

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE PACIFIC

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SUMMARY: Lack of employment opportunities for school leavers is a major problem confronting most Pacific countries. This paper reviews the causes and consequences and suggests some remedies. Key factors contributing to youth unemployment are over-emphasis of formal education, and limited promotion of informal employment and income generation, which are more compatible with traditional lifestyles. Most populations are still increasing and have young age structures, so there is potential for considerable expansion of the demand for employment. Since the formal sector is able to absorb only a small part of this demand, there is a need for a multi-faceted approach to employment, which takes traditional cultures and lifestyles into account and includes promotion of small enterprises, part-time employment and income generation as well as full-time formal employment.

INTRODUCTION

The post World War II period has seen remarkable changes in the Pacific, especially in the last two or three decades. Most striking has been rapid population growth, the burgeoning of urban centres and the proliferation of modern services and consumer goods. In the 1970s and 80s the Pacific had some of the fastest population growth rates in the world, a result of dramatic reductions in mortality due to the spread of modern medical technology, while traditional fertility rates persisted. At the same time, increasing contact with the rest of the world brought Western style governments, trade and tourism.

Opportunities to experience the benefits of modernisation, and particularly to acquire the means to purchase Western consumer goods, attracted people to urban areas. At first, government and commercial developments opened up many new opportunities for employment, but sustained population growth without a corresponding increase in production soon upset the balance. Now the demand for employment has outstripped opportunities in most Pacific countries. In particular there is a major shortage of employment opportunities for school leavers.

This paper addresses the problem of youth unemployment in the Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. It begins with an analysis of the causes of the problem that includes a discussion of Pacific culture and social organisation as well as Pacific economy. Such an analysis is necessary because Pacific society is unique, and strategies that do not take account of the nature of Pacific society are doomed to failure. An understanding of the social mechanisms that inhibit the growth of employment opportunities for young people in the Pacific is essential if effective strategies are to be formulated.

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Although donors have made numerous attempts to promote youth employment in the Pacific, there are hardly any examples of projects which have successfully generated employment for young people and/or been sustained for more than a few years. This is largely because the usual strategies are modelled on those devised elsewhere, and do not take sufficient account of Pacific culture and society. While the nature of Pacific economies certainly contributes to the problem of youth unemployment, the contributions of culture and social organisation are equally important. There are also marked differences between Pacific countries, although many are very small in terms of both population and land area. To some extent these differences follow sub-regional divisions, with common patterns evident in Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia, but even within sub-regions there can be substantial variation.

PART ONE: TRADITION AND MODERNISATION IN THE PACIFIC

The traditional Pacific lifestyle has been described as one of 'subsistence affluence' because of the ease with which food could be obtained (Fisk, 1978). It is based on subsistence cultivation, hunting and gathering. Most of the larger islands have fertile volcanic soils on which root crops and fruit grow easily, while both large and small islands have abundant fish and coconut palms. Although upland agriculture is labour intensive and can be demanding at some stages of the cultivation cycle, most rural Pacific Islanders can feed themselves and their family with only a few hours work each day in their gardens. In coastal regions, seafood and coconuts provide a nutritious and sufficient, if monotonous diet, even when no other food is produced. Climatic irregularities such as droughts and hurricanes provide the main constraints on food production rather than inputs of labour.

Traditional Pacific society is extremely cohesive. Although cultures vary between island groups, the predominant form of social organisation is a highly structured, hierarchical, village-based community. It is organised around kinship ties of blood, language and custom which determine the relationship of each individual to other individuals and also to sustenance and modes of production (Nath and Chand, 1998: 2). At the top of the social hierarchy are the chiefly leaders, who have many special rights and entitlements and who often believe their actions are sanctioned by God (Peteru, 1998: 41). The main roles in the village are leader, food producer, and child bearer and carer. As they mature, young people automatically take on the role assigned to them. While everyone has clearly defined obligations to their family and the rest of the community, the family and community provide a safety net for those who cannot provide for themselves. In a traditional village the concept of unemployment does not exist. The rewards of this system are not personal gain, but security and recognition of each individual's status as a member of the community, and community support to marry and build a family.

The key to understanding Pacific economies is to recognise that the traditional and modern economic sectors and traditional and modern culture exist side by side. This is in marked contrast to the usual Western perception that the transition from traditional to modern life (rural to urban) is a continuum along which individuals progressively become less traditional and more modern (Oommen, 1995). The majority of people living in Pacific urban areas are both traditional and modern at the same time. Hooper (1999: 3) writes 'culture plays a much more significant role in

national economies and national life of Pacific countries than it does in most other regions of the world'. This is reflected in the view of some Pacific leaders that democracy is inappropriate for the Pacific (Nath and Chand, 1998: 2). Traditional structures and organisation are little changed in the fourteen countries that are the focus of this study, even though all have a modern sector and modern urban centres.

Urban residents in the Pacific usually retain strong links with their family and village, and continue to have obligations to a network of relatives. This persistence of traditional ties is facilitated by small population numbers, relatively good communications and relatively small urban centres. Whereas migration to a major Asian city such as Bangkok, Jakarta or Manila is a major upheaval which results in a completely different lifestyle and greatly reduced contact with the village of origin, Pacific urban areas such as Apia, Nuku'alofa and Port Vila are effectively clusters of villages. Rural to urban migrants simply move to an urban or peri-urban village in which they have relatives, and a lifestyle and social organisation that is not very different from their lifestyle in rural villages. In some countries, such as Samoa, many urban workers reside in rural villages and commute daily by bus to an urban workplace.

Although the existence of the two systems side by side might be only a transitional phase, it has major implications for employment of both adult and young workers. The communal, as opposed to individual social orientation has shaped a pattern of work and enterprise that is quite different from that in an individualistic society, and can pose a major obstacle to employment generation. First, village life in both rural and urban or peri-urban areas is largely self-help. Most Pacific houses are simple with only basic facilities, and even in urban areas many are built of traditional materials or a combination of traditional and modern, and often self-built by families. This limits the availability of employment opportunities in the building trades such as bricklaying, concrete and paving, roofing, tiling, carpentry and joinery, glazing, plastering, electrical and plumbing. The simplicity of construction and basic facilities, for example, one exterior tap instead of piped water throughout the house, also limits opportunities to supply and retail building materials.

Second, there tends to be less commitment to employment in the modern sector than is found elsewhere. Rapasia (1999: 201) points out that for the majority of Solomon Islanders formal employment is a temporary and transitory phase of life '...Only a few enduring souls spend 10 years or more holding down regular jobs...Most Solomon Islanders in many ways still regard the village way of life as their way of life and not only aspire to it but even spend time and resources in trying to maintain and improve it for the day when they can leave their regular jobs.' When confronted with on-going difficulties in the workplace both inexperienced and experienced workers may decide to 'drop out' and retreat to the village, an option that is still available to most.

Third, the persistence of traditional lifestyles acts to discourage individual enterprise, even though many Pacific Islanders express a desire to set up businesses or obtain other employment in the modern sector. As communal and family obligations are generally held to be more important than the interests of business and efficiency, entrepreneurs often find themselves obliged to distribute profits among family, and unable to reinvest to expand their businesses. They may also be obliged to hire

relatives, and perhaps unable to dismiss them if they are inefficient workers. Family and social obligations and community expectations may also prevent entrepreneurs from putting in the long hours needed to establish and develop a successful business. Some workers, especially women, may be unable to keep regular working hours because of responsibilities to children and family. Yet failing to place these responsibilities ahead of workplace responsibilities would be considered selfish and anti-social.

The writer observed one woman, hired at a consultant rate of \$US300 per day to work on a development assistance project in her own country, spend almost all her time on the phone managing her father's election campaign. Neither she nor any of her co-workers saw this as anything other than correct behaviour, because they believed that family responsibilities must always come before obligations to an employer. Hess (1998: 131) points out that Tongans achieve work performances overseas that are not evident in Tonga. Similarly Kiribati seamen employed on merchant navy ships and Samoans working in the tuna canneries in Pago Pago, American Samoa, are likely to achieve superior performances compared with working in their home environment. Although Nabalarua (1997: 117) attributes some of the lack of motivation in the Fijian public sector to lack of confidence and expertise and insufficient consultation, it is noticeable that the most successful Pacific professionals tend to live away from their extended family, or are working in firms managed by foreigners. They are also likely to be high in the social hierarchy where they have greater control over their own assets.

The persistence of traditional land tenure systems also has significant implications for Pacific employment. Pacific land is generally owned communally, with titles extending beyond the foreshore into coastal marine reserves. Communal land ownership means that individuals are unable to use land as collateral to secure personal loans and are unable to sell land in order to raise capital to establish enterprises. Although the economic limitations of this system are widely recognised, land reform has progressed very slowly in the Region and many attempts to change land titles have failed (ADB, 1996a: 35-60).

It is against this background that the problem of youth unemployment must be considered. Young people are, by definition, low on the social hierarchy, with many obligations to relatives and the community. Parents who have made substantial investments in their education are eager for them to find work and start repaying this investment (Kick, 1999: 42). This also may be a disincentive, for those young people who do find work are expected to hand over large portions of their earnings, so earning only a small amount therefore brings no personal benefit. At the same time, young people are regarded by society as still the responsibility of their parents, who are expected by society to care for them if no work can be found. The creation of jobs for young people therefore tends to be accorded lower priority by governments than creating jobs for older workers with more responsibilities.

PART TWO: THE DIMENSIONS OF THE PROBLEM

It is impossible to make precise estimates of the extent of youth unemployment in the Pacific because data quality tends to be poor and definitions of economic activity vary between countries. Moreover, because of the nature of Pacific society, as described above, there is much hidden unemployment and underemployment. Even so, it is evident that there is a serious shortage of employment opportunities for workers of all ages in most Pacific countries, with unemployment highest among those aged 15-24 years.

	Estimated 2000 Population	Annual pop. growth rate	Additional people each year	Number aged 15-24 yrs in 2000	% aged 15-24	Number aged 0-14 yrs in 2000	% aged 0-14
Fiji Islands	811,900	1.6	12,990	157,794	19.4	287,192	35.4
Solomon Islands	416,195	2.9	12,070	78,908	19.0	197,025	47.3
Vanuatu	189,712	2.6	4,933	35,981	19.0	80,016	42.2
Federated States of Micronesia	117,644	1.9	2,235	23,505	20.0	51,217	43.5
Kiribati	86,548	2.3	1,991	14,701	17.0	35,615	41.2
Marshall Islands	51,665	1.5	775	11,056	21.4	22,196	43.0
Nauru	11,527	1.8	207	1,934	16.8	4,900	42.5
Palau	19,486	2.6	507	3,064	15.7	5,476	28.1
Cook Islands	19,449	-0.5	0	3,384	17.4	6,721	34.6
Niue	1,900	-1.2	0	283	14.9	621	32.7
Samoa	169,889	0.6	1,019	37,841	22.3	68,955	40.6
Tokelau	1,436	0.0	0	213	14.8	600	41.8
Tonga	98,840	0.6	593	19,829	20.1	38,672	39.1
Tuvalu	9,910	0.9	89	1,640	16.5	3337	33.7

Source: SPC Demography Population Programme

Table One: Population growth and young working age groups

Table One shows the populations of the fourteen countries addressed by this study, the annual growth rate and the number of additional people added per year. It also shows that between 15% and 22% of the population of each country is in the young working ages, 15-24 years. Substantial population momentum and potential for increase of the number of young workers is evident, with 35% of the population aged less than 15 years in two thirds of the study countries.

Table Two shows that more than 90% of adults are literate in two thirds of the study countries, and literacy rates are low only in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Even in those two countries, large percentages of adults are estimated to have completed primary school. However, in most countries the majority of both males and females have left school by age 15 years, signifying that a large proportion of those in the age group 15-19 years (Table One) are in need of employment.

Table Three shows the percentages aged 15-19 years not at school, and the percentages aged 20-24 years who are categorised as unemployed. The last two columns of the table show wage earners as a percentage of the total working age group and the percentage of the economically active population classified as unemployed. The figures on wage earners and unemployment should be treated with considerable caution. For example, in 1995 two thirds of the Kiribati labour force did unpaid or irregularly paid village work. As some of these were almost certainly discouraged workers who could have accepted regular employment had it been available, especially those aged 20-24 years, these figures are not a good reflection of

the availability of employment in Kiribati (SPC, 1996+). Similarly, in Samoa many of those not in formal

	% adults literate (#)	% aged 15+ completed primary (*)	% 15-19 at school (#)	
			Males	Females
Fiji Islands	93	80	37	35
Solomon Islands	30	77	30	18
Vanuatu	34	89	26	18
Federated States of Micronesia	71	82	45	43
Kiribati	92	85	42	47
Marshall Islands	74	>80	51	47
Nauru	95	(@) >80	32	37
Palau	91	(@) >90	65	69
Cook Islands	100	91	42	49
Niue	97	(@) >90	44	64
Samoa	96	84	66	75
Tokelau	91	(@) >70	54	69
Tonga	99	>90	62	65
Tuvalu	95	>90	31	35

Sources: * ADB (1995) ; # UNDP (1999); @ SPC (1996+)

Table Two: Literacy and school attendance

	% 15-19 at school (#)		% 20-24 unemployed (#)		Wage earners as % total working age (*)	% economically active unemployed (@)
	Males	Females	Males	Females		
Fiji Islands	37	35	10	26	33	8
Solomon Islands	30	18	..	..	12	..
Vanuatu	26	18	..	..	44	..
Federated States of Micronesia	45	43	21	42	26	16
Kiribati	42	47	1	1	(@) 18	1
Marshall Islands	51	47	23	24	25	13
Nauru	32	37	15	27	(@) 54	18
Palau	65	69	14	15		7
Cook Islands	42	49	22	12	36	13
Niue	44	64	0	2	(@) 49	5
Samoa	66	75	4	8	27	2
Tokelau	54	69	0	0	(@) 47	0
Tonga	62	65	12	25	24	8
Tuvalu	31	35	..	..	(@) 27	0

Sources: * ADB (1995) ; # UNDP (1999); SPC (1996+). Note: ..=not available

Table Three: Wage earners and unemployment

employment are known to be underemployed (Government of Western Samoa, 1997: 20), while in Tuvalu housework was classified as economic activity (SPC, 1996+). In Cook Islands it is also appears that, although male unemployment increased in 1996 because of economic restructuring, some women doing housework may have been classified as employed, thus contributing to the lower unemployment rate for women than for men. However, even if the figures shown are treated as minimum estimates of unemployment for the ages 20-24 in the other countries, it can be seen that youth unemployment is a serious concern. The lowest rate is 10% for Fijian males, with rates for females double those for males in Fiji and in several other countries. Unemployment rates for those in the labour force who are aged 15-19 years are not generally available, but they are likely to be at least twice as high as for those 20-24 years.

These figures on youth unemployment can be contrasted with statistics on job creation. In Fiji there were 4.3 people of working age for every formal sector job, and in 2000 there were 5.0. In Solomon Islands there were 6.6 in 1990 and 7.9 in 2000. If current Solomon Island population growth rates continue, there will be 9.2 in 2010 (UNDP, 2001). Virtually all of the growth in the labour force in these countries will be the addition of school leavers. In Samoa it is estimated that around 4,500 students leave school each year, of whom about 1000 find work or continue to higher education while the rest are employed in subsistence work or unemployed (Government of Western Samoa, 1997: 20). Rates of job creation in the other study countries generally range between those for Fiji (fastest) and Solomon Islands (slowest), except for Palau, where job creation has been sufficiently vigorous to create a demand for immigrant labour. Even in Palau, however, there is now concern that immigrants are taking jobs that should be done by young Palauans. There are plenty of opportunities for unskilled labour, but because Palauans tend to be well educated and prefer white-collar work, there is a mismatch between supply and demand. Unemployment among Palauan high school 'drop-outs' is rife, largely because they have high expectations and are reluctant to do unskilled work (Republic of Palau, 1997: 128).

Gender disparity in youth unemployment manifests as young women being more likely than young men to accept poorly paid jobs. In Samoa 90% of the 1700 poorly-paid production line workers in the Yazaki auto electrical component factory are female, especially females from a small minority group of Solomon Islands extraction, who have low social status. In Fiji 15% of an estimated total of 12,000 garment-factory workers are females aged 17-19 years (UNICEF, 1998: 11).

PART THREE: CAUSES OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE PACIFIC

As shown in Part Two, unemployment and/or underemployment are Pacific-wide problems that affect all age and gender groups, not merely youth. The underlying structural reasons why there are few employment opportunities are obvious for each of the three sub-regions. In resource-rich Melanesia, most development has been the export of raw materials, with little development of local manufacturing and services, except in Fiji. Micronesia is very poorly endowed with land resources, while small markets and high transport costs also limit opportunities to develop manufacturing industries. In Polynesia also, most countries are poorly endowed with land resources, and most have tended to rely on emigration and

consequent remittances rather than substantial development of manufacturing and service industries. Although all Pacific countries are richly endowed with marine resources, the costs of extensive exploitation are beyond the reach of most. Most exploration of oceanic resources has taken the form of selling licences so that wealthier countries can undertake the exploitation and reap most of the rewards.

The specific causes of youth as opposed to adult unemployment derive from both historical and socio-cultural factors. An obvious scapegoat is the nature of Pacific urbanisation, which tends to concentrate modern sector activities in only one or two locations in each country. These urban areas act as a magnet, drawing people away from rural areas with their promise of higher earnings and a more exciting lifestyle. For example, in Vanuatu urban incomes around 8 times higher than those in rural areas (Connell and Lea, 1993: 52) cause young people to flood into towns, disregarding what is also well known, that perhaps only one or two in every 10 are lucky enough to secure employment. Pacific planners say the solution is to attract young people back to villages where there are still plenty of income earning opportunities (SPC, forthcoming). In fact many Pacific youths say they would prefer to live in rural areas, but the disparity between what is possible in urban and rural areas is so great that most who are able to move will do so. For example, a Solomon Islands study found that 65% of surveyed youth would prefer to live in their rural communities, although 30% thought the standard of living in towns was better and 31% said their family expected them to go to the town to find work (Government of Solomon Islands 1993, cited in UNICEF 1998: 13). In Samoa 31% of surveyed unemployed youths wanted to obtain land for farming. However, young people with secondary education tend not to want village work, or may wish to avoid returning to the village because of a sense of shame that they did not find work (UNICEF, 1998: 13).

This points to a key underlying cause of youth unemployment, the nature of Pacific education systems and the attitudes to employment they have nurtured. Because modernisation has resulted from contact with the rest of the world rather than being an indigenous process, the Pacific has accepted the Western model of development 'where money and earning money are matters of prime interest' (Cole, 1999: 53). This includes the perception of 'employment' as formal, wage employment, for which the appropriate preparation is 10-12 years of formal education with an emphasis on academic skills. The main source of formal employment in the majority of the countries covered by this paper is the public sector, with most of the balance in retail and services, much of which is owned by overseas concerns or foreign residents. Scarce resources, limited capital and stunting of the business sector by cultural factors has resulted in little manufacturing in the study countries except in Fiji Islands and Palau. In addition, comparatively high wage rates throughout the Pacific Region have limited the development of export-oriented, low-skilled manufacturing (UNDP, 1994: 48). Not only are Pacific wage rates generally at least twice as high as in Asian manufacturing countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines, China and Vietnam, but also productivity is substantially lower (ADB, 1998: 83-84).

Pacific education systems were founded by missionaries and colonial powers, and from the outset they have tended to emphasise literacy and numeracy. While the emphasis on literacy and numeracy is not in itself inappropriate, there has been a lack

of attention to parallel training in life skills. Despite the persistence of the traditional sector side-by-side with the modern sector, formal education in the Pacific remains almost entirely focused on developing human resources for the modern sector. Primary schooling is seen as preparation for secondary school, which is in turn seen as preparation for employment in the modern sector, or even preparation for tertiary education. Parents see investment in long years of formal education as the best way of maximising the return from their children, and so support the system (Kick, 1999: 42). The value judgements driving this education strategy are evident in that those who do not progress to secondary school are branded as 'drop outs'.

Delailomaloma (1981: 16) observes that extending the period during which young people were expected to remain at school was once a common Pacific strategy to relieve unemployment. In most instances it was later discarded as it only exacerbated the problem by raising employment aspirations when no work was available. It must also be noted that the quality of education provided by many Pacific schools is poor, which contributes to a high drop-out rate (ADB, 1996a: 27).

Even in countries such as Solomon Islands, where relatively small percentages complete secondary education, the output of secondary educated youths from the school system far exceeds the demand. This means that large numbers of young people are leaving school with little hope of ever finding formal employment, yet having learned little to equip them for work in the non-formal sector. Not only is this unsound economics, but it is very demoralising for those young people who do not find formal employment. Parents are disappointed because they have little chance of a return on their investment in education, while their offspring have a sense of failure and inadequacy because they have not fulfilled expectations. Confidence is eroded, and any non-formal employment or income generation they do manage to achieve will always be perceived as second best. Poor preparation indeed for becoming a productive worker.

It is notable that the inappropriateness of prioritising formal employment, like many other problems in the Pacific, is often recognised by parents, even though the majority continue to subscribe to the prevailing attitude. For example, parents of youth club members in Fiji suggested that 'government should support activities that help to downgrade the "white collar job" as the ideal and substitute it with manual work' (Ulago, 1981: 98).

Another factor contributing to high rates of unemployment among young people is limited opportunities to obtain work experience. As noted above, although unemployment rates are generally much higher among those aged 15-24 years than for the rest of the working age population, the scarcity of employment opportunities in the Pacific is a problem for all ages. This means that young people are competing with older workers in the job market. One consequence of the largely top-down modernisation and the high degree of self-sufficiency in Pacific lifestyles is that there is little diversity in employment opportunities. In particular, there are very limited opportunities to do the sort of unskilled jobs that commonly provide work-experience for school students and school-leavers in developed countries. Jobs such as newspaper, mail and milk delivery, child-minding, petrol station attendant, truck driver's offsider, household cleaner, waitress, bar-tender and casual retail assistant, either do not exist or are likely to be filled by older workers. In developed countries

employment of this sort plays a vital role in giving young people labour force experience and improving their chances of finding more secure employment later on. Among new Australian graduates with professional qualifications, for example, those who can demonstrate a record of previous employment of any sort are more likely to be hired. The scarcity of unskilled casual work opportunities for young people in the Pacific means that young job seekers often lack any previous work experience, and are therefore more likely to be passed over in favour of older workers, even when new jobs are created with young people in mind.

School leavers also face competition from child-labour as well as from adults of working age. UNICEF (1998: 16) notes that increasing household poverty is leading to the exploitation of school age children to generate income, such as by house-to-house selling and street hawking. Pereira (1981: 71) points out that this can have a negative impact on schooling, with, for example, child hawkers in Apia staying away from school when tourist boats visit. Despite widespread opposition to child-labour in the Pacific, it is easy to understand that households unable to afford school fees could construe sending their children out to earn as being consistent with the norm that family responsibilities must come before individual needs.

Although employment in the small business sector is often promoted as the panacea for unemployment, strategies to create employment opportunities for young people in the small business sector confront the same constraints that inhibit all private sector growth in the Pacific. They include poor access to credit, especially when few people have collateral to secure loans, small markets and lack of demand, scarcity of appropriately skilled labour, lack of managerial skills, lack of access to production technology, and national policies such as high tariffs on imported equipment and spare parts and inappropriate price control (McMaster, 1993: 278-279).

PART FOUR: THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE PACIFIC

The consequences of youth unemployment in the Pacific are very serious. As well as the purely economic consideration that there is under-utilisation of the potential labour force, youth unemployment impacts on health, law and order, political stability and population growth rates, and affects communities as well as individuals.

A psychiatric report from the Solomon Islands states ‘young people are having an increasingly difficult time balancing the pressure and demands of Western and *kastom* culture, especially in the areas of marriage, education and employment’ (Government of Solomon Islands and UNICEF: 1993: 48). Consequences of this stress includes engaging in high risk behaviour including unsafe sex and substance abuse. It can also contribute to suicide. Youth suicide rates are high by world standards in Samoa, Fiji and Chuuk (Booth, 1998: 436). In Samoa, suicide has been found to be associated with the economic stress caused by the transition to the monetary economy, and unrealistic expectations of parents (Government of Western Samoa and UNICEF, 1996: 33).

Studies of substance abuse among young people in Kiribati and Vanuatu in 2000 point clearly to a strong association of substance abuse and anti-social behaviour with unemployment (McMurray, 2001; Davis 2001). These studies found that substance abuse, which is also common elsewhere in the Pacific, is not just a matter of 'the devil making work for idle hands'. In the absence of employment opportunities, the young people interviewed had no clear idea of their future, and few opportunities to build self-esteem or to bond with their peers other than to indulge of shows of bravado such as by consuming substances they know to be dangerous and/or illicit. The problem of substance abuse in these countries has little to do with lack of education about the ill effects of such behaviours. Rather it is a symptom of 'poverty of opportunity' (UNDP, 1999: 31), that can only be addressed by the provision of alternative ways of meeting psycho-social needs, most importantly by the provision of employment opportunities.

Lack of employment opportunities for young people also is strongly associated with delinquency and criminal behaviour. Whereas the incidence of youth crime generally remains low in rural areas, where there is no anonymity and little privacy, rates are soaring in urban areas in the Pacific. A Fijian study found that 50% of drug offences were attributed to ages 17-25 years, while other common offences committed by youths included rape, assault, break and entry, theft and larceny (Adinkrah, 1995, cited in UNICEF, 1998: 19). The same study found a significant association between crime and use of alcohol and marijuana. Similar patterns have been reported in Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. UNICEF (1998: 19) refers to anecdotal evidence that some young offenders have 'adult collaborators who either bring youth in to the strategies or act as a conduit for the disposal of stolen property'. In other words, in the absence of legitimate employment opportunities, young people are at risk of being recruited for illegal activities.

More than 20 years ago the association of unemployment and crime was noted in Raiwaqa, a Suva housing estate. 'The unemployed young people in Raiwaqa can be seen sitting around the bus stops, yarning to let the day pass by as there is nothing much to do...there is constant boredom, idleness and day dreaming. Raiwaqa is well known for its incidence of young people involved in crime...a "top crime spot". Strangers would not dare to walk alone in Raiwaqa as there is always violence from young people. There is a tendency for them to steal in order to live' (Vunakece, 1981: 53). The situation is unchanged today.

From a national perspective, youth unemployment may well have helped to magnify the effects of recent political instability in Melanesia. Unemployed young people loitering in urban areas in Fiji, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands are easily manipulated to add to civil disturbances, and television footage of recent disturbances in Melanesian countries invariably depicts large numbers of young people near scenes of crisis.

PART FIVE: LIMITATIONS OF COMMON STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

The type of development needed to remedy the problem of youth unemployment is widely recognised. '...what is needed is the right type of economic growth, that which stimulates local jobs and enterprises' (UNDP, 1999:83). Given

the narrow range of economic resources, there must be sustainable resource use and value-adding to create job-rich economies; ‘...if resources are used in sustainable ways there need not be an ‘either or’ choice between formal and informal employment’ (UNDP, 1999: 83). Although these views are echoed in many other works on the region, few describe specific strategies that have succeeded. The reason for this, unfortunately, is that there are very few success stories.

The main cause of this lack of success appears to be that both governments and donors still tend to think in terms of the Western model of economic development. In this model the core is capital intensive development that generates a multiplier effect, which in turn generates a climate for small business development. Although this may be appropriate for countries with indigenous capital and large markets, it is not a sufficient solution for small Pacific Island countries.

For example, the UNDP report mentioned above gives as an example of the ‘right type of development’ expansion of the tuna industry (UNDP: 1999: 83). However, the tuna industry is very capital intensive, with even the more labour-intensive version, ‘pole and line’ catching requiring expensive boats. It is estimated that for everyone directly employed in the tuna industry two more are indirectly employed. However, even doubling the 10,000 Pacific Islanders currently employed by ‘educating them to make them more attractive workers’, as UNDP suggests, would scarcely make a dent in the unemployment problem in the Pacific as a whole, let alone the problem of youth unemployment, although it would absorb large amounts of scarce development capital. Nor does the suggestion that ‘local employment and local business could be generated by bringing the foreign fishing fleet onshore’ (UNDP, 1999: 83) withstand close scrutiny. First, because it is very costly to establish processing plants and ship maintenance facilities, foreign investment would probably be needed, which means repatriation of profits. Second, low wages would be inevitable to make the new establishments competitive with existing American and Japanese owned fish processing plants and canneries. For all but the poorest Pacific countries, low wages means competition from immigrant labour, from elsewhere in the Pacific or from Asia, resulting in little net benefit to the country hosting the development because immigrant workers repatriate a large proportion of their earnings. When the immigrant workers are Asians, they patronise Asian restaurants owned and operated by Asian entrepreneurs, who sell food made from imported ingredients washed down by imported beer and soft drinks, and then repatriate their profits.

Casting around for other avenues for employment creation, the same UNDP report points out that coastal fisheries exploitation is already at unsustainable levels; that import substitution has tended to damage traditional export industries, and markets for tree crops are unstable. The only positive suggestion is that there may be scope for expanding root crop cultivation and developing horticulture and niche markets (UNDP, 1999: 84). The lack of positive plans of action in this and other reports is due largely to the enormous difficulty of generating employment in the Pacific, particularly employment for school leavers. Because they seek demonstrable returns for their outlay, agencies such as the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank tend to focus on areas where they are more likely to be successful, such as public sector reform (e.g. ADB: 1996b). The coal face work of employment and income generation tends to be left to country governments and non-government

organisations. Yet although the problem of youth unemployment has been addressed for several decades, very little has been achieved. Everyone knows what is needed, but few governments or institutions have actually managed to create significant and viable employment for young people.

The usual approach is to transplant strategies developed for quite different conditions. For example, a common recommendation is that institutions should be set up to provide micro-credit to help young people set up small businesses, based on the famous Grameen Bank of Bangladesh. While there is a strong demand for credit to develop small businesses in Pacific countries, there are several reasons why the Grameen Bank model is usually unsuitable for small Pacific countries. First, the costs of establishing most businesses in the Pacific are substantially higher than in Bangladesh. Very small loans of a few hundred dollars are seldom sufficient to establish any kind of business activity in the Pacific. Second, because markets are generally small and turnover slow, the time taken to recover outlays is much longer than in Asia. Third, there is a high risk that family obligations will take precedence over loan repayments. Successful credit schemes in the Pacific, such as Fiji's Women's Social and Economic Development Program (WOSED) (see Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1997) and the Vanuatu Women's Development Scheme (VANWODS) (see Government of Vanuatu, 2001) tend to make substantially larger loans than would be found in Bangladesh. Their success is largely because they were established in larger Pacific countries with substantial markets, and also they target women, who usually have marketing experience (UNDP, 2001).

Establishing micro-credit credit schemes among unemployed young people in small countries where they are unlikely to succeed is actually counter-productive. The credit rating and credibility of defaulters is damaged, as well as their self-esteem, which is likely to prevent them making further attempts to establish businesses. Some donors have found that where capital is needed for small businesses it is better simply to give grants rather than loans (Pacific Youth Resource Bureau, 2000).

Co-operatives are another development strategy that is often proposed, perhaps because on the surface they would seem to be an obvious form of enterprise for a communal society. However, co-operatives have a very poor record in the Pacific. The main reason is that although Pacific society is communal, it is far from egalitarian. Rather, it is extremely hierarchical and based on a network of obligations, with those at the bottom of the hierarchy being obliged to give to those higher up, and those at the top having the right to take whatever they want in return for services such as leadership. This means that more senior members feel entitled to withdraw capital from co-operatives, to default on repayments or otherwise fail to comply with the requirements of successful co-operative management. Geddes et al. (1979: 115-116) describe how co-operatives which initially appeared to be successful ran into difficulties when managers were selected for their family connections rather than ability. In fact this is fairly typical of co-operatives in developing countries everywhere. Successful co-operatives are more likely to be found in developed countries, where professional managers are employed and co-operatives operate like joint stock companies, rather than community enterprises (Rowlands, 1968). Although groups comprised exclusively of young people are likely to be less hierarchical than whole communities, young people are unlikely to have the skills to manage a co-operative without assistance from senior family members, who could chose to demand

their traditional entitlements. In the Pacific, as elsewhere, professional management is essential if co-operatives are to function effectively.

Another cause of failure to create employment opportunities is the familiar problem that aid projects are fixed term activities, while the need for assistance tends to be on-going. A common scenario is that of a youth employment project that has operated effectively for several years, but failed to become self-sustaining during the life of the project and so disappeared when funding was withdrawn. At other times a project may fail simply because the most enterprising person in the group leaves. For example, Marie Bopp, a young Pacific journalist, reports that she was involved in a project to generate income from paper recycling, but it flopped when she left because her friends 'lacked confidence' (UNICEF, 1998: 12).

Special mention needs to be made of the role of tourism in Pacific Island economies. In view of the scarcity of exploitable natural resources in most Pacific Island countries, contrasting with abundant magnificent scenery, interesting material cultures and attractive climates, tourism is often promoted as having the greatest potential to employ Pacific labour. In recent years tourism has been the largest income earner for Fiji, and it makes substantial contributions to the economies of Cook Islands, Palau, Samoa and Vanuatu (Stanley, 1996). Until now most Pacific tourism has tended to be based on resorts that are usually overseas owned. It benefits the local economy primarily by generating low-paid employment in the services sector and expanding the local market for crafts and foodstuffs. The bulk of profits, however, tend to be repatriated, while hotels import a large part of their food needs and most of their beverages. The resort-based tourist industry also has a negative image, being associated with environmental degradation, commercialisation of cultural, prostitution, gambling and family breakdown (Sofield 1994 cited in Scheyvens and Purdie, 1999: 213). Overall, the South Pacific is estimated to receive only 0.15% of the world's tourists (Hall, 1994, cited in Scheyvens and Purdie, 1999: 212), largely because it is relatively inaccessible for northern-hemisphere residents, while travel within the region is expensive by world standards. The prospects for expanding the resort-based tourist industry in the region therefore seem limited.

In contrast, the proponents of ecotourism argue that there is substantial potential for increase in the Pacific region and that this would have far greater benefits than resort-based tourism, including a healthier impact on livelihoods (Scheyvens and Purdie, 1999: 213-215). Ecotourism is essentially based on small-scale, low impact operations that ought to be sustainable because the objective is to view the environment in its natural state. It also appears to have the potential to provide significant opportunities for youth employment, since it is based on local-style housing and local catering and requires simple services such as guiding, which young people can readily provide.

A significant obstacle to the expansion of ecotourism that is not always taken into account by its advocates is the understandable reluctance of many Pacific people to open up their lives to public view. While they are prepared to tolerate tourists when they are confined to tourist resorts, they do not want them disrupting village life and violating village customs. Another obstacle is that ecotourism is vulnerable to the same constraints that affect other types of small business development. Interestingly, Scheyvens and Purdie (1999: 221) observe that it is difficult to find successful

examples of community-based ecotourism ventures in the Pacific, and report that most are dominated by chiefs and elders, who monopolise the benefits. Tourism-led development is thus yet another strategy that needs to take Pacific culture into account if it is to bring any lasting benefit to young people and the broader community.

PART SIX: A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that the any strategy that is to be effective must take into account the particular characteristics of Pacific economy and society and adapt to local conditions. Strategies that work well in countries that appear to be at a similar stage of economic growth do not necessarily work in Pacific countries. Local social structures must be taken into account and strategies must be tailored accordingly. This section makes some general strategic recommendations and provides a few examples of successful projects.

The need for a multi-faceted strategy: The key requirement of any youth employment strategy is that it must be multi-faceted. Pacific economies are characterised not just by a dualism of formal and informal economic sectors, which is common in developing societies and has long been recognised by economists (e.g. Higgins, 1968) but also a dualism of traditional and modern lifestyles. Throughout the world, rural livelihoods depend on multiple and diverse activities varying throughout the year, according to seasonal conditions (Chambers, 1997: 163-174). While continuing investment in the modern sector is essential to enable countries to access the benefits of modernisation, it must not be the only focus.

There is a need to promote not only formal and informal employment, but also income generation as well as employment generation. It must be recognised that full-time work need not be the objective of all workers. Because of the varying extent to which individuals can depend on the safety net provided by the subsistence sector, income needs vary. Not every Pacific Islander wants or needs full-time work. While some young people may seek full-time work, many others would be satisfied with only a few hours work now and again, or be satisfied with earning a few dollars, such as by catching and selling a few fish or running errands.

Unfortunately, the prevailing attitude in the modern sector is that any young able-bodied person who does not have full-time employment is a failure. This means that practical strategies such as income generation tend to be overlooked. It should be recognising that any young person who is earning income by any legal means is making a contribution to society. Promoting this attitude rather than emphasising only full-time work would do much to improve the self-esteem of school-leavers, encourage income generation and help to prevent the social problems described in Part Four of this paper.

Appropriate education for employment: There is a pressing need to review the nature and objectives of formal education in the Pacific. This must involve increasing vocational education and education in life-skills, and de-emphasising academic education. While literacy and basic numeracy should remain the goal for all students, more realistic career education is needed, starting in primary school. Work options should be depicted more equally. When formal employment is prioritised, as in the

past, all other work options become second best by implication. This leads to disappointment, and also undermines traditional Pacific society.

Non-formal education is needed, especially all types of training in business and income generation. In the past non-formal education has tended to be somewhat haphazard and uncoordinated because it is usually provided by non-government organisations, either based within country or overseas. More co-ordination is needed to maximise the benefits of non-formal education, plus additional funding to ensure that it is available to all who need it. Barr (1999: 113) points out that non-formal education should complement the formal system, as this would encourage non-formal employment in both urban and rural areas as well as employment in the formal sector.

Methods of instruction must also be reviewed. The skills needed to establish a small business enterprise include financial management, stock management and quality control. Consider the example of quality control. Uniformity of product is not a familiar concept in traditional Pacific lifestyle, and no value is attached to it, yet it is an essential requirement for commercial production. An entrepreneur in Fiji who sub-contracts handmade paper making to village women complained that although she has asked for it many times, there is no consistency in the colour or texture of their product unless they are constantly supervised (personal communication). This is hardly surprising given the nature of Pacific society.

From infancy most Pacific children are taught to be passive, to sit quietly and listen, to speak only when they are spoken to and respond to direction rather than initiate activities themselves. This carries through into the classroom, where things learned are not necessarily translated into practical applications. Although young people usually respond willingly to direction, they are likely to come to a complete standstill when left alone to manage a project. Effective education in business skills means that the subjects need to be given time to work out for themselves what is needed and seek a solution, rather than sit passively and act only on instruction. Although this type of training may be more difficult to organise, it has a much better chance of producing sustainable results. To put it simply, little is achieved by telling Pacific people what to do, but lasting results can be achieved by helping them do what they want to do.

In fact the entrepreneur mentioned above was advised by an expatriate community development officer who had been working there to seek paper makers in this particular village. The village women did not decide for themselves that they would start a paper making business, and although they made a good income from it, the village was not poor, and the women made paper for entertainment rather than for profit. Until the entrepreneur learns to communicate more effectively, the women will not bother to comply with her specifications. And if they get tired of working under supervision, she would do better to find a different village where the women are more motivated.

Income and employment generation through non-formal education: A common complaint of employers in the Pacific is that although many young people have high school education, they lack useful skills. Non-formal education can equip young workers with useful skills at low cost. Some of the training needs that can be addressed by non-formal education are fishing techniques, aquaculture, boat

construction and maintenance, horticulture, arts and crafts, small business management; bookkeeping, cultural and creative art, (including dying fabrics and articles), textured paper-making and lei and shell necklace making. Some examples of successful courses conducted that have led to employment of young people are, in Nauru, skills training workshops in beauty salon skills (perming, straightening, styling and dyeing hair; make up application, manicures, facials and massage) commercial bread making, weaving and establishing a fruit tree nursery. Courses in Tokelau have included home gardening, on-the-job training in bakeries and cultural skills development. In the Marshall Islands courses have been conducted in agriculture (planting taro, breadfruit, pandanus, coconut), jewellery-making using special shells, traditional fishing techniques, canoe making and home gardening skills (composting, seed raising, transplanting and cooking locally grown produce) (Pacific Youth Resources Bureau, 2000).

Courses that address aspects of personal development can also make an important contribution to small enterprises and income earning by fostering self-confidence and initiative among young people. This includes training in leadership and organisational skills, personal efficiency and strategies for self-improvement (Pacific Youth Resources Bureau, 2000). Some of the most effective examples of projects developed for young people in the Pacific have been sponsored by religious organisations. Religious organisations often combine strict supervision with strong support for work activities, while emphasising spiritual development. An example is the Marist Training Centre in Tutu, Fiji, which emphasises empowerment of young people and points to the substantial potential economic impact of this strategy. It cites the example of 17 graduates of its young farmers' course who 'collectively amassed a total asset of \$FJ 1,434,106 during their three years of training'. One strategy used by the trainees involved growing and selling yagona, buying a chainsaw with the proceeds and building houses with the chainsaw and the skills they had learned (Fiji Ministry for Education, Youth and Sports, 1999).

The experience of some projects has shown that there is a need for wider education opportunities for parents as well as young people. '...it has been proven that lack of interest in trainees at home and resistance to change by both parents and trainees defer projects' (Samuwai, 189). This is a striking reflection of the attitude referred to in Part Three, that only formal employment is worthwhile, and perhaps also a perception that the efforts of young people, who are at the bottom of the social hierarchy, are less important than the efforts of their elders.

It is interesting that some much earlier studies of youth development activities identified similar problems. Ulago (1981: 97) reports that one of the main problems facing members of the Korovuto Youth Club in Fiji was lack of support for their income generation efforts from parents and village elders. Lutui cites the example of a church-based youth group that utilised young people to build a new church, but with the objective of augmenting the assets of the church rather than providing employment for the young people. Bad leadership and inappropriate objectives meant that this youth group failed to develop real employment generating projects, such as peanut cultivation and fishing (Lutui, 1981: 33-34). In contrast, Madigi (1981: 89) observes that main reasons for the success of the Vunidawamoli youth group house construction project in Vanua Levu, Fiji, were '(i) genuine interest and whole-hearted support of the villagers (ii) systematic and careful planning by cooperating qualified

carpenters, and (iii) the young people's capacity for self-reliance and self-help when they were properly involved'.

The Marist Training Centre is one of a number of Fijian organisations to create successful youth employment projects with government grants, including the Navuso Agricultural School, the Navuso Student Farmers Scheme, the Fiji Scouts Association and the Fiji Girl Guides Association. Among the projects supported were servicing brush cutters and contract brush cutting, coffee bean cultivation and processing, livestock raising and ferrying across waterways. These included both small businesses and less formal income generation activities. (Samuwai, 1999:187-188).

Some other recent examples of small grants to fund young people to establish successful small businesses in Niue are: \$NZ 1823 and \$NZ 2,000 for two traditional carving businesses; \$NZ 3,500 for a Pendant and Wood Jewellery business; \$NZ 4,000 to upgrade a Coin-Operated Laundromat; \$NZ 1,867 to upgrade a builders' business and \$NZ 1,598 to upgrade a gardening and cleaning business (Pacific Youth Resources Bureau, 2000: 9). Other activities that have been promoted and supported include food processing (drying bananas, fish, making coconut and taro sweets) and livestock raising (chickens, ducks, pigs, goats).

Although some of these projects involve significant start-up costs, the long-term social benefits are likely to exceed those from other types of investment and development assistance. For example, one writer cites the example of his own village, where road maintenance money is allocated to village leaders. 'Not only is there no work done on the access road, the purpose of which is to assist agricultural production, but the money seems to be spent on card games, beer and food, with little (if any) of the money reaching the youth, women and children of the village' (Meleisea, 1997: 84).

One limitation that must be kept in mind in developing projects in the Pacific is the problem of small markets. UNICEF (1998: 17) cites the example of a Fijian girl who earned up to \$FJ250.00 a week by selling pillow cases, cushion covers and curtains to family, friends and church members. Eventually she saturated her local market but lacked transport and credit so she could expand her operation and reach other markets. Fairbairn-Dunlop (1997: 69), writing about Fiji's Women's Social and Economic Development Program (WOSED), noted that many women were engaged in more than one small income-earning venture. She also found that when one enterprise was operating effectively they tended to hand it over to another family member and start a new business.

Appropriate expansion of multiple activities such as this should be the objective of schemes targeting young people, rather than the development of large enterprises, and there is some evidence that it is occurring. For example, UNICEF (1998: 17) cites the example of a 23 year old who is supporting himself by selling lunch parcels, catering for social events, screen printing and selling shirts. Both young people and their elders need to recognise that flexibility and adaptability is an essential characteristic of successful entrepreneurs. If one type of business is unsuccessful, the response should be to try a different type of venture rather than to lose confidence and dwell on the demise.

Opportunities for small enterprises such as those described above could be further enhanced if governments gave more attention to the need to copyright culture, patent local art and crafts and use tariffs selectively to protect local products from unfair competition (see UNESCO, 1999). While it may be reasonable to import plain fabrics and garments for printing, imports of Pacific-print T-shirts and shell jewellery produced in Asia contribute to local unemployment, as well as undermining the value of local art and culture. Producing high quality artefacts and marketing them as art offers another opportunity for young people to earn an income while maintaining a village lifestyle. Purdie (1999: 70) cites the example of a Solomon Island printed hand-made paper exhibition at the New Zealand High Commission that brought substantial profits and many orders of more work.

Management support for small enterprise The most frequently mentioned cause of small business failure is poor management. This points to the need for more support services. In 1988 Fiji's Ministry of Youth, Employment Opportunities and Sport established a Youth Employment Options Centre to help young people find employment and additional training (Government of the Republic of Fiji, 1993: 66). However, there is also a need for support services that go considerably further than this. For example, small enterprise support offices could be established to provide practical assistance to young people wishing to develop income-earning opportunities. Such a service could perhaps take the form of drop-in centres staffed by business advisers, where young people could view displays, and discuss their ideas. The advisers would be available to become actively involved in any projects proposed by clients, including advising on an appropriate structure and activities, helping them apply for loan capital, advising on business management, and providing free or very low-cost book keeping and management services. Support should involve extensive consultation and discussion with participants, and be available for a flexible time period. It should be withdrawn only when a project has proven itself viable and there had been sufficient transfer of skills for management to continue effectively. Advisers could also visit schools to raise awareness of the need for income generation and small business activities and ensure that young people know there is a source of support available. Such centres could thus provide the type of assistance offered by groups such as the Marist Training Centre, but on a secular basis so they are more widely accessible.

Improvement of village infrastructure One other important strategy to encourage decentralisation of youth employment opportunities to rural areas is to enhance the level of services available in villages. In countries such as Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu many villages in remote islands and atolls are without electricity and without reliable transport and communication services. This limits both capacity to manufacture and access to markets. Installation of renewable energy systems, such as solar panels, wind power and mini-hydro-electric generators, would enable the use of equipment such as lathes and other powered production equipment. This, coupled with improvements in transport and communications to give access to markets, would provide opportunities for young people to support themselves by activities such as jewellery making and manufacture of small wood and stone artefacts.

CONCLUSION

The problem of youth unemployment in the Pacific is part of a wider unemployment problem that affects people of all ages. The underlying causes of this problem are sustained population growth and the continuing focus of governments and donors on the Western development model, rather than taking full account of the nature of Pacific culture and society and the fact that the traditional and modern economic systems deserve equal attention.

In many Pacific countries the annual increase in the labour force far outstrips the rate of job creation in the formal sector. At the same time, an emphasis on formal education has created a perception that those who do not complete secondary schooling are 'drop outs', and informal economic activities are a second-best alternative for those who 'fail' to obtain formal employment. In addition, young people with no employment record find themselves in competition with older workers, who are necessarily a government priority because of their greater family responsibilities.

Cultural factors, limited exploitable resource bases and small markets mean that strategies that have proved satisfactory elsewhere do not necessarily work in the Pacific. What is needed is a multi-faceted approach. This means not only expansion of both formal and informal employment opportunities, but also expansion of both employment and income-generation opportunities.

Promotion of multiple activities rather than a single type of activity, either formal or informal, not only makes good sense but also is entirely consistent with the traditional Pacific lifestyle. People in the traditional sector have always depended on multiple activities. 'A typical rural family will gather timber from the forest for housing; a son working in town will have bought the new tin roof; basic staples are grown in the garden; school fees are paid from seasonal sale of salt fish and mats in the nearby town; kerosene, fishing lines and hooks are paid for by washing clothes for teachers posted in the village school; and a radio was sent by an uncle in the city in exchange for two sacks of yams at Christmas' (UNDP, 2001). Until now this has been taken for granted, while policy makers have tended to look to formal employment of a business in the modern sector as the source of 'real' employment. It is now time to recognise the importance and effectiveness of income generation based on multiple activities, and ensure that young people have the skills and confidence to pursue this approach.

Non-formal education is essential to this strategy, plus community education to change the attitude that formal employment is best. It is essential to create an encouraging and supportive environment so that informal economic activities for young people can develop. While investment in the provision of employment in the formal sector must continue, there is also a need to provide credit and grants to seed small enterprises and income generation projects. Careful selection and support of motivated individuals and appropriate projects will, in time, generate momentum.

One last crucial point to remember is that Pacific Islanders seldom commit fully to strategies that are proposed by outsiders, unless they believe there has been

sufficient consultation and they have had sufficient opportunity to make inputs. Projects seen to be 'donor driven' are unpopular and achieve little in the Pacific (SPC, forthcoming). Pacific culture is an oral culture, and strategies to promote employment among groups of young people must always begin with community meetings to discuss and identify the problem of youth unemployment and elicit suggestions for solutions. This is not an unnecessary extravagance or a waste of time, but an essential step to build commitment to any activity in the Pacific. If these and other culturally appropriate steps are followed, future writers on this topic will surely be able to cite many more examples of successful youth employment and income generation strategies than existed when this paper was written.

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