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Initiatives on **Youth Employment** *in the Pacific*

SUB-REGIONAL PROJECT ON EDUCATION, EMPLOYABILITY & DECENT WORK FOR YOUTH IN PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES





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Message From The Director a.i.



Trevor Riordan *Director a.i.*
ILO Office for Pacific Island
Countries. Suva, Fiji

Youth unemployment is a growing concern worldwide. This challenge is more daunting in the Pacific given limited income and employment opportunities inherent in small island countries, exacerbated by the youth bulge. The impact of the Global Economic Crisis has placed youth among the most vulnerable groups. Consequently, economies are unable to absorb the growing workforce and many young men and women are trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty and desperation.

Special emphasis was placed on youth employment at the February 2010 Tripartite High Level Meeting on Decent Work for Sustainable Development in the Pacific. This was the largest conference organized by the ILO in the Pacific. It was generously hosted by the Government of Vanuatu in Port Vila. Pacific Labour Ministers, high level government officials

and representatives of the employers' and workers' organizations joined the ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Ms. Sachiko Yamamoto, in drawing attention to the need to urgently address the huge employment challenges, particularly for young people in the Pacific. She emphasised this in saying that: "Double digit youth unemployment in some Pacific member states will become a serious problem if they remain unaddressed."

I believe that the adoption by the high level meeting of the Port Vila Statement on Decent Work, together with the Pacific Action Plan for Decent Work, provides an excellent basis for developing a jobs-led strategy, particularly for young people, to respond to the Global Economic Crisis. It also supports the youth employment priority of national Decent Work Country Programmes. In this context, the ILO's Global Jobs Pact, agreed to at the 2009 International Labour Conference, is also an important policy tool to address the youth employment challenges of the crisis.

The primary goal of the ILO today as ILO Director-General, Juan Somavia, puts it is to promote opportunities for women and men, including the young, to obtain decent and productive work, in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. To this end, the ILO is working in partnerships with the international community, business and labour to address the employment challenge.

The ILO has an extensive experience as a development partner for youth employment promotion worldwide as well as in the Pacific. Over the years

it has implemented various youth employment initiatives using ILO tools and methodologies to promote employment and entrepreneurship development and in enabling young men and women secure productive and decent wage or self-employment.

In April 2008, the ILO, in collaboration with its constituents, launched the Pacific Youth Employment Project (YEP) aimed at improving the employability and decent work for young people in five selected Pacific island countries: Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

This newsletter attempts to capture the various initiatives and interventions of YEP to address the diverse and complex issues associated with youth employment. These interventions are directed at the macro/policy level as well as meso or institutional capacity building down to micro and direct assistance to young entrepreneurs. This important project has made a valuable contribution to dealing with the youth employment challenge in the ILO Pacific Island member States.

The ILO Office for Pacific Island Countries would take this opportunity to thank its constituents and the many regional and national implementing partners that supported the implementation of YEP.

ILO's work for youth employment in the Pacific

The ILO is responding actively to the enormous problem of youth unemployment through an initiative launched in April 2008 - the Pacific Youth Employment Project (YEP) - **RAS/06/53-NET: Education, Employability and Decent Work for Youth in Pacific Island Countries**. This is a project of the ILO Office for Pacific Island Countries in Fiji, in collaboration with its constituents. Its aim is improved employability and decent work for young people in five selected Island nations - Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The key objectives are: (i) improving

knowledge to better address challenges faced by young men and women in securing decent wages and self-employment, and effectively sharing that information within each country and in the sub-region, (ii) strengthening government, employers', workers' and youth organizations to develop national and local policies and programs to achieve Decent Work for youth; (iii) facilitating greater access by young people to support services for wage and self-employment through new methods adapted to national needs, for example Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) which is enterprise develop-

ment training, and CB-TREE, or community-based Training for Rural Economic Empowerment.

The two-year YEP project is implemented in the framework of the global programme: the Netherlands and ILO Cooperation Project (NICP). Pacific YEP ends on 30 April 2010. All ILO youth employment initiatives, including the Pacific YEP, are designed to support its constituents in their programs and policies on employment, labour market, enterprise development and skills that promote decent work.

Advancing youth employment in the Pacific

People under 25 years of age make up half of the Pacific region's population. In 2005, some 1.6 million Pacific Islanders, or about 20 per cent of the Pacific's total population, were aged between 15 and 24.

Over the last 10 years, population increase in the Pacific has outstripped economic growth, contributing to rising unemployment and underemployment, particularly among youth. Statistics illustrate the high youth unemployment component of overall employment in countries such as Kiribati – 33 per cent, Samoa – 58 per cent, and the Solomon Islands – 42 per cent.

A recent study by the Australian and New Zealand governments on the impact of the financial and jobs crises on Pacific economies, placed youth among the vulnerable groups. As such they have identified as priority targets for regional and national policies and programs. Young people's high vulnerability to the effects of the crises is a compelling challenge for the Pacific.

Even before the crisis, youth employment was a major regional concern. Labour markets struggled to cope with population growth and absorbing new entrants to the work force. The prevailing economic uncertainty means prospects for jobs for young people are not encouraging. The school dropout rate is also likely to increase as a result of household poverty. With the youth population projected to double in 30 to 40 years, the outlook is serious. If not quickly addressed these challenges could hamper decent work opportunities for young people now and in the future, and jeopardize the economic recovery and social stability of Pacific Island countries.

That youth employment is a pressing concern was recognized by Pacific leaders at the 2005 Pacific Islands Forum where they included it a priority for regional action in a 10-year Pacific Plan. The need for increased involvement of youth for sustainable development was further emphasized in the 2007 Pacific Plan review.

In May 2009, Pacific Education Ministers endorsed a 2009-2012 Development Framework that points to the need for young people to be better prepared for formal and informal employment through improved education and training. In their response to the global financial and employment crises, Pacific Forum Economic Ministers have called for special attention



to vulnerable groups as a regional priority. United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the Pacific Sub Region 2008-2010 in promoting equitable growth and poverty also supports sustainable livelihoods, employment generation, financial services and entrepreneurship for women and men and young people (Output 1.3.4).

Other national development frameworks give special attention to youth while addressing economic growth and enhancement of employment opportunities. These include Samoa's National Youth Policy (2001-2010), Kiribati Development Plan (2008-2011), Papua New Guinea Medium Term development Strategy (2005-2010), and the Vanuatu Priorities and Action Agenda (2006-2015). The Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) of Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu also place a high priority on youth employment.

In February this year, the largest conference for Pacific Labour Ministers was convened by the ILO and hosted by the Government of Vanuatu in Port Vila. Youth employment issues were of particular concern. The conference theme, 'Decent Work for Sustainable Development in the

Pacific', brought to the discussion table high-level government officials and representatives of employers' and workers' organizations.

Speaking to the Vanuatu gathering, ILO Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, Sachiko Yamamoto, drew attention to the huge employment challenges, particularly for young people, in the Pacific. "It is very clear," Ms Yamamoto said, "that in spite of signs that the Pacific Islands will gain from a global economic recovery this year, unemployment numbers remain high with many people still struggling to find work. The crisis has also led to a decline in remittances from family members abroad, who are now unemployed. Double-digit youth unemployment in some Pacific member states will become a serious problem if they remain unaddressed."

A significant outcome of the conference was the endorsement of the 'Port Vila Statement' and 'Pacific Action Plan for Decent Work'. These, together with the Decent Work Country Programs (DWCP), form the framework for ILO's work in the Pacific to 2012 and beyond.

Youth beneficiaries of YEP share their stories

The Pacific YEP is for young people aged 15-24, the UN definition of youth. This age grouping, however, can be flexible to accommodate varying national definitions of youth. In Kiribati it is 15-30 years, 12-25 in PNG, 12-29 in Samoa, 14-29 in Solomon Islands and 15-30 in Vanuatu.

The program is directed at: (i) young women and men who have dropped out of the education system and are in a precarious work situation, including child labourers; (ii) young women and men who are at school but not gaining employable skills or exposure to entrepreneurial thinking; (iii) young women and men in se-

lected urban and rural locations who have completed school but are unemployed or who struggle to make a living as self-employed or casual workers.

Those who have benefited from the Pacific YEP have some interesting experiences and insights to share.



Ofelia Eugenio, CTA of the Youth Employment Project interviewing Ms Teakaa from Tarawa, Kiribati.
Remweia Teakaa enjoys being an entrepreneur

I am 19 years old and own a retail shop (set up) with capital borrowed from my parents. I participated in the ILO Start and

Improve Your Business (SIYB) Training from 16-20 November 2009. It has helped me to work out whether

I am making a profit or not. I was told I could improve my business through good customer relations (so I smiled and became friendlier towards my customers). I learned how to extend credit to my customers on a short-term basis and with a bit of interest. I also learned about good business promotion and marketing. For example, when I realized that a water jug was not selling, I added plastic cups to make up a set, and my clients started buying. I am also trying other ways of selling more products. Through hard work, I can make this business grow. My advice to young people is not to be embarrassed about doing business or selling things because it can provide a good income. I am happy to be earning money for myself, and not asking for money from my parents.



Mr Fale Logi at his shop in Apia, Samoa.

Urima Falelogi is doing business with confidence

I am 18 years old, single, and educated to Form 6 level. I am from Vaivase Uta, Apia, Samoa. I took part in the SIYB training and I am glad because it has helped me to

manage our family grocery shop better.

I now know how to price my stock and lower costs to earn a better profit. I also

learned the importance of knowing what my customers want. For example, I tried repacking salt and flour so that people could buy in smaller quantities and at a price they could afford. I learned to make use of local resources, so we began to make and sell breadfruit chips and popcorn. These have really attracted more customers. I extend credit to customers but I go to their homes to collect payment. I am not ashamed to ask for payment because if I do not, my business will suffer. The business has given me confidence so I am now able to speak well to people. My family still gives me advice, but they have full confidence in me to run the business. I like what I am doing because I always wanted to be my own boss and earn my own money.



Ms Bonto checks a guest in at Mary's Motel, Tarawa, Kiribati.

Tibwa Bonto finds regular employment

I am single and live in Bikenibeu, Tarawa, Kiribati. I hold a diploma in business secretarial studies from the Kiribati Institute

of Technology (KIT). I was selected for the Temporary Job Placement Scheme, a joint project of the ILO Youth Employment

Project, the Kiribati Major Employers Organization (KMEO) with support from the Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development through the (KIT).

When I joined the scheme in September 2009, I was attached to Mary's Hotel as a receptionist. I was grateful to get work experience in a privately-owned hotel, where I could also meet people from overseas.

This first attachment taught me a lot about office work and public relations. Most importantly it has given me confidence, and knowledge of good working habits and work ethics. I reported to work on time, was never absent, and worked hard for the six weeks of the attachment. When it was over, I almost cried when my employer told me I would become a full-time staff member. My hard work paid off!

More schemes like the one I was in will help to reduce youth unemployment in Kiribati.



Inaubai youth inside the poultry farm.

INAUBAI youth receive support for community poultry projects

Emmanuel Paeke, the local councillor assisting the youths and monitoring the project: "the youth association has 56 members, men and women, aged 18 to 30. Many of the youths in our village, Inaubai, in the Central Province of Papua New Guinea, do traditional farming for survival. When the group was chosen as a beneficiary of the ILO Youth Employment Project, supported by the Department of Agriculture and Livestock (DAL), and the Local Level Government (LLG), to start a

community livelihood project, the members were happy to be trained to identify a workable enterprise. We suggested poultry because we had land and, with the cooperation of group members, we would be able to build a chicken house using bush material. We felt poultry-raising would make a good business; we could raise and sell chickens over a short space of time. There is a high demand for chicken for feasts, and events like wedding and burials. At the moment people

still travel to the nearest town, or to Port Moresby, to buy chickens.

Supported by the ILO consultant, we had two days' training to determine the feasibility of our project. It was eventually approved. Once we had cleared the land, the Agriculture Department trained us in poultry raising, gave us chicken wire and 100 chickens. We built the poultry house ourselves, and 20 members of the group became involved in this first undertaking.

We have just sold our second batch of chickens (100 chickens per batch) and will soon increase to 200 per batch. Following our success, we are planning three more poultry enterprises. The youth group will be divided into four with each group running its own poultry business. We have applied for registration with the Investment Promotion Authority so that we can be eligible for government support, or to borrow money from cooperatives. The community is very happy with our initial success especially since I, as ward councillor, give regular progress reports at ward meetings. We hope this youth group will become a model for other youth groups in PNG.

Thanks to ILO and the DAL and the LLG for giving young people the chance to become involved in a productive business venture.





Tomwa Tofinga, President of KTUC - Youth Wing.

Kiribati Trade Union Youth Wing now part of policy formulation and decision-making

I, Tomwa Tofinga, am the first and serving president of the Youth Wing within the Kiribati Trade Union Congress (KTUC).

Formed in February 2009 after a series of workshops in government and private organizations, the Youth Wing will implement our Plan of Action developed at the Young Leaders of Trade Union workshop in Samoa in 2008. That workshop was organized under the ILO Youth Employment Project in collaboration with ILO Bureau of Workers Activities (ACTRAV) and the International Training Center of ILO (ITCILO) in Turin.

The Youth Wing has 15 young staff associations representing large public and private organizations. We are drafting our Strategic Plan after attending the ILO YEP workshop on strategic planning for youth groups. Our group has initiated advocacy activities such as a song competition and talkback shows on the importance of the trade union movement in helping to achieve decent work for young people.

Our membership is growing as a result of these activities.

With the help of ILO YEP, the KTUC Youth Wing is becoming more widely known and recognized. We are involved in decision-making within the KTUC through a youth representative on the Board. Nationally, we are consulted on, and have a role in youth-related activities. We also sit as a member of the Decent Work Country Program (DWCP) and have been invited by the Ministry of Youth to comment on the National Youth Policy. The Youth Wing was part of a workshop for the formulation of the National Action Plan on Youth Employment as well as in the DWCP formulation meeting in Tarawa last year.

Our efforts are having an impact, and our voices are being heard in national dialogue and in policy and decision-making, especially where these affect young workers.

Sharing the results of YEP

The ILO Youth Employment Project's interventions are wide-ranging and multi-faceted to address the diverse and complex issues and realities associated with youth employment. Its interventions are directed at all levels, from macro/policy level to meso or institutional capacity-building, to direct interventions to clients and beneficiaries.

Since its inception, the Pacific YEP has achieved results in the five participating countries as follows: producing wide-ranging country knowledge and information on youth employment; improving the capacity of constituents, youth groups and national stakeholders to develop national and local policies and programs to achieve Decent Work for youth; raising awareness of youth employment through advocacy; enabling young men and women to have greater access to support services for wage and self-employment.

The interventions of the YEP have been found to be highly relevant in helping national constituents in their work to address youth employment challenges, encourage multi-stakeholder engagement and cooperation, and ensure voice and participation of young women and men.

It can also be said that YEP interventions have contributed to a more active and collaborative promotion of youth employment in the five countries concerned.

Youth employment is given priority in national development frameworks, specifically in national youth employment policies, as well as in Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) and Pacific United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

At the macro or policy level, YEP has carried out youth employment studies and advocacy activities to improve knowledge of, and to address youth employment. YEP also introduced the National Action Plan on Youth Employment to the five selected countries to help them deal with youth employment challenges in a coherent and more integrated and coordinated way. These interventions lead to heightened awareness of the seriousness, urgency and magnitude of the youth employment challenge and, hopefully, influence policies and strategies on youth employment.

The Pacific YEP contributes to the priorities and outcomes of regional and devel-

opment frameworks as follows: the Pacific Plan 2006-2015; Youth Strategy 2010 (PYS 2010); UNDAF for the Pacific Sub Region 2008-2010; national development frameworks, for example, the Kiribati Development Plan (2008-2011), Papua New Guinea Medium Term Development Strategy (2005-2010), Vanuatu Priorities and Action Agenda (2006-2015); national youth policies such as Samoa's National Youth Policy (2001-2010), Kiribati National Youth Policy 2008 -2011, PNG National Youth 2007-2017, Solomons National Youth Policy, April 2000 and currently being updated, and Vanuatu National Youth Policy 2007-2011.

The Pacific YEP also supports the priorities and outcomes of the following Decent Work Country Programs where youth employment has been unanimously endorsed as a priority:

- Kiribati (2009-2012): Priority 1, 'Promotion of decent employment opportunities, including for young women and men';
- Papua New Guinea (2009-2012): Priority 3. 'Promotion of productive and decent employment, particularly for young men and women';
- Samoa (2009-2012): Priority 2, 'Promo-

tion of decent employment opportunities, particularly for young women and men, and inclusive of persons with disabilities’;

- Solomon Islands (2009-2012): Priority 2, ‘Promotion of decent employment opportunities, particularly for young women and men, and inclusive of persons with disabilities’.

- Vanuatu (2009-2012): Priority 2, ‘Promotion of decent employment opportunities, particularly for youth, and inclusive of youth with disabilities’.

Increased and proactive participation/engagement of governments, ILO constituents and other national stakeholders in implementing youth employment promotion activities.

The ILO Pacific YEP has organised training, seminars and workshops to strengthen the capacity of governments, employers, workers’ and youth organisations, and other stakeholders to develop national and local policies and programs on decent work for youth. These have led to national stakeholders becoming more proactive in promoting youth employment. For instance, there is multi-stakeholder engagement in preparing the National Action Plan on Youth Employment in Kiribati and Vanuatu. Government agencies, particularly the Departments of Labour in the five selected countries, are taking the lead in implementing the youth employment program in association with other relevant government organisations and national stakeholders.

The Ministry/Department/Commission of Youth in Kiribati, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have sought YEP assistance in organising strategic planning workshops for youth leaders so they become better equipped to influence or participate in decision-making at local and national level on all matters affecting youth and youth groups.

Recognising the importance of labour market information (LMI) in providing decent work for youth, the Kiribati’s Ministry of Labour has spearheaded the formation of a LMI technical working group comprised of representatives of government, and employers’ and workers’ organisations. The Department of Labour in the Solomon Islands will soon establish a similar working group.

Following a gender-mainstreaming workshop in Papua New Guinea, the Department of Labour in Vanuatu is taking the

lead in drafting a policy on gender equality in the formal sector work place. This policy will also serve as a model for other departments in the Vanuatu public service. The Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry is taking the initiative on the same issue within the private sector, starting with the Vanuatu Hotel and Resorts Association, the country’s largest private sector employer. In PNG, the Employers’ Federation and the Office for Women Development are looking at possibly collaborating to promote gender equality in the work place to private companies.

Acknowledging their vital role in youth employment, employers’ organisations in Kiribati and Samoa have launched, or are about to launch, temporary work placements, giving new graduates and young people hands-on work experience in the private sector. Some may become absorbed as permanent workers. As well, employers in Samoa, Kiribati and Vanuatu are facilitating the ILO business training, Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB), targeting young people. Some SIYB graduates have started their own small businesses, or have improved their existing ventures. The employer organisation in Solomon Islands has raised awareness of youth employment issues through fortnightly articles in the national newspaper.

As already reported, the Kiribati trade union movement now has a youth wing which has helped increase union membership, and enabled youth participation in consultations on issues affecting the country’s young people.

The Trade Union Congress in PNG is also in the process of establishing and strengthening its own youth wing.

Increased awareness and engagement of youths on issues and challenges of Youth Employment.

The ILO YEP has provided capacity building support directly to youth groups and associations so they can engage effectively in decision and policy making, and in initiatives on decent employment for young people. Across the Pacific region, about 800 young people (the number is increasing) have free access to youth employment materials, events and e-forums by joining the Pacific e-network of the Pacific Youth Council that is supported by ILO YEP.

About 500 youths participated in the Pacific Youth Festival where they also attend-

ed employment workshops and training, shared views and experiences on employment, and identified measures to address them. The participants also supported the formulation of the “Laucala Declaration”. It was the first Pacific Youth Festival declaration to include youth employment as a priority issue for the Pacific. As earlier mentioned, several youth groups have attended the strategic planning workshop and are in the process of preparing their own strategic plans. In Kiribati, for example, nine Island Youth Associations of the Island Council are assembling their Island Youth Strategic Plan through wide consultation in their respective islands.

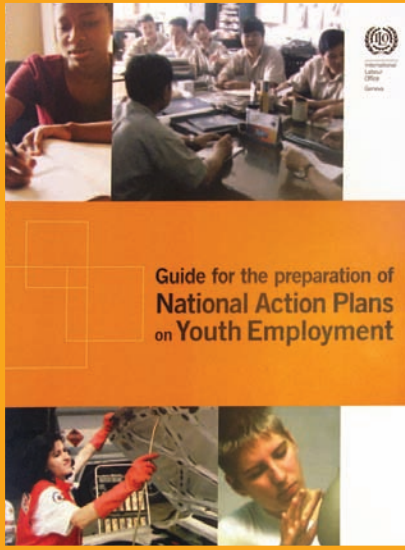
Instilling positive attitudes to youth entrepreneurship and enterprise development

In the Pacific, as in other parts of the world, many young men and women prefer to have jobs than to own or operate a business. This is more pronounced in Pacific Island countries where the entrepreneurial culture is perceived as contrary to the communal way of life and doing things. Barriers that exist to starting a business do not make the situation any easier.

The ILO YEP has assisted youth entrepreneurship by introducing two ILO-proven and widely used methods: Start and Improve Your Business or SIYB and Training for Rural Economic Empowerment or TREE. YEP also helped in establishing a pool of local SIYB certified trainers in each of the five selected countries. They are now organising SIYB training targeting young entrepreneurs and using materials tailored to the Pacific. The adaptation of SIYB training materials was supported by YEP. Through the introduction of certain elements of TREE, ILO YEP has given assistance to the setting up of community-based and youth-led enterprises in Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Vanuatu (see CB-TREE for more information). Many of the SIYB and TREE youth beneficiaries have had their first experience in starting and operating a business. It is hoped the experience will help to instill in them a positive attitude towards entrepreneurship and a realisation that running a business is a viable alternative for earning money.

A coherent, integrated and coordinated strategy to youth employment

Youth employment must be tackled in a sustained and coherent way by all the parties concerned, and over an array of policy areas. Recognizing this, the ILO Youth Employment Project introduced the National Action Plan on Youth Employment (NAP) to help the five participating countries to develop a common framework to steer



their actions on productive employment and decent work for young people. The formulation of NAP is done through a participatory process that fosters broad-based national ownership. Participation and dialogue are integral to developing an effective NAP.

The Guide for the Preparation of the National Action Plans on Youth Employment, which was developed by ILO and used in drafting NAP in several countries, was presented at the Sub-regional Workshop on Youth Employment in Fiji from 17-21 November 2008 that was organized jointly by ILO YEP, ITCILO and Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP). As a follow up, the Governments of Kiribati and Vanuatu requested technical assistance with drafting their respective plans. A situation analysis on youth employment for each country was done as a pre-requisite. The result was presented at the NAP workshop organized in the two countries. Participants, with representation from various organizations, brainstormed, identified and endorsed priority policy areas.

A local consultant, with technical support from UN-ESCAP, then drafted the NAP. Currently ILO YEP, with the assistance of the Youth Employment Division in ILO Geneva, is supporting the finalization of the Vanuatu NAP to serve as a model for Kiribati and Pacific Island other countries.

A NAP workshop was also organized in Papua New Guinea in November 2009, following a request from the Commission on Youth of the Ministry of Community Development that was supported by the Department of Industrial Labour Relations. The workshop's aim was to strengthen the employment component of the country's National Youth Policy. A similar NAP workshop will be organized in the Solomon Islands in March 2010, following a request from the Department of Youth in Solomon Islands and with support from UN-ESCAP and Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP).

All NAP workshops were organized with technical cooperation and support of the policy advisers from UN-ESCAP.



NAP workshop in Kiribati 24-27 March 2009



NAP workshop in PNG



NAP workshop in Vanuatu 6-8 March 2009

The Pacific needs LMIA Systems



Awareness Workshop on Labour Market Information & Analysis, November 2008, Apia, Samoa

How many young people are without jobs? What kind of job/income opportunities are available to youth today, in five years' time? What subjects should they choose in school to ensure they get employment? In what areas of study should scholarships be offered to improve the prospects of young graduates for finding work? What policies and programs are needed to address youth unemployment in each of the Pacific Island countries?

Governments in the Pacific constantly seek answers to these questions. It is crucial, therefore, for Labour Market Information and Analysis (LMIA) systems to be created to ensure relevant, accurate, timely and up-to-date labour market data is available.

In June 2007 the Experts Group Meeting on Labour Markets in the Pacific (ILO/UNESCAP) identified the weakness, or lack of LMIA systems in the region.

In June 2008 the Private Sector round table meeting on Labour Market Issues in the Pacific (PIFS) underlined the need for mechanisms for exchange of information on labour market needs/statistics.

In 2009, the Forum Economic Ministers concluded that, "statistical services within most Forum Island Countries are very limited and poor". (FEMM2009)

In 2010 the background paper Pacific Labour Market Scenarios presented at the Tripartite High Level Ministerial Meeting highlighted constraints faced by PICs in the production of LMIA (ILO).

While many regional discussions have identified LMIA as a major issue, there seems to be no concerted effort to roll out national initiatives.

With the call from participants at the ILO sub-regional workshop on youth employment in November 2008 for more initiatives on LMIA, the Youth Employment

Program conducted a series of national workshops on LMIA. The purpose was to raise the level of awareness of the importance of LMIA in addressing youth employment and building the abilities of governments and stakeholders to collect, organize, store and manage labour market data.

Using data from the recent report on LMIA (Youth) and country desk review on youth employment in the Pacific, training is targeting relevant government departments/ministries, ILO constituents and relevant



Awareness Workshop on Labour Market Information & Analysis, 2008, Honiara, Solomon Islands



Awareness Workshop on Labour Market Information & Analysis, 2009, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea



Awareness Workshop on Labour Market Information & Analysis, 2009, Tarawa, Kiribati

stakeholders. It is providing, for the first time, a national forum to discuss the relevance of labour market information, identify information constraints and deficits, and sharing of information on data available.

All five countries taking part were able to identify relevant national Key Indicators of Labour Market (KILM) out of the 20 KILM established by the ILO. Kiribati, meanwhile, has managed to form a technical working group on LMIA.

However, until the urgent need to practically establish LMIA systems and build the capacity (human, software and hardware) of national governments to collect and manage LMIA data is addressed, the lack of relevant information necessary for effective youth employment policy formulation and program development will remain.



Kiribati LMIA Technical Working Group.

Creating business skills and opportunities for young people in the Pacific



Start & Improve your Business (SIYB) TOT at SPC, Narere, Fiji 27 October - 7 November, 2008.

Any aspiring young entrepreneur in the Pacific will identify a number of challenges confronting those wishing to become self-employed. These include limited or no access to credit, insufficient or lack of advice on business opportunities, lack of collateral, inadequate or non-existent legislation to support young entrepreneurship, and difficulties in accessing affordable business training.

All these factors are critical. The training aspect is one of the most crucial. The region has a number of business/livelihood

training initiatives. In most cases, however, training is ad hoc. There is limited local capacity to coordinate and sustain training that is accessible and affordable. It is imperative that training is adapted to meet specific needs of young people. A major issue, of course, is post training support in the form of microfinance, business mentorship, marketing, and support for expansion.

In October 2008 the ILO Youth Employment Program (YEP), in collaboration with the Community Education Training

Center (CETC) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), organized a sub-regional Training of Trainers (TOT) course in association with the ILO Start & Improve Your Business (SIYB) project. Trainers were chosen from a cross-section of government ministries, national training providers, private trainers, NGOs and representatives of Chambers of Commerce. Twenty five trainers attended: three from Papua New Guinea, six from Solomon Islands, five from



Certified SIYB trainers in Solomons with ILO Technical Officer Edward Bernard and UNDP-OIC Shabnam Mallick.

Youths can now access a pool of SIYB Certified Trainers in the Pacific

A series of Entrepreneurial Training for Pacific Youths



Certified SIYB Trainers in from Samoa, Sakaria Taituave, Tevita Tari, Senele Tualualelei, Sauileone Etimani, and Elisapeta Eteuati- ILO National Youth Employment Programme Officer for Samoa .

certification criteria includes mastery of the subject, organisation and delivery of training, and feedback from trainees.

Of the 25 initial trainers, 17 received SIYB Certification. They are now conducting several SIYB training programs using locally tailored training materials developed from the first round of SIYB training. Adaptation of the ILO SIYB Pacific material was supported by ILO Pacific YEP.

Maria Taua, one of the certified trainers from Kiribati, says she is very excited about the acquisition of her training skills and certification in SIYB. She now plans to conduct as much training as possible for young people in Kiribati where there is a great need to encourage entrepreneurial activities for self-employment.

Having in-country SIYB certified trainers means national business training for young people is easier. Through funding from the ILO YEP, training is organized in five countries. To date over 600 (45 per cent women) budding entrepreneurs

Any aspiring young entrepreneur in the Pacific will identify a number of challenges confronting those wishing to become self-employed. These include limited or no access to credit, insufficient or lack of advice on business opportunities, lack of collateral, inadequate or non-existent legislation to support young entrepreneurship, and difficulties in accessing affordable business training.

All these factors are critical. The training aspect is one of the most crucial. The region has a number of business/livelihood training initiatives. In most cases, however, training is ad hoc. There is limited local capacity to coordinate and sustain training that is accessible and affordable. It is imperative that training is adapted to meet specific needs of young people. A major issue, of course, is post training support in the form of microfinance, business mentorship, marketing, and support for expansion.

In October 2008 the ILO Youth Employment Program (YEP), in collaboration with the Community Education Training Center (CETC) of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), organized a sub-regional Training of Trainers (TOT) course in association with the ILO Start & Improve Your Business (SIYB) project. Trainers were chosen from a cross-section of

government ministries, national training providers, private trainers, NGOs and representatives of Chambers of Commerce. Twenty five trainers attended: three from Papua New Guinea, six from Solomon Islands, five from Samoa, six from Vanuatu and five from Kiribati. The training was conducted CETC/SPC in Fiji 27 October to 7 November 2008, by Mr Peter Piawu, a certified master SIYB trainer from PNG. Participants also underwent a certification process. This involves SIYB trainers in each country organizing, delivering and conducting youth business training under the guidance of a Master Trainer and ILO Consultant, Mr. Eugene Gonzales. The

Private Sector National Drivers for SIYB



Youths in Vanuatu proudly show their SIYB certificates.



have received training. They include those wishing to start a business and young women and men who have already ventured into their own commercial projects.

With certification of local trainers and continued training of youths in SIYB, it is essential to develop a Pacific-adapted SIYB training manual. This would give trainees a better understanding of the purpose and principles of SIYB within a local context.

The private sector is playing an influential role in promoting SIYB. In Vanuatu and Kiribati the Chambers of Commerce are taking the lead in coordinating training. The involvement of the chambers paves the way for post-training support and mentorship by established local entrepreneurs. As part of its mentoring service, the Kiribati Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) plans to offer associate membership of the chamber to those who have received training.

Accreditation for SIYB in Vanuatu is proceeding. It is now a requirement for all youth training programs in Vanuatu. The same system of accreditation is being considered in Samoa.

A user friendly SIYB Manual for Pacific Youths



New Pacific SIYB Materials - Workbooks, Trainers Guide and Resource Materials.

Support in setting up youth-led community enterprises

In the Pacific, about 80 per cent of the population lives in the rural areas, and have limited opportunities for employment and income. Aware that access to education and training is more acute in rural areas, the ILO YEP introduced certain elements of the Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) methodology to assist youth groups in setting up community or group-based income generating enterprises.

With technical assistance provided by a TREE consultant, ILO YEP organized a TREE workshop in Vanuatu on 25-29 August 2008 to introduce the program to potential implementing partners from Kiribati, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, as well as CROP (Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific) agencies like Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and Commonwealth Youth Programme (CYP). There was unanimous endorsement of TREE with participants viewing it as an appropriate strategy for the Pacific, given its communal way of doing things. The TREE consultant also assisted in setting up pilot projects: 3 in PNG, 6 in Samoa and 5 in Vanuatu. In 2009, Kiribati helped to establish nine youth-led enterprises. Over 400 youths (approximately 40% women) have benefited from their involvement in TREE training and projects. In implementing TREE, strategic partnerships were forged with a number of organizations including

Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE)

TREE is a program developed by the Skills and Employability Department of the ILO and conceptualized under the principles of community-based training. It promotes income generation and local development, emphasizing the role of skills and knowledge for creating new economic and employment opportunities for the poor, the underemployed, the unemployed, informal economy workers and the otherwise disadvantaged, towards sustained economic activities. The TREE methodology consists of a set of processes that are distinct but coherently linked, to guide the articulation of local development initiatives and the identification and implementation of income generation opportunities. Starting with



Youths involved in panel-beating & Fabrication workshop with trainer.

institutional arrangements and planning among partner organizations at the national and local levels, these processes aim to systematically identify employment and income-generating opportunities at the community/local level; design and deliver appropriate training program; and provide the necessary post-training support, for example, access to markets.

government agencies such as the Departments of Agriculture in Kiribati, PNG and Samoa, and the Department of Fisheries in Kiribati; the Department of Youth (TALAVOU Programme) in Samoa, non-government agencies (NGOs) such as Habitat for Humanity in Vanuatu, KANGO (Kiribati Association of NGOs??) and FSPK (Foundation for South Pacific Kiribati) in Kiribati; training institutions like the Vanuatu Agricultural College, and local governments, churches and communities.

These pilot projects have given participating youths skills, business training, tools, equipment and raw material to set up their enterprises. For many of them, the experience has not only helped them

develop skills and absorb the entrepreneurial culture, but also helped them gain confidence, and to view their lives in a meaningful and productive way. Others, such as participants in the PNG project, regarded this as a sound practical experience in how to run a business and earn good money.

Currently the TREE training materials are adapted to Pacific context with technical assistance from consultant Mr Alex Gorham, with funding support by the ILO YEP and the Fiji Ministry of National Planning through its Integrated Human Resource Development Project (IHRDP).

Pacific Employers Support Youth Employment

Employers guide and toolkit for meeting youth employment challenge

As a major provider of jobs, employers especially from the private sector has a critical role in the search for more and better jobs for young people. To advance this cause, initiatives by individual companies or employer organizations are blossoming in many countries. The ILO, in collaboration with the International Organization of Employers (IOE) developed A Guide for Employers- Meeting the Youth Employ-

ment Challenge, with accompanying electronic toolkit.

The guide and the toolkit shows practical examples of different projects practical actions and specific programs employers and their organizations can undertake to promote youth employment. The electronic toolkit contains 40 practical examples of different projects by employers in a number of countries. They are organized around three main topics: (1) policy making and advocacy, (2) skills

development and training, and (3) self-employment and entrepreneurship. By systematically organizing and presenting these initiatives, the guide and the toolkit serve as a "bank of ideas" for employers and other business groups interested in proactively engaging in creating work and income opportunities for young people.

The ILO YEP introduced the employers guide and toolkit to employers in the 5 countries covered by the project.

Pacific employers meet to discuss youth employment

Representatives of the employers' organisations of the five YEP participating countries met in Wellington, New Zealand, from 26-29 January 2010 to enhance their ability to participate in actions that address youth employment. The meeting was jointly organised by Pacific YEP, ACT-EMP in Geneva and ITC in Turin, and hosted by Business New Zealand Incorporated. Regional employers received first-hand knowledge on youth employment steps taken by the NZ Employers' Organization either independently or in partnership with government and other stakeholders.

The employers gained a better understanding of the entire issue and its importance. They learned about methods that could be used to create jobs for young people and formed individual country plans to achieve this.



Pacific Employers, ILO staff and Business NZ staff with the Minister for Labour NZ.

in Kiribati. Kiribati Major Employers Organization (KIMEO) is at the forefront, in co-operation with the Kiribati Institute

its members provided 23 KIT six weeks work placements for graduates in office administration/accounting, mechanical, electrical and carpentry. On completion of their temporary placements, eight young workers were retained by employers. They now have permanent jobs. While there are practical benefits for the young participants in the scheme, it also helps in developing sound work ethics and enables employers to gauge workers' performance and attitude.

Another group of graduates of KIT have been taken on for temporary work placement.

Organizers expect 50 youths will be able to participate in the scheme.

The President of KIMEO, Mr Joe Taenako, says: "Kiribati's main employers are pleased to be part of this first-time initiative. It will allow employers to perform a social responsibility in dealing with youth unemployment in the country. The scheme also provides information for KIT to improve its curriculum by providing graduates with skills demanded by the private sector."



PNG Employers introduced to Employers Tool Kit.

Kiribati employers initiate first-time private sector temporary work placement scheme

September 6th last year marked the launch of a project for private sector work placements for young men and women

of Technology (KIT), Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development (MLHRD) and the ILO Youth Employment Program.

KIMEO's membership is made up of major employers in Kiribati. Eleven of

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Labour and Human Resource Development MLHRD has submitted a paper to Cabinet on centralising allocation of funding for temporary job placements in government agencies. Each agency is presently allotted job placement funds totaling about AUS\$1 million. This government proposal follows the positive results of the private sector temporary work placement project.

Solomon Islands employers advocate youth employment issues

The Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce and Industry is placing the spotlight on youth employment by preparing a fortnightly newspaper feature article on this pressing topic. The articles are written by SICCI Chairman, Mike Hemmer, who emphasises the need to counter the youth employment situation in the Solomon Islands, in view of the expanding population of young people, urbanisation, and related issues of national security.

Kiribati employers host first youth employment forum

In October 2009 the Kiribati Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) and the Kiribati Major Employers Organization (KIMEO), with the assistance of the YEP ILO, staged a forum on youth employment emphasizing the employers' perspective. The event, at the Lagoon Club in Tarawa, was attended by employers, government officials, Kiribati Trade Union Congress (KTUC) representatives, staff from the UN Joint Presence Office, diplomatic missions and media representatives. The KCCI and KIMEO reported on the progress of the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) scheme and the temporary work place attachment project. The forum ended with a panel discussion. Panelists were the Secretary for Labour, the president of KCCI, president of KIMEO, president of KTUC and the ILO national officer (Kiribati).



The late President of KIMEO, Secretary of Labour and KIT principal, ILO YEP CTA and National Officer (Kiribati).

Samoa Chamber of Commerce organises youth job meeting

For the first time, employers in Samoa met on 2 November 2009 to discuss their role in promoting youth employment in the country. The workshop was organised by the Samoa Chamber of Commerce with support from ILO YEP. It was opened by Honorable Misa Telefoni Retzlaff, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Tourism and Trade, and Minister for Commerce, Industry and Labour.

It was estimated that 55 per cent of the workforce of the employers at the meeting were aged between 15 and 29. While Samoa's employers are committed to helping to reduce youth unemployment,



Secretary of Labour with Presidents of KIMEO, KCCI and KTUC.

they are also concerned about certain workplace issues. These include absenteeism, low levels of literacy and numeracy, and the lack of relevant skills. Another factor is that the cost of employing youths can outweigh the benefits. Samoa's em-

ployers are ready to take part in regular discussions with the government on youth employment issues. They say the employment potential of young people in Samoa will only improve if their level of skills increases to the point where it becomes acceptable for workplace entry.

Employers are willing to give assistance in career counseling, temporary work placements for secondary school students in their final year, temporary employment for job seekers and support for the apprenticeship scheme. They recommend that the government's national youth policy and the TALAVO program should be carefully monitored to ensure policies translate into real life change for Samoan

youths. The employers also propose specific actions to enhance the employability of young people.

The outcome document of the workshop was presented at the recent NZ sub-regional employers workshop and served as reference in drafting Samoa employer's action plan to promote youth employment.

Employers' coordination role in SIYB Training

The Chambers of Commerce in Kiribati and Vanuatu are coordinating the Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) training for young men and women, through a cadre of certified local trainers. For more information on this, please turn to the section on developing entrepreneurial thinking and opportunities for Pacific youths.

For internet version Employers Tool Kit: www.ilo.org/youthmakingithappen/

Worker organisation initiatives to promote youth employment

Productive and decent work enables young people to realise their aspirations, improve their living standards and participate actively in society. Economies become stronger when they have the young leaders, consumers, savers and taxpayers necessary to create an environment conducive to investment, and equitable and sustainable economic development and growth. This also leads to improved societies by reducing costs related to social problems, such as drug abuse and crime.

The reality, however, is that young workers are usually faced with great challenges in securing productive and decent work. In most cases they are discriminated against by older counterparts on their lack of work experience and skills, and other age-related issues. Recognising this, a sub-regional workshop for young leaders of trade unions on decent work was organised in Samoa from 22

to 26 September 2008. The workshop was aimed at enhancing the knowledge of youth trade union leaders on Decent Work, with particular focus on workers' rights and decent employment for youth. This supports one of YEP's objectives of building the capacity of Trade Unions to promote youth employment.

The workshop was a joint initiative by the different units of the International Labour Organization (ILO), namely: the International Training Centre of the ILO, (ITCILO) Turin, Pacific Sub-regional Programme on Youth Employment, Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), ILO/AIDS and ILO Offices in Manila and Suva. It attracted 19 youth union leaders from seven ILO Pacific regional member states - Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Tuvalu, as well as a participant each from New Zealand and Australia.

Each country prepared a work plan that was subsequently funded by ACTRAV and YEP and resulted in the establishment of the Youth Wing within the Kiribati Trade Union (see YEP beneficiaries share their stories). Meanwhile, the PNG TUC is strengthening its long inactive youth wing. In these two countries, young workers now have a voice through the trade union youth wing. Young workers' issues are better articulated, and youths are being consulted by decision and policy-makers in their countries. This is more pronounced in Kiribati, but is gaining ground in PNG. The Youth Wing has also enabled youths to form a network within its affiliates as a good vehicle for sharing knowledge and information.

Building the capacity of youth leaders and youth groups

An objective of the ILO Youth Employment Program is to build the capacity of youth organisations in the five participating countries by increasing their engagement and participation in dialogue, policy formulation and programme development for decent work for youth. YEP has endeavored to involve youth leaders and representatives of youth organisations in its national and regional training workshops. Youths and their leaders are also active in advocacy activities at national and regional events to raise the profile of youth and help young people give expression to their concerns.

In 2009, YEP (with SPC sharing some of the cost) assisted the Ministries/Departments of Youths in Kiribati, Samoa, PNG

and Vanuatu to organise strategic planning workshop for young leaders of youth associations. The Solomon's workshop is scheduled for March 2010.

The workshops were aimed primarily at equipping youth for planning and decision-making. In most Island countries, decision-making is traditionally the domain of the elders. Youths are rarely consulted. Other youth employment challenges were discussed.

In Kiribati, as earlier noted, strategic plans are to be developed for each island youth association with the support of respective youth officers, and after extensive consultations with young people on each island.

In Vanuatu, Pacific YEP supported the strategic planning activities of the 2nd National Youth Forum, which also saw the revival and re-establishment of the National Youth Council. At the forum, presentations and discussions on the strategic plans of each municipal and provincial youth council were followed by the drafting of a comprehensive strategic framework. This will guide the future objectives and activities of the National Youth Council.

In Samoa the workshop was conducted as part of the National Youth Week celebrations in December 2009. This culminated in a one-day Youth Forum where the participants presented their group strategic plans.



Strategic Planning workshop for youth in PNG.



Strategic Planning workshop for Youth in Samoa.

In Papua New Guinea, the strategic workshop drew the participation of various youth groups (church, village and enterprise-based) all affiliated to the Commission of Youth. It was found that most of the youth groups had been organised without a clear plan. They are grateful the workshop helped them to come up with their own group strategic plan, although some may need assistance with their plans from the Department/Commission of Youth.

The results of the workshop, particularly youth employment issues and recommendations, were presented by a male and female representative at the multi-stakeholder workshop for the introduction of the National Action Plan on Youth Employment. The presentations gave policy makers, government officials, academics, NGOs and other national stakeholders an opportunity to hear the perspective and views of the young people on youth employment. The two youth leaders: Greg

Memeho and Cynthia Buku remarked that it was a once-in-a-lifetime chance for youth like them to share their views and opinions with high level people. They both thanked the ILO YEP and the PNG Commission of Youth for such a great opportunity. They said it was also an empowerment exercise for them as they were able, finally, to give voice to the opinions of other young men and women.

Supporting youth access to employment services

In Vanuatu, as in other Pacific Island countries, young men and women have limited access to information on career options and employment opportunities. With this in mind, the ILO Pacific Youth Employment Program initiated a pilot strategic partnership with Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV) to support a Career Referral Service and Employment Matching Service to complement and enhance their existing programs. These include Future Leaders, and Ready for Business and Ready for Work, which target youth job-seekers in the Port Vila area.

Youth Challenge (Vanuatu) was founded in Vanuatu in 2001 and is part of the global Youth Challenge International Alliance.

The ILO YEP –YCV partnership is a six-month pilot programme from September 2009 to March 2010. Pacific YEP has supported additional employment services for young people, as follows:

Career Referral Services – a centralised user-friendly database of up-to-date information on skills and employment related training, including educational courses, scholarship opportunities, small business development grants and related workshops, projects and programmes.

Employment Matching Service – this attempts to match the skills and aspirations of young jobseekers with job vacancies from Vanuatu employers. Employment-seeking youth undergo a skills assessment exercise and upload their profile to a computer database. Youth on the database also undergo a 'workplace success' training course to prepare them for entering the formal sector labour market. Employers with vacancies approach YCV to access their pool of skills-set assessed and workplace ready employment seeking youth.

Resource Centre and Library: Pacific YEP continues to support the evolving Resource Centre and Library at YCV by supplying copies of various youth and employment related publications. Many publications are sourced from ILO.

'Wok i kik' (www.wokikik.com) is a pioneering Vanuatu job vacancy website. Since August 2009 'wok i kik' has had over 800 subscribers and advertised more than 600 jobs. Some employers are now approaching YCV wok i kik directly rather than going the traditional route of newspaper advertisements.

As a result of enhanced youth employ-

ment services, YCV has increased its membership to 687, 46 per cent of whom are women.

Before this new initiative, YCV consulted with ILO's tripartite constituents representing the government, workers and employers. As a result, YCV is now formalizing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Vanuatu Department of Labour and Employment Services to share information and gather labour market statistics on youth unemployment in the Port Vila area. This Pacific YEP facilitating working partnership between the Government and an NGO is also a first in Vanuatu, and a positive side result of the initiative in Vanuatu.

Pacific YEP spoke to two young people who regularly use the Youth Challenge Vanuatu Employment Services Centre. Leitare Joel (24) and Richard Kalmet (22) are unemployed and seeking work.

They joined the Youth Challenge Drop In Centre in mid 2009 when it moved to new premises close to Vanuatu Parliament House.

Says Richard: "I have been unemployed since 2005 and I've come to the Youth Challenge Centre nearly every day since joining in July 2009. I am very motivated by the employment services here. I can use the computers and Internet access free of charge to search for employment opportunities through the Wokikik website. I also use the computers to prepare my CV and job application letters, and can get assistance from the staff. I used to sit at home think I couldn't do anything, but now I see there are opportunities for me to find work."

Leitare shared with Pacific YEP that her short-term work contract at the Vanuatu Cultural Centre was ending soon. "I use the career referral service and Wokikik website to search for other opportunities," she said. "I also search for information



Youth at Employment Centre in Vanuatu.

for other friends of mine who are unemployed. When I find something they might be interested in, I can print that out here at the Centre. Before these services became

available, it was very difficult to get this information. Our government does not yet provide information and job-seeking services for youth. Now it is easy to find out

where there are vacancies. Staff members at Youth Challenge are very helpful to so many youth seeking employment in the Port Vila area".

Other feedback from youth users of the employment centre services include:

"You really have an up-to-date listing and I find it easy to search for new openings. Thanks for offering this online service. Students will find it full of resources in terms of 'job-hunting'" (John Maseiras)

"What you have here is great. Well done and keep up the good work of spreading the information" (Excellent Toka)

"Looking forward to enjoying and benefiting from this service and wish it will help more people to find a job and reduce the increasing rate of unemployment in Vanuatu." (Andre Edward)

Promoting gender equality

The ILO views gender equality as integral to its vision of Decent Work for all women and men and as a fundamental principle in achieving its four strategic objectives of: (i) promoting and realizing standards and fundamental principle and rights of work; (ii) creating greater opportunities for women and men to secure decent employment and income; (iii) enhancing the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all; and (iv) strengthening tripartism and social dialogue.

The ILO, with its constituents, has made considerable progress over many years in promoting gender mainstreaming in technical cooperation as a strategy for advancing gender equality in the world of work. To further consolidate this strategy, the ILO Governing Body decided that the organisation should take further steps to ensure all technical cooperation programmes and projects (such as the ILO Pacific YEP), as well as ILO agreements with donors, systematically mainstream gender.

Gender mainstreaming as a strategy

Gender mainstreaming is not an objective in itself but is an applied strategy through which the goal of gender equality can be attained. In practice, gender mainstreaming consists of multiplicity of actions seeking to redress gender-based inequalities in all policies, programs, projects, and institutional mechanisms and structures.



Gender mainstreaming workshop 10-11 August 2009, Port Moresby, PNG.

As a technical cooperation project, the ILO Pacific YEP supports gender mainstreaming by: involving both women and men beneficiaries in consultations and analyses; disaggregating data by sex in background analyses of studies, and also in reporting, striving for gender balance in the recruitment of personnel and in the selection of workshop participants and project beneficiaries. One significant initiative on gender mainstreaming carried out by YEP is supporting the formulation of a policy on gender equality in the workplace.

The Gender Context

Women in the Pacific have low labour force participation with less than a third of the share of employment in Fiji, the Marshall Islands, Samoa and Solomon Islands. It is noteworthy that Kiribati and Papua New Guinea are close to achieving a gender balance in employment. However, opportunities for women in the formal sector are few and mostly in the public sector which is the biggest employer in the Pacific. Anecdotal evidence shows that young women face greater difficulty in securing productive and decent employment compared to young men. Indirect discrimination in obtaining quality and relevant education and other sex-based discriminatory practices in recruitment and promotion are some of the reasons.

Despite widespread national political commitment to combating discrimination and promoting equality in the workplace with most ILO Pacific member states having ratified the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention and the CEDAW, it has been observed that the concepts of discrimination and gender equality, especially in the world of work, are neither well understood nor appreciated. Often gender equality is reduced to mere disaggregated data by sex. There is no delving deeper into the factors affecting the differentiated roles of women and men, especially on the socio-economic front. This misconception reinforces stereotyping and further aggravates other forms of discriminatory practices against women, especially young women, in the world of work. This is well illustrated in Vanuatu where the 2000 Labour Market Survey and 2006 Household Income and Expenditure Survey it shows that, while women make up approximately 33 per cent of the formal sector workforce, more than 89 per cent of positions classified as 'Senior Officials and Managers' are held by men. More than 60% of the 'Clerical' positions are held by women. There is also some evidence of differences in financial remuneration for work of equal value.

The Gender Equality Workshop in PNG

In August 2009 the ILO YEP, in collaboration with the ILO Gender Bureau and the ILO International Training Centre (ITC) based in Turin, organized a three-day workshop in the PNG capital Port Moresby. It was to promote gender equality in the workplace and facilitate the development of a gender equality policy in the workplace. Participants included multi-sectoral representatives from government, employer and worker organisations, the private sector (of particular note the Hotel and Restaurant Association in Vanuatu, the nation's biggest private sector employer with more than 3,000 employees) and the PNG National Council of Women. There were 13 participants, six from Vanuatu and seven from PNG. Six were women.

Workshop outcome

Following the Pacific YEP Gender Equality workshop, the Vanuatu delegation drafted model policies to promote gender equality issues in public and private sector workplaces.

These policies include statements of commitment that the employer, whether public or private, will take steps to fully incorporate the Vanuatu Constitution's principles of non-discrimination on the basis of sex, in all its internal and external operations. The employer also commits to promoting positive actions by facilitating gender-related education and encouraging effective communication within the workplace, and ensuring equal opportunities at all times as well as specific affirmative actions as necessary. The policy makes it clear that the employer will not tolerate sexual harassment.

Objectives of implementing the workplace Gender Equality policy include that all staff

will take responsibility for educating themselves as far as possible in order to contribute positively to gender equality in the workplace, and the employer will increase productivity and efficiency as a result of being a gender sensitive workplace

Positive progress with several Vanuatu employers, including government departments and Vanuatu hotels and resorts, to formally endorse and publish their first Gender Equality Workplace Policy was being made at the time of writing.

In PNG, the Papua New Guinea Employers' Organization and the Office for the Development of Women are looking at collaborating in promoting the policy for gender equality in the workplace, especially for private companies. This would be a first for PNG, and an achievement that would contribute to dealing with the country's gender equality challenges.

Advocating Youth Employment regionally and nationally

Youth employment in the Pacific, one of the crucial factors in development, is often sidelined. Many other issues – such as climate change, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, among others – command greater attention and support.

It is imperative, therefore, to mainstream youth employment when addressing youth issues at national and regional levels.

The following are among the many advocacy activities organised by the ILO Youth Employment Programme to build awareness of the importance of enhancing the capacity of young people to contribute effectively to discussion and planning on youth employment.

Big regional gathering decides youth employment is a key issue

500 Pacific youths gathered in Suva, Fiji from 13-17 July 2009 for the second Pacific Youth Festival. The festival is the largest assembly of its kind staged in the region. With the theme "Actioning the Youth Agenda", the meeting gave delegates the opportunity to collectively learn about, debate and reach agreement on issues affecting Pacific youths.

At the first Pacific Youth Festival issues on youth employment were not included in the outcomes document. The ILO Youth Employment Program representatives, therefore, saw an opportunity to highlight the issue on youth employment to the participating youth leaders at the second festival. Working in partnership with other UN Agencies through the UN Working Group on Youth (UNWG-Y), the ILO YEP organized an information booth, awareness training on Start & Improve Your



Kiribati youths at the YEP information booth at the 2009, Pacific Youth Festival.

Business (SIYB) and a public forum on youth employment in the Pacific.

The combined effects of these initiatives increased knowledge and awareness, helped to inform the debate and brought the entire issue of decent wage and self-employment among young people to the fore. The public forum, in particular, generated many comments and questions.

At the end of the conference, the Laucala Declaration was endorsed. It identified development and employment opportunities for young men and women in the Pacific, one of the key priorities.

Highlighting Youth Employment on Youth Day

International Youth Day, with the theme "Sustainability: Our Challenge, Our Future", was celebrated on August 12th 2009. A number of activities promoting youth employment were staged throughout the region by the ILO Youth Employment Programme independently and jointly with

the UN Working Group on Youth, National Youth Councils, and ILO constituents and stakeholders.

Radio talkback shows in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Kiribati generated a good response. In the Solomons there were also radio messages and information booths with young people and other stakeholders wearing youth employment t-shirts. The ILO Youth Employment Programme (YEP) funded the publishing of the official International Youth Day message of the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon in the Solomon Star newspaper. In Samoa the ILO YEP partnered with the TALAVOU Program. The YEP organized a gender workshop for PNG and Vanuatu participants.

Beauty Queens talk about youth employment

Eleven young women representing Pacific Island countries were in Suva, Fiji, from 21-28 November 2009 for the South Pacific Pageant. With the theme, Preserv-



Professor - Biman Prasad, presents at the ILO YEP organised public forum on Youth Employment at the Pacific Youth Festival.



Edward Bernard of ILO YEP, Fred Kwakwalaf Youth Advisory Panel (UNWGY) and Host ZFM on a talkback show in Solomon Islands.

dress challenges faced by young women and men in securing decent wages and self-employment.

The Youth Council through its website will carry out e-forums, announcements and provide youth employment materials. In early August the website was singled out by the UN Programme on Youth to host an on-line forum.

ing the Environment the Pacific Way, this annual event was followed through the news media by many young people in the Pacific.

The ILO YEP, in collaboration with ILO HIV/AIDS and ILO TACKLE-Child Labour Project in Fiji, organised a workshop for the contestants to create awareness among them of the issue of youth employment, HIV/AIDS and child labour. The knowledge gained by the pageant competitors will be used by them in their home countries for advocacy work. The workshop presentation on youth employment underscored the imminent social and economic threat to Pacific Island countries if the youth employment challenge is not fully addressed. There was good coverage of the event by local and regional media.



Youth Employment Information booth organised by ILO YEP, UNDP, NYC, Oxfam.

Youths can access information through Pacific's first Youth Employment Portal

The ILO Youth Employment Programme (YEP) and the Pacific Youth Council collaborated to create a portal for sharing information and encouraging discussion on youth employment. The Pacific Youth Council website (www.pacificyouthcouncil.org) is to host various reports, studies and other relevant information to build knowledge on how to more effectively ad-



Jacque Koroï of Pacific Youth Council and Ofelia Eugenio of ILO YEP at the MOU Signing.



2009 Miss South Pacific Contestants with ILO staff.

Strategic partners of YEP

In implementing the Pacific YEP, the ILO has worked as a team with regional constituents and partnered with relevant government agencies such as the Ministries/Departments of Labour, Youth, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries. The close collaboration and teamwork with the implementing partners has guaranteed the relevance of youth employment targeted by ILO-supported activities in the region and will foster their long-term sustainability.

The ILO has also built strong partnerships with regional CROP agencies such as the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the Commonwealth Youth Programme, and the Pacific Youth Council and its network of National Youth Councils.

Other UN agencies, including UN-ESCAP and the UN Working Group on Youth, have also worked closely with the ILO Pacific YEP and provided valuable contributions to youth employment promotion initiatives. The project also collaborated with ILO agencies, notably ACTRAV, for workers' organisation activities, ACT-EMP for employers' organisation initiatives, Gender Bureau for gender-related activities, ILO YEP in Geneva for technical assistance for NAP, ILO International Training in Turin for jointly-organised training and workshops, ILO SEED for SIYB, and ILO Skills Employment Division for TREE. Technical back-up support has been provided by specialists from ILO Regional Office in Bangkok and Sub-regional Office in Manila.

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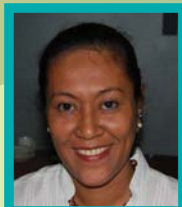
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