

Pacific Youth Employment Newsletter

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

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An overview of the ILO Youth Employment Programme

Recognizing the urgent need to respond to the challenge of youth unemployment and underemployment in the Pacific, the ILO Office for Pacific Island Countries, in collaboration with ILO constituents, launched in April 2008 the ILO Sub-regional Programme on Youth Employment Programme (YEP): RAS/06/53/NET – Education, Employability and Decent Work for Youth in Pacific Island Countries. YEP is aimed at contributing to improved employability and decent work for young men and women in Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

To realize this goal, the programme has the following three immediate objectives, namely: (i) to enhance the knowledge of how to better address the challenges faced by young women and men in securing decent wage and self-employment and efficiently disseminate the knowledge within each country and in the sub-region; (ii) to strengthen the capacity of governments, employers' and workers'

organizations as well as youth organizations to develop national and local policies and programmes to achieve decent work for youth; and (iii) to facilitate greater access by young men and women to support services to wages and self-employment through new tools and methodologies adapted to national circumstances.

The ILO Youth Employment Programme is funded by ILO and the Netherlands Government under the Netherland and ILO Cooperation Programme (NICP). The ILO Youth Employment Programme is well incorporated in the Decent Work Country Programme, with the employment creation, particularly among youth, as one of the key priority areas identified by ILO constituents and other social partners.



A snapshot of the youth employment situation in the Pacific

In the Pacific as in other parts of the world, securing employment for youth is a huge challenge. Many attribute this to low income- and employment opportunities inherent in small island nations, exacerbated by the "youth bulge". It is estimated that over 20% of Pacific population comprises youth (between 15-24 years of age) and by 2020, it is projected that this would double. This will exert a massive pressure on limited infrastructure and public services especially in education, health, housing and other basic utilities.

Given the dualistic nature of the economy in Pacific island countries, the majority of the young men and women are engaged in subsistence and informal work, with many of them underemployed. Many of the youths drop out of the labour force and give up actively seeking work when it becomes clear that few opportunities exist, especially in the formal sector. In some countries, the problem of youth unemployment is acute.

Women in the Pacific has low labour force participation with less than a third of the share of employment in Fiji, Marshall Islands, Samoa and Solomon Islands. It is noteworthy

of mention that Kiribati and Papua New Guinea are close to achieving a gender balance in employment. By and large, the opportunities for women in the formal sector are few and mostly in the public sector, being the biggest employer in the Pacific.

Anecdotal evidence shows that young women face greater difficulty in securing productive and decent employment as compared to young men. Although some are cultural, the reasons for the disadvantaged position of young women in seeking employment are similar to those affecting young women in other parts of the world, which include: low level of education, stereotyping of women for domestic work and less subservient jobs, lack of access to information, lack of employable & livelihood skills, among others.

Although young men and women are national assets to a country, being unemployed and underemployed, youth are less able to contribute effectively to national development and have fewer opportunities to exercise their rights as citizens. They have less to spend as consumers, less to invest as savers and often have no "voice" to bring about change in their lives and communities.

Consequently, many young men and women are trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty, inadequate education and training, and poor jobs. All too often, their full potential is not realized because they have no access to productive and decent jobs. This creates an endless trail of poverty linking one generation to another. It also leads to social instability as has been experience in some Pacific island countries.

Youth unemployment is a ticking time bomb! Everyone agrees that it needs to be addressed urgently and effectively through concerted and coordinated efforts by all.



A group of youth complete their entry level skills training course in Basic Construction at the Habitat for Humanity Centre in Port Vila, Vanuatu

YEP contribution to enhancing the understanding of the youth employment situation

Whilst it is recognized that youth unemployment is a serious problem in the Pacific, very little is known about the real situation. Many studies have been conducted on the general youth issues, but only few are focused on youth employment. Labour market information is left much to be desired.

Recognizing this, the ILO Youth Employment Programme (YEP) carried out studies and research to contribute to better understanding of the youth employment situation in each of the five countries covered by YEP. In 2008, consultants from the University of the South Pacific carried out country desk reviews on youth employment in Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands and

Vanuatu. On the same year, Michael de Geir, a consultant who was involved in preparing the Key Indicators of Labour Market (KILM) at the ILO Headquarter, was contracted out by ILO Office for Pacific Island Countries, with cost-sharing from the Youth Employment Programme, to carry out a Pacific Labour Market Information assessment on how to improve national collection and analysis of data on the labour market (including youth).

The results of both studies were widely disseminated within each country and in the sub-region and were presented at national and sub-regional workshops organized by YEP.

It is hoped that these studies have contributed to the knowledge base on the challenges faced

by young men and women in securing decent wage and self-employment. It is expected to help guide countries in moving forward with more focused and action-oriented policies, programmes, and other practical initiatives to address the problem of youth unemployment. Both studies provided valuable inputs in formulating the National Action Plan on Youth Employment in these countries.



Building capacity of governments, ILO constituents and social partners in promoting youth employment

In response to the clamour of ILO constituents and national stakeholders, the ILO Youth Employment Programme, in collaboration with ILO agencies and social partners, has organized various training and workshops to build local capacity to implement projects and practical initiatives that will assist young men and women secure decent wage and self-employment.

- **Training of Trainers in ILO community-based methodology entitled Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE)** in Port Vila, Vanuatu from 25-29 August 2008 to orient and train national and regional stakeholders on TREE to pave the way for the pilot implementation of TREE in Vanuatu, Samoa, Papua New Guinea and Kiribati.
- **Training of Young Trade Union Leaders on Youth Employment and Decent Work** (Apia, Samoa: 22-26 September 2008). It is a joint undertaking between ILO/YEP, ILO/ACTRAV and ILO/International Training Center (ITC, Turin). This is the first-ever workshop organized for young trade union leaders and is aimed at strengthening the capacity of trade unions in promoting decent work for young people. During the workshop, the participants organized an online youth network to serve as a knowledge sharing mechanism. The participants also prepared a country action plan for their trade union to carry out activities to promote and support decent work for youth. ILO ACTRAV and ILO/YEP will provide financial and technical assistance to the activities outlined the country action plan. As a result of the workshop, the Kiribati Trade Union Youth Wing was established in February 2009 and was responsible for organizing a national

workshop from 2-6 February 2009. The president of the Kiribati Trade Union Youth Wing sits as member of the Kiribati Decent Work Country Programme Committee which also serves as the ILO Youth Employment National Committee. The KTUC youth wing was actively involved in the formulation of the Kiribati National Action Plan (NAP) on Youth Employment. It is hoped that Kiribati Trade Union Youth Wing will serve as the role model for other PICs.

Training of Trainers (TOT) in ILO Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) in Suva, Fiji from 27 October to 7 November. This is a joint undertaking between ILO/YEP and the Community Education Training Center (CETC) of the Secretariat Pacific Community. The workshop was aimed at creating a pool of SIYB local trainers in the Pacific. The participants were mainly trainers from public, private and NGO training institutions.

A series of SIYB training will be conducted in Kiribati, PNG, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu starting May 2009 as part of the trainer's certification process and the adaptation of SIYB training materials to the Pacific.

• **Sub-regional Workshop on Youth Employment** in Nadi, Fiji from 17-21 November 2008, in collaboration with ILO/ITC-Turin, UN-ESCAP Pacific and Commonwealth Youth Programme/Solomon Islands. This is a high-level workshop participated by heads of ILO constituents and key policy makers and youth representatives in all 5 countries covered by ILO/YEP and is aimed at creating greater awareness of the youth employment challenges in the

Pacific in comparison with global and regional situation while introducing the ILO National Action Plan on Youth Employment (NAP). At the conclusion of the workshop, 3 countries (Kiribati, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands) requested technical assistance from ILO and UN-ESCAP in the formulation of NAP, while PNG requested assistance in strengthening the employment component, taking into account their current National Youth Policy. Samoa believed that their National Youth Strategy through TALAVOU approximates the National Youth Policy.



TOT Community Based Training on Rural Economic Empowerment (CBTREE), Port Vila, Vanuatu: 25-29 August 2008



TOT Start & Improve Your Business for Youth Suva, Fiji : 27 October— 7 November 2008



National Action Plan on Youth Employment Nadi, Fiji : 17-21 November 2008

Labour Market Information & Analysis Training

Timely and accurate Labour Market Information and Analysis (LMIA) is a necessary input for the formulation of employment and labour policies in the promotion of decent and productive employment. It is essential for the formulation, implementation and monitoring of national (youth) employment policies. In the Pacific, the Labour Market Information is weak. This has been the findings of the YEP country desk reviews and the LMI assessment and was validated by the participants of the November 2008 sub regional workshop on youth employment. By and large, Pacific countries lack the capacity and systems in collecting, analyzing and managing LMI. Realizing this, YEP, with the technical assistance of Mr Micheal de Gier and support of the Youth Employment Programme National/Technical Officer Mr Edward Bernard an Awareness Workshop on Labour Market Information & Analysis (LMIA) was conducted in all five countries from November 2008 to April 2009. Although the contents of the workshop highlighted some general concepts and applications of LMIA, the focus was directed to Youth Labour Market Information.

For the first time in all five countries, eight different government ministries/departments including the employers and workers representatives were able to discuss, identify and share Labour Market Information and identify LMIA deficits that exists in each country.

All five countries were also able to identify from the 20 Key Indicators of Labour Market (KILM) established by ILO, KILM that was applicable to their respective countries. They further identified Youth KILM for their

respective countries. This will only provide a basis to strengthen their process of data collection and used as applicable reference tools for each of the five countries meets the ever-increasing demands for timely, accurate and accessible labour market information and analysis in a rapidly changing world of work. For sustainability and post workshop activities, all countries except PNG proposed for the establishment of a National Technical Working Group on LMIA (NTWG-LMIA). It is hoped that the report of the workshop and proposition of the establishment of the NTWG-LMIA will be tabled at the National Decent Work Steering Committee for endorsement. Furthermore, by end of July 2009, all participants from the five countries will be virtually linked via a e-network on LMIA for Youth. This will provide for a forum for participants to share information, discuss and enhance their knowledge of LMIA. The Youth Employment Programme will moderate this forum and share information on best practices and trainings available.

The discussions and findings of these trainings, along with Mr Micheal de Gier's report on Assessing Labour Market Information & Analysis in the Pacific (2009) would provide valuable input into future Youth Employment documents and programmes. It can then be used as source document for the Situational Analysis Phase for the formulation of National Action Plan (NAP) on Youth Employment.

The Youth Employment Programme will continue to build the capacity of ILO constituents and stakeholders in the area of LMIA.



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



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



Awareness Workshop on Labour Market Information & Analysis, 2008, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea



Awareness Workshop on Labour Market Information & Analysis, 2008, Tarawa, Kiribati

Assisting governments in formulating National Action Plan on youth employment

As a follow up to the Sub-regional workshop on Youth Employment, the Government of Kiribati and the Government of Vanuatu through their Ministry/Department of Labour and Ministry/Department of Youth requested technical and financial assistance from ILO/YEP and UN-ESCAP to organize the workshop on the formulation of National Action Plan on Youth Employment (NAP). The NAP conference in Kiribati was held from 24-27 March and in Vanuatu from 6-8 June. In both countries, a NAP committee was created to be responsible to spearhead the entire formulation process of NAP until finalisation.

The National Action Plan on Youth Employment (NAP) is an operational document – a methodology to steer country action on youth employment on the basis of a common agreement reached by all interested parties. The NAP formulation process recognizes that youth employment problem is complicated and cannot be tackled through fragmented and isolated interventions. Rather, they require sustained and concerted action – by several actors over an array of policy areas. Participation and dialogue are, therefore, a necessary condition for developing NAP to effectively meet the needs on the ground, and respond to the concerns of the national stakeholders directly affected, especially the young men and women. NAP is nationally owned and driven.



NAP conference 24th - 27th March 2008, Tarawa, Kiribati

Pilot testing modalities for creating employment opportunities for youth

In response to the clamour of national stakeholders, the ILO/YEP in collaboration with the ILO constituents and national implementing partners, pilot-tested two ILO approaches/methodologies: CB-TREE and SIYB. CB-TREE is a methodology for economic empowerment of poor people through training and post-training support based on existing opportunities in their communities. It is anchored on the principles of Community-Based Training (CBT) for self-employment and income generation methodology. It consists of a set of procedures for institutional arrangements and planning among partner organization at the national and local levels, systematically identifying employment and income generating communities at the local/community level, designing and delivering appropriate training programmes and providing the necessary post-training support services. TREE promotes decent work and equal opportunity for men and women.

In the framework of YEP, the CB-TREE is now pilot-tested in Vanuatu, Samoa, Papua New Guinea and soon in Kiribati. Using integrated and

simplified methodology, the TREE is regarded as appropriate for rural communities in the Pacific and has already benefited young men and women in starting community-based enterprises.

Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) is an enterprise training programme focused on small businesses. The objective of SIYB training is to enable potential and existing entrepreneurs to develop and refine concrete, feasible and bankable ideas in order to start or expand their own small businesses.

As a follow up to the SIYB TOT in 2008, a series of country training will be organized in all 5 countries covered by ILO/YEP within the period May to June 2009 to train young entrepreneurs how to start and improve their business and help them prepare a business plan that they can present to local banks or financial institutions to obtain credit or financial assistance. The training will be conducted by the local trainers, under the auspices of an International master SIYB trainer, as part of their certification as SIYB trainer. A Pacific adapted training

material are used in the training. After the series of SIYB training, the SIYB manual training materials adapted to Pacific context and culture will be finalized and will be used by certified SIYB trainers in future training.



Vanuatu Positive Youth Movement Enterprise Centre young artists of the PYM designs and paints T-shirts

YEP contribution to the formulation of Decent Work Country Programmes

The ILO Youth Employment Programme has provided technical input as well as participated in the formulation of the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for PNG, Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Kiribati. Given the huge challenge of youth unemployment, the tripartite members endorsed employment creation, in particular for young men and women, including enterprise and entrepreneurship development and the elimination of child labour in workplace, as one of the priority areas. YEP can also contribute to the achievement of other priority areas of DWCP by including in awareness raising and advocacy activities on salient aspects such as compliance with international labour standards, industrial and employment relations, improving social security and conditions of work ---mainly Decent Work deficits faced by young workers.

DECENT WORK

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Special Feature

Creating self employment opportunities for youth in Vanuatu

Immediately following the TOT Community Based Training in Rural Economic Empowerment (CB-TREE) Sub-Regional workshop in August 2008, four local NGO's and one educational institution put forward two proposals to apply the ILO methodology to help create self-employment opportunities for unemployed youth in Vanuatu.

One proposal, which was a working collaboration between four youth focused NGO's in Port Vila, was targeted at youth in the community of Ohlen just on the outskirts of urban Port Vila. The second proposal was from the Vanuatu Agricultural College to apply the CB-TREE 'Transition Enterprise Planning' (TEP) in their Agribusiness module curriculum, and also to apply the methodology in the rural village of Hog Harbour, two hours north of Luganville, on the island of Santo.

Since September 2008, project activities in both these locations have started successfully and are in progress at the time of writing. In Ohlen, the Youth Employment Programme is working directly with youth in the self-formed the 'Positive Youth Movement'. More than thirty youth have identified small community enterprise ideas and have received specific skills training in subjects including sewing (school uniforms), community landscaping and artworks and vehicle panel beating and metal product fabrication. The programme has purchased equipments including tools and materials to help them kick start their enterprise ideas.

Even at an early stage, some successes have been recorded. The ILO programme have assisted the Positive Youth Movement in securing a government registered business licence; the sewing group have secured a contract with a local school to supply school uniforms for the 2009 year, the landscaping and arts group have been contracted to clean up and maintain the local BP compound one day a week and the vehicle group have started a basic car wash business to compliment their panel beating and metal products fabrication business.

The Vanuatu Agricultural College, with technical assistance from the ILO Youth Employment Programme, successfully incorporated the practically orientated CB-TREE TEP methodology into their Agribusiness module curriculum. Sixteen students prepared short and medium term agribusiness plans based on this methodology and successfully graduated in December 2008.

In Hog Harbour, the ILO Youth Employment Programme is supporting skills training and business start up initiatives in sewing (products for tourist industry), a community piggery project and a youth group sandalwood seedlings nursery. Work is continuing on these initiatives into 2009 and robust mechanisms are being put in place to ensure the activities can be economically sustainable as well as socially, environmentally and culturally responsible.



Youths of Ohlen Community with Habitat for Humanity Representative. Vivian Obed



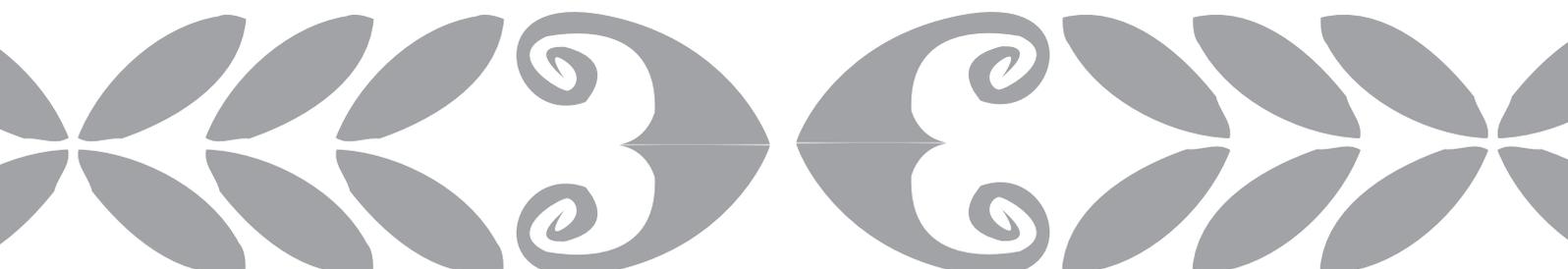
Youths involved in panel-beating & Fabrication workshop with trainer



Youths involved in Sewing with trainer



Youths involved in Art & Landscaping



Introducing the ILO Youth Employment Staff

Under the guidance of the Director of the Office for the Pacific Island Countries, Mr Werner Blenk, the ILO/YEP is managed by the Chief Technical Adviser, , and with support from two national staff (a national officer and finance/administrative assistant) all based in ILO Office in Suva, Fiji. All activities at the country level are coordinated by the National Officer under the supervision of the CTA and in collaboration with ILO constituents and members of the ILO/YEP National Steering Committee. Technical backstopping support is provided from specialists in the ILO Regional Office Bangkok, and on specific areas by ILO Sub-regional Office in Manila and ILO Headquarters in Geneva.

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