Youth Employment Promotion in Pacific Island Countries
<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Title:</strong></th>
<th>Youth Employment Promotion in Pacific Island Countries (YEP-PICs)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Country:</strong></td>
<td>6 countries in the Pacific: Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Island and Vanuatu</td>
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<td><strong>Administrative unit:</strong></td>
<td>ILO Office for Pacific Island Countries, Suva, Fiji</td>
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<td><strong>Collaborating ILO Units/Offices:</strong></td>
<td>RO Bangkok, EMP/ENT, EMP/SKILLS, ACTRAV, ACTEMP and Gender Bureau</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>External Implementing Partners (if any):</strong></td>
<td>Department of Labour, Ministry of Youth, training institutions, NGOs, Secretariat of Pacific Community</td>
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<td><strong>Budget:</strong></td>
<td>USD$5 Million.</td>
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</table>
1. Rationale and Justification

Pacific Leaders at the 2005 Pacific Island Forum included youth as a priority for regional action in a ten-year Pacific Plan. The need for the increased involvement of youth for sustainable development in the region, was reiterated in the 2007 Pacific Plan review. In May 2009, Pacific Education Ministers endorsed a 2009-2012 Development Framework that points to the necessity of better preparing young people for the challenges of both formal and informal employment, through improved education and training.

A recent study by the Governments of Australia and New Zealand\(^1\) demonstrates the significant impact of the financial and jobs crises on Pacific economies and identifies vulnerable groups as a priority target for regional and national policies and programs. Youth are among the groups who have showed high vulnerability to the impact of the crisis and represent one of the most compelling challenges for the Pacific. Youth employment was a major concern in the region even before the crisis, as the labour market struggled to keep pace with population growth and absorption of new entrants. In addition, the current economic uncertainty is likely to generate extra challenges to young people’s employment opportunities, while school drop outs are likely to increase due to household poverty\(^2\). Populations in the region are growing rapidly and if current demographic trends are sustained the World Bank projections foresee a doubling of the youth population in 30-40 years. If not promptly addressed these challenges risk harming decent work opportunities for young people in the short, medium and long terms and jeopardizing the economic recovery and social stability of Pacific countries.

Recently, the Pacific Forum’s Economic Ministers met and called for special attention to vulnerable groups as a regional priority, in response to the global financial and employment crises. Among the pillars for regional action identified at the meeting, strong emphasis was given to the development of the private sector and the promotion of country-led collaboration with development partners, with special focus on capacity building.

This concept note builds on those pillars and suggests strategies for a coordinated response to the youth employment challenge, with the aim of increasing young people’s decent work opportunities. In particular, the suggested strategies include:

1. Capacity building of partner governments and constituents, to facilitate the design and implementation of national action plans targeting youth employment;
2. Increasing the availability of career guidance and employment services for young people; and
3. Improving young people’s decent work opportunities through quality skills training, business training and improved microfinance opportunities for the creation of sustainable youth enterprises.

These strategies are to be developed in close coordination with the planning and implementation of National Human Resource Development Strategies and training systems reform as indicated by the concept note on skills development.

The ILO has extensive experience as a development partner for youth employment promotion in the Pacific region. Consequently, the ILO is tasked with monitoring the involvement of youth in the Pacific region’s sustainable development process within the Pacific Plan. Within the Pacific UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the ILO is among the designated agencies for the promotion of entrepreneurship among young people and the creation of enabling environments to the development of SMEs. The ILO’s Pacific Youth Employment Programme (YEP) and the Tackling Child Labour through Education (TACKLE) Programme are currently active in six Pacific Island Countries (Fiji, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu) to support Pacific partners in improving decent work opportunities for youth and building resilience against future shocks.

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2. Strategic fit

The project will contribute to the following priorities and outcomes of regional and national development frameworks:

- Pacific Plan 2006-2015: Strategic Objective 4 ‘Reduced poverty’; Strategic Objective 7 ‘Improved Education and Training’; Strategic Objective 9 ‘Enhanced involvement of youth’.

- UNDAF for the Pacific Sub Region 2008-2010: Equitable Growth and Poverty Reduction, Programme Outcome 1.1 ‘Pacific islands countries prepare and implement regional and national plans and sustainable development strategies aligned with MDG goals, targets and indicators linked to national budgets’; Programme Outcome 1.3 ‘Trade mechanisms, private sector partnerships and employment generation are sustainable, pro poor and equitable’, and especially Output 1.3.4 ‘Initiatives demonstrate and upscale developments in sustainable livelihoods, employment generation, financial services and entrepreneurship for women and men and young people’.

- National development frameworks such as 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), that address economic growth and the enhancement of employment opportunities with a specific focus on youth.

The project will also support the following priorities and outcomes of the following Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP):

- Kiribati (2009-2012): Priority 1, ‘Promotion of decent employment opportunities, including for young women and men’;


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


In addition, the project will link to the ILO Asia-Pacific strategic framework for the biennium 2010-2011, in particular to Outcome 2 (‘Skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness of enterprises, and the inclusiveness of growth’), under which policies and programmes to promote productive employment and decent work for youth are developed, and Outcome 3, ‘Sustainable enterprises create productive and decent jobs’.

3. Project strategy

The proposed project addresses the complexity of youth employment issues and contributes to poverty reduction and social stability in the Pacific. It builds on the experience and lessons learned, gained from the implementation of previous ILO projects, especially from its ongoing Pacific YEP.

Development Objective:

Contribute to the creation of decent employment opportunities and to the enhancement of employability of young women and men in Pacific Island Countries (PICs).

Immediate Objectives and Indicative Outputs:

1. Immediate Objective 1: Build the capacity of partner governments and constituents for the
design and implementation of national action plans targeting youth employment;

Indicative Output:

A National Action Plan on Youth Employment (NAP) is developed and implemented resulting in a more coherent, integrated and well-coordinated strategy to tackle youth employment issues and challenges, while fostering broad-based national dialogue, cooperation and ownership.

The ILO has developed a Guide for the preparation of National Action Plans on Youth Employment. It has been used in developing NAPs in several developing countries in Asia and Africa. In the Pacific, the NAP has been prepared for Kiribati and Vanuatu in the framework of the ongoing ILO Pacific YEP.

2. Immediate Objective 2: Improved availability of career guidance and employment services (in both wage and self-employment) for young people

Indicative Output:

A Youth Employment Service Centre is established and offers a wide array of employment and career services to assist young women and men in securing decent jobs and self-employment.

The services to be offered by the Youth Employment Service Centre will include, but will not be limited to:

- a library with recent and updated research, studies and data on labour market information, job opportunities, skills and enterprise training opportunities and other business development services, microfinance or credit assistance, business opportunities and other vital and relevant information on employment;
- career counseling materials and career counseling training (also available for secondary technical education and vocational training providers);
- job seekers and job vacancies database;
- job referrals and matching services; and
- referrals to training, microfinance, apprenticeship and temporary job placement, training providers/institutions, etc.

The ILO has developed various materials on career counseling as well as training packages and has assisted in setting up Youth Employment Service Centres in other parts of the world. In the Pacific, the ILO Youth Employment Programme has assisted in setting up the Vanuatu Youth Employment Service Centre in collaboration the Department of Labour and the Youth Challenge (NGO).

3. Objective 3: Support for the creation of sustainable youth enterprises through provision of an integrated programme of quality skills training, business training and improved microfinance opportunities

Output:

Sustainable youth enterprises (either group or individual based) are created, especially in rural areas through the implementation of the Community-based Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (CB-TREE).

CB-TREE is a methodology developed by the ILO which builds on and continues a long standing ILO commitment to promoting income generation and local economic development in rural communities, emphasizing the role of skills and knowledge for creating sustainable economic and employment opportunities for the poor. The CB-TREE methodology consists of a set of processes and related instruments to articulate local development initiatives and facilitate the identification and implementation of local income generation opportunities. CB-TREE is a holistic and highly participatory approach to local economic development which empowers local communities economically, socially and politically, by increasing employment and incomes, involving people directly in the local decision making process and equipping communities with the tools and expertise to exploit economic opportunities in a regular and sustainable manner.

The ILO has implemented CB-TREE in other parts of the world. In the Pacific, some basic elements of
CB-TREE have been introduced in the establishment of group-based community enterprises in Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Vanuatu as part of the demonstration projects initiated by the ILO Pacific YEP. CB-TREE will also be linked to ILO business training, particularly SIYB as well as other post-training services. Training manuals adapted to the Pacific context have been developed for CB-TREE and SIYB and in the framework of the ILO Pacific YEP.

The interventions of the ILO in the proposed project will also include building or strengthening the institutional capacity of at least 2 national organizations or rural training centres for the full implementation of CB-TREE in rural areas.

**Target groups and partners:**

The UN definition of youth is persons aged from 15 to 24 years whilst PIC national definitions of youth go up to 29 years old. The project therefore target young men and women within the 15 to 29 years age group.

**Ultimate beneficiaries:**

The proposed project will target three groups of ultimate beneficiaries:

1. Young women and men who have dropped out of education and are in the precarious labour market, including child labourers;
2. Young women and men who are at school but are not gaining employable skills or knowledge of self-employment or entrepreneurship; and
3. Young women and men in selected urban and rural locations who have completed school but are unemployed or struggle to make a living as self-employed or casual workers in the informal economy.

**Immediate beneficiaries:**

Immediate beneficiaries will include those national institutions and partners that will be involved in the implementation of the activities of the project:

- Government, workers and employers’ organizations, youth groups/associations, vocational and other training institutions, business development service (BDS) providers, non-formal training and rural training Centres, NGOs, church groups ---all institutions that will be involved in the implementation of the National Action Plan on Youth Employment, provision of information and employment services in the Youth Employment Resource Centre and in the full implementation of CB-TREE, including all SIYB trainers and partners institutions.

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**4. Comparative advantage and partnerships**

**ILO Capacity**

The ILO is a leading agency in the Pacific for the promotion of youth employment within the Pacific UNDAF and is the agency designated in the Pacific Plan for monitoring the involvement of young people in the Pacific region’s sustainable development process.

The ILO has extensive experience in the field of youth employment promotion and enterprise development at the local as well as national levels. Such experiences includes: development of indicators and tools for monitoring and analysis of youth-specific labour market information and the school-to-work transition, development of comprehensive and integrated youth employment policies, development of tools for improved business and vocational training, capacity building for high-quality employment services, establishment of mentoring opportunities and strengthening capacity for the provision of youth-friendly credit solutions.

In particular, the ILO Office for Pacific Island Countries has gained a wide knowledge of the youth un- and underemployment challenges in the region through several projects such as the *Start and Improve Your
Business” (SIYB) project in PNG, the New Beginnings projects in Solomon Islands, the Let’s Start Afresh project in Kiribati and the Let’s Do It Ourselves project in Vanuatu.

Capitalizing on this experience, the ILO launched in April 2008 the Pacific Youth Employment Programme: Education, Employability and Decent Work for Youth in Pacific Island Countries (YEP), aimed at contributing to improved employability and decent work for young women and men in five Pacific island countries (Kiribati, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu). The project focuses on three areas: (i) enhancing the knowledge of how to better address the challenges faced by young men and women in securing a decent wage and self-employment and efficiently disseminating the knowledge within each country and in the sub-region, (ii) strengthening the capacity of government, employers’ and workers’ organizations and youth organizations to develop national and local policies and programmes to achieve Decent Work for youth; and (iii) facilitating greater access by young men and women to support services for waged and self-employment, through new tools and methodologies adopted to national circumstances, such examples as SIYB and CB-TREE.

In implementing the above projects and initiatives for the promotion of youth employment in the region, the ILO has worked as a team with regional constituents and has 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 the very specific context 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 (Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific) agencies such as the Secretariat for Pacific Communities, the Commonwealth Youth Programme, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, and the Pacific Youth Council and its network of National Youth Councils. Activities developed in partnership with them include training of young men and women on skills and enterprise development and capacity building for the promotion of youth employment and for private sector development in several PICs. Other UN agencies such as UN-ESCAP and the UN Working Group on Youth have also closely collaborated with the ILO and provided valuable contributions to youth employment promotion initiatives in the region.

4. Timing

The project activities will be carried out over a period of three years, between 2010 and 2012.

5. Other information

The proposed project will benefit and can use ILO SIYB and CB-TREE training materials adapted to the Pacific as well as other SIYB and CB-TREE materials developed in other ILO projects in other parts of the world, including career counselling materials for young jobseekers developed by the ILO in various parts of the world and the ILO Guidebook for the preparation of a NAP.

The project will be run by a core team of project staff based in the ILO Suva office, with technical backstopping support provided by relevant departments in Head Quarters (Geneva), the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok) and Suva.

Please refer to the web site of the Asia-Pacific Community of Practice on Youth Employment (AP Youth Net for relevant resources and publications on the work of the ILO with constituents in the Pacific, as well as in Asia: http://ap-youthnet.ilobkk.th/
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<th>Employment</th>
<th>Protection</th>
<th>Dialogue</th>
<th>Standards</th>
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<tr>
<td>☒ Outcome 1 Employment Promotion: More women and men have access to productive employment, decent work and income opportunities</td>
<td>☐ Outcome 4 Social Security: More people have access to better managed and more gender equitable social security benefits</td>
<td>☐ Outcome 9 Employers’ Organizations: Employers have strong, independent and representative organizations</td>
<td>☐ Outcome 14 Freedom of Association and the Right to Collective Bargaining: The right to freedom of association and collective bargaining is widely known and exercised</td>
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<td>☒ Outcome 2 Skills Development: Skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness of enterprises, and the inclusiveness of growth</td>
<td>☐ Outcome 5 Working Conditions: Women and men have better and more equitable working conditions</td>
<td>☐ Outcome 10 Workers’ Organizations: Workers have strong, independent and representative organizations</td>
<td>☐ Outcome 15 Forced Labour: Forced labour is eliminated</td>
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<td>☒ Outcome 3 Sustainable Enterprises: Sustainable enterprises create productive and decent jobs</td>
<td>☐ Outcome 6 Occupational Safety and Health: Workers and enterprises benefit from improved safety and health conditions at work</td>
<td>☐ Outcome 11 Labour Administration and Labour Law: Labour administrations apply up to date labour legislation and provide effective services</td>
<td>☐ Outcome 16 Child Labour: Child labour is eliminated, with priority being given to the worst forms</td>
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<td>☒ Outcome 7 Labour Migration: More migrant workers are protected and more migrant workers have access to productive employment and decent work</td>
<td>☐ Outcome 12 Social Dialogue and Industrial Relations: Tripartism and strengthened labour market governance contribute to effective social dialogue and sound industrial relations*</td>
<td>☐ Outcome 13 Decent Work in Economic Sectors: A sector-specific approach to decent work is applied</td>
<td>☐ Outcome 17 Discrimination at Work: Discrimination in employment and occupation is eliminated</td>
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<td>☐ Outcome 8 HIV/AIDS: The world of work responds effectively to the HIV/AIDS epidemic</td>
<td>☐ Outcome 13 Decent Work in Economic Sectors: A sector-specific approach to decent work is applied</td>
<td>☐ Outcome 18 International Labour Standards: International labour standards are ratified and applied</td>
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**Policy coherence**

☒ Outcome 19 Mainstreaming Decent Work: Member States place an integrated approach to decent work at the heart of their economic and social policies, supported by key UN and other multilateral agencies