

# *Mapping the youth challenge*

*The youth challenge in the Pacific region*





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*By the Secretariat of the Pacific Community*



Secretariat of the Pacific Community  
Noumea, New Caledonia, 2009





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# Acronyms

AHD	Adolescent health and development
CSO	Community service organisation
CYP	Commonwealth Youth Programme
FSPI	Foundation for Peoples of the South Pacific International
HDP	Human Development Programme
IATFY	Inter-Agency Task Force on Youth
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NZAID	The New Zealand Agency for International Development
PICTs	Pacific Island countries and territories
PYS2010	Pacific Youth Strategy 2010
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Populations Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women





## Introduction

Population characteristics are primary determinants of development and impact resource availability, utilisation and sustainability for current and future generations. In 2006, the total population of the Pacific Islands (island members of the Pacific Community) was estimated to be 9.2 million, representing an increase of about 1.6 million people since 2000. However, population distribution in the region has remained unchanged, with the five largest island countries and territories (those of Melanesia) having the vast majority (87.0%) of the regional population, followed by the much smaller island countries and territories of Polynesia (7.1%) and Micronesia (5.9%). The increase reflects an annual population growth rate of 3.1% per annum. If sustained, this growth rate would lead to a doubling of the Pacific Island population in 23 years, to 18.3 million people. In the six-year period 2000–2006, Melanesia's population increased at an annual rate of 3.4 per cent, which is considerably higher than the rates in Polynesia (0.9%) and Micronesia (0.8%). With a median age of about 21 years, Pacific populations are very young compared to those in countries like Australia, France, New Zealand and United States (the metropolitan members of the Pacific Community), where the median ages are 35.6, 37.4, 33 and 35.2 years respectively.

Approximately 20 per cent of the total population of Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) is aged between 15 and 24 years, representing one of the most dynamic elements in Pacific Island societies. The proportion of the population in this age group is projected to grow at an annual rate of 2.2 per cent, which will increase demand for essential social services such as education and health, as well as for employment opportunities. As a result, government budgets and services directed toward young people will be under even more pressure than they are now.

Inadequate educational opportunities leave many young people in the region with limited skills and life choices, which in turn can undermine self-esteem and lead to antisocial and risky behaviours. Given that a large proportion of the Pacific youth population require education, employment, reproductive health services and urban infrastructure to support their future social, economic and other needs, a more coordinated approach to addressing youth issues in the region is required.







## Background

In recent years, attention has been drawn by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the media and other stakeholders to the so-called youth bulge in the region. While many countries in the world struggle with the issues related to ageing populations, the Pacific faces the challenges of having 'youthful populations'. For its part, over the period 2007 to 2009 SPC has embarked on a number of interventions aimed at strengthening youth development work by enhancing strategic alliances and fostering more effective partnerships amongst stakeholders with a genuine interest in achieving real outcomes and benefits for Pacific youth.

In this regard, CRGA (the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations) at its 36th meeting in Noumea in November 2006 directed SPC to conduct a mapping exercise on the challenges facing young people in the region and to present an overview of the different youth programmes conducted in the region. SPC's Human Development Programme (HDP) conducted the exercise.

This report presents the key findings of the Pacific Youth Mapping Exercise (PYME) and proposes a way forward in terms of responding to the findings of the exercise.

## Pacific Youth Mapping Exercise

The PYME focused on:

- i. quantifying and making a qualitative analysis of the extent of youth challenges in the Pacific region;
- ii. identifying all stakeholders supporting youth activities in the region (national, regional and international) and the respective roles they play;
- iii. identifying the youth priorities that are best addressed nationally and those where regional coordination/intervention might add value to national initiatives;
- iv. quantifying and mapping the total resources flowing into youth programmes in the region by source of funds and allocation by priorities; and
- v. identifying gaps in resource allocations/availability that would need to be addressed to ensure a more comprehensive approach to addressing youth challenges in the Pacific Islands region.

## Project organisation

SPC (through its HDP) was the central coordinating agency for the exercise and took a lead role in establishing and maintaining the partnerships necessary for the exercise, coordinating the various resources required for the exercise, developing a work plan for the exercise and monitoring its implementation, recruiting and supervising the consultant(s) for the exercise, facilitating the development of the key outputs, providing regular updates to the Project Reference Group and partners, and organising a regional stakeholder roundtable.

PYME commenced in early 2007 under the leadership of the Youth Development Adviser. A Principal Researcher was hired in mid-2007 to assist with the mapping and gap analysis. Administrative support was provided by staff of HDP.

A Project Reference Group, comprised of representatives from SPC, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, the Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP) South Pacific Centre and the Pacific Youth Council, provided ongoing input and guidance to the project staff throughout the exercise.





## Methodology

This exercise collected data from: 1) a literature review, including review of online resources and project monitoring documents from SPC programmes, national governments, civil society organisations, regional and international organisations, and development partners; and 2) four different self-administered surveys, tailored for SPC programmes, international and regional agencies working in the youth sector, government youth departments and national civil society organisations.

The self-administered surveys were sent out to members of the Project Reference Group for further dissemination to regional, international and national organisations while the consultant sent the survey forms to the government youth departments.

All the surveys were sent and received by email and respondents were called by telephone to get further clarification on the information provided.

## Literature review and analysis

The literature review was conducted by analysing interim progress reports, minutes of UN-led Inter-Agency Task Force on Youth (IATFY) meetings, published documents on youth development in the region, and other in-house documents. In addition, further literature was obtained on regional programmes during a desktop analysis by the principal researcher. Data collected were analysed for key or recurring themes and divergent viewpoints. Categories/themes were defined using the affinity diagram process prior to coding, and then interpreted. Data collected in the desktop analysis were used to triangulate the data collected from service providers and key respondents to establish whether there were examples that extended, enhanced, confirmed, modified or contradicted best practice.

## Self-administered surveys

A list of key respondents was compiled based on the knowledge, experience and recommendations of the SPC Youth Development Adviser and government youth focal points in each country and territory. These key respondents included SPC staff and representatives of international organisations, donors, government bodies and major community and civil society organisations. A full list of key respondents is provided on the HDP website. An open-ended questionnaire was developed with core or common questions and additional questions specific for each group of key respondents in order to maximise the unique insights that each person or organisation was able to provide.

## Meeting with government youth workers

The project team also took advantage of a meeting held by the Commonwealth Youth Programme together with SPC in Cook Islands in September of 2008 to meet with some government youth workers and collect or clarify information that was provided by their department.

## Limitations of the research

While the methodology employed required minimal resources, it also created barriers to timely gathering of information due to technological and communication difficulties. The response rate was lower than expected and in some cases survey forms were incomplete, which caused further delays in finalising the data collection process. However, the situation was rectified to a degree by having face-to-face meetings with some government youth officers at the Cook Islands meeting.







## Findings

### The youth challenge

The materials obtained from PICTs tend to have a practical and policy focus, reflecting the small size of their populations and limited resources available for funding research into youth issues.

Despite these limitations, the exercise revealed that the challenges that young people face are similar across the 17 PICTs that responded to the survey, but that they vary in magnitude and priority. Employment, health and education remain the key areas of concern for the majority. Notably, there are still limited employment opportunities for young people, in particular those in urban centres; formal education systems continue to fall short in effectively addressing the varied vocational needs of young people; and current programmes are still having limited success in improving the mental health of young people.





## ***The common priority issues***

This section highlights the common youth issues in the Pacific region based on available information on recent trends with a view to understanding the underlying causes of youth issues and evaluating strategies currently being implemented to address them.

### ***Unemployment***

This issue is a longstanding challenge facing the Pacific region. It is still a key issue for many, if not all PICTs. The unavailability of jobs and inadequate training and preparation of young people for employment are the major contributing factors. Self-employment is another option; however, resources and skills to generate and implement these ideas are not available. Training programmes to equip young people with employable skills are limited and the number of young people coming out of education systems is far greater than the number of available jobs in the market. In addition, job recruitment criteria often require previous job experience, which most young people do not have. The Melanesian countries that participated in this exercise mentioned that there is no career preparedness in schools to assist students to aim for employment in their field of interest.

### ***Limited educational opportunities***

As with unemployment, educational opportunities for young people are limited by external and internal factors, making it difficult for young people to complete or continue their education. Some PICTs have free and compulsory basic education, but in the majority, parents or guardians have to pay not only school fees but other expenses such as school contributions and the costs of stationery, uniforms and transport. Availability, access and cost are the main contributing factors that affect the ability of young people to complete or continue with their education. Tertiary and university education is scarce and most students rely on government or donor sponsorships to continue on to these levels. The limited number of scholarships means that not all qualified students are able to attend university.

### ***Youth health***

Health issues for young people include sexual health, mental and emotional health and adverse health effects from abusing alcohol and drugs. Teenage pregnancy and early marriage also impinge on the health of young women, which later affects the health of children born to the young mothers. The threat of HIV amongst the youth population is growing. Though the numbers infected are very small (except in Papua New Guinea), increasing teenage pregnancy and high levels of sexually transmitted infections indicate that unsafe practices are prevalent amongst young people; highlighting that young people are vulnerable to HIV. Sexual and reproductive health services do not meet the sexual and reproductive health needs of young people. Health workers either do not have the skills and capacity to work with young people or have a heavy workload, which reduces their ability to focus on the unique sexual health needs of young people. Religious restrictions, taboos and shame are among the factors that often prevent young people from seeking medical attention or advice regarding their sexual health. Mental health is a growing issue in the region and the data collected indicated that lack of mental and emotional well-being is threatening the productivity of young people. Services to address mental health issue, such as counselling, are non-existent or minimal at best. Most PICTs have reports of suicide resulting from young people's incapacity to deal with stress and depression. However, apart from Samoa and Fiji most do not have sufficient research on youth and suicide. Nevertheless, suicide was among the issues discussed by the Pacific Island delegates who were consulted during the stakeholders' consultation meeting in Cook Islands in September 2007. Substance and alcohol abuse also add to the ill-health of young people and contribute to accidents and anti-social behaviours.

### ***Lack of support for young people***

The lack of support is quite a broad issue, encompassing poor parental guidance, limited support for youth initiatives from leaders, inadequate supportive mechanisms to encourage and/or support youth involvement in economic activities, and lack of policy direction for youth development. However, there is also a need to focus on the ability of adults/leaders to work with young people. It has been noted that while adults have good intentions in terms of providing leadership for young people, the situation can be interpreted as lack of support for young people to assume leadership roles and responsibilities. This is important as part of youth development – building young people's capacity to lead and provide support for their peers. On the family level, parental skills and guidance often do not keep up with the rapid social change that young people are going through.





## **Youth engagement, participation and representation**

There appears to be an overall lack of faith in the capacity of young people to contribute positively to development, including by participating in decision-making. The lack of empowerment and participation initiatives for young people remains a major concern. In addition, the limited focus on vulnerable and unattached young people (e.g. those with disabilities, different sexual orientations, etc.) leaves them beyond the reach of organised programmes. This calls for a rights-based development approach to dealing with youth issues. There is a need for more community-based projects and programmes led by youth and targeting youth, and more multi-sectoral planning as well as implementation on youth issues.

The lack of youth participation in the different levels of society is widely acknowledged across the region as an area that undermines youth development. The term 'youth participation' refers to young people being involved in decision-making, taking leading roles in addressing issues that affect them and contributing to general community- or nation-building. Several reasons exist for the low level of youth participation in society; these include lack of trust in youth by the older generation, youth not having confidence or being deemed incompetent to participate, young people not being aware of their rights, and the level and extent of issues that young people are faced with. The fact that it is culturally inappropriate for young people to actively participate in decision-making has been used to keep young people from speaking up on youth issues and how they think the issues should be addressed. Youth programmes are slowly learning how to involve young people fully in these programmes; however, they still struggle to implement this knowledge. This includes programmes that are operated by NGOs, community service organisations (CSOs) and the government. In addition to their lack of active participation in social, economic and political processes and activities, young people are poorly represented in the national, regional and international arenas. This can be attributed to their lack of confidence and the lack of opportunities and support for them to participate.

A number of respondent PICTs noted the difficulty of not having a national youth council or representative body. The non-government sector is an important part of youth development in the region. Through collaborative efforts with government agencies and development partners, NGO community networks can be used for advocacy, supporting capacity development initiatives and guiding policy.

## **Gender inequality and young women**

Gender inequality is prevalent in the youth sector; youth programmes and other human development initiatives need to pay attention to the needs of young women. The needs of young women are not the same as those of young men or older women. This inequality has serious implications for young women as they tend to be less involved in education, employment and generally at the community, national and regional levels. These implications are manifested in the high and increasing rates of teenage pregnancy and unsafe abortion, the lack of attention to sex workers, the low status of young women and gender-based violence. In addition, the civil conflict that exists in some Pacific countries exposes young women (and older women) to greater risk of sexual harassment and rape, though these occur in stable and conflict-free situations as well.

## **Youth in conflict with the law**

According to The State of the Pacific Youth 2005, youth crime in the Pacific continues to rise. Responding PICTs stated that youth involvement in crime was one of the issues needing attention as it continues to rise, particularly in urban centres. If they drift into crime and delinquency, young people risk alienating themselves from society and being deprived of their liberty, as well as limiting their opportunities and choices in life. Though the issue of young people as victims of crime was not mentioned in the surveys, it must also be addressed as it is considered to contribute to a cycle of violence and crime.

## **Rural to urban migration**

Rural to urban migration was highlighted as a major issue in the 1970s and the 1980s. It continues and is linked to several other issues – one being squatter settlements in urban areas. Most PICTs have at least a part of their urban centres or industrialised areas occupied by squatter settlements. The living conditions and situations within such settlements are poor, which affects the health and the social and economic situations of families and young people.

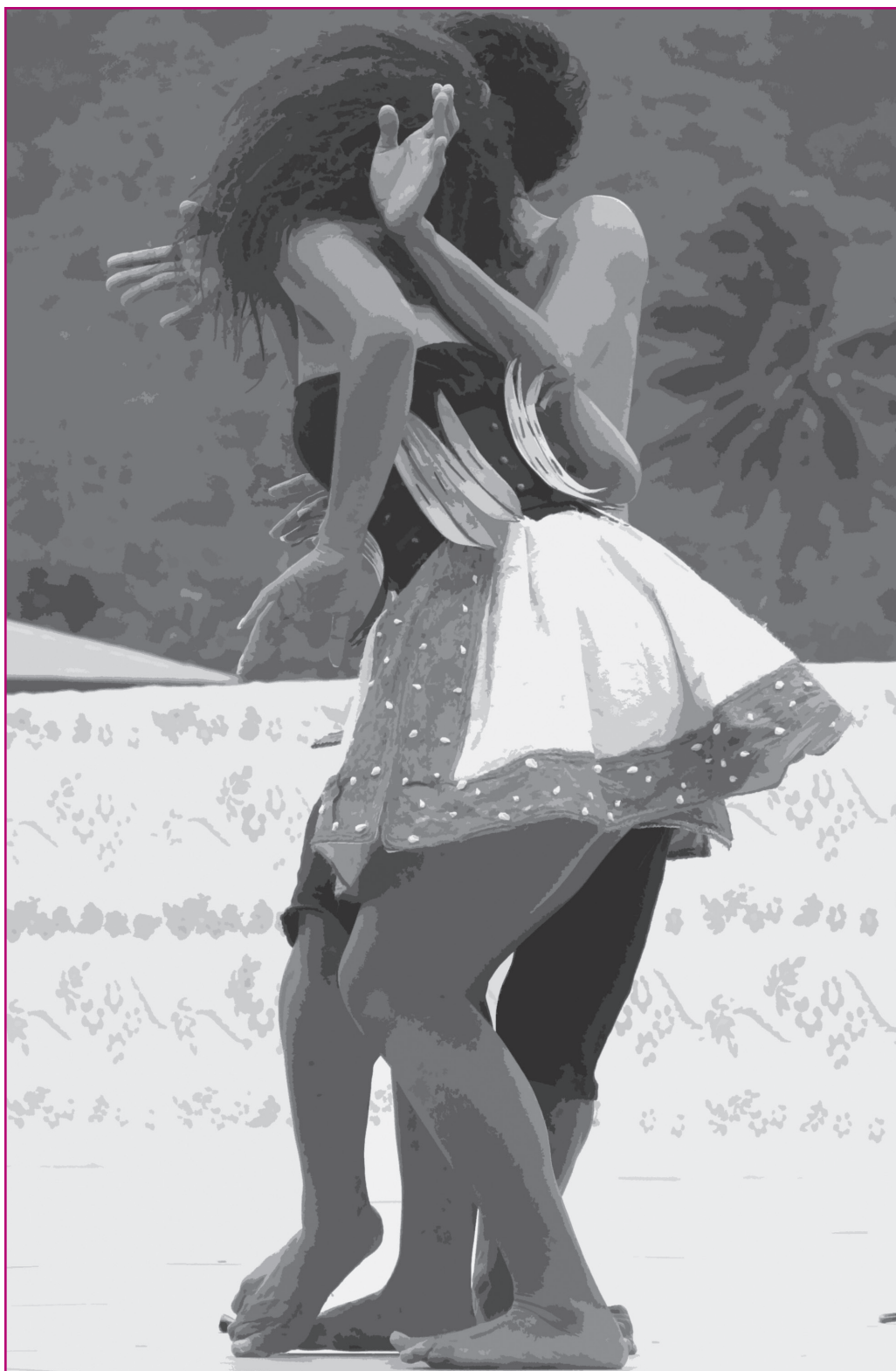






## Youth and culture

A lot has been said about young people and culture. Among the observations made are that young people lack respect for tradition and culture, including traditional systems and leaders, and that they do not participate in and lack knowledge of traditional cultural practices. These concerns have been affirmed by the vision developed by the Pacific delegates who participated in the Youth Visioning for Island Living conference in Mauritius, which was organised for small island developing states and called for increased participation of youth in development and in national economic, social and cultural life. According to the information collected through this exercise, youth in most small island developing states are losing cultural identity and traditional arts and knowledge.



## Stakeholders' support and role in the youth sector

### Overview of the current situation

Within the Pacific region there are a number of key players funding and supporting national, regional and international agendas in addition to UN agencies. The major aid donors studied in this exercise are New Zealand (NZ), Australia, Taiwan/ Republic of China (ROC), China, Japan, France and the United States. It was found that that the respective countries involved in financing youth-related development projects in the region each have their own views and perspectives on youth development and participation.

NZAID in 2006 commissioned a study of NZ-funded programmes for youth development, recognising that youth development is an important and cross-cutting issue that needs to be dealt with for effective national development. None of the other key agencies had similar documents available for public view. It is possible that these documents exist but were not available at the time of this study. This is a good example of implementing best practices, in which NZAID took the initiative to analyse to what extent youth are benefiting from its programmes. It was made very clear by the study that NZ was funding programmes with a youth focus in the areas of governance and leadership, education, and health but very few programmes focusing on youth employment and livelihood. The study recommended making youth development one of NZAID's priority areas, encouraging implementation of policies rather than further policy development, maintaining partnerships with other donors and international agencies that have quality youth-focused programmes, expanding core funding for organisations with sound youth-related initiatives, and supporting and promoting good quality programmes as key strategic directions for the future.

Another best practice example comes from the TALAVOU (Towards A Legacy of Achievement, Versatility and Opportunity through Unity) project for youth in Samoa, which was supported by UN agencies and focused on a sustainable approach to youth development in Samoa. The project supports the implementation of selected activities to address key priorities identified in the youth policy and consists of four interlinked components including initiatives in self-worth improvement, skills formation and human development, income generation and livelihood, and programme management and coordination.

There are indications that donor-funded youth programmes implemented at the national level by governments, local and international NGOs, and UN agencies have contributed to addressing many different areas in youth development. However, a major concern is that of the government youth departments that responded to the survey, few have ongoing youth programmes, while the rest are involved in one-off projects. There is little evidence of long-term sustainable programmes.

The majority of national youth programmes are implemented by civil society organisations. However, too few survey forms were received from civil society organisations themselves to adequately verify this so the assumption is that there is much more work being done by faith-based organisations and voluntary organisations than was recorded by the exercise. Without in-country coordinating mechanisms to capture this information, it was difficult to map. It is clear that much more work remains to be done in coordinating and managing these efforts.

As stated, most activities implemented by national organisations including government youth departments are conducted on an ad-hoc basis and not all programmes cover remote and rural areas.

### Linkages with regional youth strategies

Pacific youth ministries, CSOs, youth leaders, and regional organisations participated in the development of the Pacific Youth Strategy 2010 (PYS2010), and have partnered with SPC's HDP and major donors, including UNICEF and UNFPA, to address youth issues under this strategy.

Youth delegates have also contributed to the development of other major regional strategies including the Koror Statement on Youth Empowerment for a Secure, Prosperous, and Sustainable Future; the Pacific Tofamamao 2015 declaration; the Pacific Plan and the Pacific Youth Charter.

During the analysis, an attempt was made to identify any programmes linked to the various components of PYS2010. The project team found the following:



- Formal and non-formal education and training (PYS2010 – Assessing integrated education): Education programme supporting integration of life skills and adolescent health development, food safety, water and sanitation, nutrition, HIV and healthy lifestyle and civic education into school curricula, while other support was geared toward technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Another programme implemented under this category is the youth work, education and training programme and diploma in youth development work.
- Youth enterprise and entrepreneurship (PYS2010 – Nurturing sustainable livelihood): According to the data collected, only four organisations implement and support programmes that address youth and (sustainable) livelihood. These programmes cover areas ranging from promoting employment in formal and non-formal sectors to promoting village enterprise and mainstreaming rural development. Programmes in these areas are fairly broad and certain components target youth specifically while others work with young people indirectly.
- Youth and health (PYS2010 – Promoting healthy lifestyles): The major area of focus of youth and health programmes is sexual and reproductive health, including HIV. The SPC Adolescent Health & Development (AHD) Programme covers 10 PICTs, supporting training, peer education, youth health services including youth centres, and incorporating AHD into school curricula. The SPC HIV & STI Section programmes also cover 10 PICTs. Other health programmes address tobacco, alcohol, and mental health through awareness raising, research (mental health) and promotion of healthy lifestyles.
- Youth and society (PYS2010 – Building and strengthening institutional capacity): Institutional capacity strengthening programmes focus on national and community institutions. Programmes include training and awareness raising for employees from government and civil society institutions on improving quality and management of programmes, good governance and promotion of dialogue between communities, civil society and government.
- Information and data on youth (PYS2010 – Research, information and data): Programmes and research initiatives dealing with up-to-date information and data on youth are minimal. The database on youth and AHD and the database on labour market information, maintained by UNFPA and ILO respectively, were the two databases consulted for this exercise.

The findings suggest that very little effort is made at the national level to achieve alignment of programmes with regional and international mandates including the Pacific Tofamamao 2015 declaration, the Pacific Plan, the Pacific Youth Charter and the Millennium Development Goals.







## **Gaps in resource allocation and availability**

It is evident from the section above that certain youth issues receive enough resources while others are accorded little attention. While there is currently a lack of resources going into the youth sector, programmatic and structural issues pose further challenges to effectively addressing the priority youth issues prevailing in the region.

### **Youth and education**

Programmes and support in this area are mainly focused on integrating health, mostly adolescent sexual health, in school curricula. The revival of professionalising youth work by the CYP South Pacific Centre will add to improving youth work in the region through the diploma in youth work studies. However, education-related youth issues include lack of access to basic education, truancy, low retention rates and lack of higher education opportunities. Little has been done to address the concerns of young people as stated here. TVET is the other alternative for young people who cannot continue in the formal education system, but this exercise could not ascertain if this option is being taken up by many young people. The difficulties in implementing TVET programmes and their limited capacity to absorb all school drop-outs are also noted.

### **Youth and employment – sustainable development**

The information collected showed that little has been done in relation to youth and employment. Programmes in this area mostly address promotion of employment in the formal and non-formal sectors and it is evident that they are directed to the larger population with minimal focus on young people. Government youth departments in a few PICTs have addressed the issue of youth unemployment, with small grant schemes in Cook Islands, National Youth Service (Youth Training) in agriculture and trade in Fiji and young farmer projects in several other PICTs.

It is clear that major challenges exist in addressing youth unemployment, as programmes can only provide skills training, which does not guarantee employment or being able to engage in income earning activities. There is little being done to engage employers in addressing this issue.

### **Youth health**

The majority of programmes and support for the youth sector focus on youth health, especially AHD. SPC's AHD programme addresses sexual and reproductive health, including HIV and alcohol and substance abuse, emotional health and self-esteem. The AHD programme covers 10 PICTs – making it one of the largest regional programmes in terms of coverage. Another youth and mental health programme is implemented by the Foundation for Peoples of the South Pacific International (FSPI) in five PICTs. Other health-related programmes target the general population, focusing only occasionally on youth.

Health concerns of young people centre on sexual and reproductive health and alcohol, tobacco and substance abuse. The programmes implemented so far have addressed these concerns; however, government commitment and adult support, especially from service providers, need to be increased. Creating a positive environment in the communities where young people live is also an important aspect of programmes promoting young people's health; such an environment reinforces positive behaviour change to sustain healthy lifestyles.

### **Youth and society**

Programmes dealing with youth and social development are largely implemented by civil society organisations supported by regional bodies. Most of the causes of social issues faced by young people can be traced to the rapid social and economic shifts experienced in the region. The issues under this heading include lack of opportunities for young people to participate, lack of support, gender inequality and young women, youth and conflict, urban migration and suicide.

Programmes addressing these issues have limited support from governments. International conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) have been signed by many PICTs but the realisation of the social components of these conventions in relation to young people needs to be looked at more closely to develop relevant programmes.





The effort to keep up-to-date on the adverse effects of rapid social and economic changes through research and monitoring the situation of young people must be supported to ensure that programmes can be adjusted to effectively address the current situation of young people. One of the significant gaps identified by national and regional organisations is the lack of youth programmes in rural and remote areas. The existence of more opportunities in urban centres than in rural areas can be seen as one of the factors contributing to urban migration.

### **Youth and culture/identity**

The issue of youth and culture/identity is a major gap identified by the mapping exercise. Of the youth programmes implemented by national, regional and international organisations, there is no specific focus on youth and culture. There are a few national projects implemented to transfer and maintain traditional and cultural skills and knowledge. These projects are operated on an ad-hoc basis and there is little or no follow-up. There is a need to work with young people to find innovative approaches to get young people to be interested in and place value on their tradition and culture.





## **Gaps in programming and institutional capacity**

### **Policy environment and programme delivery**

The former SPC Pacific Youth Bureau, now integrated into SPC's HDP, has led the charge in supporting PICTs in the development of national youth policies over the past decade.

The majority of PICTs now have some form of national youth policy. However, there are limited capacity and resources to implement the policies. In some PICTs, the policies are not well known to all stakeholders or young people themselves. There is also limited effectiveness in monitoring and evaluation of progress in policy implementation.

In the context described above, the basic information and tools to enable a country to have a well organised and coordinated youth development strategy is lacking in some PICTs. Up-to-date qualitative and quantitative information on youth issues to inform programme directions and resource allocation appears to be lacking. This affected the way PICTs responded to the mapping exercise. None of the organisations implementing programmes in the PICTs (with the exception of Samoa, through the TALAVOU programme) made reference to addressing national youth strategies, let alone regional strategies. It is therefore assumed that youth policy and/or strategy are not up-to-date in some PICTs and that there is a lack of awareness of the national youth policy and strategy in some PICTs. Almost no PICTs have databases of all the youth programmes and situational analysis of youth in the country, and it was therefore difficult to adequately identify the gaps.

A number of gaps were noted in the delivery of youth programmes. The major gaps were in career preparedness linked with job availability, youth participation and leadership development for young people, education and students dropping out of the formal education system due to unavailable spaces, cultural preservation, rural and remote service delivery, and reaching vulnerable youth. The largest gap was in support for programme delivery, where identified concerns were not being supported at all levels.

Also of concern was the lack of legislative responses to identified issues, e.g. access to alcohol, anti-smoking laws, etc.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

Many respondents commented on the difficulty of putting together information for the mapping exercise, pointing to a weakness in the capacity of youth service providers in the region to effectively monitor and evaluate youth programmes. Countries that have good systems and personnel were in place responded quickly and in detail, while the others commented that the information had not been collected or was not available.

There remains a need for more in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of programmes and for greater participation of young people in the monitoring and evaluation process. There is also a great need for ongoing analysis of existing youth-related statistical information as part of the policy implementation process, in order to facilitate evidence-based planning.

These areas of development will require ongoing improvements to both national youth machineries and planning systems within existing frameworks. In this regard, there is a need for national policy development to incorporate research outcomes, encourage cross-sectoral strategic implementation, and ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of both the process and the outcomes/impacts of policy interventions.

### **Youth programme coverage**

Most youth programmes are reported to be concentrated in urban centres. It is ironic that international, regional and national programmes complain of the lack of youth programmes in rural areas when most of their programmes are concentrated in and around urban centres. The infrastructure and geographical spread of the islands are clearly among the factors affecting services to the majority of the population who live in rural areas. It is also noted that limited resources affect organisations' ability to take programmes to rural areas.

### **Partnerships and collaboration**

The exercise found that lack of communication and coordination – not just within the youth sector but also between other sectors – continues. As noted earlier, it is only with a multi-sectoral and multifaceted approach that we can adequately address the situation, making resources go further more effectively without compromising the quality of services, and minimising duplication.







The exercise revealed that organisations were open to discussing the overlap of some programmes, with the organisations expressing a need to collaborate more rather than 'guard their turf' and their share of resources. CSOs and government agencies noted that some of the overlap was donor-driven, as programmes are generally designed based on donor requirements and priorities. It is important that donors, within their own mandates, support national priorities rather than directing them.

To achieve the goal described above, it is critical for all agencies to share a common vision and purpose for supporting youth development. Such a vision needs to reflect a move away from the short-term, problem-driven interventions currently prevalent in the region and toward long-term, collaborative, sustainable, vision-driven strategies.

### **Resource allocation**

Not all PICTs have the resources and expertise needed to support long-term sustainable youth development programmes. There are still gaps in resources and this is having a negative impact on implementation of youth services. A large proportion of the resources being put into youth development are directed to reproductive health and education, which is reflected in the types of programmes that responded to the survey. As government resources for the youth sector are very limited and many youth development activities occur within the civil society sector, youth ministries and youth programmes are allocated very small budgets and have few support staff, and sometimes limited expertise, to implement youth policies.

A sample analysis of appropriation from the national budget for the government youth development agency in one PICT for the 2007–2008 fiscal year revealed that the youth agency, which is a division within a large ministry, received an allocation equivalent to 3.8 per cent of the ministry's budget. This equates to only about 0.06 per cent of the national budget. In terms of expenditure, only 18 per cent of the division's allocation was spent on operations and programmes while 82 per cent was spent on personnel and depreciation costs.

Another issue relating to national appropriations for the youth sector is that there is a lack of resources to extend programmes to reach those young people in rural and remote areas, meaning that activities are often concentrated around capital cities.

### **Institutional strengthening and capacity building**

Regional and international organisations have programmes that contribute to strengthening and building the capacity of national institutions and their systems. Institutional strengthening and capacity building programmes identified in the exercise do not address concerns raised by national youth bodies such as low capacity to develop and review policies, strategic plans, fundraising and resource mobilisation for youth programmes; and management of youth programmes especially in the areas of monitoring and evaluation and research.

The lack of effectiveness in implementing youth policy and strategic plans can be seen as lack of capacity of youth organisations to translate youth plans into actions. Of the organisations that responded to this exercise, none of them have institutional strengthening and capacity building programmes that address the capacity building concerns raised regarding youth bodies such as national youth councils or other national youth bodies.

### **Youth leadership deficiency**

There is not sufficient leadership training in the region for young people that ties in with human rights; democracy; good governance; upholding the rule of law; managing organisations, youth groups and governance bodies; and being able to plan strategically and develop strategic and implementation plans that are in line with national youth policies and other national documents. It is highly recommended that targeted leadership training programmes for young people be developed to address all of these leadership development needs.





## *Proposed approach to addressing youth issues*

### *National level*

The project team believes that effectively addressing the issues highlighted in the findings of this exercise will require considerable investment at the national level in a number of areas, including:

- strengthening national government and non-government institutions responsible for youth development to improve planning and coordination of the implementation of youth policy strategies and innovative programmes;
- developing, implementing and ensuring ongoing monitoring and review of holistic and gender-inclusive national youth policies aimed at realistically and effectively addressing national priorities for youth development and emerging trends impacting the lives of young people;
- establishing and maintaining appropriate consultative mechanisms such as national youth councils and youth advisory groups for efficient monitoring, reporting and accountability for policy initiatives and institutional effectiveness in addressing priority issues;
- strengthening mainstreaming efforts and partnerships at the national level through the effective coordination of cross-sectoral initiatives and cross-issue action; and
- promoting youth participation in decision-making and providing conditions to enable young people to make positive contributions to the development of society.

### *Regional level*

At the regional level, the project team emphasises the need for regional and international organisations with interest in youth development to work together with development partners to promote positive development in the youth sector. This can be achieved through collaborative efforts in:

- providing policy advice, and financial and technical resources to support PICTs in improving the effective implementation and monitoring of national youth policies;
- mobilising funding support for strengthening capacity building and institutional strengthening at the national level;
- exploring the establishment of a regional youth development fund to ensure long-term availability of financial resources to support income-generation initiatives, skills development and innovative projects for young people;
- facilitating the strengthening of regional youth coordinating mechanisms/organisations such as the youth component of SPC's HDP and the Pacific Youth Council;
- establishing a mechanism for co-financing of regional conferences to review the impact of current programmes and strategies and determine future policy directions; and
- establishing a central regional database for storage and sharing of information on youth development trends and best practice initiatives in the region and globally.





## Conclusion

The mapping exercise has generated some important revelations and agreement in principle by CRGA on the proposed way forward is a solid first step toward improving the way all stakeholders work together to support PICTs in addressing youth issues more effectively.



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