



# **Navigating the Western School System in Jandals**

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# Overview

- **Introduction**
- **My STEM journey**
- **Existing barriers**
- **Some insights**



# Introduction

- **BNZ - Tongan/Tokelau/Samoan**
- **Faith**
- **Socio-Economic background**



# STEM Journey

- **Childhood fascination with science**
- **The parentals 😊**
- **No excuses**



# Existing barriers

- **Existing systemic disadvantages**
- **Limited/nil understanding of Mathematics and Science at intermediate level.**
- **Reduced/nil confidence by Year 9 (already behind/overwhelmed)**
- **Elitist view of STEM subjects in High School – “The Asian 5”.**



# Barriers contd

- **Nil study habits established/normalised by Yr 11 and continues through out High School.**
- **Study space at home not always a reality for Pasifika students**
- **Family commitments to church/community events leaves limited time for meaningful/targeted study and revision.**
- **Parents do not understand the system..misinformed?**
- **Disempowered youth**

# What helped me

- **The parentals**
- **Decolonisation/Critical analysis**
- **School teacher/s**



# Some suggestions 😊

- **Commit your time, energy, yourselves**
- **Know your Pasifika families at the grassroots...like really get to know them**
- **Seek advice from parents of successful STEM students regardless of their professional “titles” / qualification etc.**





# Poem

**Rich in radiant red  
Amongst the flowerbed  
Lies internal beauty that bleeds  
Golden pollen beads  
For my heilala flowers  
Holds many powers  
Yet I hold back the feeling of being down  
Like a smile hiding a frown  
Unsure of what it is It falls to bits**



# Poem continued

**Reaching for a star  
It hopes to stretch out far  
Something holds it back  
Like a mere heart attack  
No root boosters to propel it forward  
It feels like it is being tortured  
Teuila also known as red ginger  
The growth of it may hinder  
Until I feel confident  
I will face the consequent**

# **Last one 😊**

**Blooming during the season  
Knowing I am Polynesian  
I must stand out, without  
A shadow of doubt  
Displaying my culture  
As a work of art, a sculpture  
Showing the world the best I can be  
All that it takes is to be me**