



# STATE OF PACIFIC YOUTH 2017

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The State of Pacific Youth Report 2017 (SOPY 2017) is fourth in the series of SOPY reports, which span almost two decades. The SOPY has become an authoritative situation analysis on youth development across Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs).

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# COMMONLY USED ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome	M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
ADB	Asian Development Bank	NAP	National action plan
ANER	Adjusted net enrolment ratio	NCD	Non-communicable disease
CBO	Community-based organization	NDoH	Papua New Guinea National Department of Health
CSE	Comprehensive Sexuality Education	NEETs	Youth who are not in education, employment, or training
CSO	Civil society organisation	NFE	Non-formal education
DALYs	Disability-adjusted life years	NGO	Non-governmental organization
DHS	Demographic and health surveys	NMDI	National minimum development indicator
DoL	United States Department of Labor	NYC	National Youth Council
DPOs	Disabled people's organizations	NYEP	National Youth Employment Plan
EMIS	Education management information system	NYP	National Youth Policy
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development	Pacific-INDIE	Pacific Indicators for Disability-inclusive Education
EU	European Union	PDF	Pacific Disability Forum
FBO	Faith-based organisation	PEDF	Pacific Education Development Framework
FLE	Family Life Education	PICTs	Pacific island countries and territories
FSM	Federated States of Micronesia	PNG	Papua New Guinea
GBD	Global Burden of Disease	PYC	Pacific Youth Council
GBV	Gender-based violence	PYDF	Pacific Youth Development Framework
GCED	Global Citizenship Education	RMI	Republic of the Marshall Islands
GER	Gross enrolment ratio	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
GPI	Gender Parity Index	SHN	School Health and Nutrition
GSHS	WHO global school-based student health survey	SIDS	Small Island Developing States
GYTS	WHO global youth tobacco survey	SNAP	Samoa National Action Plan on Youth Employment
HFLE	Health and Family Life Education	SOPY	State of Pacific Youth
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus	SPC	Pacific Community
HPS	Health Promoting Schools	SRH	Sexual and reproductive health
HRBA	Human rights-based approach	SRHS	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
ICT	Information and communication technology	STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
IER	Informal employment rate	STI	Sexually transmitted infection
ILO	International Labour Organization	TNYC	Tonga National Youth Congress
KIT	Kiribati Institute of Technology		
KTC	Kiribati Teachers College		
LGBTQI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex		



TVET	Technical and vocational education and training
TYEE	Tonga Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UBE	Universal basic education
UIS	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Institute of Statistics
UPE	Universal primary education
VNTC	Vanuatu National Training Council
WHO	World Health Organisation
Y@W	Youth@Work
YCV	Youth Challenge Vanuatu
YEP	Youth Entrepreneurship Programme
YUR	Youth unemployment rate

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is the fourth State of Pacific Youth (SOPY) report. Conducted every five years, they have presented situation analyses on the status of youth in the Pacific region, which have informed development policies and practices at the regional level and in 15 Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs).

This SOPY report extends the analysis of Pacific youth in several critical ways:

- It investigates a wider age group (10-24). This includes the period of adolescence (10-19) with that of youth (15-24). The extended age period under review (10-24) encapsulates the critical years of physical, neurocognitive, and social development that are critical to healthy and successful transitions to adulthood.
- It is built around a conceptual framework of Pacific youth development, which includes five key domains: i) health and wellbeing, ii) education and learning, iii) employability and employment, iv) civic and political participation, and v) protection and safety.
- Within each domain, key indicators have been defined harmonised with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators and other global efforts around adolescent and youth development. These indicators can provide a framework for monitoring the state of Pacific youth and ensuring accountability of investments. A core set of indicators is proposed.

The approach adopted in this report is inclusive, holistic, and rooted in positive youth development (i.e. it does not focus only on problem youth or problem issues). For each of the domains an indicator set has been selected and operationalized as far as possible. This is not a definitive set by any means, but rather an initiation of a dialogue in the region on developing and using appropriate indicators. Where possible these have been aligned with Pacific SDG indicators and SDG indicators more generally.

Adolescent and youth development represents a very broad canvas. This is all the more so in the context of a regional assessment among 15 PICTs. These encompass a widely differing set of country contexts. There is wide regional variation in many areas. There are commonalities in this context of diversity. This report focuses on the regional dimensions of adolescent and youth development. It is not exhaustive in terms of issues or details. It relies heavily on the availability of data for all PICTs in accordance with the selected indicators.

The three strategic recommendations of the SOPY 2011 report remain pertinent. There is a continuing need for the Pacific region to focus on: i) improving the governance of youth through laws, policies, plans, and programmes, ii) improving youth data collection and analysis, and iii) mobilising resources for youth.

Additional resources are required across the region to invest in adolescent and youth development so that this critically important population group is better prepared and supported to make the key transitions to adulthood effectively. Current investments are stymied by lack of rigorous attention to monitoring and evaluation of policies, strategies, and programmes. As a result, key statistical data are often unavailable across the region in education, health, and employment, in particular, for the adolescent and youth demographic. Thus, it is often difficult to track progress and trends with confidence. It is hard to find robust evidence for the impact of policies and programming.



There are long-term health problems, some of which have serious implications for adult wellbeing. There has been limited progress in improving health outcomes. The increase in non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is one that is particularly alarming and signals the need for increased financing for youth health services. Investments in health need to focus more on a life course and people-centred approach. This means tailoring interventions to evidence-based needs of adolescents and youth, including specific health service requirements and health promotion activities that would result in better health throughout the life course.

Some significant progress has been made in education, particularly in expanding opportunities in basic education (primary and lower secondary education). Adolescents and youth are progressively increasing their levels of attainment. This improvement in regional human capital matters for economic development. However, the quality of education and the acquisition of marketable skills matters more for the economy and for the transition to adulthood. There are long-term concerns about the quality of education at all levels and the preparation it provides for adult life.

Youth unemployment and lack of decent work constitute arguably the most significant problem for young males and even more for young females. PICTs economies are simply not generating the quality and quantity of work opportunities for young people leaving education. Young people could be better prepared for job seeking and entering the world of work. While creative solutions are required, it is critically important that youth employment is made central to national development in a holistic approach. The issue is complex and both demand and supply side responses need to be developed, informed by national development strategies. Measuring youth unemployment is difficult. The youth unemployment rate (YUR) alone is inadequate to measure the state of the labour market. In the region, there are significant data issues that undermine understanding of the problem. There is, however, enough data available to recognize youth employment as a serious challenge and the serious difficulties encountered in the transition from education to work, but not enough data to track progress. Going forward, investments need to be made in developing better quantitative measures of the problem.

Measuring civic and political participation is proving to be a major challenge. Youth themselves have functional structures at the regional and PICTs levels that provide opportunities for meaningful participation in decision making in areas that concern their development. More resourcing – financial, human and technical – is required for these organisations to improve the quantity, representativeness, and quality of participation across the region. A good start has been made, but this needs to be better evaluated, documented, and results tracked over time.

There is a need to address protection issues concerning young people in the Pacific region. They need to be protected from abuse and exploitation arising from their use in child labour, including commercial sexual exploitation, the prevalence of child marriage, gender-based violence (GBV), and high rates of homicide.

Youth development is being taken increasingly seriously at the regional and country levels. Almost all PICTs have national youth policies (NYPs) and a few have action plans for implementation. These set out the various national priorities for youth. The lack of detailed budgets and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks for these policies represent critical gaps in implementation effectiveness. The lack of budgets indicates a critical shortfall in resources to prepare young people

adequately with the various and changing capabilities needed for life in the Pacific region in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the opportunities to put these into practice, in decent work and participation in the community and in society.

Gender equality is a key issue across the five domains selected. Patterns of gendered disadvantage vary across PICTs, but the commonality is that understanding the nature of key policy issues to be faced in adolescent and youth development cannot be accomplished without sex disaggregated data and gender analyses. Young women face some of the most difficult issues such as unwanted pregnancies, GBV, and lack of employment opportunities.

The situation of young people with disabilities in the region seems little changed since SOPY 2011. Better statistics on disability, disaggregated by age and sex, are urgently needed across the region to track progress and the impact of interventions.

## OVERARCHING RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. **Improve data collection and analysis of adolescents and youth by:**

- Adopting a set of core indicators that can be used to monitor, report on, and track the progress of youth development across the Pacific region;
- Developing national institutional capacity to obtain disaggregated data and conduct trend analysis;
- Evaluating the performance and outcomes of NYP implementation; and
- Conducting policy-relevant research, including youth-led research, in priority areas for adolescent and youth development.

### 2. **Improve the governance of youth by:**

- Strengthening evidence-based NYP making and related planning, including ensuring that all NYPs have costed and time-bound action plans with robust M&E frameworks;
- Strengthening the capacity of national youth councils (NYCs) in supporting the creation of opportunities for the inclusive and meaningful participation of youth in policy making and programming; and
- Taking concrete steps to strengthen child protection systems and eliminate child labour, child marriage, and GBV, as well as addressing emerging issues such as on-line safety and cyber-bullying.

### 3. **Mobilise resources for adolescents and youth through:**

- Ensuring that all NYPs and action plans are clearly backed by adequate dedicated resources and budgets;
- Allocating additional resources to priority policy areas for adolescents and youth such as capacity building, establishing and expanding youth-friendly services (e.g. in health and employment), and creating opportunities for participation at the local and national level; and
- Allocating enhanced resources for research and evaluation regarding adolescent and youth priority issues, such as employment in decent work, civic participation, skills development, and wellbeing.

## DOMAIN SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Health and wellbeing

- i. **Reframe adolescent and youth health policy to better match health actions to needs.** The focus of youth policy needs to reflect the very different health needs of this population. There is a need to take a much broader and integrated view of adolescent health and youth, which includes (but is not limited to): suicide, but also fatal unintentional injury and non-fatal self-harm and assault; adolescent sexual health, but also reproductive health; mental health that addresses both the immediate burden of mental disorders, but also supports wellbeing; and key risks for future poor health, including overweight, nutrition, physical inactivity, and substance use.
- ii. **Strengthen health education and promotion at regional and individual PICT levels to strengthen the capacity of young people to practice healthy behaviours.** This needs to include the active and meaningful participation of adolescents and youth.
- iii. **Enable adolescent and youth participation in health policy making and programming.** There is much to do to increase the voice of young people in the field of health policy and programming that affects their lives. It is important to strengthen their participation in decision-making processes and their ability to advocate for better health for themselves and their families and communities.
- iv. **Improve access to quality youth-friendly health services generally, and specifically for sexual and reproductive health (SRH), including addressing barriers to contraceptive services for married and unmarried sexually active youth.** These enhance opportunities to make healthy choices. Programmes also need to be developed to deal with the adverse consequences of poor health behaviours or outcomes. For example programmes are needed to help youth overcome addiction (e.g. tobacco and alcohol), treat sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and provide access to emergency contraception. Counselling is an important service that needs to be made widely available given the emerging issues of teenage pregnancy and youth mental health.
- v. **Respond to adolescent and youth health needs through inter-sectoral collaboration.** Service systems need to be adapted to respond to the needs of adolescents and youth while taking into consideration culture, geography, family, and community resources. Many of the health needs of adolescents and youth, such as injury and violence, are best addressed through sectors other than health. Inter-sectoral action must include the education sector since schools can be effective health promoting environments.

### 2. Education and learning

- i. **Improve data availability and quality.** Continue efforts to strengthen data gathering and analysis at all levels of the education system. Particular attention needs to be given to improving the availability of good quality technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and tertiary education statistics.
- ii. **Improve the relevance of education to preparation for work and life.** Consider the development of regional/national policy frameworks on skills development relating to life skills, lifelong learning, health and wellbeing, employability and employment (including core work skills) and active citizenship. Focus more strongly on developing and

assessing skills and competencies. Areas for increased investment include: school health and nutrition (SHN) education, comprehensive sexuality education (CSE), technical and vocational skills and entrepreneurship education, citizenship education, and life skills education. Continue to support technical and vocational education and training (TVET) development across the region. Redouble efforts. Build the evidence base. Improve the provision of TVET information to young people.

**iii. Expand opportunities for young people to learn.**

Develop a multiple pathways approach to education. Invest in developing an enabling environment for a multiple pathways approach to enhancing opportunities for adolescents and youth. This includes second chance education opportunities. The policy framework would include the major pathways such as general education, TVET, workplace training, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and non-formal education (NFE). Local partners such as Chambers of Commerce should also be included. It is important to specify how different education and training providers, employers, unions, and other stakeholders will collaborate. This includes details of cooperation mechanisms together with clearly specified roles and responsibilities. It would also provide directions for collaboration in key activities such as curriculum development.

Identify and address disadvantages in adolescent and youth education at all levels arising from disability. Efforts need to be redoubled to bring about measurable positive outcomes for those with disabilities. Better data and increased financing are required.

**iv. Promote youth participation in the education sector.**

Develop the political space for young people to be involved in education policy and programming. Create an evidence base on youth perspectives on education. Strengthen the capacity of the Pacific Youth Council (PYC) and national youth councils (NYCs) to engage on an on-going basis in education development at both regional and country levels. Strengthen the education content of NYPs. Include an action plan, a budget, and an M&E framework.

### **3. Employment and employability**

**i. Invest in analytical work to support policy-making.**

There is an urgent need for more research on youth employment and employability in the region. An inclusive process to identify research gaps relating to youth employment and employability, with youth participation needs identified and taken forward.

**ii. Develop a comprehensive policy framework to address youth unemployment.**

This includes:

- **Policies to create an enabling environment for economic development.**
- **Creating an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises.**
- **Country-specific industrial policies** that address the potential for decent job creation and poverty reduction.
- **Policies to enhance human capital and employability.**
- **Policies to support the transition from school to work.** To support better employment opportunities for youth, it is important to invest in public employment services such as job centres. These can help young men and women find decent jobs by providing information about vacancies, training in interviewing skills and curriculum vitae writing, and referral to training schemes and providers.

- **Policies to establish and ensure inclusive employment.** PICTs governments have expressed a strong commitment to the economic empowerment of women. The immediate challenge is to implement these policy commitments. This includes removing practices in the workplace such as gender discrimination and sexual harassment. Disability is another issue that has only recently begun to receive attention from policy makers as a development and human rights issue.
- **Policies to foster well-managed labour migration and mobility.**
- **Supporting the development of National Youth Employment Plans (NYEPs).** NYEPs provide opportunities to develop better situation analyses at country levels, strengthen partnerships and build enabling environments. Regional and national youth organisations should actively participate in developing, as well as implementing, employment plans. NYEPs need to be costed and have a robust, practical M&E framework to track progress.
- **Supporting the integration of youth employment and employability strategies in NYEPs and accompanying action plans.** These need to be costed and have a robust, practical M&E framework to track progress. They also need to be aligned with relevant national policies and plans.

### iii. Build the capacity of national youth organisations.

The voice of youth is hard to find in the literature covering youth employment and employability in the Pacific region. Efforts need to be made to enhance inclusive youth voices and representation in decision-making concerning the development of employment opportunities for males and females, including among the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) communities. Youth with disabilities also need to be represented.

### iv. Enhance skills development for the labour market.

Skills development is an identified factor in the complex youth employment equation. Some actions to consider:

- **Invest in strengthening quality TVET development.** Continue with efforts to develop TVET as part of a multiple pathways approach to skills for employability development. Take steps to align TVET training with labour market demand. Involve youth organisations in the popularisation of TVET and gender mainstreaming.
- **Provide support for NGO programmes to develop employability and entrepreneurship skills as part of a multiple pathways approach to lifelong skills development.** Encourage NGOs to build capacity to deliver effective employability and entrepreneurship training for adolescents and youth. There are models of good practice internationally (e.g. the International Youth Foundation's Passport to Success programme for life skills development for employability).
- **Incorporate core workplace skills development in TVET programmes and other skills training.** Link core workplace skills development with life skills education and training in formal and informal education.
- **Invest in improving information and communication technology (ICT) skills for the labour market, including with TVET programming.**

## 4. Participation

- i. **Build the evidence base.** Select indicators for tracking youth participation and put in place appropriate mechanisms to regularly gather data. Develop a means of capturing, recording, and analysing outcome data from processes and projects/programmes that involve youth participation. Conduct systematic research (quantitative and qualitative) at the regional and country levels to obtain better evidence on the extent to which youth are able to participate, the quality of such participation, and the outcomes. Ensure all statistical data are disaggregated by sex.
- ii. **Build capacity for participation.** Invest in life skills education and citizenship education. Support participatory teaching and learning approaches in education. Mainstream active participation in all adolescent and youth development activities.
- iii. **Enhance youth voice.** Develop new ways for adolescents and youth to express their voices (e.g. through national youth opinion surveys either on their development in general or on specific issues/themes such as gender equality or employability). NYCs have an important role to play in promoting youth voice and finding creative ways to do so.
- iv. **Increase technical support and funding for NYCs.** NYCs can play an important leadership role in strengthening and expanding opportunities for youth participation, as well as developing M&E frameworks to track progress. The supporting role of the PYC is critically important in this regard.
- v. **Expand local opportunities for youth to participate.** Provide greater support for establishing and maintaining representative structures for youth and to establish networks reaching marginalised groups of youth or groups in specific sectors. This includes support for youth centres in both urban and rural settings. Provide technical and financial support to create youth volunteerism opportunities.
- vi. **Encourage youth activism in key issues that affect PICTs sustainable development.** Support youth activism in the fields of climate change, sustainable development, and disaster risk reduction. Disability is another important field. Provide support to NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) to support youth activists and train youth leadership.
- vii. **Engage and empower youth in all sustainable development activities.** Young people are powerful agents of change and must be engaged in any action around their development. Engagement should be supported with appropriate resources and time so that it is meaningful and respectful. Communities and families also play a key role in enabling and supporting adolescent development and they should be respectfully engaged and consulted.
- viii. **Ensure that NYPs promote civic and political participation.** NYPs should include a budget and M&E framework for youth participation.

## 5. Protection and safety

- i. **Invest in better data systems.** Strengthen child protection M&E systems. Conduct systematic research (quantitative and qualitative) at the regional and country levels to obtain better evidence on the extent to which adolescents and youth need, and are able to benefit from, protection interventions.
- ii. **Update national youth policies as well as relevant sectoral policies** to incorporate key protection issues such as child labour, child marriage, GBV, and sexual harassment. Ensure NYPs include all relevant protection issues, a budget, and an M&E framework.
- iii. **Strengthen the child protection and technological capacity of law enforcement agencies.** Strengthen linkages with national child protection systems in NYPs and with national youth organisations to eliminate child labour, child marriage, and GBV, and to address emerging on-line issues such as cyber protection.
- iv. **Make digital citizenship a priority in on-line child protection policies.** Digital skills, including safety on-line, must be taught from the earliest stage possible. In practice, for today's environment, this means from early primary (or elementary) school age.

Engage with children to develop robust research on child on-line safety and integrate those findings in child protection systems. Develop consistent indicators to assess and monitor child on-line safety. Develop a coordinated strategy for awareness raising and education on child on-line safety for different actors. This includes engaging with and empowering parents, guardians, teachers, and other authority figures with whom young people regularly interact.

- v. **Build the capacity of national youth organisations and NGOs** to enable youth participation in support of national legislation, policies, and programmes to address GBV, child marriage, child labour, violence, and crime/juvenile justice. Encourage youth activism to eliminate child labour, child marriage, and GBV.
- vi. **Develop youth capabilities to enhance protection efforts.** Life skills development is needed from an early age to support personal empowerment among youth through the building of resilience, self-esteem, negotiation skills, communication skills, critical thinking, and problem solving.



## 6. Recommended core adolescent and youth development indicators for the Pacific region

It is recommended that a set of core indicators be used to report regularly on the status of Pacific adolescents and youth, for example in future SOPY reports (see Table 1).

The indicators have been selected according to the following criteria:

- **Availability.** Data were most complete in the SOPY report research process and thus contribute to an existing platform for reporting;
- **Importance.** Indicators are selected according to their importance in tracking key trends in the five domains. With many of these, more work is needed to operationalize these indicators, some of which are new to the Pacific region. Thus data may not be available immediately, but it is clearly important to be able to assess learning outcomes from education and how many young people are not in employment, education, or training.
- **Comprehensiveness.** Indicators for all five domains of adolescent and youth development in this report's conceptual framework are included.
- **Statistical burden.** It is important not to impose a statistical burden on PICTs that have relatively weak capacity in this field. Accordingly, relatively few indicators have been selected to cover a wide range of adolescent and youth developmental issues, focusing on selected key issues identified in this report.
- **Strong weighting given to the preparation of adolescents and youth for the key transitions to adult life.** This means that there are more indicators for i) health and wellbeing and for ii) education and learning than there are for other domains. These two domains are critically important for all young people to acquire the capabilities for a successful adult life and to participate effectively in the sustainable development of the Pacific region.



**Table 1. Core indicators for the Pacific region for adolescent and youth development**

<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	<b>Education and learning</b>	<b>Employment and employability</b>	<b>Civic and political participation</b>	<b>Protection and safety</b>
All cause mortality rate.  All cause mortality for 10-24-year-olds per 100,000	Learning outcomes.  Percentage of children and young people at the end of primary and at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics, by sex. Data disaggregation by sex, location, socioeconomic status, and other characteristics (e.g. disability status).	NEET rate (and NEET-Plus).  Percentage of 15-24-year-olds who are not in education, employment, or training.  Data disaggregated by sex.	Proportion of youth (engaged in activities involving the wider community).  Proportion of youth (15-19) and (20-24) engaged in activities involving the wider community.	Child labour.  Proportion and number of children aged 10-17 years engaged in child labour by sex.
Suicide mortality rate.  Mortality rate due to suicide (10-24 years)	Learning outcomes.  Proportion of youth/adults with ICT, by type of skill	Youth unemployment rate. Proportion of the youth labour force who are unemployed.  Data disaggregated by age, sex and disability.	Volunteering.  Proportion of young people (15-24) who are involved in volunteering (in past month).	Child marriage.  Percentage of 20-24-year-olds in union before the age of 18.

Health and wellbeing	Education and learning	Employment and employability	Civic and political participation	Protection and safety
<p>HIV prevalence rate (15-24).</p>	<p>Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education).</p> <p>Percentage of children or young people aged 3-5 years above the intended age for the last grade of each level of education who have completed that grade. Data disaggregated by age, sex, location, income and disability status.</p>	<p>Average hourly earnings of female and male employees by occupation, age and disability status.</p> <p>Average hourly earnings of female and male employees aged 15-24 by occupation, and disability status.</p>	<p>Youth who are involved in youth-led climate change programmes.</p> <p>Proportion of youth (15-24) who are involved in youth-led climate change programmes.</p>	<p>Gender-based violence.</p> <p>Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15-19 and 20-24 subjected to physical or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the past 12 months.</p> <p>Data disaggregated for 15-24 age group.</p>
<p>Adolescent birth rate.</p> <p>Annual number of births per 1,000 female adolescents (10-14 and 15-19).</p>				
<p>Overweight and obesity.</p> <p>Prevalence of overweight and obesity (10-24 years).</p>	<p>Out of school rate (primary education, secondary education, upper secondary education).</p> <p>Children and young people in the official age range for the given level of education not enrolled in primary, secondary, or higher levels of education.</p>		<p>Political participation.</p> <p>Proportion of young people 20-24 who are registered to vote.</p>	

Health and wellbeing	Education and learning	Employment and employability	Civic and political participation	Protection and safety
<p>Anaemia.</p> <p>Prevalence among 10-24-year-old males, and pregnant and non-pregnant females.</p>	<p>Participation rate in technical and vocational programmes (15-24), by sex.</p> <p>Percentage of youth aged 15-24 participating in TVET in formal education, work-based, or other settings on a given date or during a specific period.</p>			
<p>Alcohol and tobacco use.</p> <p>Alcohol use: Percentage of adolescents 13-15 years who had a least one alcoholic drink on at least one or more days during the past 30 days.</p> <p>Harmful use of alcohol (binge drinking): Episode of binge alcohol use (.48 grams of alcohol for females; 60g for males).</p> <p>Tobacco use: Daily tobacco smoking (10-24 years).</p>	<p>Quality/Relevance.</p> <p>Percentage of schools that provide life skills-based HIV and sexuality education.</p>			

Health and wellbeing	Education and learning	Employment and employability	Civic and political participation	Protection and safety
Unmet need for contraception.				
The percentage of women of reproductive age (18-24), either married or in a union, who have an unmet need for family planning.				



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth State of Pacific Youth (SOPY) report. Spanning almost two decades, SOPY has become an authoritative situation analysis on youth development across Pacific island countries and territories (PICTs). Previous reports were published in 1998, 2005, and 2011. The previous SOPY report (UNICEF, 2011) concluded that the overall situation of young people had changed little and, if anything, the challenges had become more critical. It highlighted the importance of investing in youth development through improving governance relating to youth, data collection and analysis, and resource mobilisation.

This latest report provides a stocktake of progress across a broad range of development issues and attempts to analyse any significant changes that have taken place in the period since 2011, including the uptake of recommendations made in the last report. It provides recommendations on ways to strengthen policies and programming at the regional and country levels. The intended audience of this report includes policy makers in government, regional bodies, international agencies, NGOs, and young people themselves.

As with previous reports, SOPY 2017 draws upon available data. However, this report differs from previous reports by developing a conceptual framework and suggested indicators that can support a more systematic approach to monitoring youth development across the Pacific region. Thus, SOPY 2017 involves a strong focus on obtaining relevant quantitative data and is, as a consequence, more data-focussed than its predecessors. The hope is that this will provide a platform for evidence-based policy making and the monitoring of youth development across the Pacific region. It is further hoped that the data obtained and analysed will help make a better case for investing in young people, including the identification of priorities for resource allocation.

## 1.1 Rationale for investing in youth development in the Pacific region

There are strong arguments for investing in adolescent and youth development. They include the following put forward by the Asia-Pacific Interagency Group on Youth (2011), Commonwealth Secretariat (2016), Kochendorfer-Lucius and Pleskovic (2007), UNICEF (2011), and the World Bank (2003, 2007):

- It is a means of realizing rights and a right in itself;
- It is the most effective way of consolidating gains in early and middle childhood, especially in education and health;
- It is needed to facilitate important transitions from childhood to adulthood, such as starting work, forming families, and exercising citizenship;
- It is needed to address risky and antisocial behaviours emerging in this age group;
- It can accelerate progress in addressing poverty, inequity, inequality, and gender discrimination;
- It can support efforts to address intergenerational issues, such as climate change, environmental degradation, conflict and natural disasters, rapid urbanization, ageing in societies, and migration.

The adolescent and youth population is the future, but at the same time it is an important part of the present situation. Young people are a resource characterised by energy, imagination, and talent.

They constitute a key national asset for long-term national development.

## 1.2 Defining adolescence and youth for the Pacific

### Adolescence as a developmental stage

Development for the adolescent/youth demographic is now a recognised area of international and national policy. For example, the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health has now been extended to include adolescents. This is because the health of adolescents is now recognised as providing the platform for the long-term development of societies. A substantial number of countries have put in place national policies for adolescent and youth development. Various international agencies have developed strategies to guide their work with young people – for example, the UNDP Youth Strategy, the UNFPA strategy on adolescents and youth, and the UN system-wide approach to youth.

### Defining adolescent and youth development

Adolescent and youth development is defined as:

*Enhancing the status of young people, empowering them to build on their competencies and capabilities for life. It will enable them to contribute to and benefit from a politically stable, economically viable, and legally supportive environment, ensuring their full participation as active citizens in their countries. (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2013)*

Adolescent and youth development involves preparation and support for making key transitions from childhood to adulthood. These include post-primary learning, starting a productive working life, adopting healthy lifestyles, forming a family, and exercising citizenship (World Bank, 2007). Successful transitions in these areas are important for the development, protection, and deployment of human capital. The transitions vary across cultural, economic, and political contexts.

Successful transitions are facilitated by the development of capabilities, access to resources and opportunities, meaningful participation, and protection. Capabilities are fundamental to individual wellbeing and are the means through which individuals access other forms of wellbeing. Basic capabilities are typically acquired through education, health, and nutrition. Access to resources and opportunities involves the ability to use or apply basic capabilities through access to economic assets (such as land or housing) and resources (such as information, services, income, and employment), as well as political opportunities (such as representation in parliaments and other political bodies).

Without access to resources and opportunities, both political and economic, young people will be unable to employ their capabilities for their wellbeing and that of their families, communities, and societies. There are enormous benefits to countries when they support the meaningful participation of youth in the structures, processes, decisions, and environments that shape their lives. This involves creating mechanisms for youth that connect to a "citizenship framework", to governance systems, and to duty-bearer responsibility for engagement, as well as education, health, and nutrition information. This also helps to explain the potential for investing in youth development. Protection and security is needed to reduce vulnerability to violence and exploitation. Violence and conflict result in physical and psychological harm and lessen the ability of individuals, households, and communities to fulfil their potential.

## Defining an appropriate age band for SOPY 2017

The report covers the age range 10-24, which includes the period of adolescence (10-19) and youth (15-24). The decision to review a broader demographic is based on a strong argument for incorporating adolescence with youth in reporting on youth in the Pacific region. The two periods representing 10-19 and 15-24 age groups are overlapping and to some extent indivisible. There is no clear boundary between the categories in that a substantial number of adolescents can be categorised as youth and vice versa. Development in this age group represents more a continuum than age-defined stages. For example, standard levels of education reflect a progression that covers both the periods of adolescence and youth. A similar situation pertains in health. The 10-24 year group is being used more consistently in the global adolescent health literature as it more reliably encapsulates the biological, social, and neurocognitive developments that are typical of this age group. Education and health exemplify the foundational nature of adolescent development for subsequent youth development.

While the biology of adolescence is a universal phenomenon of humans, there is great variation in the way different cultures and communities interpret and articulate this passage. Some cultures may not recognize a developmental period of adolescence, but there are developmental commonalities in human development across a diverse range of societies, which are best conceptualized within the time frame of the 10-24 age group. It is important to recognise that the 10-24 age group is heterogeneous. Those at the lower end (10-15) face different issues from the upper end (18-24). It also includes youth definitions adopted by PICTs that extend beyond the age of 24, such as in Papua New Guinea (15-30), the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), Nauru, Niue, and Palau (15-34). This is an expanded age range from that covered in previous SOPY reports.

Definitions of the youth period vary in terms of its duration in the Pacific region (see Table 2), but there is broad agreement on its importance as a key stage in personal development in the life course. Youth development prepares the stage for adulthood and full participation in society, from dependent to independent living. The success of this transition across the youth population has profound implications for social and economic development.

**Table 2. Social and cultural definitions of youth in the Pacific**

PICT	Definition of youth (years of age) in national youth policies	Previous definitions of youth	Target groups
Cook Islands	15-24 (2015-2020)	15-34	At risk youth.
Fiji	15-35 (2011)	-	Vulnerable youth.
Federated States of Micronesia	15-35 (2004-2010)	-	School drop outs, youth who are sexually active, youth who are involved in substance abuse, youth with physical and mental health concerns, youth with special needs, youth in violence and youth with low income, youth who are not culturally conversant, juvenile offenders, juvenile victims of crime, idle youth.
Kiribati	15-29 (2011)	-	Groups who face greater marginalisation: young women, young men, youth living with disabilities, unemployed young men and women, school aged out of school youth, youth in rural areas, youth at risk.

PICT	Definition of youth (years of age) in national youth policies	Previous definitions of youth	Target groups
Marshall Is.	12-24 (2009-2014)	-	-
Nauru	15-34 (2008-2015)	-	Unemployed young people, school drop outs and push outs, young people with disabilities, "night shifters", juvenile offenders, young women, single parents, young married couples.
Niue	15-34 (2009-2013)	-	-
Palau	13-24 (2016-2021)	15-35 (2005)	-
Papua New Guinea	12-25 (2007-2017)	-	-
Samoa	12-29 (20001-2010)	-	-
Solomon Is.	14-29 (2010-2015)	-	-
Tokelau	-	-	-
Tonga	-	-	-
Tuvalu	15-34 (2005-2010)	-	Rural youth, youth with special needs, unemployed youth.
Vanuatu	12-30 (2012-2022)	-	Youth in rural areas, youth at risk, out of school and unemployed youth, female adolescent/youth, youth with disabilities, talented/gifted youth.

### 1.3 Positioning SOPY 2017 in the broader context of the Pacific

The geographical scope of this report includes the following countries and territories: the Cook Islands, FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea (PNG), Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

The Pacific region has three sub-regions, with the 15 PICTs grouped as follows: Melanesia (Fiji, PNG, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu), Micronesia (FSM, Kiribati, RMI, Nauru, and Palau) and Polynesia (the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Tokelau, Tonga, and Tuvalu). With the exception of Tokelau, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs lists all of the PICTs as Small Island Developing States (SIDS). SIDS were first recognized as a distinct group of developing countries at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Agenda 21, the outcome document of that conference, stated that SIDS are a special case both for environment and development. They are ecologically fragile and vulnerable. Their small size, limited resources, geographic dispersion and isolation from markets, place them at an economic disadvantage and prevent economies of scale (United Nations, 1992, Article 17.123).

Vulnerability to climate change, particularly for SIDS, is widely recognised as a major concern. Changing agricultural conditions threaten food security for both rural and urban populations, and are especially likely to hit the poorest countries and population groups. Even more serious may be water salinization and land loss due to rising sea levels and coastal inundation. The case of low lying atoll nations such as Tuvalu and Kiribati provide dramatic examples. In the worst scenario, entire nations would need to be resettled in a new homeland, and islanders would become climate refugees.

## Demography

The population of the Pacific region is young. The median age<sup>1</sup> is an indicator of the age distribution of a population (see table). In the case of the Pacific region, the total is 22.6, which is indicative of a young population. The range is from 35.6 in Palau, which is characteristic of an older population such as is found in Europe, to 19.4 in the Solomon Islands, which indicates a very young population.

Three countries (Fiji, PNG, and the Solomon Islands) account for 90 per cent of the total PICTs population (UNFPA, 2015). Table 3 presents the most recent SPC population estimates (2016).<sup>2</sup>

Within the small total PICTs population, youth looms large. The Pacific region is characterised by a youth bulge. This can be discerned for the countries with data for the 15-24 age group as a percentage of the total population (see Table 3). The highest percentages in 2016 are to be found in FSM and PNG with more than 20 per cent of the population in this age group, closely followed by Vanuatu, Tonga, and Tuvalu. The lowest percentage is in Palau (13.4 per cent).

**Table 3. PICTs demography: population estimations 2016 (SPC)**

PICT	Total	15-24	15-24 % of population	Median age
Cook Islands	15,200	2,500	16.2	31.1
Fiji	880,400	151,600	17.2	28.5
Kiribati	-	-	-	-
Marshall Islands	55,000	10,600	19.3	-
Micronesia	104,600	21,900	20.9	23.3
Nauru	10,800	1,800	16.9	20.8
Niue	-	-	-	35.6
Palau	17,800	2,400	13.4	36.5
Papua New Guinea	8,151,300	1,641,000	20.1	21.8
Samoa	194,000	38,200	19.7	20.3
Solomon Islands	651,700	120,600	18.5	19.4
Tokelau	-	-	-	25.6
Tonga	100,600	19,100	18.9	22.6
Tuvalu	10,100	1,900	18.7	25.1
Vanuatu	287,700	56,400	19.5	21.3

<sup>1</sup> Median age is the age that divides a population into two numerically equal groups - that is, half the people are younger than this age and half are older. It is a single index that summarizes the age distribution of a population.

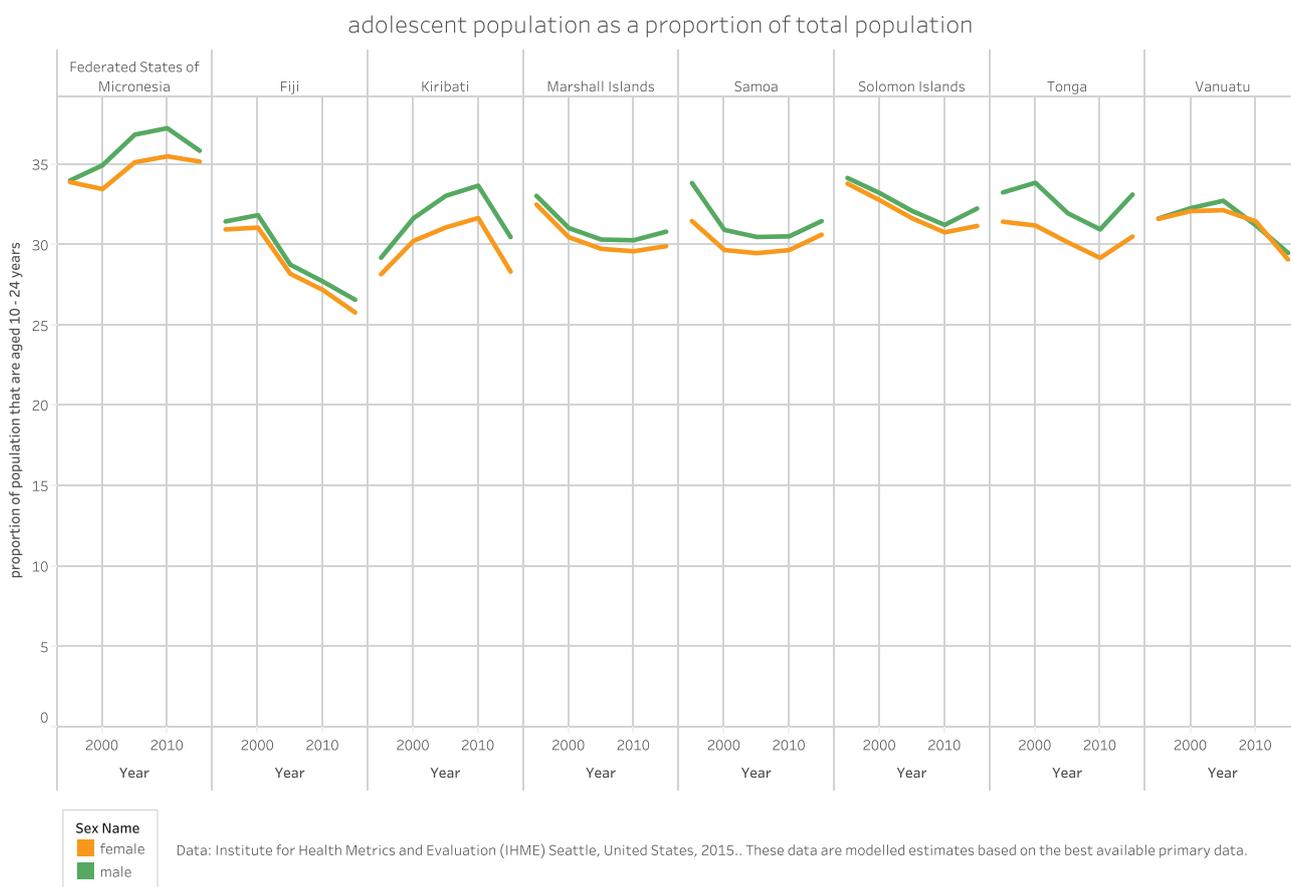
<sup>2</sup> <http://sdd.spc.int/en/news/latest-news/124-population-projections-by-pacific-island-countries->

At the lower end of the continuum, annual average growth rates (%) range from 0.2 in Tuvalu to 0.3 in FSM and RMI, 0.4 in Tonga, 0.6 in Fiji, 0.8 in Samoa and 0.9 in Palau. At the higher end and facing more difficult challenges in population growth management are Kiribati (1.6), PNG and the Solomon Islands (2.1), and Vanuatu (2.2), according to 2014/2015 data (Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific, 2015). In contrast, Niue is experiencing a decline in population (-2.8 per cent in 2014).

Despite the small populations, there are patterns of high population density, particularly in atoll communities in Kiribati, RMI, and Tuvalu. These represent particularly fragile environments with water supply systems, and sanitation and solid waste management under severe pressure with attendant health and environmental risks.

In most of the countries presented for the period 2000-2010, close to a third of the total population is in the 10-24 age group (see Figure 1). The highest proportion is in FSM, and Fiji has the lowest. In some countries (FSM, Fiji, Kiribati, and Vanuatu) there has been a decline in the proportion of this age group in the decade. Some countries however, display an increase (Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Tonga), which indicates the persistence of a youth bulge for some time yet.

**Figure 1. 10-24 age group as proportion of the total population**



## Youth bulge and demographic dividend

The size of the large youth cohort increases competition for jobs and other opportunities. It is a common phenomenon for many youth to migrate to urban centres in search of work. The intersection of the youth bulge with poverty, urbanization, and unemployment is a factor that can lead to political instability and social development problems such as higher crime rates (Bloom and Williamson, 1998). However, under the right conditions, youth bulges can contribute to demographic dividends rather than civil strife.

A demographic dividend is the tendency for economic growth to be accelerated by the rapid growth of the working age segment of the population. This can occur when the consumption needs of large numbers of children are reduced and resources are shifted to other investments, including physical capital and technological change. As a country's total fertility rate falls, child dependents begin to decrease relative to the working-age population. This constitutes a fall in the dependency ratio.<sup>3</sup> Families are thus able to concentrate their resources on the education, health, and wellbeing of fewer children. Women with a reduced child-rearing burden are more able to enter the formal labour market. Countries need to spend less on education and child health and can capitalize on increased productivity and potentially higher savings.

For countries to benefit from a demographic dividend, the enabling environment must be favourable to ensure that an increased supply of workers is gainfully employed. This entails good economic management and good governance, including effective policy-making and strong institutional structures. Key institutional frameworks for education, health, the economy, and governance must be in place to convert the growing labour force into a skilled and effective workforce.

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<sup>3</sup> The dependency ratio is the ratio of actual non-workers to actual workers, which takes into account both unemployment and underemployment by considering the extent of absorption into the available labour force.



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## 2. AN INDICATOR FRAMEWORK FOR ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH IN THE PACIFIC

### 2.1 The need for indicators

As previously reported by SOPY (UNICEF, 2011), patterns of adolescent and youth development vary widely across the Pacific. In this context, indicators can help to identify local priorities and needs. They can also help to monitor the implementation and effectiveness of specific programmes and policies, critical in the context of limited resources and competing needs. Relevant to this SOPY report, indicators also enable comparison across Pacific nations. This can help to identify where resources should be prioritised within the Pacific community. Box 1 describes criteria for good quality indicators.

#### **BOX 1. Criteria for quality indicator definition** (sourced from Azzopardi, UNICEF)

Indicators should:

- Be timely and address a topic of public policy importance or a priority question for a programme of interest; in essence, they should be compelling in catalysing further action
- Be valid, reliable and easily interpretable in relation to the topic of interest, and comparable across settings and over time
- Be measurable and have an accompanying measurement strategy either through a feasible new data collection or through pre-existing data collections
- Link to policy and programming priorities at a national (or global) level

### 2.2 An approach to defining indicators for Pacific adolescents and youth

Defining indicators for adolescents and youth in the Pacific is not a simple task. There is currently no agreed set of indicators for this age group in the Pacific, or indeed globally. There are substantial issues with data quality and availability. It can also be difficult to measure the broad range of issues that are relevant to adolescents, both within the developmental stage that is adolescence, but also across gender and culture.

There are, however, increasingly good examples of indicators for adolescent health. For example, the Lancet Commission on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing defined 12 headline indicators for adolescent health globally - UNICEF has proposed 25 indicators of adolescent health in the form of the National Adolescent Assessment Card. Many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) also relate to and are relevant to adolescent health.

For this report we have attempted to define headline indicators for adolescents and youth in the Pacific – by headline, we mean the core issues that affect most adolescents. We have attempted to define indicators that can be largely populated with comparable data across nations. We have also tried to keep the indicator set focussed and as small as possible – this is particularly important given the large number of other indicators on which the Pacific must report.

The approach to defining indicators involved several key steps:

- We first defined a conceptual framework of key issues and needs as they relate to adolescents and youth in the Pacific. We did this by reviewing conceptual frameworks for adolescent and youth development previously defined for the Pacific and globally. We also sought input from a broad range of stakeholders. The conceptual framework was structured in a hierarchal fashion and included broad domains, more focussed subdomains, and specific elements to enable the identification of measurable indicators.
- We defined indicators against elements of the conceptual framework. Indicators were selected that could be harmonised with existing indicator constructs (such as the SDGs, UNICEF National Adolescent Assessment Card, indicators proposed by the World Health Organization (WHO) around adolescent health, SDGs relevant to adolescent and youth development, and the Commonwealth Youth Development Index) as previously mapped (see Azzopardi, UNICEF 2017).
- We sought to ensure alignment of the selected SOPY indicators with Pacific indicator frameworks relevant to adolescent and youth development.
- Finally, we identified a suggested set of core indicators to measure and track adolescent and youth development.

## 2.3 A conceptual framework for adolescent and youth development in the Pacific region

### Synthesis of previous conceptual frameworks

Previous SOPY reports have identified a number of key issues or challenges facing youth in the Pacific. These are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Key issues in the Pacific region for youth as identified in previous SOPY reports**

Report	Issues identified
<b>State of Pacific Youth 1998 (UNICEF, 1998)</b>	<p>Young age structure of the population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education challenges;</li> <li>• Limited employment opportunities;</li> <li>• Crime and juvenile delinquency.</li> </ul> <p>Health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) issues;</li> <li>• Mental health and suicide;</li> <li>• Substance abuse.</li> </ul>

Report	Issues identified
<b>State of the Pacific Youth 2005 (UNICEF, 2005)</b>	<p>Four key economic and structural causes of youth issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Poverty;</li> <li>▪ Education systems focussed on white collar employment skills;</li> <li>▪ Stagnating economies that do not provide enough employment opportunities;</li> <li>▪ Rural-urban inequalities.</li> </ul> <p>Four underlying causes relating to behaviours and attitudes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Conflict between traditional and modern cultures;</li> <li>▪ Authoritarian parenting methods;</li> <li>▪ Gender discrimination and discrimination against minorities;</li> <li>▪ Disempowerment and lack of voice in social dialogue.</li> </ul>
<b>Mapping the Youth Challenge (SPC, 2009)</b>	<p>Common priority issues identified were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unemployment;</li> <li>▪ Limited educational opportunities (post-basic/tertiary education);</li> <li>▪ Health (SRH, mental and emotional health);</li> <li>▪ Lack of support mechanisms;</li> <li>▪ Engagement, participation, and representation (empowerment and participation in decision making);</li> <li>▪ Gender inequality (the situation of young women);</li> <li>▪ Conflict with the law (crime and delinquency);</li> <li>▪ Rural to urban migration;</li> <li>▪ Culture and tradition (lack of respect and knowledge).</li> </ul>
<b>State of the Pacific Youth, 2011 (UNICEF, 2011)</b>	<p>Three opportunity profiles were identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Educated and healthy, but stalled (lack of jobs, limited access to post-secondary education, remedial help needed for tertiary education);</li> <li>▪ Disadvantaged (poor quality education, illiteracy, adolescent mothers);</li> <li>▪ Severely disadvantaged (living with HIV, disability).</li> </ul> <p>Downsides of urban life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Poverty;</li> <li>▪ Alcohol and drug abuse;</li> <li>▪ Suicide and attempted suicide.</li> </ul>

SOPY 2011 (UNICEF, 2011) recommendations were framed at the regional level and grouped into three broad clusters. These were:

- i) governance issues related to young people and the need for a more coordinated approach focused on youth transition, specific strategies on key youth issues, and scaling up existing youth activities;
- ii) data collection and analysis with a proposed set of key youth measures; and
- iii) mobilising more resources.

The specific issues to be addressed were:

- Youth employment;
- Improving learning outcomes at each level of education;
- Improving literacy levels, focusing on school leavers who have limited or no literacy;
- Community engagement through volunteering; and
- Improving the lives of young people with disabilities.

The **Pacific Youth Development Framework (PYDF)** 2014-2023 was developed by the Pacific Community (SPC, 2014)). It was strongly influenced by the earlier Pacific Youth Strategy and its review together with the findings of the SOPY 2011 report. It provides a framework that aims to be a catalyst for investment in youth in the Pacific region. It notes the imperative of strengthening data collection and analysis to better understand the situation of youth. Common youth policy components from PICTs were compiled and young people determined the top four priorities. There are three main outcome areas: employment, health and participation (influence in decision making), and environmental action (see Table 5).

The PDYF approach to youth development is rights-based. It emphasises positive youth development as well as effective youth participation in governance and decision making that empowers young people. This entails partnerships where all parties have the mandate to express their views and make decisions. The quality of participation is at least as important as the quantity. The approach is inclusive, aiming to target marginalised youth who are not in education, employment, or training (NEETs) as well as youth living with disabilities, young women, rural youth, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex (LGBTQI) youth to enable them to make successful youth transitions.

**Table 5. PYDF outcome areas**

Outcome area	Outcomes	Indicator areas
<b>Employment</b>	More young people have secured decent employment	<p>Young people have increased access to relevant education and training in informal and vocational sectors</p> <p>More young people are involved in entrepreneurship</p> <p>Youth friendly employment services are established to connect young people to employment services</p>
<b>Health</b>	Young people’s health and wellbeing status is improved	<p>Young people’s mental health and wellbeing is improved</p> <p>Young people’s sexual and reproductive health is improved</p> <p>Young people’s nutrition and physical activity is improved</p>

Outcome area	Outcomes	Indicator areas
<b>Participation</b>	Governance structures empower young people to increase their influence in decision making processes	<p>Responsive structures for youth are strengthened and are inclusive of diverse groups</p> <p>Governments increase investments in youth development across sectors</p> <p>Governments and representative structures for youth share responsibilities in development processes</p>
<b>Environment</b>	Environmental action is increasingly led and influenced by young people	<p>More young people are engaged in innovative initiatives addressing food and water security</p> <p>More young people are leading climate change monitoring and adaptation programmes</p> <p>More young people are engaged in promoting sustainable environmental practices</p>

## Conceptual framework for this report

Based on the synthesis presented above, a conceptual framework of five key domains was developed for this report (see Table 6). The proposed conceptual framework is consistent with global frameworks around adolescent development, including the Youth Development Index. Key stakeholders were consulted, which included young people, key UN agencies in the Pacific, the Commonwealth Secretariat, the SPC, and the Pacific Youth Council (PYC) and they endorsed this framework.

**Table 6. The five domains of adolescent and youth development adopted in this report**

Domain	Rationale
<b>Health and wellbeing</b>	<p>Health and nutrition constitute key capabilities for youth. It is during the period of adolescent/youth development that many important behaviours are adopted that persist into adulthood and affect future wellbeing. In particular, substance use, diet, and physical activity all change rapidly across adolescence, with important implications across the life course, and for the health of the next generation. Injuries and mental disorders typically arise during adolescence, as do poor health related to sexual and reproductive health.</p> <p>While young people generally constitute a healthy population, they also experience important health outcomes that represent opportunities for health gain. Youth is a time of physical, social, and emotional maturation when risky behaviours are first initiated (World Bank, 2003), particularly risks relating to sexual health and drug-related health. HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are a health risk for youth.</p>

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
<b>Education and learning</b>	<p>Education is a key means of equipping young people for capabilities for life. This includes literacy, numeracy, and life skills. It opens up opportunities and enhances life chances. Education is delivered through formal and non-formal modalities.</p> <p>It contributes to the other capabilities such as health and wellbeing as well as access to opportunities, e.g. employment and employability.</p> <p>Education is also supportive of meaningful participation and protection.</p>
<b>Employment and employability</b>	<p>Decent work and livelihood creation are major determinants in the socio-economic empowerment of youth as well as contributing to sustainable human development overall (UNDP, 2014).</p> <p>Starting a productive working life for young people involves the transition to a working life, which is possibly the most important youth transition of all. It is important to prevent young people from starting work too early, when they are at risk of exploitation and have not yet acquired the skills necessary for this and other transitions.</p>
<b>Civic and political participation</b>	<p>Youth is the time when young people acquire their own voice and political perspectives. The right to vote is usually granted to those turning 18. At this age, as members of the community, young people exercise the rights and duties of citizenship.</p> <p>When young people understand their rights, they can become empowered to engage in civil society, public service, and political processes (UNDP, 2014). They can be positive agents of change in their community and nationally.</p>
<b>Protection and safety</b>	<p>Protection is a key dimension of empowerment. Youth, especially vulnerable and marginalized youth, need protection and security in order to fulfil their potential in developing capabilities and accessing opportunities.</p> <p>Violence and crime are affecting an increasing number of young people in the region. Other issues include child labour, child marriage, incarceration, and gender-based violence.</p>

Within each of the five domains of the conceptual framework, sub-domains were then defined. These are detailed in turn below. Within each sub-domain we then defined specific elements (or measurable units) against which indicators could be defined. To simplify reporting, the elements of the conceptual framework are presented alongside the indicators in the next section.

## Health and wellbeing

The reporting of health in this report is framed around three key subdomains:

- **Key health outcomes:** These include mortality, disease, and injury that relate to poor health status for young people during the 10-24 year period.
- **Key health risks:** These include behaviours (such as substance use) and states (such as obesity), which relate to current and future poor health outcomes, and for intergenerational health. For example, teenage pregnancy is also an important risk for both young people and their children.
- **Health service response:** This includes policies that relate to the enabling environment for improving health outcomes and mitigating health risks.

## Education and learning

Education can be summarised in terms of the following issues:

- **Attainment:** Educational attainment is a term commonly used by statisticians to refer to the highest degree of education an individual has completed. This includes access to primary, lower and upper secondary education, and post secondary/tertiary education.
- **Quality of education:** This includes the relevance of learning to the development needs of young people, both for immediate use and for the transition to adulthood. It also includes learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes for lifelong development.
- **Equity and inclusion:** Equity concerns access to educational opportunities for disadvantaged populations such as young people with disabilities, rural youth, and those living in remote communities.
- **Policy response:** Education and learning for adolescence and youth development require appropriate legal and policy frameworks.

## Employability and employment

The key issues to measure in employment and employability for youth development are:

- **Employment outcomes disaggregated by sex:** Employment outcomes as measured by:
  - i) NEET Rate in youth population: percentage of 15-29 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (ILO);
  - ii) Youth unemployment ratio: the ratio of youth (15-24) unemployment to adult employment rates;
  - iii) Youth unemployment rate (YUR) by level of completed education (e.g. primary, secondary, and tertiary);
  - iv) Youth unemployment by disadvantaged group: female, with disability, etc.; and
  - v) Vulnerable employment, casual paid employment, and temporary (non-casual) paid employment among youth.
- **Services to assist job seekers:** These include active labour market interventions.
- **Gender equality:** Sex disaggregated data.
- **Policy response:** Policies for expanding employment opportunities among youth; national youth policy (NYP); national strategy for youth employment; national youth employment programme.
- **Resources:** Government spending and financial allocations for youth employment.

## Civic and political participation

While participation is clearly an important issue for young people, defining sub-domains was challenging given the infancy of this construct in the literature. The key issues to consider for data gathering and analysis around participation include the following:

- **Youth involvement:** The role youth have in influencing policy and programme design and implementation; number of youth participating in programme design and delivery; opportunities for experiential learning.
- **Youth leadership:** Taking primary responsibility for developing plans; taking decisions; and solving problems.
- **Quality of participation:** Breadth and intensity of participation; type of engagement; types of activities; duration of participation; relationship with adults; opportunities for skills building; and level of structure within the programme (Bohnert et al, 2010).
- **Impact of participation:** Outcomes that can be attributed to youth participation.
- **Opportunity to participate:** Presence of structures for inclusive youth participation (e.g. national youth councils or NYCs, local level youth bodies, youth-led community-based organizations (CBOs), youth organizations, student councils, political parties, use of social media).
- **Gender equality:** Sex disaggregated data.
- **Policy response:** Existence of an NYP with clear directions for youth participation; national strategy for youth participation; targeted strategy for participation of marginalized populations; government funding to support youth participation.

There are a number of specific methodologies for assessing youth participation. These include community-based participatory research, youth led-participatory action research, youth participatory evaluation and community youth mapping. There is a lack of data on youth participation research methodologies in use in the Pacific region.

Interventions and programmes aimed at promoting youth participation implemented in the Pacific region need to be robustly evaluated, documented, and made available to regional audiences as a way of exchanging best practices and enhancing opportunities for meaningful and effective participation.

## Protection and safety

Protection and safety can be considered a key dimension of youth development, especially in a human rights-based approach (HRBA). The obligation of States to protect is core to HRBA and requires that they take action. Protection includes taking measures to ensure that there is non-discrimination, which in itself is a core human right. Vulnerable and marginalized adolescents and youth need protection and security to fulfil their potential in developing capabilities and accessing opportunities. Exclusion needs to be addressed. This is the process by which youth individually or in groups are wholly or partially marginalized or discriminated against from full participation in the society in which they live.

The key issues to consider for data gathering and analysis around protection include the following:

- **Child labour:** This is measured by the proportion and number of children aged 10-17 years engaged in child labour by sex.

- **Child marriage:** This is measured by the percentage of 20-24-year-olds who were married before the age of 15.
- **Gender-based violence:** This concerns the gathering and analysis of data on experiences of both physical and psychological violence from an intimate partner by girls and women from the age of 15 and up.
- **Policy and legal response:** Examples include national legislation on child labour and NYPs which pay attention to protection issues.

### Cross-cutting issues

Two cross-cutting issues were identified:

- i) Gender equality and
- ii) Disability.

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys.<sup>4</sup> Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs, and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.<sup>5</sup>

In both cases the issues were mainstreamed across the five domains of adolescent and youth development. Wherever possible, the selected indicators for this report were disaggregated by sex and disability and the data was used to inform gender analysis and disability analysis.

## 2.4 Indicators for adolescent and youth development in the Pacific

For each domain and sub-domain defined in the conceptual framework above, we defined elements (specific units that could be measured). These elements were selected by reviewing key issues as highlighted in previous SOPY reports, key needs as identified by stakeholders, and commonly measured issues for adolescents more globally. Against each element we then defined specific indicators. Indicators were selected to be harmonised with existing indicator constructs (such as the SDGs, UNICEF National Adolescent Assessment Card, indicators proposed by WHO around adolescent health, SDGs relevant to adolescent health, and the Commonwealth Youth Development Index) as previously mapped. They were also harmonised with existing data where possible.

We prioritised data as catalogued by the Pacific Community (SPC), data available through the demographic and health surveys (DHS) and multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS), and data as catalogued by the regional offices of the UN agencies. In many instances, however, good quality comparable data were not available. In these cases we defined an indicator that used modelled data (such as that modelled by the Global Burden of Disease Study). This was done to ensure as complete a picture as possible, ensure key issues are reflected in the report, and help inform where data collection needs to be prioritised. These elements, related indicators, and data availability are summarised in Table 7.

<sup>4</sup> [www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm)

<sup>5</sup> [www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convention\\_accessible\\_pdf.pdf](http://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convention_accessible_pdf.pdf)

**Table 7. Key needs for adolescents and youth in the Pacific, and indicators to measure these.**

The left-hand columns detail key needs to be measured for adolescents and youth in the Pacific – these are organised as broad domains, more focussed sub-domains, and specific measurable elements. The domains and sub-domains are detailed in the preceding section, with the rationale for the specific element included in this table. The columns to the right detail the specific indicator definition, its alignment with other key indicator sets, and comment on the data availability to populate this indicator for the Pacific.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
<b>HEALTH</b>						
	Health outcomes: diseases and injuries	All-cause mortality	Commonly measured, motivator of action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All-cause mortality for 10-24 year olds per 100,000.</li> </ul>	NAAC  YDI	Vital registration data often incomplete, modelled estimates from IHME available.
		STI burden	SRH a core issue for Pacific.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>STI prevalence/incidence (chlamydia, gonorrhoea, syphilis, trichomoniasis (15-24 years)).</li> </ul>		Data on STIs are very limited and collected through passive surveillance.
		HIV burden	High policy relevance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevalence/incidence of HIV (15-24 years).</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 3.3.1	Varies substantially, but limited.
		Road traffic mortality	Leading cause of mortality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Road traffic deaths for 10-24 year olds per 100,000.</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 3.6.1  NAAC	Vital registration data often incomplete, modelled estimates from IHME available.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
		Mental disorder	Leading cause of morbidity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevalence of mental disorders (15-24 years)</li> </ul>		Data quality is poor and there is a lack of validated scales.
		Suicide	Preventable cause of mortality, key concern of young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mortality rate due to suicide (10-24 years).</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 3.4.2	Vital registration data often incomplete, modelled estimates from IHME available.
		Adolescent birth rate	Commonly measured, SRH a significant issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual number of births per 1,000 female adolescents (10-14 and 15-19 years).</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 3.7.2 NAAC	Reasonably good.
	Health risks	Tobacco smoking	Significant cause of premature death and disease burden.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Daily tobacco smoking (10-24 years).</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 3.a.1 NAAC	Measured in most surveys (DHS, MICS, census).
		Overweight and obesity	<p>Rapid change in this risk over adolescence.</p> <p>Implications for current, future, and intergenerational health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevalence of overweight and obesity (10-24 years).</li> </ul>		Measured in some surveys.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
		Anaemia	Affects growth and energy levels.  In pregnancy, associated with premature births, low birth weight and perinatal and maternal mortality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prevalence of anaemia (10-24 years) in males, pregnant, and non-pregnant females.</li> </ul>		National surveys (e.g. national nutritional survey).
		Harmful alcohol use	Compromises both individual and social development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of adolescents 13-15 and 16-19 years who had a least one alcoholic drink on at least one or more days during the past 30 days.</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 3.5.2  NAAC  YDI	Data mostly available for males.
	Health service and policy response	Contraception access	SRH a core issue for Pacific.  Refers to the proportion of women who do not want to become pregnant, but are not using contraception.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unmet need for contraception.</li> <li>The percentage of women of reproductive age (18-24), either married or in a union, who have an unmet need for family planning.</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 3.7.1	Data measured in DHS and MICS.
		Condom use		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Condom use at last high-risk sex.</li> </ul>		Inconsistently available.
		SRH knowledge		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Correct knowledge of HIV.</li> </ul>		Available in DHS and MICS.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
		Enabling environment	Enabling environment for adolescent and youth health.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NYPs have specific costings for health interventions.</li> </ul>		Policy analysis (qualitative research).
<b>EDUCATION</b>						
		Completion rate (primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education)	<p>This indicates how many persons in a given age group have completed the relevant level of education.</p> <p>Completion rate data indicates low or delayed entry, drop out, repetition, late completion at a given level of education.</p> <p>When data are disaggregated, the indicator can clearly identify excluded population groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of children or young people aged 3-5 years above the intended age for the last grade of each level of education who have completed that grade.</li> <li>Data disaggregated by age, sex, location, income, and disability status.</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 4.1.4	Population censuses, household surveys.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
		Out of school rate (primary education, secondary education, upper secondary education)	To identify the size of the population in the official age range for the given level of the population who are not enrolled in school in order that they can be better targeted and appropriate policies can be put in place to ensure they have access to education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children and young people in the official age range for the given level of education who are not enrolled in primary, secondary, or higher levels of education.</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 4.1.5	Administrative data, household surveys.
		Gross enrolment ratio for tertiary education, by sex	<p>To show the general level of participation in a given level of education.</p> <p>It indicates the capacity of an education system to enrol students of a particular age group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of students enrolled in tertiary education expressed as a percentage of the 5 year age group immediately following upper secondary education.</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 4.3.2 NAAC	Administrative data, household surveys.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
		Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months by sex	To show the level of participation of youth and adults in education and training of all types.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of youth and adults in a given age range (e.g. 15-24 years) participating in formal or non-formal education or training in a given time period (e.g. last 12 months).</li> <li>Data disaggregated by type of programme such as TVET, tertiary education, adult education, and other relevant types.</li> <li>Data disaggregated by age, sex, location, income, and disability status.</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 4.3.1	Administrative data, household surveys.
		Participation rate in technical and vocational programmes (15-24), by sex	To show the level of participation of youth in TVET.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of youth aged 15-24 participating in TVET either in formal education, work based, or in other settings on a given date or during a specific period.</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 4.3.3	Administrative data, household surveys.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
		Participation rate of youth/adults in literacy programmes	To show the level of participation of illiterate youth (and adults) in literacy programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of youth (15-24) and adults (15+) participating in literacy programmes expressed as a percentage of the literate population of the same age.</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 4.6.3	Administrative data, household surveys, and population censuses.
		Youth/adult educational attainment rates by age, group economic activity status, levels of education, and programme orientation	Education attainment is a measure of the human capital of individuals and nations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cumulative distribution of the population of a given age group according to the minimum level of education completed.</li> <li>Calculated for 15-24 age group.</li> <li>Data disaggregation by sex, location, socioeconomic status, and other characteristics (e.g. disability status).</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 4.4.3 NAAC	Population censuses, household surveys.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
	Quality	Proportion of children and young people at the end of primary and at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics, by sex	The indicator is a direct measure of the learning outcomes in the subject areas at the relevant stages of education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of children and young people at the end of primary and at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics, by sex.</li> <li>Data disaggregation by sex, location, socioeconomic status, and other characteristics (e.g. disability status).</li> </ul>	<p>Pacific SDG Indicator</p> <p>SDG 4 Indicator</p>	<p>Data not available.</p> <p>Learning assessments (national and cross-national).</p>
		Proportion of youth/adults with ICT skills, by type of skill	To determine levels of skills which determine the effective use of ICT.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of youth (15-24) and adults (15+) that have undertaken certain computer related activities in a given time period (e.g. last 3 months).</li> <li>Data disaggregation by sex, location, socioeconomic status and other characteristics (e.g. disability status).</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 4.4.1	<p>School or household surveys.</p> <p>Data not available.</p>

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
		Extent to which global citizenship education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), including gender equality and human rights are mainstreamed at all levels in national education policies, curricula, teacher education, and student assessments	To provide important information on the level of national commitment towards the alignment of this target as well as the quality of programmes provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent to which countries mainstream GCED and ESD, including climate change education, human rights, and gender equality in their education systems, specifically in policies, curricula, teacher education, and student assessment.</li> </ul>	Pacific SDG Indicator  SDG Indicator 4.7.1	Calculation method still to be defined.
		Percentage of schools that provide life skills-based HIV and sexuality education	To assess progress towards implementation of skills-based HIV and sexuality education in all schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of schools providing life skills-based HIV and sexuality education within the formal curriculum or as part of extracurricular activities.</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 4.7.2	Administrative data.
	Equity and inclusion	Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintiles and others such as disability status as data become available for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated	<p>To measure the general level of gender disparity with regard to a given indicator.</p> <p>To measure equity in education service delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parity indices represent the ratio of the indicator value for one group to that of another. A value of exactly 1 indicates parity between the two groups.</li> </ul>	Pacific SDG Indicator  SDG Indicator 4.5.1	Administrative data, household surveys.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
		Proportion of schools with access to electricity, the Internet for pedagogical purposes, computers for pedagogical purposes, adapted infrastructure for students with disabilities, basic drinking water, single sex basic sanitation facilities, and basic hand washing facilities	To measure access in schools to basic key services and facilities to ensure a safe and effective learning environment for all students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of schools by level of education (primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary) with access to the given facility or service.</li> </ul>	<p>Pacific SDG Indicator</p> <p>SDG Indicator 4 .a.1</p>	Administrative data.
	Law, policy and strategy	Number of years of compulsory secondary education guaranteed in legal frameworks	To measure government commitment to guaranteeing the right to education to children and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of years of primary and secondary education to which children and young people are legally entitled that are either free from tuition fees or compulsory or both.</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 4.1.7	Policy analysis.
		Enabling environment	To assess the extent to which NYPs include resources to implement policies for young people in education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of NYPs that include specific costings/budgets for education interventions for youth.</li> </ul>		Policy analysis.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
<b>EMPLOYMENT</b>						
	Opportunities	Youth unemployment rate	The unemployment rate signals the underutilization of labour supply and reflects the inability of an economy to generate employment for those persons who want to work and are not doing so, even though they are available for employment and actively seeking work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of the youth labour force who are unemployed.</li> <li>Data disaggregated by sex.</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 8.5.2  ILO Decent Work Indicator	Data are typically derived from labour force survey.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
		Proportion of youth aged 15-24 not in education, employment, or training (NEET rate)	<p>NEET provides a measure of youth who are outside the education system, not in training and not employment; it serves as a broader measure of potential youth labour market entrants than youth unemployment.</p> <p>It includes discouraged worker youth and those who are economically inactive due to disability, engagement in household chores, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of 15-24-year-olds who are not in education, employment or training.</li> <li>Data disaggregated by sex.</li> </ul>	<p>SDG Indicator 8.6.1</p> <p>ILO Decent Work Indicator</p>	Data are typically derived from labour force survey, population censuses, and household surveys.
		Youth unemployment by level of educational attainment	A breakdown of youth unemployment by educational attainment may inform policy actions for addressing the labour potential of the youth population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of total unemployed by ISCED levels of education; lower and upper secondary level and tertiary level.</li> <li>Data disaggregated by sex.</li> </ul>	ILO Decent Work Indicator	Data are typically derived from labour force survey.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
		Informal employment rate	<p>Informal employment is a job-based concept that encompasses those jobs that generally lack basic social or legal protections or employment benefits.</p> <p>The IER is an important indicator of the quality of employment in an economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The percentage of persons in total employment who are in informal employment.</li> <li>Data disaggregated by age (15-24 years).</li> <li>Data disaggregated by sex.</li> </ul>	ILO Decent Work Indicator	Data are typically derived from labour force survey.
		Average hourly earnings of female and male employees by occupation, age, and disability status	<p>Statistical Decent Work Indicator.</p> <p>Provides data that may be useful for targeted policy making.</p> <p>Data can be used for comparing youth versus adult populations.</p>	Average hourly earnings of female and male employees aged 15-24 by occupation and disability status.	SDG Indicator 8.5.1	Data are typically derived from labour force survey, industry or occupational wage surveys, household surveys.
		Occupational risk	Relevant to decent work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Disability adjusted life years attributable to occupational risk per 100,00 youth (15-24) by sex.</li> </ul>		Industry or occupational wage surveys.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
		Enabling environment	National youth policies have specific costings for youth interventions relating to employment and employability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National youth policy has: Specific costings for employment interventions, and M&amp;E framework.</li> </ul>		Policy analysis.
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>						
	Civic participation	Proportion of youth engaged in activities involving the wider community		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of youth (15-19) and (20-24) engaged in activities involving the wider community.</li> </ul>	SOPY 2011 recommended indicator	Household survey.
		Adolescents who participate in recreational, social, or leisure activities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of adolescents (10-19) who participate in recreational, social, or leisure activities.</li> </ul>		Household survey.
	Political participation	Proportion of young people who are registered to vote		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of young people 20-24 who are registered to vote.</li> </ul>		Household survey.
		Proportion of young people (who have taken part in a local political activity related to a youth issue in the past 12 months		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of young people (20-24) who have taken part in a local political activity related to a youth issue in the past 12 months.</li> </ul>		SOPY 2011 recommended indicator.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
		Volunteering		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of young people (15-24) who are involved in volunteering (in past month).</li> </ul>		YDI indicator.
		Representative structures for youth participation in national development		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existence of functioning representative structures for youth participation in national development.</li> </ul>		Policy analysis.
		Local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of youth in governance and decision making (based on SDG 6.b.1)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of local administrative units with established and operational policies and procedures for participation of youth in governance and decision making (based on SDG 6.b.1).</li> </ul>		Policy analysis.
		Youth who are involved in youth-led climate change programmes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of youth (15-24) who are involved in youth-led climate change programmes.</li> </ul>		Programme evaluations.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
		Youth (15-24) who are engaged in sustainable environmental practices		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of youth (15-24) who are engaged in sustainable environmental practices.</li> </ul>		Programme evaluations.
		Youth who are engaged in innovative initiatives addressing food and water security		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of youth (15-24) who are engaged in innovative initiatives addressing food and water security.</li> </ul>		Programme evaluations.
	Policy	Enabling environment	Provides data on enabling environment and resource mobilisation for youth participation programming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NYP has specific costings for youth participation.</li> </ul>		Policy analysis.
<b>PROTECTION</b>						
	Outcomes	Child labour	Provides data on engagement of children in prohibited work and more generally in types of work to be eliminated as guided by national and international standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion and number of children aged 10-17 years engaged in child labour by sex.</li> <li>Child labour rate.</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 8.7.10  ILO Decent Work Indicator	Household-based child labour survey, population census/other household surveys with an employment module.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
		Child marriage	Provides data on child marriage before age 15.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percentage of 20-24-year-olds in union before the age of 15 years.</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 5.3.1  Pacific SDG Indicator	Population census/other household surveys.
		Gender-based violence	Provides data on experience of violence from intimate partner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the past 12 months by form of violence and age.</li> <li>Data disaggregated for 15-24 age group.</li> </ul>	SDG Indicator 5.1.1  Pacific SDG Indicator	Population census/other household surveys.
	Policy and legal framework	National legislation on child labour	Provides data on enabling environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designation of a particular form of work as child labour in national legislation: is there a minimum age for work? Does legislation prohibit the worst forms of child labour for all persons under 18.</li> </ul>	ILO Decent Work Indicator	Policy review, ILO Country Baselines.

Domain	Subdomain	Element	Rationale	Specific indicator	Alignment	Data availability and quality
	Policy	National youth policy	Provides data on enabling environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NYP and action plan that has specific costings for adolescence and youth protection and M&amp;E framework.</li></ul>		Policy analysis.



## STATE OF PACIFIC YOUTH



In the sections that follow, we use the indicators defined to report the state of Pacific adolescents and youth. We report these in five sections, representing the five domains of the conceptual framework on which this report is based.



## 3. HEALTH AND WELLBEING

### 3.1 A priority issue

The health of young people has emerged as a priority issue in global development. In the Pacific region, health is widely recognized as a key element in adolescent and youth development. The PYDF 2014-2023 argues that youth health is significant because the region has a very young population (SPC, 2014). Healthy young people will contribute to healthy communities, productive nations, and the region overall. SOPY 2011 identified four key health issues among youth:

- i) Suicide and attempted suicide;
- ii) Alcohol and drug misuse;
- iii) Teenage pregnancy; and
- iv) Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

These largely overlap with the priorities identified by the PYDF:

- i) Young people's mental health and wellbeing is improved;
- ii) Young people's sexual and reproductive health is improved; and
- iii) Young people's nutrition and physical activity is improved.

A critical issue for adolescents and youth in the Pacific region is access to health information and services. This includes health and nutrition education in general and CSE, known as Family Life Education (FLE). A wide range of SRH services are required including for the prevention of adolescent pregnancy, care for pregnant adolescents, HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STI) prevention, testing, counselling, and HPV vaccination (UNFPA, 2014).

### 3.2 Background

In recent years, PICTs have seen improvements in health indicators, with decreases in maternal and child mortality and progress in eliminating vaccine-preventable diseases. Geographical challenges — such as isolation and widely dispersed populations, resource limitations, and capacity limitations — are common challenges for PICTs (WHO, 2012). Each country has unique needs. The prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is significantly higher than in other countries at the same stage of development and is associated with the four main modifiable risk factors (tobacco use, unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, and the harmful use of alcohol). Communicable and emerging diseases still burden PICTs. These include STIs, HIV, and tuberculosis. Other challenges include gender inequality, availability of a skilled labour force, weak health systems, rapid urbanization, and vulnerability to climate change (WHO, 2012). Other important factors for health and wellbeing in the Pacific region include extreme weather events, environmental factors such as provision of clean water and sanitation, poverty, and homelessness (Colquhoun, et al, 2016). Most PICTs face challenges in improving their health information and data quality systems (WHO, 2012).

Specific barriers to adolescent and youth health in the Pacific region identified in the PYDF (SPC, 2014) include: slow country responses to NCDs, meeting the health needs of rural young people, cultural barriers to SRH programming, lack of evaluation of the impact of youth health promotion programming, lack of data on key issues, and lack of priority given to youth health concerns.

## 3.3 Key findings

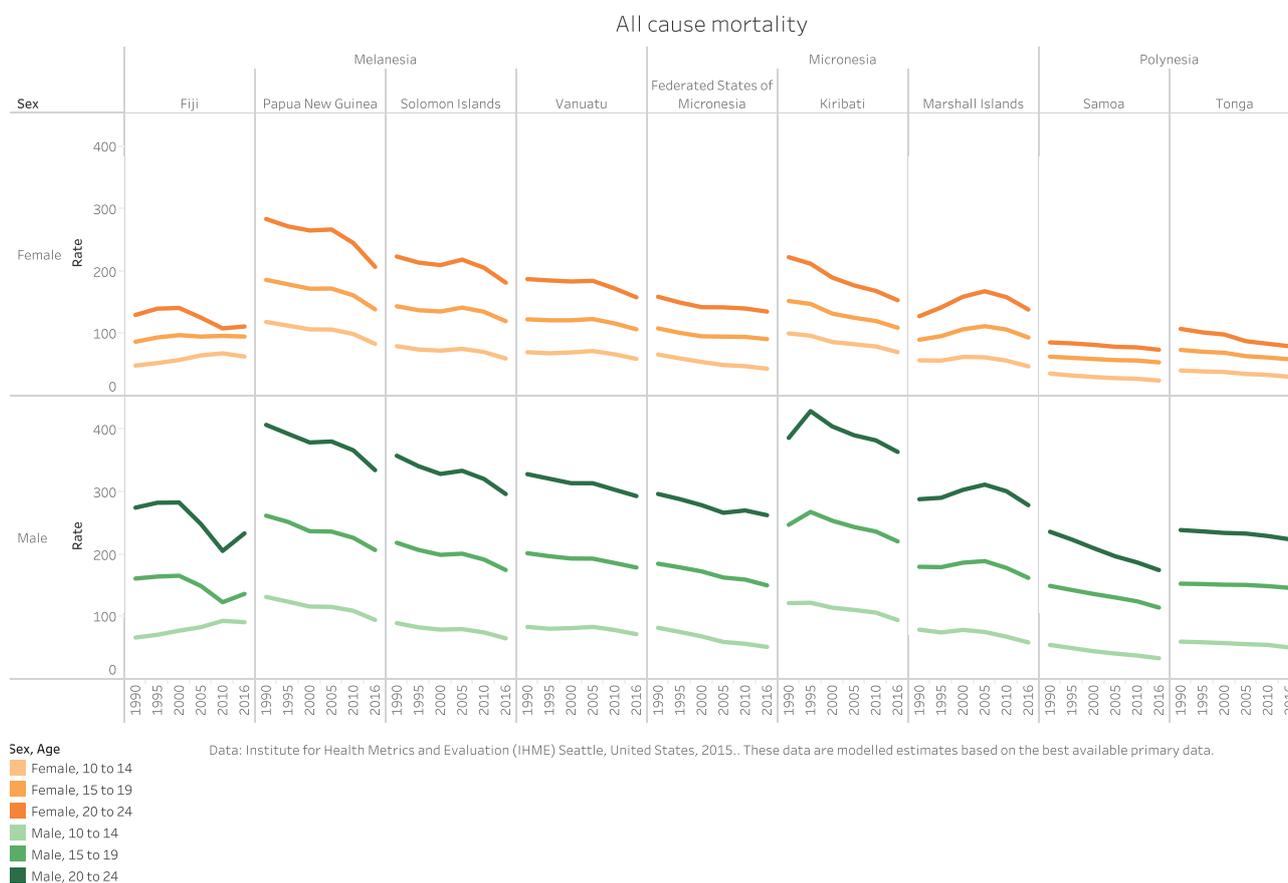
### HEALTH OUTCOMES

#### i) Adolescent and youth mortality

All cause mortality for adolescents and youth is high across the region, challenging the notion that this age group is healthy. However, a trend of gradual improvement is observable across the region in most PICTs where data is available. Data disaggregated by sex for this indicator for adolescents and youth in the Pacific is shown in Figure 2.

Rates of mortality for 20-24-year-olds are much greater than for 10-14-year-olds. This suggests the onset of causes of mortality (diseases and injuries) across adolescence and into youth that current health policies and health systems respond to inadequately. The highest rates are observed in PNG, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, and Kiribati.

**Figure 2. All cause mortality for 10-24-year-olds 1990-2015**



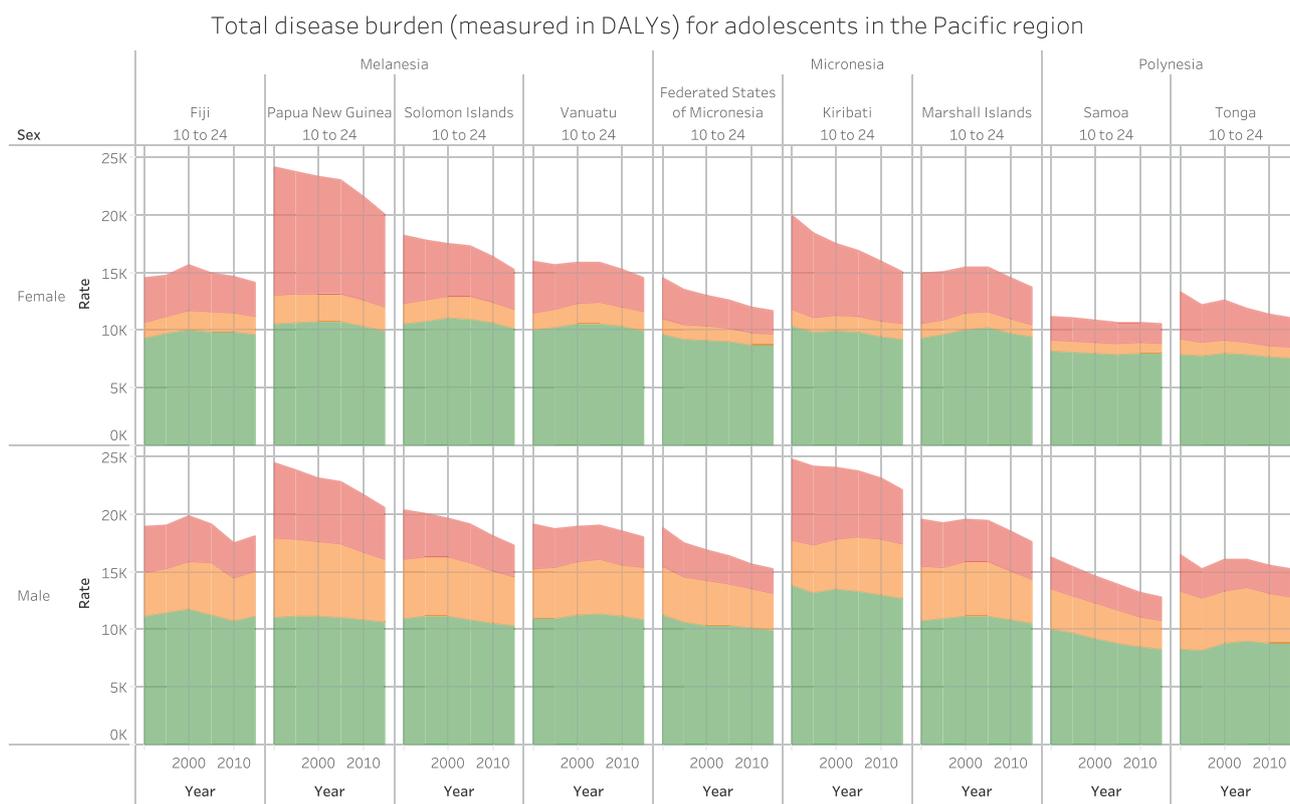
Males have higher mortality rates than females. This suggests that risks for mortality in adolescence are gendered, which is not the case in childhood.

Road traffic injuries are a leading cause of death among adolescents and youth globally (WHO, 2013). This is also the case for PICTs (WHO, 2009). A major reason identified for the high mortality rates is the lack of comprehensive legislation and enforcement mechanisms related to five risk factors: speeding, drink driving, obligatory use of motor cycle helmets, compulsory seatbelts, and child restraints (WHO, 2015). The highest mortality rates are reported for the larger PICTs with more extensive road networks such as Fiji and PNG.

## ii) Communicable, non-communicable diseases and injury

Modelled estimates were used to assess the total disease burden as measured in disability adjusted life years (DALYs). DALYs are the years of healthy life lost either due to death or disability. Figure 3 presents DALYs for adolescents and youth (10-24) in the Pacific region. DALYs are reported for 3 major groups: type I conditions (communicable, reproductive, and nutritional disease), type 2 conditions (NCDs), and type 3 conditions (injuries). There are several key findings from the available data. These are discussed below.

**Figure 3. DALYs due to a major cause for 10-24 year olds**



Data: Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) Seattle, United States, 2005. These data are modelled estimates based on the best available primary data. These data are in DALYs which are years of healthy life lost due to death and disability.

### Group

- communicable, reproductive and nutritional disease
- unintentional injury and assault
- non communicable disease

NCDs are a very significant cause of morbidity. NCDs are responsible for the largest share of disease burden and arguably provide the largest challenge to the health and wellbeing of adolescents and youth in the region. Similar to global trends of adolescent health, NCDs make a large and unshifting contribution to disease burden. These NCDs include mental disorders and substance use disorders as well as chronic physical conditions. Injuries are an important cause of poor health, especially for males. The previous section on adolescent and youth mortality also highlighted the significance of accidents.

Communicable diseases have shown the greatest improvement in the region. However the burden from these remains very large in many countries, particularly PNG and Kiribati.

Unintentional injuries and assault are a significant cause of morbidity for males. These contribute significantly to male health outcomes across the region. The effects are particularly large in PNG. In several PICTs, such as PNG, the Solomon Islands, and Tonga, morbidity from injury and assault outweighs the disease burden arising from communicable diseases. The impact on females is considerably lower. This points to issues with risk and violence associated with masculinity.

Reported data on violence and unintentional injury for adolescents are to be found in the WHO global school-based student health survey (GSHS)<sup>6</sup> findings for 13-15 year olds for some PICTs (see Table 8). They indicate relatively high levels of violence, injury, and bullying among the survey population across PICTs affecting both males and females.

**Table 8. Data on violence from GSHS**

Indicator	Fiji (2016)	Kiribati (2011)	Niue (2010)	Samoa (2011)	Solomon Is. (2011)	Tokelau (2014)	Vanuatu (2011)
<b>Percentage of students who were in a physical fight one or more times during the past 30 days</b>	33.5 (43.1; 24.2)	35.5 (43.3; 28.5)	32.9	67.7 (73.3; 62.1)	52.7 (53.5; 50.7)	75.1 (88.4; 60.1)	50.5 (59.9; 41.8)
<b>Percentage of students who were seriously injured one or more times during the past 12 months</b>	47.5 (55.7; 38.7)	58.3 (64.2; 53.2)	48.0	83.2 (87.7; 78.6)	68.4 (67.7; 68.6)	61.7 (66.7; 55.1)	62.2 (66.9; 57.4)
<b>Percentage of students who were bullied on one or more days during the past 30 days</b>	29.9 (33.1; 25.7)	36.8 (42.1; 32.2)	35.5	74.0 (78.6; 69.4)	66.5 (64.1; 67.7)	40.5 (38.6; 38.9)	67.3 (68; 66.5)

### iii) HIV and AIDS burden

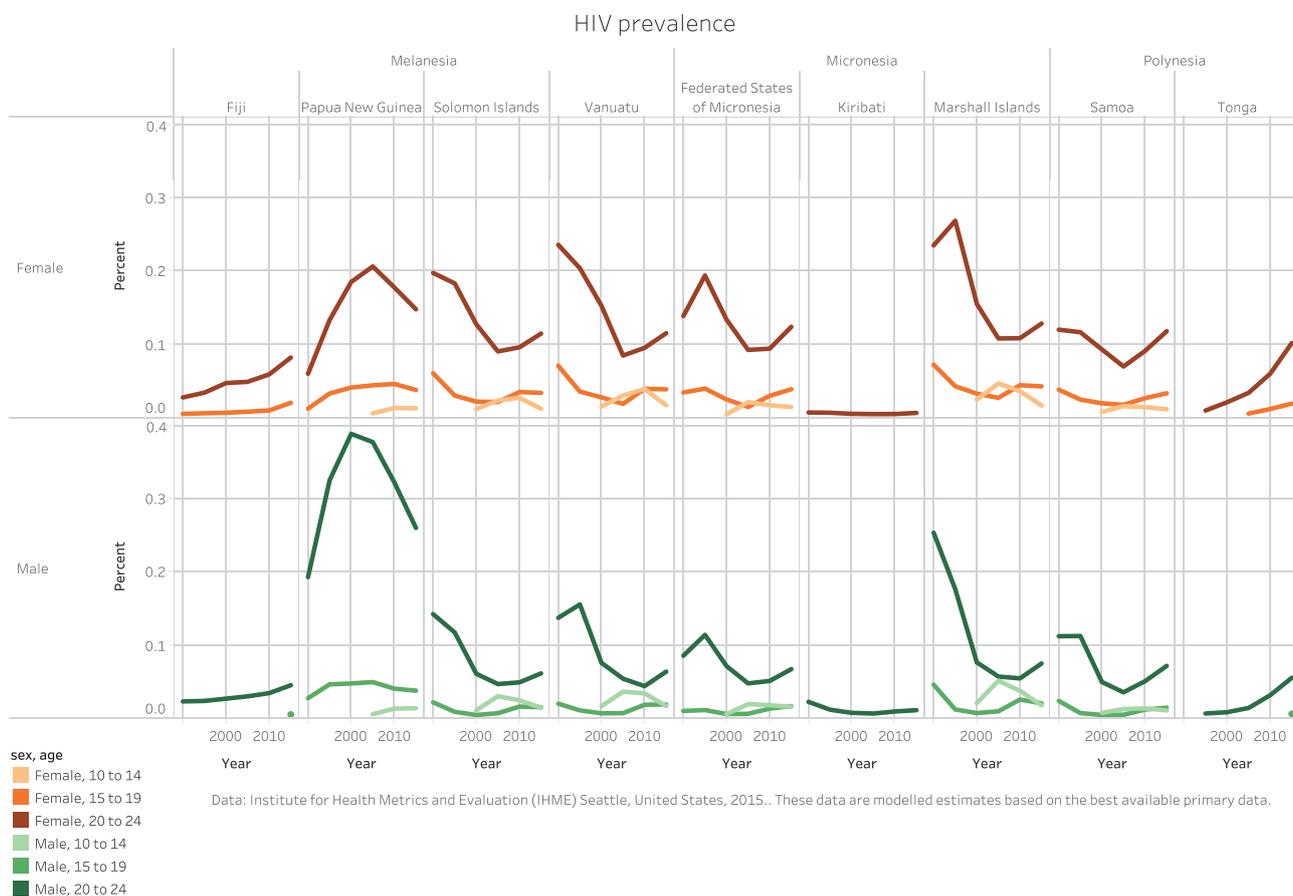
HIV prevalence among youth is low, but increasing among the 20-24 age group. The Pacific region is experiencing a low level HIV epidemic (i.e., HIV prevalence has not exceeded 1 per cent in the general population, 5 per cent in any sub-population). HIV prevalence for youth (15-24) in 2011 was 0.1 per cent in Fiji, 0.2 per cent in RMI and zero for all other PICTs (UNFPA, 2014). HIV epidemics in the region are concentrated among key populations: male and female sex workers, men who have sex with men, and people who inject drugs (UNAIDS, 2014).

Several patterns can be discerned in the data. First are the populations that are experiencing a slow and steady increase, as in Fiji and Tonga. Second, there are those that are seeing declining rates of prevalence, such as in PNG. Third, there are those that are experiencing an increase in prevalence rates following a period of decline such as in FSM, RMI, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Fourth, there are youth populations that are not experiencing any change in prevalence rates, such as in Kiribati. This is a complex mix of trends. In all adolescent and youth populations, the 20-24 age group has the highest prevalence rates. They suggest that there is little room for complacency with regard to HIV prevention among adolescents and youth.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/gshs/>

While prevalence rates are low, there is a suggestion of an increased burden amongst females aged 20-24 (for example in Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga), which may signify a shift in those at risk. Of all countries in the Pacific, the burden of HIV remains highest amongst adolescents living in PNG. Figure 4 shows national HIV prevalence data for adolescents and youth in the Pacific (10-24 years).

**Figure 4. HIV prevalence rates**



#### iv) STI burden

Complications due to STIs have a profound impact on sexual and reproductive health and on the overall wellbeing of individuals (WHO, 2016). These disproportionately affect women in several ways. STIs also facilitate indirectly the sexual transmission of HIV and cause cellular changes that precede some cancers. STIs impose a substantial strain on the budgets of both households and national health systems. Limited data on STIs, particularly data disaggregated by sex, compromise the response at regional and national levels. There is inconsistent reporting between countries.

STIs are common among youth in the Pacific region. In countries where STI data are available, STIs or STI symptoms amongst sexually active 15-24-year-olds were prevalent in 20 per cent of females in Nauru, 12 per cent in Vanuatu, and 9 per cent in RMI. Among males, the highest figure was reported in Tonga (10 per cent), followed by Vanuatu and Nauru (8 and 6 per cent respectively). Within the region, a prevalence of over 35 per cent of chlamydia was reported among 15-19-year-old females and 27 per cent for males (UNFPA, 2015). Higher prevalence of STIs is likely among young key populations, but such data are usually not disaggregated by age.

## v) Early sexual initiation

Limited data on sexual behaviour for adolescents is found in the GSHS<sup>7</sup> findings for 13-15-year-olds for some PICTs (see Table 9). The lack of data may reflect the sensitivities around assessing sexual behaviours. The available data indicates that a substantial number of adolescents (13-15) in school have reportedly already had their sexual debut, ranging from 12.2 per cent in Vanuatu to 55.6 per cent in Samoa. Males are more likely to report that they have had sex than females in all cases.

**Table 9. Data on sexual behaviour from GSHS**

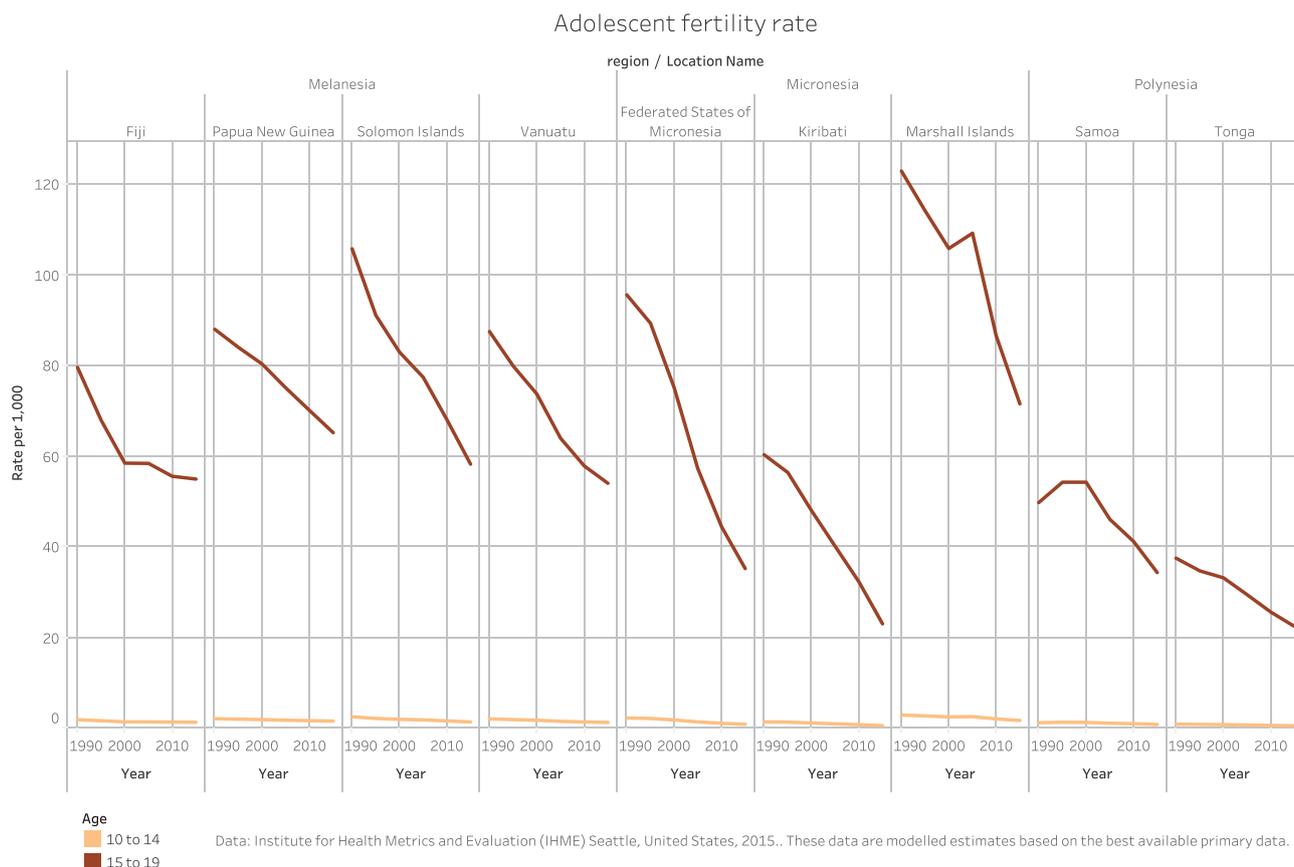
Indicator	Fiji (2016)	Kiribati (2011)	Niue (2010)	Samoa (2011)	Solomon Is (2011)	Tokelau (2014)	Tuvalu (2013)	Vanuatu (2011)
Percentage of students who ever had sexual intercourse	15.6 (22.0; 9.0)	22.0 (37.2; 9.8)	-	55.6 (68.5; 44.9)	-	22.9 (26.5; 16.4)	16.8 (28.5; 8.2)	12.2 (15.9; 8.4)
Percentage of students who had sexual intercourse before age 14 for the first time among students who ever had sexual intercourse	62.1	54.9	-	81.2 (82.6; 79.3)	-	-	-	-
Percentage of students who used a condom during last sexual intercourse among students who ever had sexual intercourse	53.0	25.5	-	56.3 (61.5; 49.4)	-	-	-	-

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/gshs/>

## vi) Adolescent fertility

Adolescent fertility rates remain relatively high.<sup>8</sup> While fertility rates in the Pacific have declined over the past several decades, they remain relatively high in most PICT populations (UNFPA, 2014). Modelled data for adolescent fertility (10-14 and 15-19) during the period 1990-2015 show falling rates across the region (see figure 5). For the 15-19 age group, adolescent rates are particularly high in Fiji, RMI, PNG, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Additional data from UNFPA also suggests that Nauru has a particularly high rate (94.3 per 1,000 in 2010-2015). Lower rates are to be found in FSM and Kiribati, as well as in Samoa and Tonga.

**Figure 5. Adolescent fertility rates 2000-2015**



Teenage motherhood is particularly high in remote and rural settings. Rural adolescent fertility in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu is 70 and 77 respectively (UNFPA, 2014). On outer islands in RMI it reaches 100. Rates are lower in the urbanized areas of the country (80).

Teenage pregnancy is indicative of higher levels of unmet need for contraception among youth, a lack of information about sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and the result of a girl's lack of autonomy over her own body (UNFPA, 2013; UNFPA, 2007). The pregnancy may be the result of unwanted or forced sexual relations. In RMI from 2006-2013, 43 per cent of births in the 15-19 age group were unintended. Rates of 1, 15, 19, and 20 per cent were recorded in the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Nauru, and Tonga respectively (UNFPA, 2015). Unintended pregnancy, particularly if it occurs outside marriage can have profound consequences for young women and men as well as their offspring. These include stigma and discrimination, social isolation, school expulsion, forced marriage, violence, and suicide (UNFPA, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> The adolescent fertility rate or adolescent birth rate is usually defined as the number of births per 1,000 women ages 15 to 19.

Early motherhood, intended or unintended, can entail raised health risks (UNFPA, 2015). Adolescent mothers face a higher risk of complications such as severe bleeding, infections, and high blood pressure. Children of young mothers tend to have higher rates of morbidity and mortality (UNFPA, 2014). Unwanted teenage pregnancy also raises the risk of unsafe abortion. Other consequences for teenage mothers include school drop out and failure to continue with education.

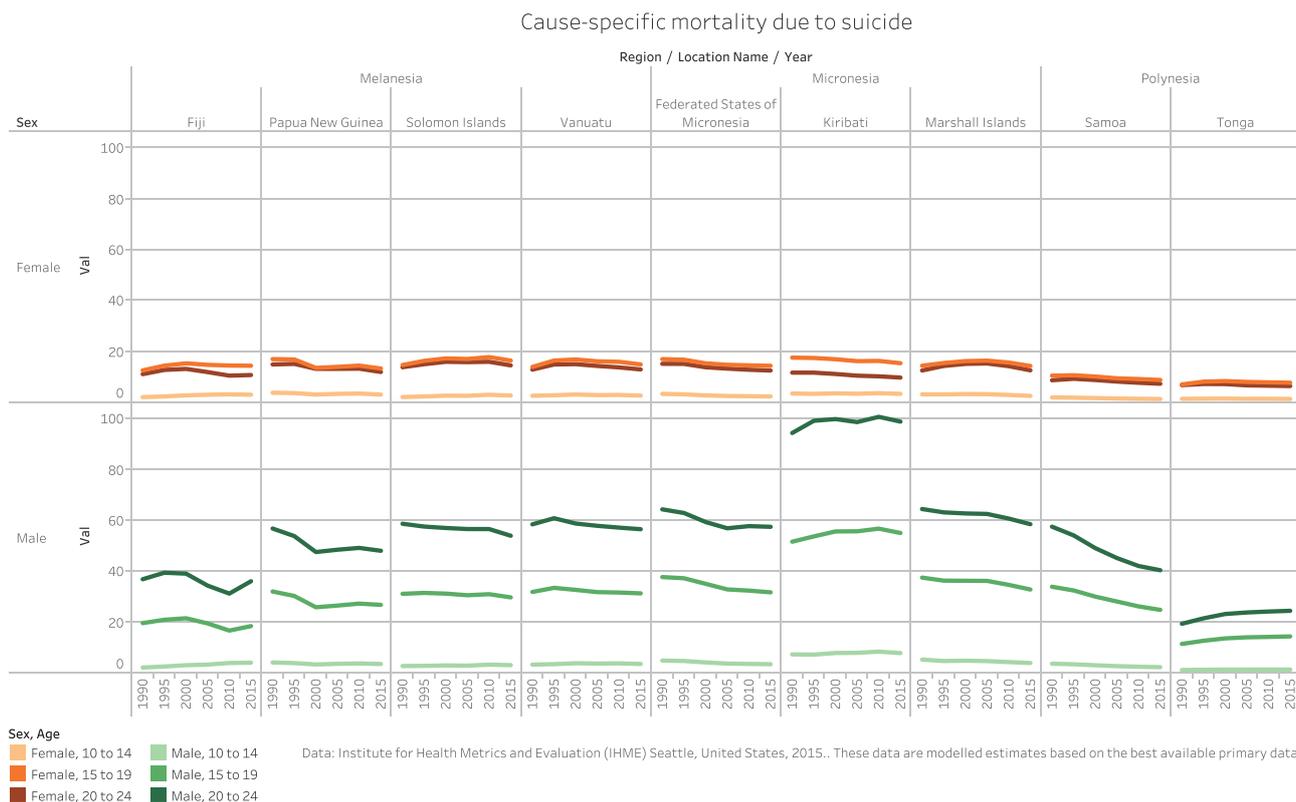
There has been insufficient prioritization of teenage pregnancy as a development issue in the region (UNFPA, 2013). This is reflected in a failure to provide access to quality SRH services for young men and women, particularly in rural, remote, and outer island communities. Available services are not youth-friendly and staff may be judgmental or poorly trained. This implies a need to provide specific training for adolescent and youth populations. Young people have been insufficiently involved in programme decision-making processes that directly affect them. There is a need for CSE for adolescents and youth, in and out of school, and to enable access to SRH services, including contraception, information, peer education, and counselling, particularly in communities not currently served. Young people need to be able to participate effectively in decision-making and other important processes. There is also a need to improve national and community awareness about adolescent SRHR needs and how they can be best met (UNFPA, 2007).

#### **iv) Suicide**

Suicide is a significant cause of death for male youth. Suicide is closely related to mental wellbeing. It is one of the leading causes of death in adolescence and youth, for both males and females. There are indications that for each adult who died of suicide there may have been more than 20 others attempting suicide (WHO, 2014). Data presented in Figure 6 show mortality due to suicide for nine PICTs during the period 1990-2015 for the 10-24 age group disaggregated by sex and age (10-14, 15-19, and 20-24).

Across the region, female suicide rates are lower than those for males. There is little difference between the 10-14, 15-19, and 20-24 age groups for females. A different picture is obtained for males, which shows that suicides increase by age, with the 20-24 age group recording the highest number of cases. The rates are generally high for males across the region and particularly high in Kiribati. There appears to be generally no change in female suicide rates in the period 2000-2015. There is some evidence of a limited decline in male suicide rates in FSM, PNG, and Samoa. Suicide rates for males are increasing in Fiji and Tonga, though the latter has lower rates than generally found in the region. Stressors contributing to adolescent and youth suicide include unemployment, social and cultural expectations, family and relationship problems, bullying, violence, and abuse (WHO, 2015). While accurate statistics are not available and may underestimate the situation, suicide rates in Pacific Islands are some of the highest in the world, reaching double the global average in Samoa and FSM, with youth rates even higher.

**Figure 6. Cause-specific mortality due to suicide 2000-2015 (10-24, both sexes)**



**v) Mental health**

Mental health data is poor. As indicated in Figure 2, NCDs, including mental disorders, are a leading cause of poor health for adolescents in the Pacific. Limited data on the mental health of adolescents can be obtained from the GSHS for the 13-15 age group. In any given year about 20 per cent of adolescents will experience a mental health problem. The risk is increased by experiences of violence, humiliation, devaluation, and poverty (WHO, 2015). Numerous mental disorders start during adolescence, although diagnosis and treatment may be delayed for years. Half of all lifetime mental disorders start to appear by the age of 14. However, many people fail to seek professional help for mental health problems, with stigmatization in communities often attached to mental health issues. There is strong social stigmatization against people with mental disorders.

Some data on mental health for adolescents are found in the GSHS<sup>9</sup> findings for 13-15 year olds for some PICTs (see Table 10). The survey uses three indicators in this regard. The findings are limited to adolescents in school and therefore do not cover those who are out of school and potentially more at risk. Nevertheless, they indicate that mental health issues are prevalent among adolescents as measured by suicidal ideation and attempted suicide. The percentage of students who have seriously considered committing suicide ranges from 10.8 per cent in Fiji to 34.6 per cent in Kiribati. This affects both males and females. Higher reported rates for males are to be found in Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Tokelau, while higher rates for females are reported in Fiji, Kiribati, and Vanuatu. Higher numbers reported that they have actually attempted suicide with the highest rates to be found in Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Kiribati (more than 30 per cent). Higher rates for females were reported in Kiribati and the Solomon Islands. The third indicator findings show that substantial numbers of students report that they have no close friends. The percentages are particularly high in Samoa and Vanuatu (more than 15 per cent). These findings illuminate what may be a significant mental health problem in the making.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/gshs/>

**Table 10. Data on mental health from GSHS**

Indicator	Fiji (2016)	Kiribati (2011)	Niue (2010)	Samoa (2011)	Solomon Is. (2011)	Tokelau (2014)	Vanuatu (2011)
<b>Percentage of students who ever seriously considered attempting suicide during the past 12 months</b>	10.8 (9.5; 11.7)	34.6 (32.7; 36.2)	14.9	32.4 (37.1; 28.1)	25.4 (27.2; 24.2)	26.5 (28.8; 19.6)	17.6 (17.4; 18.0)
<b>Percentage of students who actually attempted suicide one or more times during the past 12 months</b>	10.2 (11.6; 8.2)	30.7 (29.8; 31.5)	8.9	60.2 (67.2; 53.7)	33.9 (30.8; 35.9)	29.7 (34.7; 19.9)	24.3 (28.3; 19.5)
<b>Percentage of students who had no close friends</b>	8.0 (9.3; 6.6)	2.5 (3.1; 2.1)	-	16.0 (17.4; 14.9)	13.3 (14.8; 10.9)	3.6 (10.2; 3.8)	15.8 (17.0; 14.3)

## vi) Disability

There is a significant shortage of empirical research on the prevalence of disabilities among youth (15-24) and their living conditions. There are estimates for the prevalence of disability in the Pacific region for the year 2015 (UNESCAP, 2015). These are set out in Table 11 in terms of overall disability prevalence and by age group, which varies across countries. There is a considerable range in disability prevalence across the region from 1.4 per cent in Fiji to 14 per cent in the Solomon Islands. Disaggregated data on youth disability prevalence (15-24) is largely unavailable. Three PICTs have estimates covering the youth population (FSM, Kiribati, and the Solomon Islands). The range is from 2.8 per cent to 6.4 per cent, indicating a small but significant population of youth with disabilities. Better estimates are needed for the region.

**Table 11. Disability prevalence data**

PICT	Disability prevalence	Disability prevalence by age group	
Cook Islands	1.7% (1.9%m; 1.4%f)	15-19	2.4%
Fiji	1.4% (1.4%m; 1.3%f)	14-19	1.8%
Kiribati	4.1% (4.7%; 4.3%f)	15-30	2.8%
Marshall Islands	11.7%	N/A	N/A
Micronesia	11.0% (10.7%m; 11.4%f)	15-24	4%
Nauru	5.1% (5.5%m; 4.7%f)	N/A	N/A
Niue	4.7% (4.4%m; 5.0%f)	N/A	N/A
Palau	N/A	N/A	N/A
Papua New Guinea	13.4% (12.6%m; 14.2%f)	N/A	N/A

PICT	Disability prevalence	Disability prevalence by age group	
Samoa	5.9% (3.2% <sub>m</sub> ; 2.7% <sub>f</sub> )	N/A	(for youth)
Solomon Islands	14.0% (13.8% <sub>m</sub> ; 14.4% <sub>f</sub> )	15-19	4.2%
		20-29	6.4%
Tonga	8.7% (8.1% <sub>m</sub> ; 9.4% <sub>f</sub> )	20-29	5%
Tuvalu	1.9% (2.3% <sub>m</sub> ; 1.6% <sub>f</sub> )	N/A	N/A
Vanuatu	12.0% (11.8% <sub>m</sub> ; 12.8% <sub>f</sub> )	N/A	N/A

Access to adequate health care is difficult for young people with disabilities in the Pacific region (UNICEF, 2010). Accessibility can be an issue in reaching health facilities; distances to health centres are often long and transport is costly. A lack of knowledge and disability awareness can contribute to poor health outcomes.

Health care for people with disabilities is often expensive. Basic assistive devices, such as wheelchairs that are suitable for different conditions, are costly. The use of catheters and disposable urine bags is also costly as are assistive devices and adaptive equipment, which are difficult to obtain and maintain. Hearing aids, magnifiers, and spectacles that could transform lives are often unobtainable, especially in rural and remote areas. Access to health care is worse in remote and rural areas throughout the region.

SRHR for young people with disabilities is a taboo subject. Many people, including parents and health workers, are in denial that teenagers are sexually active or have sexual thoughts and interests and do not appreciate the risks of unwanted pregnancies and STIs, including HIV. Access to SRH information is often unavailable to young people with disabilities, or the information is disseminated using inappropriate means such as inaccessible clinics, inaccessible print or electronic media, or by providers who cannot communicate with young people with disabilities. Health care professionals may lack disability awareness and consequently feel unwilling or unable to address these issues.

WHO reports (2017) that Ministries of Health in the region are on the way to fully identifying and addressing barriers experienced by persons with disabilities when accessing general health services. A number of PICTS have put in place the following:

- Mechanisms for engaging people with disabilities in health planning (Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, PNG, RMI, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu);
- National physical accessibility standards for public buildings, including health facilities (Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, PNG, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu);
- National rehabilitation policy/strategy (PNG and Vanuatu);
- Defined standards for assistive technology provision (RMI);
- Mechanisms to support quality rehabilitation practices (Fiji, Palau, Samoa, and the Solomon Islands);
- Availability of rehabilitation services at the community level (Solomon Islands).

There is, however, very little rehabilitation available even though it is an essential health strategy and many PICT governments are experiencing challenges in responding. The provision of assistive technology is inadequate (WHO, 2017). NGOs are a primary mechanism for community-based rehabilitation and their work should ultimately be resourced through government. Good quality and comparable disability data are limited and often underutilized. Many countries have very low capacity in disability data and are not utilizing the data they have (WHO, 2017).

## HEALTH RISKS

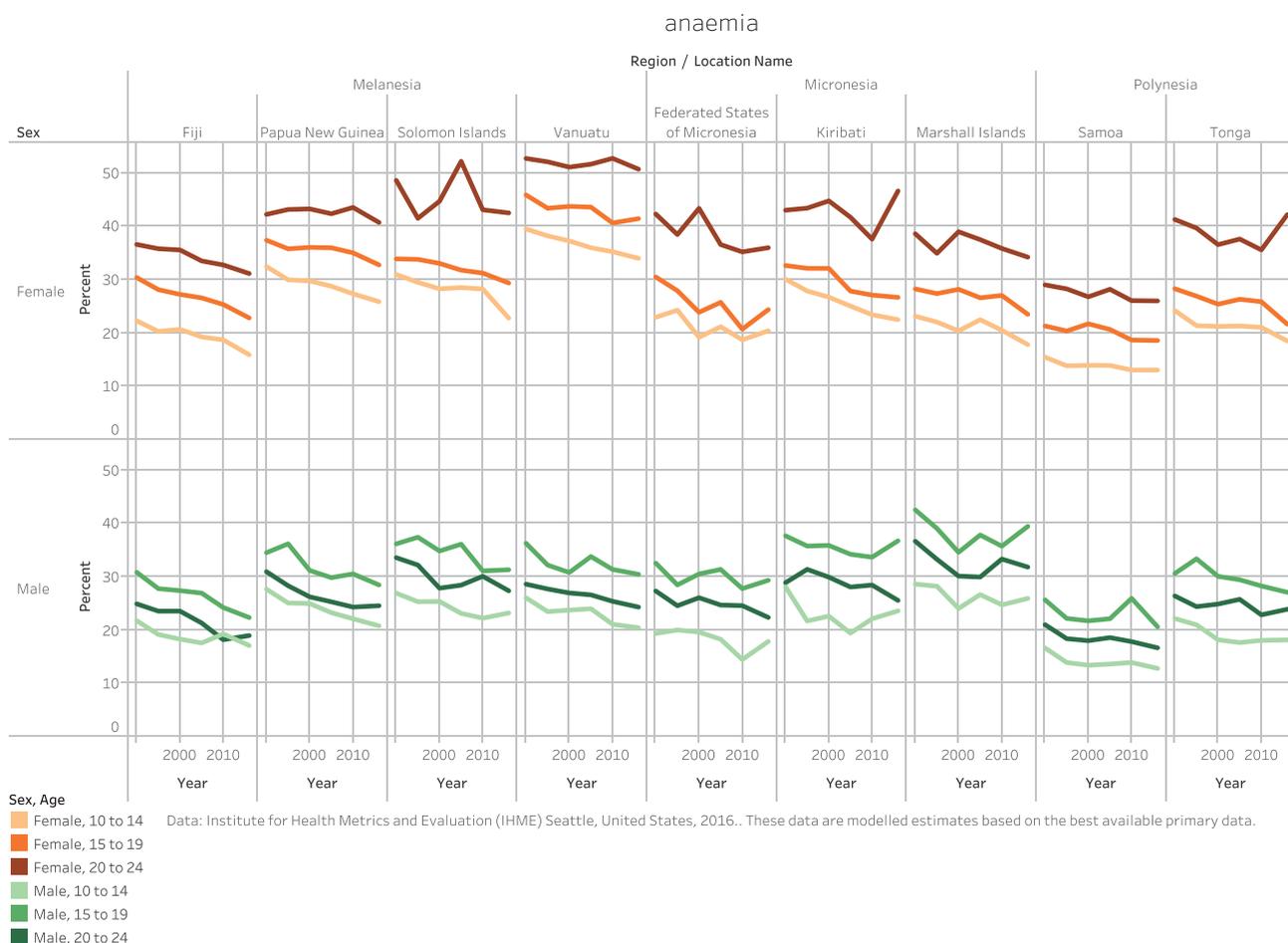
### i) Iron deficiency

Anaemia is a critical health concern because it affects growth and energy levels. In pregnancy it is associated with premature births, low birth weight, and perinatal and maternal mortality. Anaemia is mostly due to iron deficiency. Factors that account for the prevalence of anaemia include poverty, inadequate diet, pregnancy and lactation, and poor access to health services. Adolescence is a key time for interventions to address anaemia.

Higher levels of anaemia among females (10-24 years) than males were found in the period 2000-2010, particularly for the 20-24 age group (see Figure 7). Levels of anaemia for females rise successively through the 10-14, 15-19, and 20-24 age groups. A decline in levels was observed in Fiji, RMI, PNG, Samoa, and Vanuatu. Increases were recorded in Kiribati and Tonga for the 20-24 age group and in FSM for all age groups 10-24. The highest levels of female anaemia were found in Vanuatu for the 20-24 age group. For males a gradual decline in anaemia levels is observed in most PICTs, as illustrated in Figure 10. The highest rates are to be found in the 15-19 age group, not among 20-24-year-olds. The highest rates are in Kiribati and RMI for the 15-19 age group, where anaemia levels are rising among this group.

The National Nutrition Survey for Fiji (2014-2015) data shows that iron deficiency among 15-17-year-old females has worsened from 20.9 per cent in 2004 to 30.5 per cent (Government of Fiji, 2015). This amounts to an almost 10 per cent increase in iron deficiency among this group in a decade.

**Figure 7. Anaemia levels 2000-2010 for 10-24-year-olds both sexes**



## ii) Nutrition, overweight, and obesity

The health of adolescents and youth depends significantly on their nutritional status, which is affected by the availability, accessibility, and adequacy of food (UNESCAP, 2015). The GSHS<sup>10</sup> has found that the majority of younger adolescents (13-15) do not eat recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables and have overall unbalanced diets high in processed foods and sugary drinks. The consequence of this is an increased risk of malnutrition, including nutrient deficiencies such as vitamin A deficiencies, iodine deficiency disorders, and anaemia. These contribute to delayed growth, stunted height, delayed intellectual development, and increased risks in childbirth (UNESCAP, 2015). There is also increased risk of obesity and its associated health risks.

Malnutrition encompasses both under-nutrition and over-nutrition, both of which coexist in the PICTs. They are mostly associated with poverty and deprivation. Adolescents who are under-nourished are more vulnerable to disease and early death. Overweight and obesity are increasingly common among adolescents and youth. It is a serious problem in some PICTs with the prevalence of overweight adolescents as high as 50 per cent in some PICTs (WHO, 2015). Overweight is commonly due to a poor quality diet, high in energy/calories from processed foods and drinks and low in healthier items like fresh fruits, vegetables, and fish.

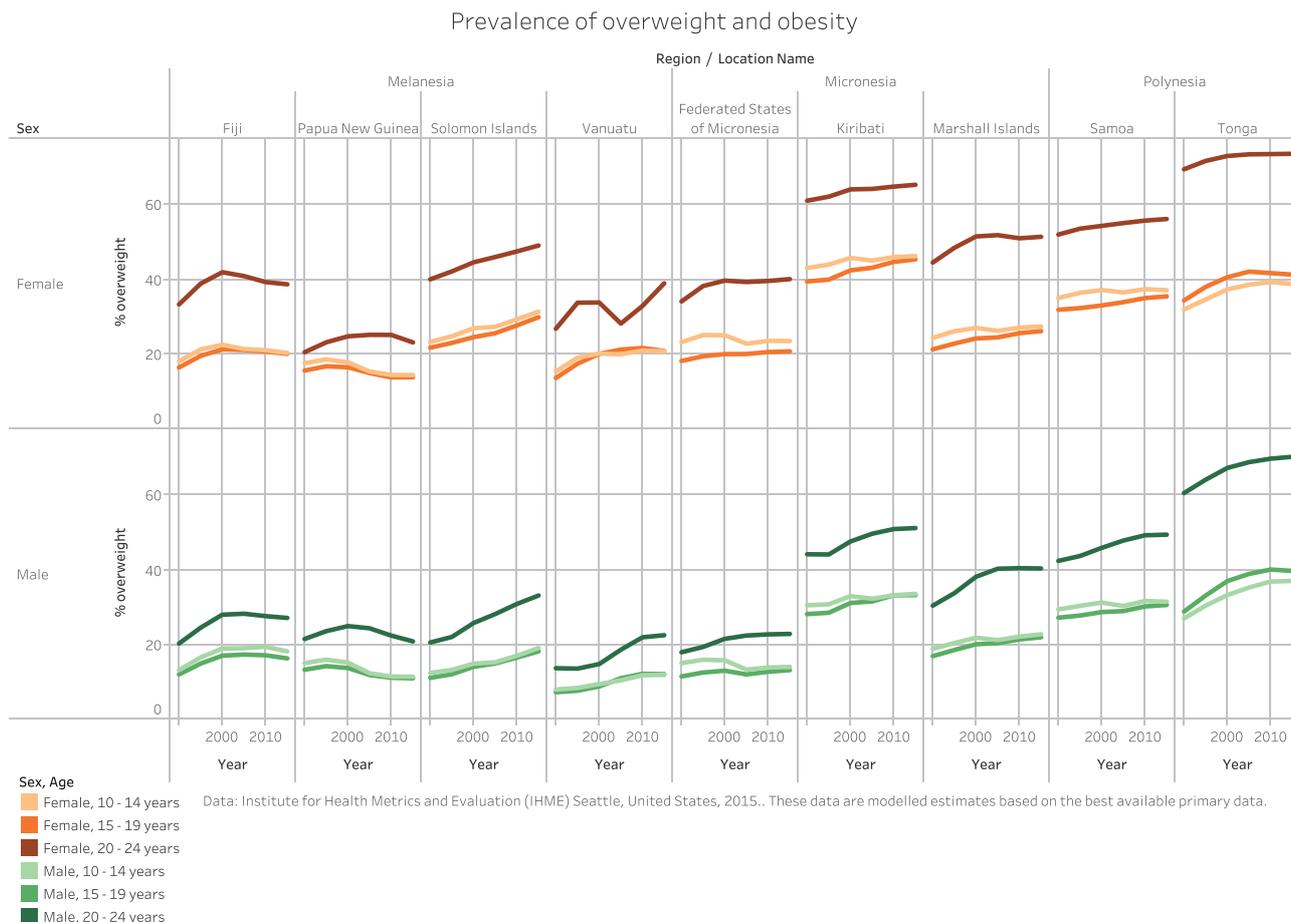
Data for the period 2000-2010 for overweight and obese adolescents and youth in Melanesian, Micronesian, and Polynesian PICTs are provided in Figure 8. These are some of the highest rates of overweight in the world. This represents a very significant public health crisis.

Females and males aged 20-24 have the highest rates of overweight. Females have higher rates of overweight and obesity than men. Tonga has the highest rates for young women, closely followed by Kiribati. A significant increase in overweight and obesity is observed in the 20-24 age group. There is generally little difference in rate increase between the 10-14 and 15-19 age groups and there is more convergence than divergence in data between these groups. What takes place among the 20-24 age group is very marked and needs further research to identify more clearly what individual and social processes and factors are involved. Rates of obesity and overweight are generally increasing across the region for both females and males. A slight decline has been estimated in Fiji and PNG for both females and males.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/gshs/>

**Figure 8. Prevalence of overweight and obesity (10-24, both sexes)**



The Fiji National Nutrition Survey (2014-2015), carried out around every 10 years, provides data that help determine the current nutritional status of the population and the effectiveness of national policy and programming interventions. Data are not disaggregated by standard adolescent and youth age categories. Data are available for the 15-17 year range that show that stunting among this group has improved from 6 per cent to 3.8 per cent in the decade. Wasting (underweight) also has improved from 7 per cent to 6 per cent, although this is not a significant change. The percentage of overweight has worsened from 6.2 per cent to 8.1 per cent, another non-significant change.

One of the most prevalent chronic diseases associated with overweight and obesity is diabetes. Physical inactivity is a contributory risk factor. The prevalence of diabetes in the Pacific region has risen steadily since 1980 and is predicted to continue to rise over the coming decades. WHO diabetes country profiles (2016) give a diabetes age-standardized estimated prevalence of more than 20 per cent in the following PICTs: the Cook Islands (26.8 per cent), Kiribati (22 per cent), Nauru (28.9 per cent), Niue (26.4 per cent), Palau (22.8 per cent), RMI (20.7 per cent), Samoa (22.8 per cent), Tonga (21.9 per cent), and Tuvalu (23.1 per cent). Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, and Tonga have a strategy for diabetes and to reduce physical inactivity. FSM, Palau, and Tuvalu have a strategy to reduce overweight and obesity. The extent to which adolescents and youth are actively and meaningfully involved in these is an issue for further research. Nearly all PICTs have national NCD strategies, which target all the risk factors across all age groups.

Data on physical activity for adolescents is found in GSHS<sup>11</sup> for 13-15-year-old students for some PICTs (see Table 12). They generally indicate low levels of physical activity, particularly in Fiji and Tokelau. Males tend to report being more physically active than females in Fiji, Kiribati, and the Solomon Islands, with females reportedly more active in Samoa, Tokelau, and Vanuatu. Levels of participation in physical education are relatively low in all cases (less than 40 per cent) except in Tokelau, with boys more likely to participate than girls. More than 25 per cent of the 13-15 age group reported being sedentary for more than three hours a day apart from school in five of the PICTs, with boys more likely than girls to be inactive. The lowest level of such activity was reported in Kiribati (14.2 per cent). The data is limited to young adolescents in school. More comprehensive data is required, but they point to relatively high levels of inactivity among the group across PICTs.

**Table 12. Data on physical activity from GSHS**

Indicator	Fiji (2016)	Kiribati (2011)	Niue (2010)	Samoa (2011)	Solomon Is. (2011)	Tokelau (2014)	Vanuatu (2011)
<b>Percentage of students who were physically active at least 60 minutes a day on all seven days during the seven days before the survey</b>	19.2 (21.2m; 17.5f)	26.8 (32.9m; 21.9f)	31.5	21.0 (19.8m; 22.1f)	27.2 (30.0m; 25.1f)	23.9 (20.6m; 29.0f)	46 (45.7m; 46.7f)
<b>Percentage of students who attended physical education classes on three or more days each week during this school year</b>	21.1 (22.1m; 19.7f)	33.7 (35.5m; 32.2f)	27.8	27.8 (25.2m; 30.3f)	40.0 (38.5m; 38.6f)	47.2 (54.7m; 41.6f)	23.9 (27.5m; 21.4f)
<b>Percentage of students who spent three or more hours per day sitting and watching television, playing computer games, or talking with friends when not in school or doing homework during a typical or usual day</b>	29.0 (28.0m; 29.4f)	14.2 (15.3m; 13.4f)	34.5	37.8 (43.4m; 31.7f)	26.8 (27.1m; 27.8f)	44.7 (43.2m; 43.0f)	19.4 (22.6m; 16.1f)

Interventions to increase and sustain physical activity participation among populations are an important component of health promotion. A stocktaking of physical activity interventions in the Pacific region found that 17 out of 84 programmes took place in schools, 37 in the community, and 26 in the workplace (Siefken, et al, 2012). Challenges identified in the study included limited time, lack of financial resources, human resource constraints, limits to venues and equipment, and necessary skills and resources for evaluation. Communication in relating physical activity to health benefits, motivation of participants, changing attitudes, and cultural constraints (e.g. female involvement) were also found to be challenges. There were implementation difficulties in reaching groups such as those of low socioeconomic status, remote, and rural populations.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/gshs/>

### iii) Substance abuse

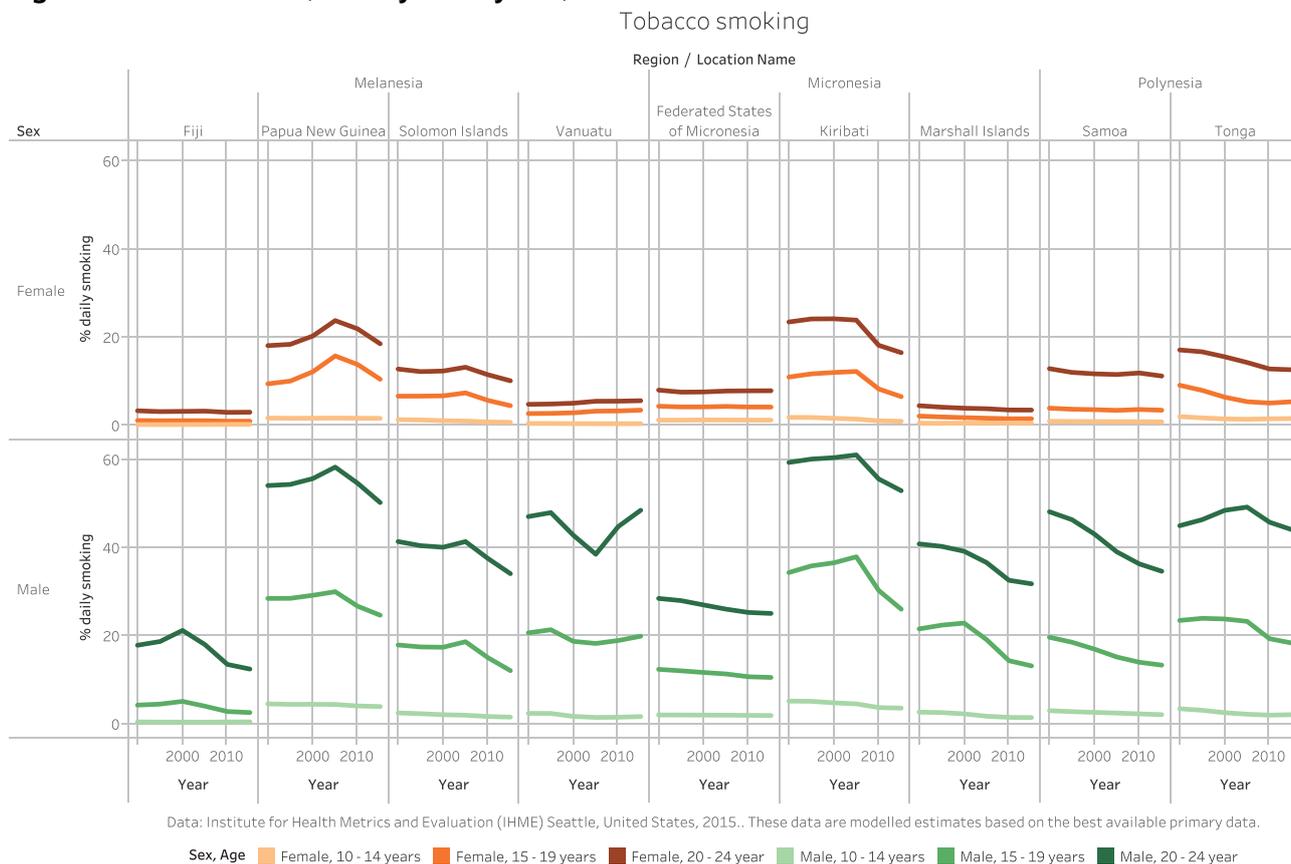
#### Tobacco use

Premature death and a significant disease burden are the adult results of tobacco use that begins mainly in the period covered by adolescence and youth. Among adolescents and youth, the short-term health consequences of smoking include respiratory and non-respiratory effects, addiction to nicotine, and the associated risk of other drug use. Long-term health consequences of youth smoking are reinforced by the fact that most young people who smoke regularly continue to smoke throughout adulthood. Cigarette smokers have a lower level of lung function than those persons who have never smoked. Smoking reduces the rate of lung growth. In adults, cigarette smoking causes heart disease and stroke. Smoking at an early age increases the risk of lung cancer. For most smoking-related cancers, the risk rises as the individual continues to smoke. Studies have shown that early signs of these diseases can be found in adolescents who smoke (CDC, 1994).

Tobacco use is highly gendered in most PICTs. Modelled data estimates for 10-24-year-olds from 2000 to 2010 show that tobacco smoking is most common amongst young men aged 20-24 years (see Figure 9). There is a hike in smoking activity during these years. Males at all ages 10-24 have higher rates of tobacco smoking than females. Rates of tobacco use are much lower among females, with the highest rates observed in PNG and Kiribati. However, data from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS) indicate that the gap between male and female use is narrower than in other regions (WHO, 2016).

Rates of tobacco use vary from country to country. Higher rates are to be found in PNG, Kiribati, and Vanuatu for both males and females. A marked decline is estimated among males in most countries in the period 2000-2010 with the exception of Vanuatu, which shows an increase towards 2010. The data indicates a pattern of decline in tobacco smoking is less remarkable and more gradual among females and there is some evidence of stagnation in several PICTs.

**Figure 9. Tobacco use (10-24 years by sex)**



Additional data are available for the 13-15 age group through the GSHS and the GYTS. Data for the period 2001-2013 analysed by Kessaram, et al (2015), show that smoking prevalence varied from 5.6 per cent to 52.1 per cent. In seven PICTs for which data were available, over half who had ever smoked had first tried a cigarette before the age of 14; in Nauru and the Cook Islands this was 90 per cent. In 13 PICTs, more than 15 per cent of females were current smokers. This suggests that young people start experimenting with tobacco smoking at an early age. Most young smokers reported that they wanted and tried to quit, reflecting the addictive nature of tobacco (WHO, 2016).

Data from the GYTS for the period 2005-2014 (WHO, 2016) indicates that PNG has the highest prevalence of current smokers aged 13-15 in the Pacific region (43.8 per cent), followed by Palau and the Cook Islands (32.3 and 30 per cent respectively). PNG has one of the lowest rates for early initiation into cigarette smoking, in contrast to the Cook Islands, which has a high rate.

Differences in tobacco smoking across the region may reflect variations in availability or affordability (WHO, 2016). PICTs have some of the highest prevalence rates of tobacco smoking, especially among men, but high rates among women must not be overlooked (WHO, 2013). There is a risk of future increases in tobacco use among women through changing social norms and tobacco marketing practices (Kessarem, et al, 2015). Exposure of young people to tobacco marketing is high (WHO, 2016). The practice of chewing tobacco is common in parts of Melanesia and FSM, which may also be combined with betel nut chewing. Cigarette smoking remains the dominant form of tobacco used by young people in the region (WHO, 2016). The use of locally grown tobacco in addition to manufactured cigarettes is a concern for which better data is needed.

While data for smoking among adolescents and youth is limited in the Pacific region, there is a strong case for urgent action. Comprehensive and adequately resourced tobacco control initiatives are needed. Improved data is required through PICTs undertaking repeated, standardized, representative surveys. Preventing early experimentation with tobacco and working to support those who have started smoking to quit would seem to be important. Increasing awareness of the dangers of second-hand smoke in public places, the home, and in school is needed (WHO, 2016). Interventions need to respond to the differences between young men and women in smoking. Research is needed on the drivers of tobacco use.

## **Harmful abuse of alcohol**

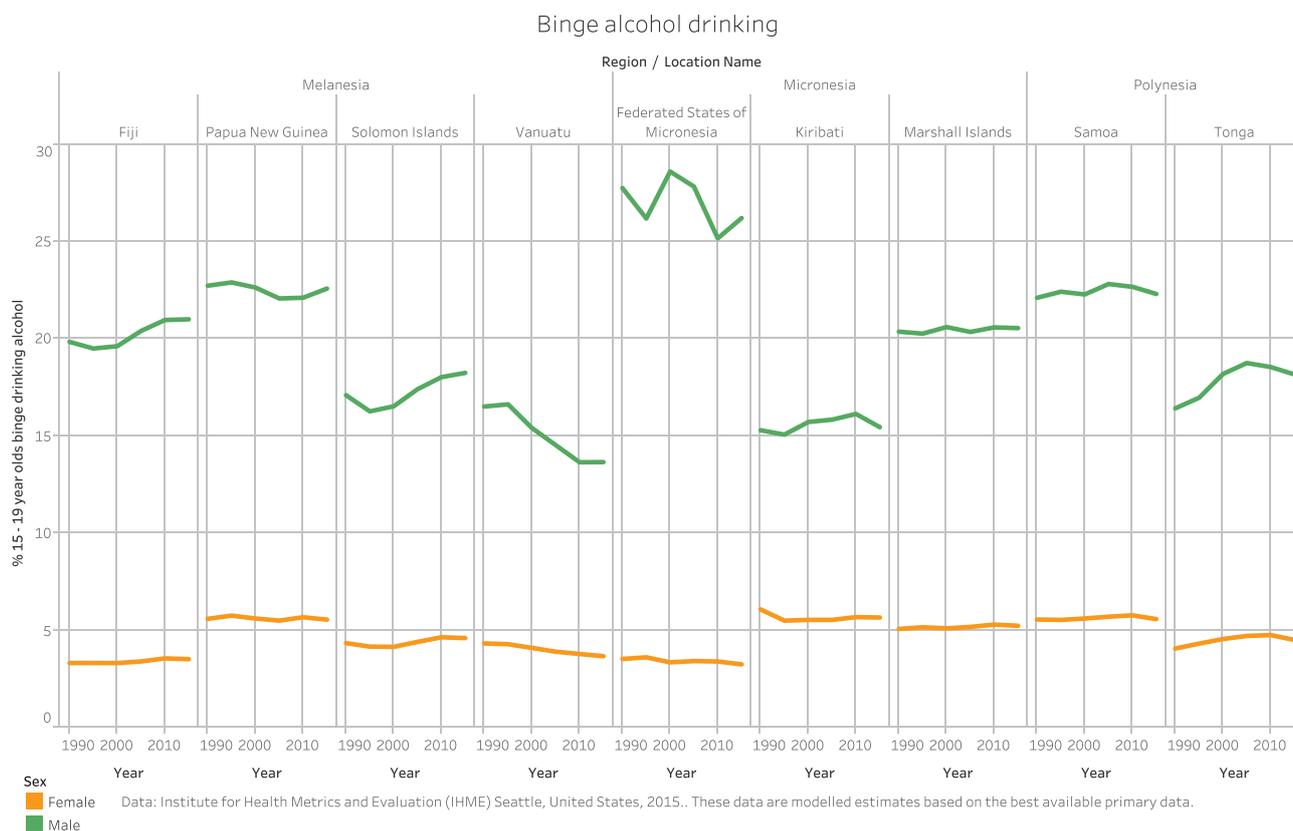
The harmful abuse of alcohol is a global problem, which compromises both individual and social development. It results in 3.3 million deaths each year. Alcohol is the world's third largest risk factor for premature mortality, disability, and loss of health. It is the leading risk factor in the Pacific region.

Alcohol abuse is associated with many serious social and developmental issues, including violence, child neglect and abuse, and absenteeism in the workplace. It also causes harm far beyond the physical and psychological health of the drinker. It harms the wellbeing and health of people around the drinker. An intoxicated person can harm others or put them at risk of traffic accidents or violent behaviour, or negatively affect co-workers, relatives, friends, or strangers. Thus, the impact of the harmful use of alcohol reaches deep into society.

Adolescence is a key time of behaviour change in an individual's life cycle and for brain reorganization. Excess alcohol consumption during this period adversely affects these developmental changes. Further, young people have particular reactions to alcohol as compared to adults. While they are less sensitive to sedation and mobility effects, they are more sensitive to social and rewarding effects. These reactions can make young people easily intoxicated, placing them and the community at risk of physical, sexual, and emotional harm. Furthermore, young people can develop dependence on alcohol more quickly than adults, and persons who initiate drinking at early ages tend to develop alcohol problems later in life.

Modelled estimates for 10-19-year-olds between 2000 and 2010 reveal harmful alcohol use among both males and females (see Figure 10) and show a significant gap in favour of male involvement. Rates are particularly high for males in FSM. High rates are also reported for males in Fiji, PNG, RMI, and Samoa. Female rates are broadly consistent across the selected countries, and slightly higher in PNG and Kiribati. There is no clear trend in the region, but some PICTs have seen a slight decline in binge drinking in this age group (Kiribati, Samoa, and Tonga). An increasing rate is observable in the Solomon Islands. Binge drinking can be considered an issue among the 10-19 age group in the region in particular.

**Figure 10. Harmful alcohol drinking 2000-2010 (15-19, both sexes)**



Data from the GSHS<sup>12</sup> shows the following:

- Early initiation.** In Fiji (2016), 68.7 per cent of 13-15-year-old students had reportedly drunk alcohol for the first time before age 14 (71.9 and 64.3 per cent for males and females respectively). This was higher than reported among 16-17-year-olds (36 per cent). The rate was 74.2 per cent among students aged 13-15 in Nauru (2011), 80 and 66.7 per cent for males and females respectively. In Kiribati (2011) the rate was 66.6 per cent, Niue 78.7 per cent (2010), Samoa 86.9 per cent (2011), Solomon Islands 63.6 per cent (2011), Tokelau 81.3 per cent (2014), Tonga 63.4 per cent (2010), and Vanuatu 70.8 per cent (2011).
- Prevalence of reported drunkenness.** In Fiji (2016), among the 16-17-year-old students 19.1 per cent reported being drunk at least once in their life (26.5 per cent male and 11.8 per cent female). The following rates are reported for 13-15-year-old students: Kiribati 21.7 per cent (2011), Nauru 19.7 per cent (2011), Niue 22.8 per cent, Samoa 35.9 per cent (2011), Solomon Islands 16.8 per cent (2011), Tokelau 31.9 per cent (2014), Tonga 16.1 per cent (2010), Tuvalu 11.9 per cent (2013), and Vanuatu 70.8 per cent (2011).

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/gshs/>

- **Regular consumption of alcohol.** In Fiji (2016), 21.2 per cent of students aged 16-17 reported consuming alcohol on at least one day in the 30 days before the survey (27.5 per cent for males and 14.8 per cent for females). The rate is 12.7 per cent for students aged 13-15. The following rates are reported for 13-15-year-old students: Kiribati 30.3 per cent (2011), Nauru 21.9 per cent (2011), Niue 23 per cent (2010), Samoa 34.2 per cent (2011), Solomon Islands 18 per cent (2011), Tokelau 44.6 per cent (2014), Tonga 18.4 per cent (2010), Tuvalu 13.1 per cent (2013), and Vanuatu 8.3 per cent (2011).
- **Male-female differences.** Males were more likely to drink regularly, become drunk, and start drinking early (e.g. in Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu). In Tokelau higher rates of regular drinking are reported for females than males: 51.6 per cent vs. 34.7 per cent.

The patterns are consistent. Young people in the region start alcohol use early. The risks of alcohol use include alcohol-related harm and risks including injuries, risky sexual activity, suicide, impaired relationships, and reduced participation in education and employment.

## HEALTH SERVICE RESPONSE

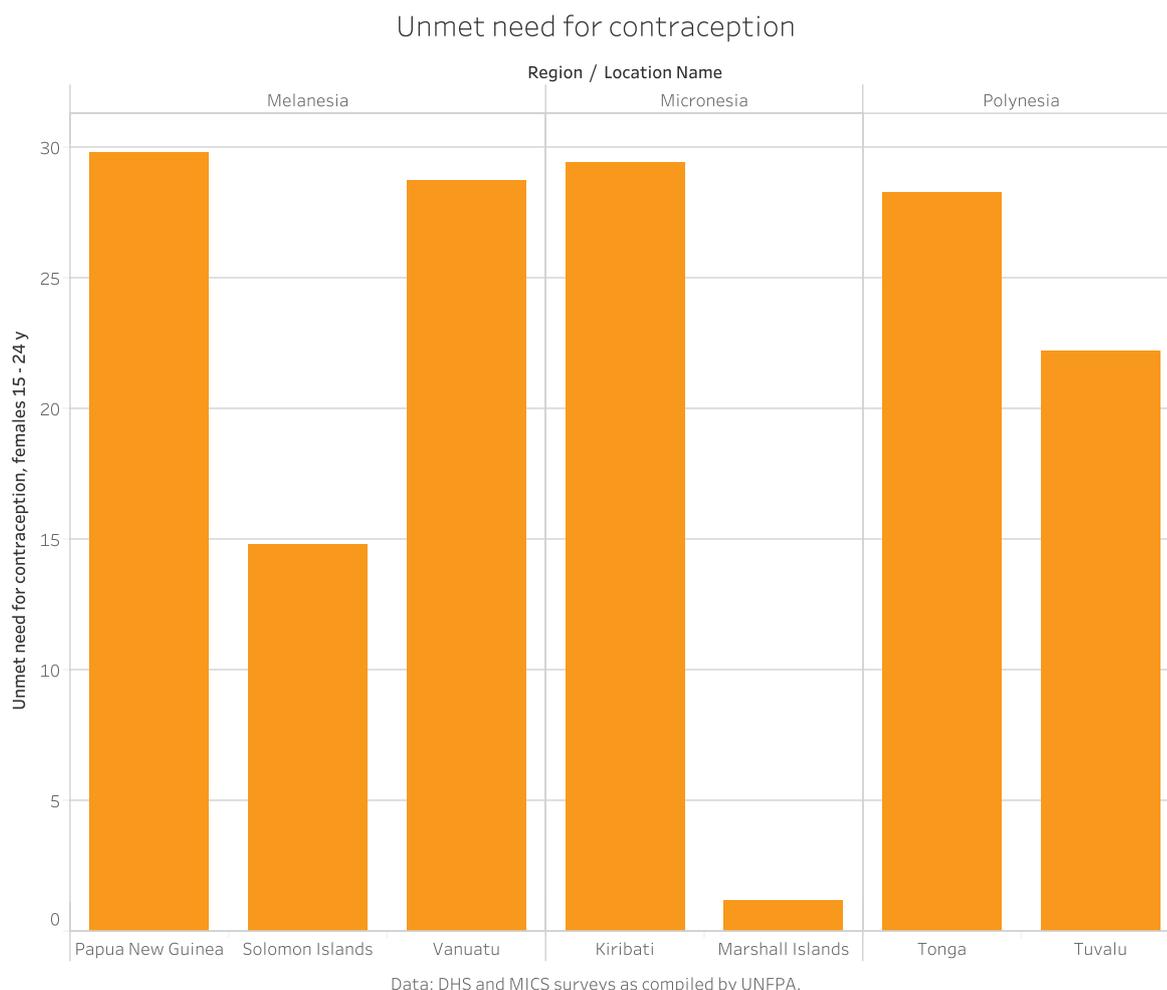
### i) Unmet need for contraception

To provide context, the majority of married young people in the Pacific region can name a modern method of contraception. The proportion of females in the RMI, Tonga, and Vanuatu currently married or in union who had heard of at least one modern method of contraception from 2006-2013 were 97, 97, and 92 respectively. In PNG and Samoa the percentages were 71 and 62 respectively (UNFPA, 2015). However, few have comprehensive knowledge and many misconceptions exist.

The unmet need for contraception varies widely between PICTs. Very high rates, all greater than 25 per cent, of unmet need among married girls/women 15-19-years-old are reported for Kiribati, PNG, RMI, Tonga, and Vanuatu (see Figure 11).

Rates for the Solomon Islands and Tuvalu are lower, but are still indicative of a significant unmet need for contraception. RMI is an exception with a very low rate. These data indicate a need to improve contraceptive availability to better meet the needs of young women and their families in the region.

**Figure 11. Unmet need for contraceptives (15-24 females)**



## ii) Adolescent and youth-friendly health services

A 2015 assessment of youth-friendly health services was conducted in five PICTs (Kiribati, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu) using mixed methods of data collection with support from UNFPA. The findings include an analysis of four key domains: acceptability, accessibility, affordability, and youth involvement (UNFPA, 2015). Illustrative findings from Kiribati, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu are presented in Table 13.

**Table 13. Youth-friendly services in three PICTs (UNFPA, 2015)**

Key domain	Kiribati	Solomon Islands	Vanuatu
<b>Acceptability</b>	Youth stated in focus group discussions that there are no dedicated spaces for youth to discuss SRH issues in government clinics	Health workers not youth-focused and there are attitudinal barriers to YFS in both rural and urban settings	Confidentiality is an issue with government clinics, but not NGO clinics: fear of stigma attached to visiting SRH clinic
	Health workers not youth-focused and there are attitudinal barriers to YFS	Government clinics are not youth friendly	Health workers not youth-focused and there are attitudinal barriers to YFS

Key domain	Kiribati	Solomon Islands	Vanuatu
<b>Accessibility</b>	Few clinics provide exclusive SRH services for youth	Limited access to YFS across the country	Limited access to YFS across the country
	There are geographical barriers to access		Lack of YFS in remote and rural areas
<b>Affordability</b>	No fees	Small fee (NGO), but not a barrier	Small fee (NGO), but not a barrier
	Transportation costs are the greatest challenge		
<b>Youth involvement</b>	Limited involvement	Peer educators are integral to YFS provision	Peer educators are integral to YFS provision
	Very few youth reported having been involved in clinic activities	There is a national network of community peer educators	

Youth friendly SRH services are not widely accessible in the Pacific region (UNFPA, 2015). They tend to be located in urban centres and thus exclude those who live in rural settings and on remote islands. A study of youth-friendly SRH services in the Cook Islands, Kiribati, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Tuvalu found that they were overwhelmingly falling short of being youth-friendly (SPC, 2010). Problems encountered included accessibility (inflexible opening hours), inadequate training to provide effective counselling, judgemental attitudes towards sexual behaviours, and no involvement of youth in the design, implementation, or evaluation of SRH services. As a result youth are often reluctant to visit SRH services for fear of embarrassment, that their family will find out, and of being sexually abused during examination. Contraception is seen as a service for married youth only and young unmarried people may be turned away from clinics. The majority of service providers only offer condoms and not any other form of contraception.

The abovementioned issues are being addressed at the regional level through the development of a Pacific Regional Guideline Manual on Standards for Youth Friendly Services (UNFPA, no date). Ensuring its adoption in national standards and their implementation across the region will be an important development in improving the quality of youth-friendly health services.

UNFPA (2017) identifies a number of facilitating factors and constraints concerning developing these services. Facilitating factors include: involvement of youth-focused non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with qualified staff and supplies, cost free services, and working groups on behalf of adolescent and youth SRH that meet regularly. Constraints include: limited dedicated funding, government services not set up specifically for youth, health workers not conversant with youth perspectives, lack of qualified counsellors, and limited outreach to the most vulnerable groups including sex workers, LGBTQI, and youth with disabilities.

To strengthen the provision of quality adolescent and youth-friendly services requires action in several key areas (UNFPA, 2007). The concept needs to be agreed and accepted among all stakeholders. Packages of services that meet the friendliness criteria need to be defined that are appropriate to the local context. Service providers need training in the attitudes and skills required to deliver the services as defined. This should include counselling skills, STI syndromic management, contraceptive technology (including emergency contraception), and CSE facilitation skills. Attention needs to be given to developing appropriate facilities with adequate equipment and resources. Effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms need to be put in place

for on-going capacity development and quality assurance. A supportive enabling environment — involving cultural, social, and family involvement — is required that allows young people easy access to services. Finally the involvement of young people themselves is essential, including in the assessment of the delivery of youth-friendly SRH services.

## HEALTH POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

### i) National youth policies

Available NYPs were obtained for PICTs (see Annex 1). These address many of the health issues that are identified in this section. There is a strong emphasis on health promotion/education and access to youth-friendly health services. Important factors are youth engagement and meeting their relevant health needs. The link with education is made in several instances.

The main strategic areas are grouped as follows:

- a) **Health education and health promotion (in and out of school).** This includes access to information relevant to adolescent and youth health and awareness of health issues and risks. Health education is considered a means of promoting healthy lifestyles and proactive health seeking behaviours. Particular mention is made of mental health awareness and support, condom availability, and services for youth with disabilities. Also mentioned are the need to develop spiritual health and the role of arts and music in promoting wellbeing.
- b) **Life skills.** There is some recognition of the need to go beyond the provision of information and to invest in the capabilities of adolescents and youth to manage their own health effectively. In this regard, life skills development is mentioned. Three specific life skills are included in the various NYPs: decision-making skills (for health), self-esteem, and communication skills.
- c) **Specific health issues.** A wide range of health issues is identified in the NYPs. Frequent mention is made of SRH, substance abuse, mental health, nutrition and overweight, and physical activity, fitness, and sports. Other specific issues include: tobacco, hygiene, teenage pregnancy, unwanted pregnancy, anaemia, TB, leprosy, violence, suicide, and road accidents.
- d) **Health services.** A relative lack of emphasis is given to developing adolescent- and youth-friendly health services in these policies. The active and meaningful participation of youth in health service provision is also largely missing. Mention is made of mental health support systems that are adequate and available, counselling services, community-based programmes, and peer education.

These NYPs provide a platform for addressing youth health in the context of a holistic multi-sectoral approach to youth development.

### ii) National policies on adolescent and youth health

In addition to an NYP, governments may also develop national policies on youth health. Only one PICT appears to have done this. PNG has put in place a specific policy for youth and adolescent health (Government of PNG, 2014). The policy is based on a consultative process involving senior representatives from the National Department of Health (NDoH), the University of PNG Medical School, national and international NGOs, as well as representatives of adolescents and youth. This comprises the Youth and Adolescent Health National Policy Core Group, established in 2009.

Issues identified that are to be addressed in the policy include early and unwanted pregnancies (and marriages), prevalence of STIs, alcohol, tobacco and other substance abuse, mental health (depression and suicide), a lack of access to information, and youth-friendly services.

The policy includes the following strategies:

- Strengthening coordination and building capacity to implement adolescent and youth health activities (mainly through NDoH central coordination of all services);
- Provision of services that are appropriate and friendly to adolescents (using NDoH approved curricula);
- Improving access to information and building awareness of adolescent and youth health issues (through school-based health education, life skills programmes focusing on out of school youth, community level programmes, and parental education);
- Prevention of risky behaviours and addressing their consequences (a strong emphasis on information and health sector agencies working to discourage health risk behaviours and provide appropriate care and support);
- Addressing abuse and neglect, which affect the physical and mental health of adolescents (training of health workers to recognise suspected and actual cases of abuse, legal protection and action by local government authorities and service providers to ensure all cases are reported and addressed appropriately);
- Reduction of early and unwanted pregnancies (collaboration between NDoH and Department of Education to strengthen SRH education).

### **iii) Situational analysis on adolescent and youth health**

Fiji conducted a situational analysis on adolescent health (Colquhoun et al, 2016). This provides a comprehensive assessment of the health status of the adolescent population and the policy issues to be addressed. It can be considered an example of good practice in terms of data gathering, analysis, and provision of policy relevant information.

### **iv) National strategies on health**

PICTs also have in place national strategies and action plans for health that include interventions aimed at adolescents and youth. Examples of Indicators directly relevant to adolescent and youth health are: number of schools with active healthy food policies, a 10 per cent reduction in obesity in school children, reduction in teenage pregnancies, and reduction in youth suicide rates.<sup>13</sup>

PICTs have also developed National NCD strategies and action plans. These include strategies such as these from the Cook Islands National NCD strategy and action plan 2015-2019<sup>14</sup>:

- Strengthening the Health and PE curriculum and ensuring that it includes harmful effects of alcohol use and abuse (to tie in with the tobacco school intervention programme);
- Strengthening healthy food initiatives in schools;
- Strengthening physical activity in schools;
- Strengthening community-based physical activity programmes with a particular focus on non-competitive activities;
- Promote physical activity in workplaces.

<sup>13</sup> Cook Islands National Health Strategy 2012-2016 (Ministry of Health, 2012)

<sup>14</sup> Cook Islands National Strategy and Action Plan for Non-Communicable Diseases 2015-2019 (Ministry of Health, 2015)

## 3.4 Discussion

### The need for better understandings of adolescent and youth health

To date, the specific health needs of adolescents and youth living in the Pacific have been poorly described, and the focus of reporting has largely been around SRH.

SRH and HIV have been the dominant focus of adolescent and youth health programming and policy in the Pacific region. This is where the statistical data is strongest.

### Limited progress in health outcomes

Adolescents and youth in the Pacific have complex and poor health outcomes that have seen limited improvement over recent years. All cause mortality is high across the region. Road traffic accidents are a leading cause of death. Adolescents and youth in the Pacific experience a very large burden of disease. NCDs make a large and unshifting contribution to this burden. These NCDs include mental disorders and substance use disorders as well as chronic physical conditions. Injuries are an important cause of poor health, especially for males. SRH is important. STIs are common amongst sexually active 15-24-year-olds. Adolescent fertility rates are high. Teenage motherhood is particularly high in remote and rural settings. A substantial proportion of these pregnancies are unintended. Suicide rates in Pacific Islands are some of the highest in the world, reaching double the global average in Samoa and FSM, with youth rates even higher. This requires urgent attention.

### Significant health risks

The findings show that health risks are common for adolescents and youth in the Pacific, and that for many risks there has been little improvement over time. These findings highlight the need for investment in preventative intervention. Notable health risks include:

- **Overweight and obesity.** These are increasingly common among adolescents and youth. It is emerging as a serious problem for women aged 20-24 with multiple implications over the life cycle. This is the most significant health risk for Pacific youth.
- **Anaemia.** High levels of anaemia are seen, particularly among females aged 10-24. Rates are generally high across the region and increasing in some PICTs, while declining in others.
- **Tobacco.** Tobacco smoking is most common amongst young men aged 20-24 years. Rates of tobacco use vary from country to country. Higher rates are to be found in PNG, Kiribati, and Vanuatu.
- **Alcohol.** More young people are drinking and at younger ages. Harmful drinking is common. Young people are reporting increasing alcohol-related harm and risks including injuries, risky sexual activity, suicide and impaired relationships, and reduced participation in education and employment.

### Inadequate response to adolescent and youth health needs

Adolescents have substantial health needs. They are not as “healthy” as is often assumed. They require access to high quality universal health care. It appears that much remains to be done in developing good quality youth-friendly health services in the region. Youth friendly SRH services are not widely accessible in the Pacific region. They tend to be located in urban centres and thus exclude those who live in rural settings and on remote islands. Better health promotion interventions and school-based health education are also clearly needed to address SRH and emerging health issues.

The development of a regional framework for health education is an option that should be considered. It appears to work well in the Caribbean, which merges health education with FLE in the Health and Family Life Education (HFLE) programme. The FRESH (Focusing Resources on Effective School Health) partnership has developed many resources for school health and nutrition (SHN) that do not appear to be accessed in the Pacific region. In short, it is time to take stock and rethink health education/school health and nutrition SHN in this region. The Health Promoting Schools (HPS) initiative needs to be reviewed. It appears to be necessary but not sufficient to meet the emerging health needs of young people. Any such review of health education should include the meaningful participation of adolescents and youth.

The need for FLE and SRH among young people in the region is also recognized. It is subsumed in the PYDF under health and wellbeing. The Pacific Shared Agenda for Sexual Health and Wellbeing (2014-2018) provides support for improving youth SRH. There is currently a need to strengthen FLE in the region and better align it with international technical guidance. Implementation varies from country to country and is very much a work in progress. As with health education, there is a need to accelerate progress in universalizing coverage of age relevant FLE and ensuring quality implementation. This requires action at the country level. A common regional approach is a recommendation of the UNICEF report (2013) to support FLE efforts. From the available literature, it was difficult to discern any progress in taking this agenda forward at the regional level. Other regions are developing regional frameworks for CSE or FLE. These set standards for implementation. The Caribbean region has a long-standing HFLE regional framework. This approach would likely bring benefits to the Pacific region in supporting a more concerted approach to quality FLE across the region.

### 3.5 Conclusions and recommendations

#### i) A need for better data

The literature on youth health in the Pacific region attests to data issues and critical gaps in key areas. For example, the PNG National Youth and Adolescent Health Policy reports that there is “little strategic information about the health of this age group”. As such, it proposes a range of research programmes to fill data gaps. It also states that age disaggregated data (10-19) will be collected for selected indicators using a range of sources, including the National Health Information System, the DHS, and other surveys and research. The strong focus on SRH is reflected in indicators measuring STI and HIV, sexual activity, condom use, adolescent pregnancies, adolescent maternal mortality, unsafe abortion rates, and use of health facilities.

The DHS is carried out infrequently in the Pacific region. Few PICTs have conducted a DHS since 2010, which means that data are often a decade old. The most recent DHS for PNG was conducted in 2006 (PNG National Statistical Office, 2009); the next DHS will be conducted in 2016-17. For the Solomon Islands, the most recent DHS was carried out in 2006-07 (SPC, 2009), Kiribati in 2009 (SPC, 2010), Nauru in 2007 (SPC, 2009), RMI in 2007, and Tuvalu in 2007 (SPC, 2009). More recent DHS data are available for Samoa in 2014 (SPC, 2015), Tonga in 2012 (SPC, 2014), and Vanuatu in 2013 (SPC, 2014). As such, the current landscape of data availability and quality makes it difficult to report the health status of adolescents and youth in the Pacific.

To provide some estimates for SOPY 2016, data was drawn from the Global Burden of Disease Study, 2015 (GBD). The data was modelled (estimated using mathematical models which are based on the best available primary data) with four key benefits. First, modelling helps to account for errors or inconsistencies in measurement over time. Second, modelling helps harmonise different ways

of measuring the same condition (for example, incidence and prevalence of HIV). Third, modelling helps to provide estimates where data is lacking. Finally, by employing a consistent approach to modelling, different countries in the region can be compared to see where investments must be prioritized. GBD data has previously been used in a situational analysis for adolescent health in Fiji.

Research is needed to better understand the drivers of adolescent youth health risk behaviours as well as youth perspectives on health and wellbeing priorities.

**ii) Strengthen health education and promotion at regional and individual PICT levels to strengthen the capacity of young people to practice healthy behaviours**

This needs to include the active and meaningful participation of adolescents and youth. Efforts need to include risk reduction interventions. Information is necessary to change behaviour. Health promotion interventions need to be developed that are targeted at youth tobacco use and alcohol consumption, including harmful drinking. Road safety education needs to be enhanced. SHN and CSE should be considered priority investments to build the health literacy of young people and promote healthy lifestyles. Increasing participation in secondary school means that school-based programmes will have increasingly greater coverage of the adolescent population. Mass media and social marketing should be used to reach all youth.

**iii) Enable adolescent and youth participation in health policy and programming**

There is much to do to increase the voice of young people in the field of health policy and programming that affects their lives. It is important to strengthen their participation in decision-making processes and their ability to advocate for better health for themselves and their families and communities. In this regard it is important to strengthen capacity at the regional, national, and community levels. The PYC and NYCs have important roles to play in enabling the participation of youth in the field of health and promoting youth leadership. At the same time, individual agency needs to be developed through life skills development, relationship skills building, and networking.

**iv) Improve access to quality youth-friendly health services generally, and specifically for SRH, including addressing barriers to contraceptive services for married and unmarried sexually active youth**

Youth-friendly services enhance opportunities to make healthy choices. Health care services for youth need to incorporate suicide prevention as a core component. Programmes also need to be developed to deal with the adverse consequences of poor health behaviours or outcomes. For example, programmes are needed to help youth overcome addiction (e.g. tobacco and alcohol), treat STIs, and provide access to emergency contraception. Counselling is an important service that needs to be made widely available given the emerging issues in teenage pregnancy and youth mental health.

**v) Nutrition and exercise need to be given enhanced priority in the national youth development agenda**

This includes national nutrition planning with health and other sectors. Health promoting schools (HPS) have an important role to play. Legal frameworks that protect, promote, and support healthy diets need to be strengthened and enforced. Quality nutrition services need to be accessible and implemented across public health programmes and settings. Enhanced strategies are needed to prevent and treat overweight and obesity in youth, including the promotion of physical exercise for all at school, at the workplace, and in the community.

**vi) Reframe adolescent and youth health policy to better match health actions to needs**

The focus of youth policy needs to reflect the very different health needs of this population. Adolescents in the Pacific encounter a triple burden of health problems (communicable/reproductive/nutritional disease; NCDs; and injury). As such, their needs extend beyond STIs and HIV (typically the focus of adolescent health programming in the Pacific). It is necessary to take a much broader and integrated view of adolescent health that includes, but is not limited to: suicide, but also fatal unintentional injury and non-fatal self-harm and assault; adolescent sexual health, but also reproductive health; mental health that addresses both immediate burden of mental disorder, but also supports wellbeing; and key risks for future poor health including overweight, nutrition, physical activity, and substance use.

**vii) Respond to adolescent and youth health needs through inter-sectoral collaboration**

Service systems need to be adapted to respond to the needs of adolescents and youth while considering culture, geography, and family and community resources. Many of the health needs of adolescents and youth, such as injury and violence, are best addressed through sectors other than health. Inter-sectoral action must include the education sector since schools can be effective health promoting environments, and education is such a powerful determinant of health.



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## 4. EDUCATION AND LEARNING

### 4.1 The case for investing in education for adolescents and youth in the Pacific region

Education is foundational and fundamental to adolescent and youth development. Access to quality inclusive education creates opportunities and improves life chances (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2016). Education helps prepare young people for work and life more generally. It helps build capabilities. This lifelong process starts in early childhood and extends into secondary and tertiary education.

Investing in the human capital of young people is central to the potential for economic growth in a highly competitive international environment (Burgess, 2016). This applies to the Pacific region as much as anywhere. Human capital involves the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values for lifelong personal development and the fulfilment of potential. Education is the main channel of acquiring these. It is important for developing healthy behaviours, skills, and attitudes for employability, personal empowerment, and the ability to participate effectively in society as an active citizen. It follows that education curricula need to be directly relevant to the lives of the learner in these and other thematic areas.

Quality of education is key. The poor quality of basic education severely limits opportunities for young people (World Bank, 2007). The quality of basic education is a major concern in the Pacific region. Children are not learning as much as they should at school and are not well prepared for the transition to post-basic education or life more generally.

The distribution of human capital is a key determinant of income inequality and a person's socioeconomic background is a fundamental determinant of social mobility and social disadvantage (Burgess, 2016). Equity and inclusion are therefore critically important education principles. Appropriate investment is needed to ensure that all adolescents and youth, regardless of their socioeconomic status, have the opportunity to benefit from post-primary education. Leaving no one behind entails having a strong commitment to equity in education.

Young people in the Pacific region experience educational disadvantage in a number of ways. SOPY 2011 highlighted disability, adolescent mothers, young people living with HIV, and the urban poor as disadvantaged groups. To this list should be added young people living in remote communities, the rural poor, and those affected by conflict or natural disaster. Gender inequality is another important driver of educational disadvantage in the region, in some contexts favouring girls and in others, boys. Using data to identify patterns of disadvantage or young people at risk is essential to preventing drop-outs and push outs, exclusion, and failure to learn. It is also necessary for remediation in both policy and programming through targeted interventions.

## 4.2 Towards a sector-wide approach to education for adolescent and youth development

**No single component of the education system is solely responsible for adolescent and youth development.** It is the contribution of all component parts of the education sector that enable the fulfilment of human potential. A sector-wide approach is needed. Maximising human capabilities of all adolescents and youth means taking into account their various contexts, needs, and assets, including their motivation to learn. It means establishing multiple pathways for educational attainment and skills development to cater to different circumstances and interests. Key to monitoring youth development is the ability to assess levels of participation in the education system, the quality of learning outcomes at different levels, and patterns of educational disadvantage arising from factors such as gender inequality, disability, and poverty that require targeted policy and programming responses.

**The education pathway to adulthood begins in the home.** The role of parents in early learning is critical. Learning in early childhood is fundamentally important for future development. The education system, which may also include early childhood education, provides a structured, graduated system for developing skills and acquiring knowledge, attitudes, and values for a successful life. This involves multiple transitions from level to level. Unsuccessful transitions entail early drop out from the system and the risk of failure to achieve essential learning for life, such as functional literacy and numeracy skills. Monitoring youth development, therefore, needs an approach that tracks the progress of the adolescent and youth cohort through the education system and its different pathways. It is about ensuring that no one is left behind.

**Primary education lies mainly outside the age range for this report, yet its outcomes cannot be ignored.** Completing a quality primary education and acquiring the desired learning outcomes, particularly in literacy and numeracy, is essential for all young people to be able to fulfil their potential. Learning at this level involves establishing a solid foundation for learning and understanding core areas of knowledge — including the skills to learn and personal and social development — in preparation for lower secondary education. It focuses on learning at a basic level of complexity with little, if any, specialisation (UNESCO, 2011). Universal primary education (UPE) is an international benchmark, a minimum standard of education attainment for all children. Investments at this level are indispensable for subsequent human capital development. The PICTS are on track to achieve UPE and the majority of primary school age children are in school, though about 10 per cent are not (UNESCO, 2015).

**For the period of adolescence, secondary education is central to learning.** Lower secondary education aims to lay the foundation for lifelong learning and human development upon which education systems may then expand with further educational opportunities. Some education systems may already offer vocational education programmes at this level to provide individuals with skills relevant to employment (UNESCO, 2011). Lower secondary education is usually considered with primary education to comprise basic education. Monitoring the achievement of universal basic education is therefore an important dimension of assessing the status of adolescent and youth development. It entails monitoring the completion rates at this level, though enrolment rates (gross and net) can also provide useful data on participation at this level. Through this approach, using data disaggregated by sex and socioeconomic factors, disadvantaged groups can be identified and targeted interventions developed.

**Post-basic education is the keystone in preparation for participation in the modern economy.** International attention has been focused on achieving UPE and universal basic education (UBE), with limited focus on this level of education. While they provide the essential foundations, neither primary nor lower secondary education can fully deliver the higher-order skills that are becoming

increasingly important in the modern economy and society. A basic education is necessary, but not sufficient. Upper secondary education is a key stage in the skill development process. This level is typically designed to complete secondary education in preparation for tertiary education or to provide skills relevant to employment, or both (UNESCO, 2011). Programmes at this level offer students more varied, specialised, and in-depth instruction than programmes at lower secondary level. They are more differentiated, with an increased range of options and streams available. Teachers are often highly qualified in the subjects or fields of specialisation they teach, particularly in the higher grades.

**Tertiary education is important for high order skills in youth development.** Tertiary education builds on secondary education, providing learning activities in specialised fields of education (UNESCO, 2011). It typically aims at learning at a high level of complexity and specialisation. Tertiary education includes what is commonly understood as academic education, but also includes advanced vocational or professional education. Economic rates of return are variable for university education, differing in terms of subject and class of degree (Walker and Zhu, 2011). Typically the highest returns are for degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Tertiary education has been a neglected field in youth development, yet it is obviously key to the economic and social empowerment of this cohort in society. Increased attention needs to be given to monitoring participation and outcomes at this level with a view to supporting effective transitions to adulthood in the world of work and in society more generally.

**Second chance education opportunities are needed for those who dropped out of school early or left without academic success.** These include remedial education, equivalency programmes, literacy programmes, and vocational training programmes (World Bank, 2007). Different types of programmes can work in combination and indicate the potential of a multiple pathway approach to addressing young people's educational disadvantages. While many PICTs offer non-formal education (NFE) opportunities, there are no data available in the data sets accessed to enable measurement of how accessible they are to out of school youth and whether accessibility has improved over time. These opportunities are important for out of school adolescents and youth in formal and non-formal education settings. Countries are in the process of putting in place second chance education opportunities, but the lack of statistical data precludes an objective assessment of the status of these.

### 4.3 The Pacific education sector context

**Pacific education regional priorities.** The importance of universal access to quality education is well recognised across the Pacific region and reflected in the Pacific Education Development Framework (PEDF) 2012-2015 in core strategic objectives that were agreed for the region. Three strategic PEDF objectives were particularly relevant for adolescent and youth development:

- i) Universal basic education (primary and secondary education);
- ii) Increased access to technical and vocational education and training (TVET); and
- iii) Creation of pathways to NFE linked to formal education.

In addition there were cross-cutting objectives relating to inclusive education, gender equality, information and communication technology (ICT), education for sustainable development, HIV and AIDS, and youth. The PEDF objectives were also congruent with the Education for All (EFA) agenda 2000-2015. In 2017, a new regional education framework was being developed. This will be relevant to the next SOPY reporting period.

It is important to note that not all education development issues relevant to adolescent youth development were included in the PEDF. Post-basic education was missing, in particular, the critically important sub-sector of tertiary education.

**A context of diversity.** There is significant diversity in education systems in the Pacific region. PICTs have different durations of primary education (from six to eight years) and similarly at secondary level (from four to six years). Some PICTs make a clear distinction between lower and upper secondary education and some do not. A flexible approach was observed in some PICTs with overlapping primary and secondary systems.

Education systems vary considerably in scale across the region. A feature of many PICTs is that the post-primary education system is small, considerably smaller than for primary education. Some PICTs have less than 10 secondary schools in total (the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Tokelau, and Tuvalu); these may be widely dispersed across islands, some have only one. A few PICTs have larger systems with more than 100 secondary schools of various types (Fiji, PNG, and the Solomon Islands). These numbers indicate significant differences in system complexity, as well as the possibility of economies of scale and thus potentially greater managerial and technical capacity. In summary, there is great diversity across the region in education provision.

**Increasing attainment.** SOPY 2011 (UNICEF and SPC, 2011) reported that education attainment in the Pacific region was increasing. Pacific youth were more educated than older age groups. Education was the domain in which governments invested the most. Education attainment was increasing rapidly among young women. A significantly higher proportion of women aged 20-24 in 2009 had completed secondary education or higher education than the 25-29 age group in several PICTs including Kiribati and Samoa (14 and 9 per cent respectively). Secondary education enrolment rates (gross enrolment ratio, or GER) were higher for girls than boys in a number of PICTs including Fiji, Kiribati, and Tonga.

**Universal primary education.** The vast majority of primary school age students in the region are enrolled in school. According to the Pacific Review of EFA 2015 (UNESCO, 2015), the adjusted net enrolment ratio (ANER) for primary education in the region was 89 per cent in 2012. However, this means that more than 10 per cent of primary school aged children were not enrolled in primary school in that year, which is still a substantial proportion. Thus, for some adolescents and youth, education attainment does not even reach primary level completion. This implies that in these cases, basic foundational skills of literacy and numeracy have not been achieved. This is an issue that was highlighted in SOPY 2011. This contributes to their lack of opportunity, deprivation, and disadvantage.

**Post-primary education.** A major challenge lies in universalising lower secondary education and increasing opportunities in post-basic education and training. Data for this level are limited. On the basis of these, participation rates in upper secondary education, TVET, and tertiary education are generally low. Policies and strategies are needed to expand education pathways and opportunities in these areas, developed in relation to economic and labour market needs.

There is very considerable variation between countries in the provision of and access to post-secondary education including university education. There is a regional university, the University of the South Pacific. Some PICTs have established their own universities and higher education institutions (e.g. Fiji, PNG, Samoa, and the Solomon Islands). Some PICTs rely heavily on university education in Australia and New Zealand for undergraduate and graduate training. This is a pattern of great complexity and is reflected in persistent data gaps at this level.

**Future directions.** In the face of strong demographic pressure and competition for opportunities and resources in the Pacific region, there is a need to ensure that there is a strong and clear focus on the purposes of education in policy, strategy, and programming. It is important that education is fully relevant to the needs of everyday life and the key transitions from adolescence to youth and then adulthood.

There is currently considerable thinking, research, and debate on education for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the types of skills that are needed for success in our increasingly technological world. In an increasingly globalized world, this debate is relevant to the Pacific region, but it has yet to become as influential or integral to education policy making as in some other regions of the world. 21<sup>st</sup> century skills<sup>15</sup> include the development of life skills such as communication, critical thinking, creativity and innovation, problem solving, collaboration, and personal management skills. This has profound implications for how education is conceived and delivered. The Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills (P21, 2011) has identified key interdisciplinary themes that are considered essential to the success of young people. These include financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, health literacy, environmental literacy, ICT literacy, and media literacy.

## 4.4 Key findings

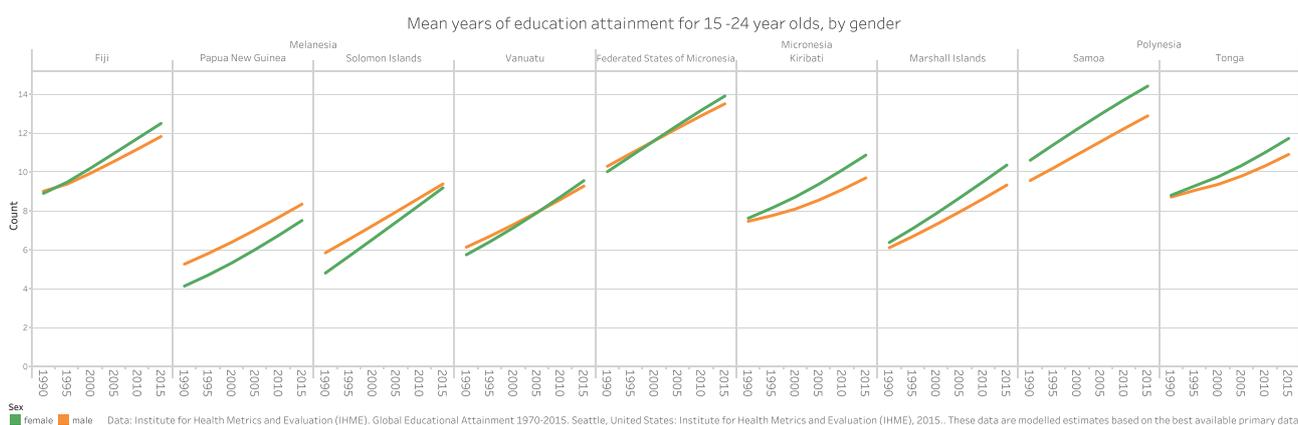
### 4.4.1 Attainment

#### Education attainment among the 15-24 year age group

Levels of education as measured by mean years of schooling (in the 15-24 age group) in the Pacific region have risen continuously during the past quarter of a century (see Figure 12). This means that youth as a group are becoming increasingly better educated over time. In the period 1990-2015 the mean years of attainment increased by three to four years for all countries with data.

There is, however, a wide range in educational attainment across the region. Some countries have progressed from a lower starting point (e.g. RMI, PNG, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu), but have relatively low mean years of attainment of 10, 8, 9, and 9 years respectively in the 15-24-year-old age group. There is a substantial gap between these countries and Fiji, FSM, and Samoa (12, 14, and 14 years respectively) representing around a quarter of a century of attainment progress on current trends. These data indicate there is a substantial difference in education attainment levels among the 15-24-year-old age range across the region.

**Figure 12. Mean years of education attainment for 10-24 year olds (both sexes)**



<sup>15</sup> [www.P21.org](http://www.P21.org)

Sustainable development requires educated workers, entrepreneurs, managers, and citizens.

Levels of education attainment are an important indicator of the human capital of young people. Higher levels of education lead to higher labour productivity and higher aggregate levels of education in a country support faster economic growth (Goldin and Katz, 2008).

There are limitations to the usefulness of the attainment indicator. Years of schooling do not capture the acquisition of skills and it is these that are strongly associated with economic growth, cognitive skills in particular (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2012). Data are also needed that are direct measures of skills, including cognitive skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking, in order to obtain a better picture of the capabilities of young people that are relevant to economic and social development. Non-cognitive skills such as self-management and communication skills are also important.

### Participation in lower secondary education

Monitoring the percentage of young people who participate in and complete lower secondary education is an important measure of their education attainment. It is fundamental to ensuring the universalization of basic education. This level of education is an important stage in the education of young people. For some it will be the end point. The most disadvantaged will not even complete this basic level. It is, therefore, necessary to be able to identify those at risk of drop out for preventive measures as well as those who have dropped out so they can access second chance education opportunities and other forms of support as necessary.

There are limitations to the usefulness of this indicator. Completion of years of schooling does not capture the acquisition of skills at this level of education. Data are also needed that provide direct measures of skills, including cognitive skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking, to obtain a better picture of the capabilities of young people that are relevant to their economic and social development.

### Key indicators

- *Completion rate for lower secondary education*
- *Out of school rate for lower secondary education*

**Lower secondary completion rate.** Major gaps were found in the data for completion rates at this level. Only two PICTs have completion rates for lower secondary education that are found in the UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS database).<sup>16</sup> These are for Fiji (83.5 per cent) and Vanuatu (38.27 per cent), both from 2007, the latest available data. These indicate a massive range in participation between these two countries. However, with so little available data, it is difficult to say more, except to highlight the urgent need for better statistical data across the region.

**Out of school rate (lower secondary education).** Similar problems were encountered with data gaps on out of school adolescents. This is illustrated in Table 14. There is a lack of time series data, and trends, therefore, cannot be discerned. It is clear from the available estimations that the issue of out of school adolescents varies substantially in magnitude across PICTs. In the Cook Islands and Niue it is estimated that there are less than 10 out of school at this level. Larger numbers are indicated in RMI, Nauru, and Samoa. More complete and regular data are required, but the estimations suggest that there is a deficit in lower secondary school completion, at least in some PICTs.

<sup>16</sup> <http://data.uis.unesco.org>

**Table 14. Number of adolescents out of school at lower secondary level (UIS data<sup>17</sup>)**

PICT	2011	2016
Cook Islands	-	4 (national estimation)
Fiji	1,355	-
Kiribati	-	-
Marshall Islands	-	1,210 (UIS estimation)
Micronesia	-	-
Nauru	-	152 (national estimation)
Niue	-	-
Palau	-	-
Papua New Guinea	-	-
Samoa	55	166
Solomon Islands	-	-
Tokelau	-	1 (national estimation)
Tonga	-	-
Tuvalu	-	-
Vanuatu	-	180 (2015)

**Enrolment rates.** Given the dearth of available data for completion rates and out of school adolescents, it is possible to use enrolment data for lower secondary education to obtain an indication of the level of participation. Net enrolment data (adjusted net enrolment rate or ANER<sup>18</sup>) for lower secondary education for both sexes were accessed from UIS data sets for the years 2011 and 2015 to identify any significant changes at the individual country level. These are presented in Table 15. Ten PICTs are able to report for 2015 (or 2014) compared with six in 2011 (or 2012). The regional picture is still incomplete. The data indicates that there are significant numbers of overage adolescents at this level. From available data, it appears that only the Cook Islands, Fiji, Tonga, and Tuvalu are anywhere near universalising lower secondary education and even in these cases, much work remains to be done. ANER data availability problems are also pervasive.

**Table 15. Lower secondary adjusted net enrolment ratio both sexes: (UIS data<sup>19</sup>)**

PICT	School year ending in 2011 (%)	School year ending in 2015 (%)
Cook Islands	93.3	93.3
Fiji	89.0	-
Kiribati	-	-
Marshall Islands	-	62.5
Micronesia	-	62.6

<sup>18</sup> ANER is defined by UIS as the total number of students of the official primary school age group who are enrolled at primary or secondary education, expressed as a percentage of the corresponding population.

<sup>19</sup> <http://data.uis.unesco.org>

PICT	School year ending in 2011 (%)	School year ending in 2015 (%)
Nauru	77.0 (2012)	83.6 (2014)
Niue	-	77.9
Palau	45.2	57.4 (2014)
Papua New Guinea	-	-
Samoa	70.6	68.5
Solomon Islands	-	-
Tokelau	-	-
Tonga	90.0 (2012)	87.4 (2014)
Tuvalu	-	86.5 (2014)
Vanuatu	-	46.8

On the basis of this data, expanding access to lower secondary education represents a significant development challenge for many PICTs. There are important implications for the key transitions to adulthood from such low enrolment data for this level of basic education. It means that many adolescents and youth will be entering the job market with less than a complete basic education and in many cases only a full primary education. Moreover, knowledge and skills preparation for a healthy life, forming a family, and civic participation will likely be incomplete for many. Thus, universalization of lower secondary education should be regarded as a strategic development priority for all countries in the region and enhanced investment is needed to ensure that all adolescents complete this level. A more significant issue is the extent to which they are able to achieve the basic learning competencies set for this level.

### Participation in upper secondary education

Monitoring the percentage of young people who participate in and complete lower secondary education is an important measure of their education attainment. It is indicative of young people acquiring higher order skills including those for the world of work and higher education. The data also indicate the extent to which young people are making the transition from basic to post-basic education.

As with lower secondary education, data are also needed that are direct measures of skills, including cognitive skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking, in order to obtain a better picture of the capabilities of young people that are relevant to economic and social development.

### Key indicators

- *Completion rate for upper secondary education*
- *Out of school rate for upper secondary education*

**Completion rate.** Major gaps were found in the UIS data set for completion rates at this level. Two completion rates for upper secondary education in PICTs were found in the UIS data sets.<sup>20</sup> These are Fiji with 34.28 per cent and Vanuatu with 3.7 per cent (both from 2007, the latest available data). These illustrate the potential range in participation at upper secondary level in the region and indicate that access to participation at this level may be severely constrained. However, with so little available data, it is difficult to say more, except to highlight the need for better data across the region.

<sup>20</sup> [http:// data.uis.unesco.org](http://data.uis.unesco.org)

**Out of school rate.** Data for out of school adolescents was obtained from UIS data sets (see Table 16). There are substantial gaps. The numbers are significantly higher than for lower secondary level, indicating that there is a bottleneck at this level. Many adolescents are not making the transition to upper secondary level. They are not completing secondary education. This has important implications for the skill sets that these young people have acquired.

**Table 16. Number of adolescents out of school at upper secondary level (UIS data<sup>21</sup>)**

PICT	2011	2016
Cook Islands	266	274 (national estimation)
Fiji	12,818	-
Kiribati	-	-
Marshall Islands	-	771 (UIS estimation)
Micronesia	-	-
Nauru	-	238 (national estimation)
Niue	-	-
Palau	-	-
Papua New Guinea	-	-
Samoa	3,541	4,115
Solomon Islands	-	-
Tokelau	-	69 (national estimation)
Tonga	-	-
Tuvalu	-	349 (2015)
Vanuatu	-	6,922 (2015)

**Enrolment rate.** NER data (ANER data were not available) were obtained for only three PICTs for 2011 (the Cook Islands, Fiji, and Samoa). More data were found for 2015 (or 2014) indicating an improvement in statistical data availability. NER data for 10 PICTs were found with a range from 82 per cent in Palau to 22 per cent in Vanuatu (see Table 17).

Only five PICTs estimate more than a 50 per cent NER in upper secondary education (the Cook Islands, FSM, Niue, Palau, and Samoa). Five PICTs have estimates of less than 50 per cent. This suggests that the majority of adolescents and youth in the upper secondary education age range in many countries in the region are already out of school. This argues for investments to expand opportunities at this important level of education, including in STEM.

The NER data corroborate the finding that expanding educational opportunities for adolescents/youth at this level represents a major challenge for all PICTs, more for some than for others. Success at this level is necessarily constrained by the need to universalise lower secondary education.

<sup>21</sup> [http:// data.uis.unesco.org](http://data.uis.unesco.org)

**Table 17. Upper secondary education net enrolment ratio (UIS data<sup>22</sup>)**

<b>PIC</b>	<b>2011 (%)</b>	<b>2015 (%)</b>
Cook Islands	65	65
Fiji	61	-
Kiribati	-	-
Marshall Islands	-	33
Micronesia	-	51.6
Nauru	-	45.0 (2014)
Niue	-	72.0
Palau	-	82.0 (2014)
Papua New Guinea	-	-
Samoa	69	68.0
Solomon Islands	-	-
Tokelau	-	-
Tonga	-	30.0 (2014)
Tuvalu	-	46.2 (2014)
Vanuatu	-	22.0

Data for three PICTs from the Barro-Lee dataset indicate high levels of secondary education (lower and upper secondary) completion in Fiji and Tonga, with especially rapid progress in Tonga from 1990-2010 (see Figure 13). There are gender disparities in both cases. More females than males are completing secondary education in those countries. PNG has much lower levels of secondary completion with little difference in performance by gender with slightly more males completing, which is probably not statistically significant and thus gender parity exists.

<sup>22</sup> [http:// data.uis.unesco.org](http://data.uis.unesco.org)

**Figure 13. Secondary education completion by sex**



Data: Barro-Lee dataset. Barro, Robert and Jong-Wha Lee, 2013, "A New Data Set of Educational Attainment in the World, 1950-2010." *Journal of Development Economics*, vol 104, pp.184-198.

Sex ■ female ■ male

### Participation in tertiary education

Monitoring the percentage of young people who participate in tertiary education is an important measure of their education attainment. It is indicative of the level of human capital in a given youth population and the opportunities that exist to acquire higher level skills and qualifications. The best available overall measure is the gross enrolment rate at this level. It would be helpful for policy making to have more disaggregated data on tertiary education by area of study (e.g. STEM and other important fields for social and economic development) for the region.

#### Key indicator

- *Gross enrolment rate for tertiary education by sex*

The most complete tertiary education GER data for the Pacific region is available from the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) website, which provides statistical profiles for PICTs.<sup>23</sup> Data are presented in terms of earliest and latest data due to enormous gaps in statistics during the period from 2000 to the current year (see Table 18).

There are serious limitations in GER data for the Pacific region. Eight PICTs report early data, some dating from 2000. The latest data range from 2003-2014 and seven PICTs report GER statistics accordingly. Only four PICTs report data since 2012.

There is a very wide range in reported participation at this level. Estimates of the GER range from 61.9 per cent in Palau and 59.7 per cent in the Cook Islands to 4.7 per cent in Vanuatu (2004). There are relatively high levels of participation in tertiary education in RMI, Palau, and the Cook Islands and relatively low levels in Tonga and Vanuatu. The relation between investment in higher

<sup>23</sup> [http://www/data.unescap.org/escap\\_stat/](http://www/data.unescap.org/escap_stat/)

education and economic development in the Pacific region needs to be better explored, including economic rates of return analyses. Better data are urgently required to provide a more complete assessment of regional performance at this strategically important level of education.

**Table 18. GER data for tertiary education in the Pacific region (UNESCAP)**

PICT	Earliest data	Latest Data
Cook Islands	44.6 (2012)	59.7 (2014)
Fiji	15.8 (2003)	16.1 (2005)
Kiribati	-	-
Marshall Islands	16.3 (2002)	42.9 (2012)
Micronesia	14.1 (2000)	-
Nauru	-	-
Niue	-	-
Palau	37.0 (2001)	61.9 (2013)
Papua New Guinea	-	-
Samoa	7.6 (2000)	-
Solomon Islands	-	-
Tonga	4.9 (2000)	6.3 (2003)
Tuvalu	-	-
Vanuatu	3.8 (2000)	4.7 (2004)

### Participation in TVET and training

Monitoring the percentage of young people who participate in TVET is an important measure of their education attainment and preparation for the world of work. This is a basic indicator that provides data on overall uptake of TVET training. More nuanced data on types of training and learning outcomes from TVET programming are also needed.

The ILO (2017) reports the prevalence of general skills shortages in the region and the key challenges in this regard concern the lack of quality and relevance of TVET, low levels of communication skills, generic workplace skills, and entrepreneurial skills.

### Key indicators

- *Participation rate in TVET programmes (15-24)*
- *Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months by sex*

## Participation rates in TVET programmes (15-24 years)

The UIS data<sup>24</sup> includes statistics from two PICTs on the selected indicator, which is also one of the SDG 4 indicators. These are from Fiji and Tonga. The former had a participation rate of 1 per cent in 2014 and the latter 2 per cent (UNESCO 2016). More complete data sets are required for the region. On the basis of available data, access to TVET for 15-24-year-olds, therefore, appears to be quite limited.

Few PICTs report secondary vocational education enrolment numbers to UIS. Only two did so in 2015 (Kiribati and Vanuatu) and one in 2014 (Tonga). Three PICTs reported post-secondary TVET enrolment numbers in 2015 (the Cook Islands, RMI, and Vanuatu).

The Pacific Framework for TVET was developed for the years 2012-2015 and endorsed by the Pacific Forum Ministers of Education. The Framework was intended to address key challenges and gaps in TVET provision. These include an imbalance in demand for and supply of skills, TVET coordination, demand-driven data, quality assurance standards, poor management of TVET personnel, low levels of financing, limited pathways, and modes of delivery. These issues highlight the complexity involved in effective TVET delivery.

Progress was reviewed in 2015 (Morris, 2015) and the findings contribute to this assessment. The review found commitments to increasing investment in TVET in Fiji and RMI, though these were the exception rather than the rule. The concept of lifelong learning is largely aspirational and not widely practiced. A major implementation problem was the lack of an M&E strategy for the Framework.

Key findings of the review are presented in the box below.

### **Key Findings of the Review of the Regional TVET Framework (Morris, 2015)**

#### ***Problems with the TVET concept***

In many instances TVET is perceived to be a strategy to deal with disaffected youth in and out of school. It is regarded as a mechanism to deal with potential social issues rather than a mechanism to support economic development priorities at national and enterprise levels. Low resourcing levels reflect its low community status. TVET is, in effect, stigmatized.

Coordination across Ministries, the private sector, and TVET providers is weak. There needs to be a shift in attitudes toward skill development initiatives in both the school and post-school sectors by building a constituency of broad-based support for training investment. Low quality of TVET in the region is partly a result of the private sector not being involved in the planning and delivery of training.

Better-targeted skill development investments are needed. Targeted investments imply a training system that is flexible and capable of being responsive to economic opportunities as they arise.

Increased investment in data collection, data management, analysis, and publication of results is required. It is critical to provide the evidence base to government, the private sector, and the community showing that their respective investments in skill development are yielding a dividend. This means of course increased investment in and a much more rigorous approach to M&E and the widespread publication of results.

<sup>24</sup> [http:// data.uis.unesco.org](http://data.uis.unesco.org)

## Participation in literacy programmes

### Key indicator

- *Participation rate in literacy programmes (15-24)*

## 4.4.2 Quality of education

The quality of education is a concern and results in low motivation and school leaving. It has not moved forward (SPC and UNESCO, 2013). Young people often do not have the opportunity to develop essential life skills. More flexible, varied, and skills-based learning opportunities have been developed, but there is limited access and variety.

Education was not adequately preparing youth for employment. The lack of jobs was a major issue and top of the list that young people faced. A large proportion of the 20-24 age group was neither studying nor working. Early school leaving is a factor. There was significant investment in TVET, particularly the Australian Pacific Technical College branches in Fiji, PNG, Samoa, and Vanuatu.

### Learning outcomes

#### Key indicators

- *Proportion of children and young people at the end of primary and at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics, by sex*
- *Proportion of youth/adults with ICT skills, by type of skill*

#### Learning outcomes at post-primary level

This is an extremely important indicator concerning learning outcomes. No data were obtained for the selected indicator from the databases consulted. This represents a very significant gap in data on education and young people. Without regional statistical data on learning, including skills, it is extremely difficult to objectively assess the quality of post-primary education or the progress being made in developing the capabilities of young people.

The situation is different at primary level however. There are regional data on the performance of primary school students in grades 4 and 6 in numeracy and literacy through the 2015 Pacific Islands Literacy and Numeracy Assessment regional report (EQAP, 2016). Comparisons were made between results in 2012 and 2015.

Very substantial improvement in numeracy was found across the region from year 4 to 6. The percentage of students at or above the expected proficiency level for year 6 of primary education was 68 per cent in 2015 (36 per cent in 2012). Girls demonstrated higher levels of numeracy than boys across the region in 2015, though the mean difference is small. With regard to literacy, the percentage of students at or above the expected proficiency level for year 6 of primary education was 46 per cent in 2015. In 2012, the percentage was 48.4. This indicates a decline in literacy skills achievement. As with numeracy, girls outperformed boys in literacy test results. Most year 6 boys performed at a similar level to year 4 girls.

These results indicate the need to continue and intensify efforts to improve the quality of primary education and learning outcomes in foundational skills. The 2015 test results illustrate the rather poor learning outcomes in literacy in primary schooling and while numeracy skills are improving, almost a third of primary children are not achieving the desired benchmark proficiency.

## ICT skills development

This is an extremely important indicator in terms of learning outcomes. Modern forms of ICT are key components of contemporary society and the workplace. Accordingly, all sectors of the economy need education and training to build skills in effective ICT use, and governments should ensure the provision of adequate support systems and maintenance (UNESCO, 2015). The ILO (2017) notes that the Pacific region is behind most of the world with regard to new technology and ICT. The ICT skills of the workforce need to be upgraded and matched with the demand coming from new sectors and technologies. Establishing a monitoring mechanism for the region will be necessary to provide statistical data on types of ICT skill acquisition and levels of competency.

Data on ICT skills learning outcomes in the Pacific region is highly elusive. None were found in database searches. Thus, it is not possible in this report to make an informed assessment of progress in developing such skills among adolescents and youth. This is important for the region as a whole given the increasing importance of ICT skills, particularly in economic development.

## Relevance

The selected indicators for relevance are also SDG 4 indicators. These are to be used to monitor Global Citizenship Education (GCED) and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) implementation. GCED aims to be transformative, building the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that learners need in order to contribute to a more inclusive, just, and peaceful world (UNESCO, 2015). It takes a multifaceted approach, employing concepts and methodologies already applied in other areas, including human rights education, peace education, education for sustainable development, and education for international understanding (UNESCO, 2014). ESD empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society for both present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity (UNESCO<sup>25</sup>). ESD is holistic and transformational education, which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy, and the learning environment.

## Key indicators

- *Extent to which GCED and ESD, including gender equality and human rights, are mainstreamed at all levels in national education policies, curricula, teacher education and student assessments*

The first indicates that young people are being given the opportunity to benefit from quality GCED and ESD programming in schools. The second is an indicator of coverage (i.e. the extent to which sexuality education is being taught in a school system). A limitation of these indicators is that they do not measure learning outcomes in any way.

- *Percentage of schools that provide life skills-based HIV and sexuality education*

No data were obtained for these indicators. Efforts need to be made at the regional level to put in place a mechanism to provide data and analysis for these important indicators. Similar indicators could be developed subsequently for SHN, life skills education, and entrepreneurship education.

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<sup>25</sup> [www.en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development](http://www.en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development)

## Comprehensive sexuality education

There is currently a lack of statistical data regarding the implementation of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE), implemented as FLE in secondary schools in the Pacific region (i.e. coverage, quality, learning outcomes). At present, a regional picture of progress in this important field of education for adolescent and youth development that is relevant to the adoption of healthy lifestyles, forming a family, participation in civil society, and promoting gender equality in society, is not possible.

Qualitative data on CSE curricula were obtained through sub-regional studies, which provide selected country coverage of PICTs. From these it appears that there has been substantial progress in introducing SRH education into school curricula and out of school programming.

This includes education to prevent the risky behaviours that can lead to HIV and STIs. With support from UNICEF and UNFPA, the SPC Adolescent Health and Development Programme has helped strengthen CSE in the formal education sector, particularly in Fiji and the Solomon Islands. Countries are at different stages in their implementation.

Data from UNFPA (2017) provides a categorisation for SRH/CSE programmes in terms of approach: inclusion in school curricula, extracurricular activities, peer education, and programmes for out of school youth (see Table 19).

**Table 19. SRH/CSE education approaches**

Approach	PICTs
School curricula includes SRH/life skills	Fiji, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu
Extracurricular activities include SRH/life skills	Kiribati
Peer education	Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu
Counselling programmes	Cook Islands
Out of school programmes	Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu
Media involvement	Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa

Two reports supported by UNICEF (2013) and UNESCO (2015), using different methods and focus, shed some light on implementation of FLE in selected PICTs. Some countries have developed national policy frameworks (Fiji, Kiribati, and Vanuatu). Curricula vary in the extent to which they adhere to international standards for CSE. Improvements are needed to bring them more in line with these standards. For example, FLE in some countries focuses mainly on biological information and tends to neglect the life skills development that is important for making informed decisions and adopting healthy behaviours (UNESCO, 2015).

Emphasis needs to be placed on integrating youth-friendly services into the approach, as well as strengthening support from parents, community and religious leaders, and teachers to improve the enabling environment for effective implementation (UNFPA, 2017). Monitoring mechanisms also need to be strengthened and behavioural outcomes need to be assessed.

UNFPA (2017) identified the following facilitating factors for CSE implementation: experience sharing among PICTs, technical support to ministries of education, and community outreach to NGOs in the development of CSE curricula. The constraints include a lack of financial and human resources, inadequate government support, weak engagement of young people in CSE curriculum development, and religious/cultural opposition, especially in rural areas (UNFPA, 2017).

### **School health and nutrition**

SHN, which is delivered through the HPS approach, potentially contributes to a successful transition to healthy adulthood. It is complementary to CSE. The HPS approach is important for equipping adolescents and youth with the knowledge and life skills to enable them to adopt healthy behaviours. Issues that need to be addressed in SHN programming were discussed in the previous section on health and wellbeing.

There is no statistical data available on regional implementation coverage, quality, learning outcomes, or impact. Hence, the extent to which PICTs are involved in HPS implementation and what progress has been made to date is unclear. In Fiji, a School Health Policy was developed in 2015, but the school health programme is focused on primary schools and is not implemented in high schools (Colquhoun et al, 2016). It is difficult to ascertain the extent to which other PICTs have put in place SHN policies and strategies for their implementation. It would be helpful to have a comprehensive assessment of SHN policies and programming across the Pacific region.

### **Citizenship education**

Citizenship education is increasingly recognised as an essential programme for adolescent and youth development in the education system. It features prominently in the Education 2030 agenda with a focus on global citizenship. This refers to a sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity (UNESCO, 2014). It emphasizes political, economic, social, and cultural interdependency and interconnectedness between the local, the national, and the global. UNESCO (2015) has developed international guidance on topics and learning objectives for global citizenship education.

This is a relatively new direction for education development. From the available education literature, it is not clear to what extent citizenship education is being implemented in secondary schools. There are currently no statistics available on regional implementation coverage, quality, learning outcomes, or impact. The extent to which PICTs are involved in its implementation and what progress has been made to date is, therefore, unclear.

SPC is reportedly working on a regional review of human rights education and also helping countries to review their own plans. This is highly relevant to the development of citizenship education. The new Pacific Regional Education Framework is currently under development and includes specific reference to GCE and ESD.

### **Climate change education**

There has been some progress in developing the delivery of climate change education in the Pacific region since 2011 through the Coping with Climate Change Programme in the Pacific islands. The aim is to increase levels of knowledge on the causes and local impacts of climate change, increase efforts to deal with climate change, and build local capacity for adaptation and mitigation measures. This is being implemented in Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu in collaboration with key regional organisations – the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme, University of the South Pacific, Pacific Resources for Education and Learning, and UNESCO.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> SPC Website. Climate Change Education. Accessed 11.9.2017

There is a strong focus on primary school curriculum development. The box below lists some of the actions that have taken place to deliver climate change education for adolescents and youth.

### **Climate Change Education**

- Fiji Ministry of Education endorsed a strategy in 2012 to implement the National Climate Change Policy (2012) by integrating climate change into school curricula, tertiary education, TVET, and NFE.
- In Kiribati, competencies relating to climate change and disaster risk management have been identified for the Maritime Training Centre, the Fisheries Training Centre, and the School of Nursing. Staff at Kiribati Teachers College (KTC) and Kiribati Institute of Technology (KIT) have been trained in using a picture-based toolkit.
- Samoa has developed a climate change education action plan. A picture-based teaching resource has been developed for classes 7 and 8.
- Tonga has established a national working group for education on climate change and disaster risk management.
- In Vanuatu, climate change and disaster risk management have been incorporated into the Vanuatu National Curriculum Statement, syllabuses, and assessment standards. The Vanuatu National Training Council (VNTC) has included competencies on climate change and disaster risk management in its qualifications framework.

### **4.4.3 Equity and inclusion**

A key issue is equality of opportunity. There are substantial numbers of young people who are unable to benefit fully from access to education, who drop out of school early, and who lack foundational skills. In the Pacific region, severely disadvantaged young people include those with disabilities, those living with HIV, and those living in remote rural locations (UNICEF, 2011). Youth illiteracy is a major problem in some countries.

Two indicators were selected to measure equity. First, parity indices are intended to measure the general level of gender disparity with regard to a given indicator and to measure equity more generally in education service delivery. The second is a proxy indicator of equity in the education system in terms of the quality of facilities and availability of key resources.

#### **Key indicators**

- *Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintiles, and others such as disability status) developed as data become available for all education indicators on this list that can be disaggregated*
- *Proportion of schools with access to electricity, the Internet for pedagogical purposes, computers for pedagogical purposes, adapted infrastructure for students with disabilities, basic drinking water, single sex basic sanitation facilities, and basic hand washing facilities*

Parity data for the region is limited to gender disparities. From the review of literature, it appears that there is significant inequality in opportunity at the country level in some PICTs, and this is masked by regional averages. This points to the importance of subnational data for evidence-based policy making and programming. For example, in PNG the national GER in 2008-09 for secondary education was 44.4 per cent (49.7 and 38.9 per cent for boys and girls respectively).

Sub-national data show lower rates in the Southern and Momase regions – 39.2 and 25.9 per cent respectively (PNG 2015 EFA Report, 2014). For future reporting, it is hoped that regional data on equity in education provision will be available.

### **Education of adolescents and youth with disabilities**

Currently there are no regional statistics available for monitoring the education of adolescents and youth with disabilities. This applies to both disability-inclusive education and special education provision (i.e. not inclusive). No regional statistical data on education for adolescents and youth with disabilities were found in the various databases accessed. These include basic statistics on enrolment, completion, and learning outcomes.

A literature review confirms that education for children with disabilities is a chronic problem. SOPY 2011 highlighted this issue as important for youth development. Geographic layout and population distribution in the PICTs challenges the provision of access and options for leveraging economies of scale in providing services for those with disabilities. This translates to costly delivery of services. A fundamental issue and one that is proving hard to solve despite long standing commitment from PICT governments is the lack of accurate statistical data on children/adolescents/youth with disabilities and the total resources directed to providing education services to learners with disabilities. Confusion regarding what constitutes disability-inclusive education and the various existing indicators and identification tools undermines the collection of accurate data.

Disability-inclusive indicators to monitor and evaluate education in the Pacific region have been investigated in 14 PICTs (Sharma et al, 2016). It was found that none reported the use of any structured data collection system at district or national levels for students with disabilities that captured information about attendance, retention, achievement, or participation. Building measures of disability into education management information systems (EMIS) has proven to be problematic in terms of complexity. Developments in local technical capacity and the use of ICT provide opportunities to embed disability in the EMIS.

One of the major challenges is a lack of existing tools that can be used to guide implementation of disability-inclusive education and to monitor progress. The Pacific Indicators for Disability-Inclusive Education (Pacific-INDIE) is an important new framework for supporting the development and implementation of effective M&E frameworks to measure disability-inclusive education. It has been developed collaboratively by Monash University as part of a research project commissioned by the Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The Guidelines Manual was published in 2016. The Pacific-INDIE will support Pacific states in their own monitoring of national efforts towards building more inclusive education systems that will allow persons with disabilities greater access to mainstream schools without barriers.

The main source of available regional qualitative data on developments in this field come from a multi-country study on disability-inclusive education (Pillay et al, 2015) which are summarized in the box below.

### **Status of disability-inclusive education in four PICTs**

Pillay et al (2015), in a study of four countries (Fiji, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu) found that they had made some progress with respect to improving community attitudes towards the education of children with disabilities and in developing policies based on global agendas such as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Education for All, and the Millennium Development Goals.

Disability-inclusive education services ranging from early intervention to tertiary level support exist, but vary in scope, capacity, and quality within each country and across the four countries. However, the region faces several complex interwoven issues in implementation. Fiji being an exception, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu have the majority of their disability-inclusive education services located in capital cities. Fiji has special education centres in 17 districts throughout the country.

Schools are mostly community schools without infrastructure or resources for students with disabilities. Therefore, appropriate facilities such as toilets for children with disabilities must be negotiated with the school committees. Making adjustments to existing buildings is often beyond the budget of school communities. Government and donor partners' support is critical. Therefore, national disability or inclusive education policies may not be sufficient for effective implementation when the communities' education priorities are different or there is a lack of funds and other necessary resources.

Apart from general teaching and learning resources, special equipment for the rehabilitation and education of children with disabilities is seriously lacking. While there is an abundance of empathy among teachers and the community, there is a lack of knowledge and skills regarding how to teach children with disabilities.

A review of approaches to education for children with disabilities in PNG (Kett et al, 2016) found that despite the presence of policies on inclusive education, these were not being translated into action at the school level. Teachers in mainstream schools felt they were unprepared for children with disabilities in their class in terms of their knowledge and skills. Schools were unprepared in terms of their physical facilities and the availability of targeted resources such as adapted materials or assistive technologies. Additionally, staff to support mainstream teachers are rarely available in schools. Specific funds to support the learning requirements of children with disabilities are not available at all in mainstream schools. Finally, it proved difficult to obtain clarity on the number of children with disabilities in mainstream schools; very low numbers were reported.

In conclusion, the development of disability-inclusive education provides a major challenge to PICTs education systems and societies. Many complex issues need to be worked on and resolved. This will be a long-term endeavour, but arguably an important litmus test for equitable PICTs development.

### **Gender parity indices: Illuminating differing patterns of gender inequality**

Data from the GPI indicates the extent to which participation at a given level of education is in a state of parity or is biased in favour of either boys or girls, which is termed "gender disparity".

Gender equality is a key issue for adolescent and youth education. The Pacific Regional EFA Review (UNESCO, 2015) found that gender disparities in access to and participation in education are still evident in the Pacific but, depending on the country and level of education, some of these disparities exist in favour of girls and some in favour of boys. The picture is mixed.

Attainment data shows a gap in attainment between males and females in almost all instances (see Figure 1). This is largely in favour of females who are becoming better educated than males as a group. This is most pronounced in Kiribati and Samoa. In PNG, males have better education attainment than females with little sign that the gap is closing significantly. The Solomon Islands have seen the gap close and parity in attainment more or less achieved.

Regional data for the GPI are available for primary and secondary education enrolment (SPC data). Data are not available for TVET or tertiary education. Regional gender parity indices are currently not available for other indicators. The picture they provide is partial and should be interpreted with caution.

GPI data for enrolment at primary and secondary levels of education are presented in Table 20 (SPC, 2015). Gender parity at primary level has been achieved in all the countries in the table with the exception of Nauru and PNG, which have disparities towards the enrolment of boys.

With regard to gender parity in secondary enrolment, PICTs fall into two categories. In the majority of PICTs, gender gaps favour girls (ADB, 2016). This gender gap is particularly significant in Samoa and Tuvalu. In two PICTs, there are higher enrolments for males than females (PNG and the Solomon Islands). Both categories indicate issues of gender inequality in education, disadvantaging either girls or boys. The drop out rate of boys is reported to be an emerging concern in several countries (SPC, 2015).

**Table 20. The gender parity index in primary and secondary education enrolment (SPC, 2015<sup>27</sup>)**

Country	Year	GPI Primary	GPI Secondary
Cook Islands	2014	100	101 JSS 122 SS
Fiji	2013	101	111
Kiribati	2011	101	118 JS 137 SS
Marshall Islands	2010	99	111
Micronesia	2010	102	110
Nauru	2013	94	106
Niue	2010	100	86
Palau	2011	98	108
Papua New Guinea	2009	90	71
Samoa	2012	103	143
Tuvalu	2011	100	154
Vanuatu	2011	97	110

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.spc.org>

Where countries are able to disaggregate lower from upper secondary education, the disparity increases from lower to upper in favour of girls. In 10 countries, the number of girls enrolled in secondary education exceeds the number of boys.

#### 4.4.4 Policy response

Monitoring the policy response to the provision of quality, equitable, and inclusive education for all adolescents and youth is a complex task. The policy framework is necessarily complex. Currently there are no education policy indicators in use for the region. To simplify matters, two indicators have been selected to initiate a process towards better national policy monitoring.

The first involves addressing the extent to which the number of years of compulsory secondary education is guaranteed in legal frameworks. This measures government commitment to guaranteeing the right to education for children and young people. It is also a proxy measure of government efforts to increase educational attainment. The indicator does not measure the effects of policy on the quality of education or the intended learning outcomes.

The second indicator concerns NYPs. All PICTs have developed NYPs and some have also put in place action plans for their implementation. These NYPs include strategies for improving youth education in terms of a mix of access, quality, equity, and inclusion. For the NYPs to be effective, resources are needed, evidenced by a fully costed plan and a robust monitoring and evaluation plan. The latter is essential for tracking progress and for accountability purposes to youth and to society more generally. They also need to provide for the active participation of youth organisations such as the NYCs.

#### Key indicators

- *Number of years of compulsory secondary education guaranteed in legal frameworks*
- *NYPs have specific costings for education interventions and an M&E plan*

#### Legislation for free and compulsory education

PICTs in the Pacific are putting in place legal guarantees for free and compulsory education. UNESCO (Education 2030, 2015) sets the international norm at 12 years of free primary and secondary education, at least nine years of which should be compulsory.

Data from UNESCO (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2016) indicates that few PICTs have legal guarantees for at least 12 years of free primary and secondary education. From the available data only the Cook Islands, Fiji, and Palau have this legislation in place. Free primary education is guaranteed in the nine PICTs that can provide data. Free secondary education is provided in only four PICTs: the Cook Islands, Fiji, Palau, and Samoa. Two or three years of free secondary education is available in Kiribati, RMI, and FSM. The lack of data from some PICTs may mean that this picture underestimates the extent of free primary and secondary education. The lack of free secondary education throughout the cycle is likely to result in lower participation rates in the upper grades where this is lacking.

The situation regarding compulsory education legislation is varied across the region (see Table 21). From the available data, Fiji and Tonga have the longest duration of compulsory education (6-18 years). The shortest spans are in RMI and FSM (6-14 years), which fall below the recommended nine years. Ten PICTs have at least nine years of compulsory education. As with free education legislation there are conspicuous data gaps.

**Table 21. Legal guarantee of compulsory and free education (Global Education Monitoring Report, UNESCO, 2016)**

PICT	Compulsory education (age group)	Free primary education (years)	Free secondary education (years)
Cook Islands	5-16	6	7
Fiji	6-18	6	6
Kiribati	6-15	6	3
Marshall Islands	6-14	6	2
Micronesia	6-14	6	2
Nauru	6-16	6	
Niue	5-16	6	
Palau	6-17	6	6
Papua New Guinea		6	
Samoa	5-14		6
Solomon Islands			
Tokelau	5-16		
Tonga	6-18		
Tuvalu	6-15		
Vanuatu		6	

### National youth policies

NYPs provide an enabling framework for driving priority issues, bringing sectors together, and supporting effective programming. They are a commitment to the development and wellbeing of youth. All PICTs have NYPs in place, with the exception of Tokelau (SPC, National Minimum Development Indicator, or NMDI). Table 1 provides a summary of the education and learning strategies for youth in the available policies.

Currently none of the NYPs include a budget or a plan for M&E. These limitations can be considered a major constraint on their effectiveness. There is a range of prioritisation in education exemplified in the available policies. These are set out below:

#### **Strengthening the employability of young people and enabling the transition to employment.**

Most of the available NYPs include a clear focus on the links between education and the world of work. There are a number of strands to this strategic thematic area. They include:

- Career guidance services to ensure that young people are informed of available employment opportunities. This includes guidance on TVET opportunities.
- Programmes to promote the school to work transition.
- Entrepreneurship and business education.
- Financial skills development.
- Computer literacy and computer skills development.
- Expanding the range of vocational training centres to focus on specialized areas such as handicrafts for young women and men.

**Improving learning outcomes.** This aims to develop the abilities and competencies of young people in a lifelong education approach. NYP interventions include:

- Academic counselling and student support services to ensure that young people are informed of educational opportunities.
- Programming to support transitions of young people to higher education and TVET rather than leaving school.
- Literacy programmes for youth who have dropped out of school.

**Improving learning opportunities.** This agenda includes:

- Expanding the formal curriculum to provide more relevant learning for young people.
- Maximizing school attendance.
- Development of NFE opportunities for skills development.
- Increasing participation in regional TVET programmes.
- Establishment of libraries to expand access to information for youth.
- Scholarships and study abroad.

**Cultural heritage preservation.** This is a common theme. It includes the development of patriotism.

**Life skills education.** A number of life skills have been identified in NYPs for development. These include self-esteem, self-reliance, self-development, leadership skills, creativity, and communication skills.

**Health education.** There is a very limited emphasis on health and nutrition education. Programming is mentioned concerning HIV and AIDS, sexuality education, FLE, and linkages to health services. There is very limited mention of physical education and sport in relation to education for youth.

**Parental education.** The importance of educating parents about adolescent development and the importance of education along with parental roles in providing appropriate support and guidance is included in one NYP.

### **Cross-cutting issues**

- **Disability:** Education for youth with disabilities is prioritised for secondary education (one country). Mention is made of providing special education programming and institutions for youth with disabilities, but not inclusive education.
- **Gender equality:** This includes gender equitable access to education. There is very limited mention of gender equality.

**Mechanisms.** Develop links between government, the private sector, and NGOs.

The policies are generally not holistic in terms of covering the gamut of education issues for youth development and transitions to adulthood. For example, there is no reference to civic participation and active citizenship and very limited reference to health and wellbeing. However, countries need to set priorities and the NYP is a good way of arriving at these. In conclusion, the NYP is a promising approach, but constrained by lack of budgeted resource allocations and accountability mechanisms.

## 4.5 Discussion

This section highlights multiple needs in the development of education and learning to better prepare adolescents and youth for the world of work, better health, and life in society more generally. A number of themes stand out.

- i) **The need for better statistical data and more analytical work to inform policy-making and programming.** There are serious weaknesses in the Pacific region in the field of education statistics. SOPY 2011 (UNICEF and SPC, 2011) reported that many PICTs either do not collect or make available public education data such as rates for enrolment, completion, and drop out. Obtaining education data for the selected indicators in this report proved to be a challenge. Some valuable data were obtained, with some PICTs being better able than others to present key education statistics. The data obtained are sufficient to provide a broad picture of youth education status. There were some notable gap areas, for example concerning tertiary education. The development of statistics to better measure educational equity and learning outcomes will undoubtedly present significant technical capacity issues in the region.

Improvements are being made in PICT capacity to generate quality statistical data in education. Some PICTs have made more progress than others in this regard. Nevertheless there are substantial gaps in the availability of what should be considered core and indispensable education indicators. Continued and long-term investment in regional statistical and analytical capacity building is required. There is also a dearth of analytical work on post-primary education in the region, which is most acute at the post-basic level. The focus on education development in the region must go beyond the early years and basic education provision, important as these are.

The availability of standard education statistics has been a major constraint in tracking progress in education sector development for the adolescent and youth age groups in the region. This issue is discussed in both SOPY 2011 and the Pacific EFA Review 2015 (UNESCO, 2015). Data availability does appear to have improved since 2011, with more PICTs reporting on key indicators in 2014-2015, especially regarding primary and lower secondary education. There are still gaps in the data, which is sparse for 2011-2015 and renders comparisons with 2005-2011 problematic. Upper secondary education, tertiary education, and TVET are fields of education where data availability remains poor. Strengthening education statistical and analytical capacity in the region should remain a high priority.

In addition, there is a body of analytical work on education in the region prepared for the national level, selected PICTs, and the region as a whole. The most comprehensive of these is the Pacific EFA Review 2015 (UNESCO, 2015). Towards the end of the EFA period (2000-2015), a number of countries produced national reviews of progress towards the goals agreed in Dakar. In the Pacific region, seven such reviews were obtained. These were prepared by Fiji, Kiribati, RMI, PNG, Samoa, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu in 2014. These are useful analyses of the status of education as framed by the EFA goals in those countries. They show the importance of conducting country level analytical work from time to time, providing context and qualitative data to supplement standard education statistics.

- ii) **The need to focus more on skills building and assessment for adolescents and youth.** While there is evidence for increasing levels of educational attainment, there is no regional data evidence for increases in the levels of skill proficiency or competencies at post-primary level. This is a serious gap in education and youth development knowledge. There are positive indications of developments in life skills education and skills for the world of work, chiefly through TVET and entrepreneurship education. These developments appear to be in need of higher prioritisation and funding. A regional approach to life skills education may be worth considering given its transversal nature (e.g. core work skills) and importance in 21<sup>st</sup> century skills development.
- iii) **Educational preparation of adolescents and youth for work and life is inadequate.** Current educational preparation of adolescents and youth for work are far from adequate for the various demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century sustainable development in the Pacific region. A stronger focus on clarifying and articulating the purpose(s) of education is required for the region. More investment is needed across the region to strengthen the coverage, quality, and relevance of education for adolescents and youth in relation to health and wellbeing, gender equality and sexuality, employability and business, citizenship, and personal empowerment. Also important is ICT education. In all of these curriculum areas, there is a lack of statistical data on coverage, quality, and learning outcomes. Strengthening the connection between school and work seems to be particularly important going forward. Regional frameworks can help achieve economies of scale in curriculum development, capacity building, learning assessment, and M&E.
- iv) **TVET remains a problematic area of education policy and practice despite regional prioritisation.** The importance of TVET for expanding opportunities for skills development for the job market is becoming more widely accepted. However the dearth of statistics militates against being able to assess the current status of participation among adolescents and youth. The few available statistics indicate low levels of participation (2 per cent or less of the 15-24 age group). There is an urgent need for better data. There is also a need to better inform adolescents and youth about the benefits of TVET in terms of better employability.
- v) **The involvement of youth is for the most part invisible in education development.** The voice of youth is hard to find in the education sector. Comparatively little attention has been given to obtaining their perspectives across the region or to develop effective mechanisms for their involvement in education development. There seems to have been little research on the key issue of youth motivation and demand-side issues in post-primary education in the region.
- vi) **The need to enhance post-primary education opportunities.** With UPE almost achieved across the region, investments need to be made to ensure UBE and the universalization of secondary education. In particular, access to quality post-basic education needs to be expanded, but closely linked to the emerging needs of Pacific economies and societies.
- vii) **There are significant pockets of educational disadvantage among the adolescent and youth population.** There appear to be significant numbers of young people who are out of school, particularly at upper secondary level. More comprehensive data are required in order to be able to objectively assess the scale of the problem. Second chance education opportunities are needed to develop the knowledge and skills of those adolescents and youth who have dropped out of school early. PICTs are developing second chance education provision, but data are not available on enrolment or outcomes and it is thus not possible to provide a regional status report on progress.

- viii) **More attention needs to be given to developing quality and monitoring tertiary education outcomes.** Higher education is important for innovation, skills development, and economic growth. It builds upon secondary education with learning at a high level of complexity and specialization with activities that often complement research (UNESCO UIS, 2015). A key function is to educate professionals, workers, and skilled civil servants (World Bank, 2015). Higher education contributes to economic growth and poverty reduction. It promotes technological potential, the supply of knowledge and innovation (World Bank, 2015). There is a positive association between economic growth and higher levels of education as measured by tertiary GER, science test scores, research and development, and number of scientists and engineers per capita (World Bank, 2012). The World Bank suggests that low- and middle-income countries need to start prioritizing higher education if they want economic growth. This applies to the Pacific region.
- ix) **There is little evidence for improvement in the education status of young people with disabilities.** Despite regional political commitment, there is very limited evidence of interventions resulting in improved opportunities and outcomes for this disadvantaged group. This partly reflects the state of education statistics in the region, but just as important, it appears that current interventions are underpowered and unable to bring about significant change at the school level. This may be connected to financing, but it is also likely related to cultural perspectives on disability and parental attitudes. This suggests that more effort needs to go into societal disability awareness. A regional situational analysis on disability-inclusive education focusing on post-primary education is warranted to increase awareness among policy makers of problems and options going forward.
- x) **Gender inequality remains an important policy issue.** Regional data on gender equality in the education sector are limited and more comprehensive statistical data is needed to obtain a clearer picture of patterns of gender inequality. Nevertheless, the available data are a concern. The emerging pattern of disparities in favour of females in education raises important questions about male participation, motivation, and aspirations. What this may mean for masculinity and gender equality in PICT societies in the long run is unclear, but the issue needs to be considered by policy makers. Sex disaggregated data are urgently needed on post-primary learning outcomes as well as post-basic participation in STEM and TVET.

## 4.6 Conclusions and recommendations

### 1. Improve data availability and quality

Continue efforts to strengthen data gathering and analysis at all levels of the education system. Particular attention needs to be given to improving the availability of good quality TVET and tertiary education statistics.

### 2. Improve the relevance of education to preparation for work and life

Consider the development of regional/national policy frameworks on skills development relating to life skills, lifelong learning, health and wellbeing, employability and employment (including core work skills), and active citizenship. Focus more strongly on developing and assessing skills and competencies. Areas for increased investment include SHN education, CSE, technical and vocational skills and entrepreneurship education, citizenship education, and life skills education. Continue to support TVET development across the region. Redouble efforts. Build an evidence base. Improve the provision of TVET information to young people.

### 3. Expand opportunities for young people to learn

Develop a multiple pathways approach to education. Invest in developing an enabling environment for a multiple pathways approach to enhancing opportunities for adolescents and youth. This includes second chance education opportunities. The policy framework would include the major pathways such as general education, TVET, workplace training, NGOs, and NFE. Local partners, such as Chambers of Commerce, should also be included. It is important to specify how different education and training providers, employers, unions, and other stakeholders will collaborate. This includes details of cooperation mechanisms together with clearly specified roles and responsibilities. It would also provide directions for collaboration in key activities such as curriculum development.

Identify and address disadvantages in adolescent and youth education at all levels arising from disability. Efforts need to be redoubled to bring about measurable positive outcomes for those with disabilities. Better data and increased financing are required.

### 4. Promote youth participation in the education sector

Develop the political space for young people to be involved in education policy and programming. Create an evidence base on youth perspectives on education. Strengthen the capacity of the PYC and NYCs to engage on an on-going basis in education development at both regional and country levels. Strengthen the education content of NYPs. Include an action plan, a budget and an M&E framework.



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# 5. EMPLOYABILITY AND EMPLOYMENT

## 5.1 Background

The transition to a working life is possibly the most important transition of all since it is an important marker of independence, and failure constrains the ability to complete other transitions effectively (World Bank, 2007). For example, access to work is an important means through which youth are included in and participate in society (UNICEF and SPC, 2011). Decent work<sup>28</sup> and livelihood creation are major determinants in the socio-economic empowerment of youth as well as contributing to sustainable human development overall (UNDP, 2014). Education and health contribute strongly to the creation of employment opportunities. They help create the capabilities that will increase the employability of youth in securing decent work. Limited opportunities for youth to engage in work have significant welfare implications for them and their families as well as for broader economic performance and political stability (World Bank, 2014). Lack of employment opportunity for youth also carries the increased risk of conflict and violence (UNICEF and SPC, 2011).

Employability is a key determinant in gaining decent work. It results from several factors, which include access to education, foundational skills, availability of training opportunities, motivation and support, and recognition of acquired skills (Brewer, 2013). Skills development is critically important for employability. Young women and men need technical skills as well as core work skills such as communication, learning how to learn, problem solving, and teamwork (ILO, 2013). Personal attributes such as honesty, reliability, punctuality, and reliability are also important.

Youth employment and employability are critical policy issues for the Pacific region, which faces significant challenges with regard to youth unemployment. Investment in enhancing employment opportunities for youth is needed to spur economic growth. This is a chronic and complex problem. The SOPY 2011 report observed a lack of jobs as a major issue facing young people (Section 2.3.1). Improving levels of education attainment had not resulted in greater opportunities in finding paid work. School to work transitions were long; many young people had a lengthy wait until they found employment. A larger number of job seekers were emerging from education to compete for a limited number of jobs due to slow job growth. Breaking into the job market and finding a first job was a major challenge. The formal economy had only limited capacity to generate employment opportunities and to absorb the growing population. Job seekers had to rely on their own networks to find work with limited career counselling services available and a lack of mechanisms to link education to the workplace.

## 5.2 Securing decent work for all youth in the Pacific region

Countries in the Pacific stand to benefit from a demographic dividend, however the labour markets are simply not producing enough jobs (ILO and ADB, 2017). The gap between the number of labour force entrants and the number of new jobs is alarming (ILO, 2017). For instance, in Fiji 27,000 enter the labour force with 600 new jobs created annually. In Kiribati 2,000 enter the labour force with 400-600 new jobs created every year. In the Solomon Islands 10,000 enter the labour force

<sup>28</sup> Decent work comprises jobs that are productive, provide adequate incomes and social protection, respect the rights of workers and give workers a say in decisions that will affect their lives (ILO, 2014).

with 400 new jobs created. The net result of this is that more young people are driven to informal employment or subsistence living without social protection and rights. Therefore, the link between development policies and employment creation, particularly for young people is a critical element in addressing youth unemployment. This also includes the formalisation of jobs to ensure that young workers can access social protection and rights at work. Self-employment can be an answer to the lack of jobs, particularly when the entrepreneurial system incentivises youth enterprises. Successful young entrepreneurs or youth enterprises can help create jobs for more young people.

The issue of skills development for the workforce in the Pacific region is one that has been recognised for many years. More than two decades ago (1995), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) argued that enabling future economic growth would demand creating a highly skilled flexible workforce. Yet the ILO reports (2017) that most PICTs are characterized by an oversupply of low-skilled workers with considerable skills shortages in technical and vocational, managerial, and professional skills as well as entrepreneurial and generic workplace skills. Thus enabling youth to move up the skills ladder is another policy issue for the region.

## 5.3 Key findings

### 1. Measuring youth unemployment

Youth unemployment is generally viewed as an important issue for many countries, regardless of their stage of economic development. It represents a complex public policy issue in terms of both concept and statistical measurement. There are two significant problems. First, the problem of youth unemployment is not uniformly identified because there is a range of issues connected with lack of voice, lack of access to services, and the impacts of social change. Second, quantitative measurement is difficult. The use of the youth unemployment indicator is inadequate to measure the state of the youth labour market. Young people in developing countries are typically over-represented in vulnerable employment, often unpaid and excluded from unemployment measurement. They are often under-represented in formal, waged employment, which they find difficult to enter.

For evidence-based policy making regarding youth employment, it is helpful to be able to measure a number of factors, including the following:

- Changes in youth unemployment over time;
- Labour market participation rates;
- Youth unemployment versus adult unemployment rates;
- Long-term unemployment among youth;
- The time it takes to obtain a first job;
- The proportion of youth who are NEET;
- Enrolment in post secondary education;
- The proportion of youth employed in subsistence agriculture; and
- The proportion of youth in paid employment as a proportion of those in unpaid employment.

Gaps in PICTs data further compound understanding of the youth unemployment issue. Labour market data in the Pacific region is characterized by the irregularity of data capture, poor coordination, divergence in definitions, and data capture in surveys intended for other purposes. Global labour market indicators are challenged by country contexts in which there are large informal sectors. National unemployment rates underestimate the problem in terms of youth inactivity, discouragement from formal job seeking, and under-employment.

The NEET rate is arguably the best measure, although this ignores the reality of unpaid work for youth. In response to this, the Statistical Division of the SPC has proposed an indicator that takes into account youth who work in unpaid employment and who are looking for paid work and are available and willing to take such work if it is available. This is termed NEET-Plus.

## 2. Selecting indicators for measuring youth unemployment

A range of indicators is needed to better understand youth unemployment in the Pacific region. These include:

- NEET and NEET-Plus;
- YUR, i.e. the proportion of the youth labour force that is unemployed (ILO, 2013);
- Ratio of the YUR to the adult unemployment rate;
- Youth unemployment as a proportion of total unemployment; and
- Youth unemployment as a proportion of the youth population.

For the purpose of these indicators, the term “youth” covers persons aged 15 to 24 years, while the term “adult” refers to those aged 25 and over.

## 3. Youth not in education, employment, or training (NEET and NEET-Plus rates)

In the Pacific region, there may be a steadily increasing youth population that is not in education, employment, or training. However, statistical data for NEETs are not widely available at the country or regional levels. In the absence of data, it is important to investigate whether there has been a rise in the number of NEETs in some PICTs. Identification of NEETs and those at risk of becoming NEETs is important for targeted programmes of support.

Some data are available for NEET and NEET-Plus indicators (see Table 22). NEET-Plus is an indicator that was developed by the Statistical Division of the SPC to include youth who work in unpaid employment, who are looking for paid work, and are able and willing to take such work if it is available.

The standard NEET definition captures more than a quarter of youth in FSM, Nauru, and Samoa. When the NEET-Plus definition is applied, the proportions captured rise significantly in most cases and in FSM, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu the rates are higher than 40 per cent of youth. These are very high rates and cause for concern. More PICTs need to be encouraged to obtain NEET and NEET-Plus data so that the regional situation can be more clearly assessed and tracked.

**Table 22. NEET and NEET-Plus data**

PICT	Youth NEET	Youth NEET-Plus
Cook islands	-	-
Fiji	-	-
Kiribati	-	-
Marshall Islands	-	-
Micronesia	28.9	54.6
Nauru	33.9	37.2
Niue	-	-

PICT	Youth NEET	Youth NEET-Plus
Palau	13.7	17.2
Papua New Guinea	-	-
Samoa	38.2	-
Solomon Islands	7.2	42.7
Tonga	-	-
Tokelau	-	-
Tuvalu	-	-
Vanuatu	22.9	47.0

Typical risk factors have been identified for becoming a NEET (ETF, 2015) and are relevant to the Pacific region. They are: gender (e.g. discrimination against women), low employability and lack of appropriate skills (e.g. lack of skills, no previous work experience, new skills needs, skills mismatch), low educational attainment (e.g. early school leaving), poor socioeconomic conditions (e.g. poverty), and health status and disability.

### Youth unemployment rate

The most comprehensive set of statistics on youth unemployment have been compiled by the SPC. The data are presented in Table 23. These show that youth unemployment is an important issue in many PICTs. The magnitude of the problem varies. Comparisons between the YUR and the adult unemployment rate show that in 12 of the 15 PICTs, the YUR is higher. In some countries – e.g. the Cook Islands, Kiribati, and RMI – the difference is quite significant. It appears that young people are having difficulty in finding productive work and that transitions from school to work may be long.

There is a continuum of youth unemployment ranging from 0 per cent in Niue, Palau, and Samoa to 64 per cent in Kiribati. This represents a wide range of outcomes. At the low end of the YUR data are PNG, Tokelau, Tonga, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu with YURs below 8 per cent. Towards the upper end are RMI, Nauru, and Tuvalu with a YUR of more than 20 per cent. The issue is less serious in Polynesian countries such as Samoa and Tonga where youth have better access to migration opportunities (ADB and ILO, 2017). Fiji, which has one of the more diversified economies, has a YUR of 18 per cent (SPC NMDI, 2007). These data signal the need for country-specific approaches to youth unemployment.

**Table 23. Youth unemployment rates and adult unemployment rates (SPC NMDI database<sup>29</sup>)**

PICT	Youth unemployment rate (%)	Adult unemployment rate (%)
Cook Islands	18.3 (2011)	8.2 (2011)
Fiji	18.7 (2007)	11.8 (2007)
Kiribati	64.4 (2015)	37.5 (2015)
Marshall Islands	58.5 (2012)	32.6 (2012)
Micronesia	25.3 (2012)	10.6 (2012)
Nauru	22.3 (2011)	12.7 (2012)
Niue	0.0 (2016)	0.5 (2016)
Palau	0.3 (2015)	0.1 (2016)
Papua New Guinea	7.9 (2011)	1.4 (2011)
Samoa	0.3 (2012)	0.3 (2012)
Solomon Islands	1.5 (2013)	0.7 (2013)
Tokelau	2.1 (2016)	2.2 (2016)
Tonga	2.8 (2016)	1.0 (2016)
Tuvalu	20.9 (2016)	9.5 (2016)
Vanuatu	1.2 (2016)	3.5 (2016)

Official unemployment figures, such as the YUR, understate the scale of youth unemployment in the region, as many youths drop out of the labour force and give up actively seeking work (ILO, 2017). The definition of unemployment concerns those who are actively looking for paid employment. Large numbers of youth in the Pacific region are reported to be discouraged from their job search by the lack of opportunities.

### Additional indicators

The challenge of youth unemployment is illustrated by data<sup>30</sup> related to three indicators:

- i) Youth labour force participation rate,
- ii) Youth inactivity rate, and
- iii) The ratio of paid to unpaid work for youth.

In Table 24, the youth labour force participation rate is contrasted with the total rate. With few exceptions, there is a wide gap between youth and total adult participation rates, amounting to more than 20 percentage points in several cases (e.g. the Cook Islands, FSM, Palau, and RMI). The smallest gaps (less than 5 per cent) are to be found in Kiribati, PNG, and Tuvalu.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.spc.int/nmdi/>

<sup>30</sup> Data are sourced from unpublished papers provided by SPC.

**Table 24. Additional indicators**

PICT	Youth labour force participation rate % (labour force participation rate)	Youth inactivity rate % (total inactivity rate)	Youth Paid; Unpaid employment ratio
Cook islands	50.6 (71)	-	42.9
Fiji	41.2 (55)	55.1 (40.3)	4.9
Kiribati	53.7 (59.3)	8.6 (6.3)	1.6
Marshall Islands	30.9 (51.1)	-	N/A
Micronesia	36.6 (60)	-	0.29
Nauru	49.5 (64)	-	10.8
Niue	51.4 (68.9)	-	33.0
Palau	36.2 (76.9)	-	6.15
Papua New Guinea	56.7 (58.6)	42.4 (27.7)	0.3
Samoa	28.4 (41.3)	56.7 (39.4)	1.4
Solomon Islands	41.8 (56.7)	50.5 (32.9)	0.36
Tonga	-	-	1.7
Tokelau	-	-	-
Tuvalu	57.5 (59.4)	-	6
Vanuatu	49.2 (60)	43.0 (29.3)	0.98

Data on youth inactivity rates are more limited. Nevertheless in contrast with total inactivity rates, the available data indicate high rates of youth economic inactivity in almost all cases ranging between 27 and 40 per cent of youth. The outlier is Kiribati, which reports less than 10 per cent. In all cases youth inactivity rates are higher than total inactivity rates.

The data on the ratio between youth who are in unpaid as opposed to paid employment indicates a high proportion in unpaid employment.

### Youth unemployment rate data by sex

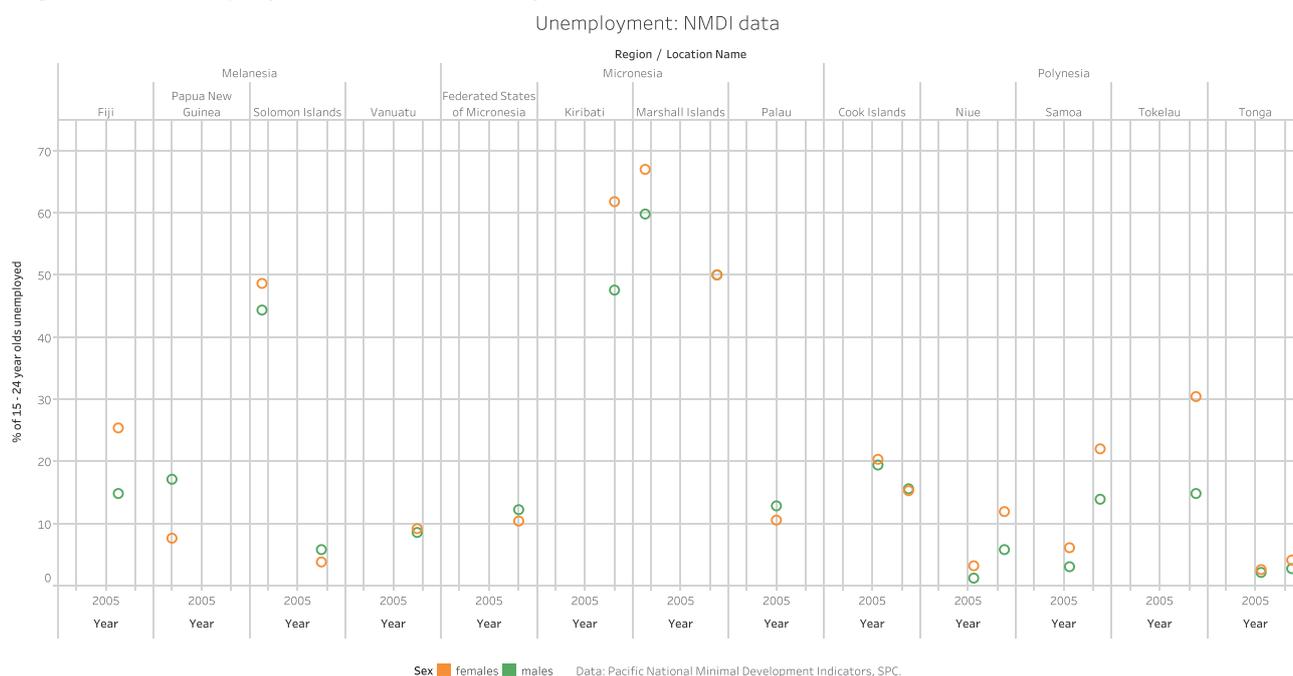
Statistical data on youth unemployment by sex are elusive. Data from SPC (unpublished) indicates a pattern of female youth disadvantage in the labour market. With YUR data, higher levels of unemployment for females are reported in Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, PNG, Samoa, Tonga, and Tokelau. Gender parity is observed in the Cook Islands, RMI, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. In FSM and RMI the male YUR is higher than that for females. In all PICTs the youth labour force participation rate is higher for males than females.

**Table 25. Youth unemployment rate data by sex**

PICT	Youth unemployment rate (m/f): %	Youth labour force participation rate (m/f): %
Cook Islands	15.6m/15.3f	56.2m/45.1f
Fiji	14.8m/25.4f	57.7m/41.3f
Kiribati	47.6m/61.8f	58.0m/49.2f
Marshall Islands	12.2m/10.4f	41.4m/31.3f
Micronesia	50.0m/50.0f	39.3m/22.0f
Nauru	40.7m/54.4f	63.0m/35.5f
Niue	5.8m/11.9f	54.0m/47.2f
Palau	12.9m/10.5f	54.0m/30.8f
Papua New Guinea	9.7m/2.1f	56.7m/58.6f
Samoa	3.1m/20.2f	39.3m/16.5f
Solomon Islands	45.8m/46.1f	56.7m/41.8f
Tonga	4.7m/2.7f	32.2m/19.2f
Tokelau	14.9m/30.4f	-
Tuvalu	-	61.9m/52.4f
Vanuatu	2.2m/2.6f	60.0m/49.2f

Additional data on male and female unemployment rates are presented in Figure 14. The highest rate for female unemployment (15-24) is to be found in RMI (less than 60 per cent). High rates are also found in Kiribati and in the Solomon Islands. The largest gender gaps with female unemployment higher than male are observable in Fiji, Kiribati, and Samoa. In PNG male unemployment is higher than female and there is a significant gender gap.

**Figure 14. Unemployment rates 15-24 by sex**



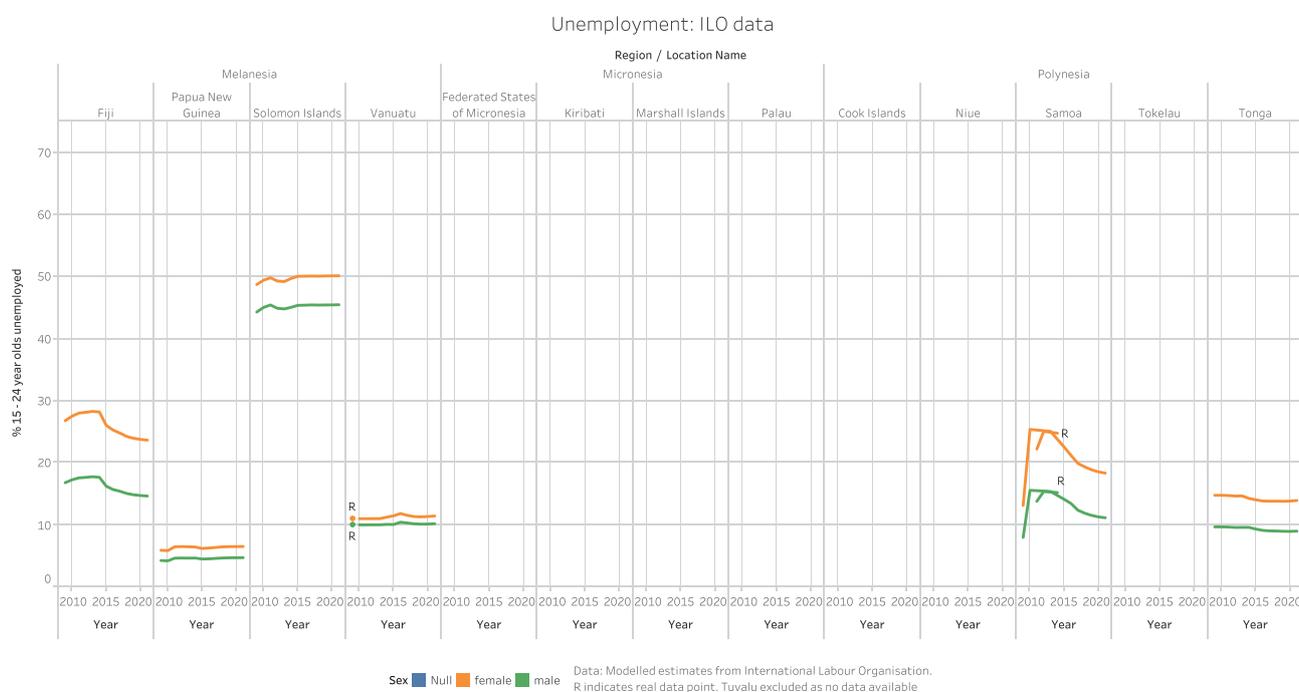
There are cultural and institutional barriers that restrict equal access of women to productive assets and formal jobs. These include gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment (ILO, 2014). Women are under-represented in senior jobs in most PICTs. Large numbers of women are engaged in the unregulated informal economy in unsafe, unhealthy, and hazardous occupations such as market and roadside trading. It may be the case that a higher proportion of women than men are thus engaged. Women tend to find some employment opportunities in the formal sector in stereotypical female occupations in the service sector such as domestic work, tourism, garment making, and food processing where wages are lower and conditions are poor with little bargaining power (ILO, 2014).

It is reported that sex work is increasingly becoming a work option for young women in some PICTs as a result of limited opportunities for decent work in the formal economy and rising poverty levels. It is associated with the fishing, logging, and mining industries of Kiribati, PNG, and the Solomon Islands as well as the urban centres of Suva, Honiara, and Port Moresby (ILO, 2014). Involvement in sex work has significant implications for the SRH of young female sex workers and their clients as well as retarding efforts to achieve gender equality in society.

## Measuring trends in youth unemployment

Tracking change in unemployment rates is difficult due to problems arising from lack of data availability. Figure 15 shows data that is a combination of modelled data and real data. There is little change in unemployment rates for the 15-24 age group (both sexes) in PNG, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu between 2010 and 2020. A decline in unemployment is taking place in Fiji and Samoa. In all cases where data are available females experience higher rates of unemployment. There is no evidence of the gender gap being closed in these data.

**Figure 15. Youth unemployment rate data 2010-2020 (15-24 both sexes)**



Data sourced from ILO Key Indicators of the Labour Market database and presented by the World Bank on youth employment rates from 1990-2016 is available for a few PICTs.<sup>31</sup> These indicate no significant change in YURs over time in the case of PNG (2012-2016), Samoa (2012-2016), Tonga 2006-2016), the Solomon Islands (1990-2016), and Vanuatu (1990-2016). A declining trend is reported in Fiji (2012-2016). Only Samoa has a significantly higher YUR in 2016 than in 1990.

## Unemployment by disability status

Youth with disabilities face discriminatory barriers to employment opportunities. The situation is particularly challenging for women with disabilities with the additional risk of gender-based violence (PIFS, 2013; ILO, 2014). They also face barriers to education and training, including TVET.

Data on disability for the Pacific region were published by UNESCAP in 2015 covering a range of indicators for the Asia-Pacific region. This included employment to population ratio of persons with disabilities and those without disabilities and the unemployment rates with/without disabilities. Data were not available for most of the PICTs. Only two PICTs provided any data for these indicators (FSM and Samoa). The data are presented in Table 26. Only Samoa provides data for both persons with and without disability. They indicate that unemployment is worse for males than females and is higher for those without disability. More and better data is needed. It would be helpful to have age- and sex-disaggregated data on employment and disability for the 15-24 age group.

**Table 26. Disability and unemployment data (UNESCAP, 2015)**

PIC	Employment to population without/with disabilities	Unemployment rate without/with disabilities
<b>Micronesia</b>	N/A (without): 48.3% male and 41% female (with)	NA without): 55 per cent male and 45.6% female (with)
<b>Samoa</b>	37.5% male and 22.1% female (without); 26.9% male and 18.5% female (with)	8% male and 10.8% female (without); 5% male and 3.9% female (with)

## Vulnerable employment

There is no statistical data available for vulnerable youth employment in the Pacific region. However, it is recognised that youth are generally overrepresented in subsistence, precarious, and informal employment in the region (ILO, 2013; ILO, 2014). While there are significant data problems, it is understood that underemployment and vulnerable employment are a significant problem for youth in the region (ILO, 2014). Those who do find work are often employed in poor quality jobs with limited earnings. Most school leavers across the region have little choice but to enter the urban informal economy or work in subsistence agriculture or fishing (ILO, 2017).

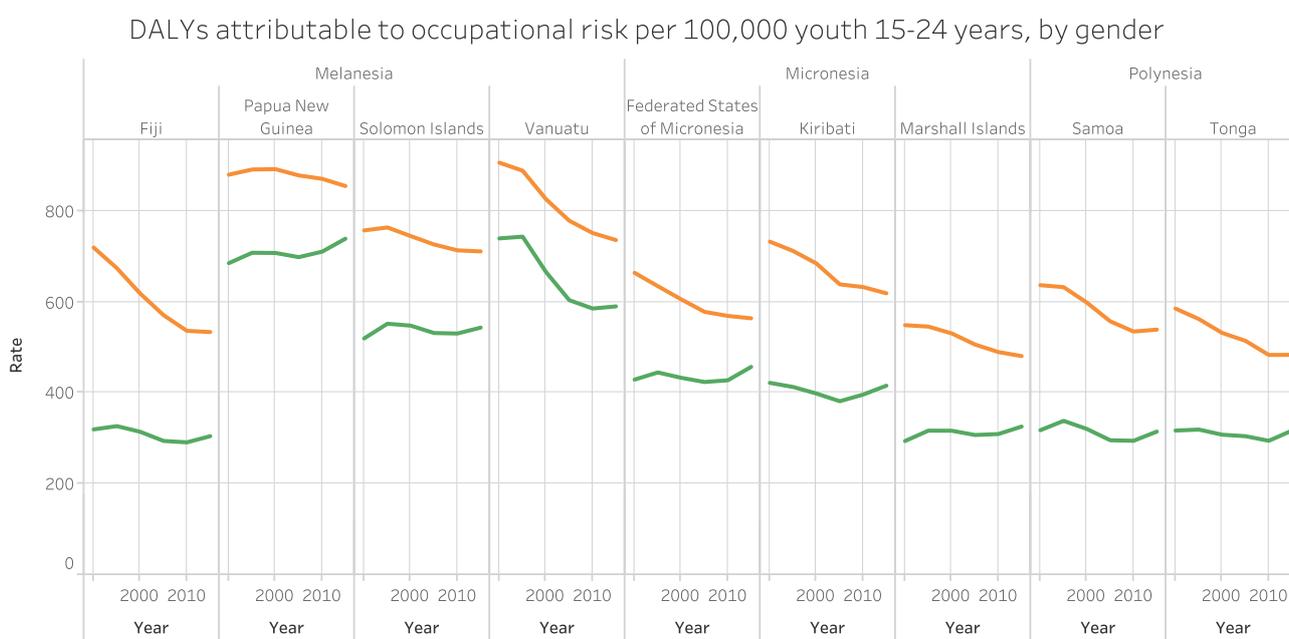
The issue is illustrated by the context of the Solomon Islands where a youth employment scan found that they face significant challenges obtaining formal employment (Barbara and McMahon, 2016). The formal labour market is small, reflecting the fragility of its economy and the dominance of subsistence and informal sectors. The primary sector, which encompasses agriculture (including subsistence agriculture) and timber production, dominates the Solomon Islands economy. This sector provides informal, irregular, and precarious employment opportunities for youth. It is not a preferred option for them or their parents. Public sector jobs carry high status and are the priority objective of the country's education pathways.

<sup>31</sup> <http://datatopics.worldbank.org/jobs/country>

## Occupational risk

Data on occupational risk show that males aged 15-24 are exposed to greater occupational risks than females and youth in the Pacific countries (see Figure 16). Occupational risk to health and safety for males is highest in PNG, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. There is considerable variation across the region. A decline in male risk is generally observed. For females, there are data that suggest an upward trend that needs to be carefully monitored.

**Figure 16. Occupational risk by sex**



The trend of sum of Rate for Year broken down by Region and Location Name. Color shows details about Sex. The view is filtered on Sex, which keeps Female and Male.

## The national youth policy response

NYPs include strategies to address employment and employability. It is important that youth-focused policies in the region give employment and employability a high priority. Youth employment has been a policy priority for many PICTs for some time. However, translating policy commitments into action and positive outcomes has proved problematic.

The array of NYPs presented in Table 1 indicates that addressing youth unemployment is an issue for all PICTs. The proposed approaches vary. To some extent, this reflects the diversity of economic context in the region.

The strategies proposed in the NYPs include:

- Education and skills building (entrepreneurship education);
- Active participation in economic development;
- Training workshops;
- Financial support to start small businesses;
- Income generation activities;
- Microcredit;
- Career guidance and counselling;
- Advocacy for youth employment; and
- Work experience.

Life skills development:

- Teamwork;
- Cooperation;
- Coordination; and
- Work ethic.

Business development and entrepreneurship for youth are being widely considered as a strategy to reduce youth unemployment. The link with education is clearly articulated in several NYPs though the emphasis is on general skills development (e.g. the Cook Islands and the Solomon Islands) and entrepreneurship education (the Cook Islands, FSM, Niue, Palau, and the Solomon Islands). Palau identifies strengthening the role of the school in developing work ethic, teamwork, cooperation, and coordination skills as an important intervention. Other strategic areas include small business development (Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu), promotion of income generating activities (Nauru and Tuvalu), the provision of microcredit (Tuvalu), and career guidance services (the Cook Islands, Palau, and Vanuatu). Addressing gender issues is mentioned in several NYPs (Palau, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu), youth with disabilities (Vanuatu), and targeted interventions in outer islands (Kiribati).

While these policies provide a platform for addressing youth unemployment, the policy responses contained in each youth policy tend to be only a subset of those required in a holistic response. Only two include specific attention to gender issues. None of the NYPs include TVET in the section on employment. It may be more effective to develop a specific policy framework for youth employment.

## 5.4 Discussion

**The PICTs are a diverse grouping and there are important sub-regional differences that militate against generalisation.** The four Melanesian countries of Fiji, PNG, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu have relatively large land areas, relatively large populations, and are endowed with a variety of natural resources. The atoll states of Tuvalu and Kiribati are highly vulnerable to climate change with limited opportunities for economic diversification. Economic opportunities in small, remote, and low-lying atoll nations are considered even more limited than those in other PICTs (World Bank, 2017). The Polynesian PICTs, which include the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, and Tonga, have large diaspora communities, mainly in New Zealand, as result of considerable emigration. The Northern Pacific countries of FSM, Palau, and RMI have a special relationship with the USA through the Compact of Free Association. These different characteristics have implications for the youth labour market and policy interventions that are needed to strengthen employment opportunities.

**Labour markets are largely informal and subsistence-based.** The dominance of the informal and subsistence economy is a challenge to sustainable development due to the vulnerability of informal and subsistence workers who lack formal social security systems (ILO, 2017). Available statistical labour market data for 2016 indicates a high proportion of informal employment in PICTs with 60 per cent in Fiji, 84 per cent in PNG, 68 per cent in Samoa, 85 per cent in the Solomon Islands, and 40 per cent in Vanuatu (ILO, 2017). A lower rate is reported in Tonga (10 per cent). The informal economy is associated with low productivity and poverty. The informal sector combines both entrepreneurial spirit and the struggle for subsistence. Informal businesses lack legal rights, and are unable to access public services or formal sources of credit. They also avoid taxation. In general, they tend not to create decent work opportunities for youth.

**Labour market institutions are not well developed.** Labour market institutions are policy interventions or collective organizations that interfere with wage and employment determination (Holmund, 2013). They include labour unions, legislation on minimum wages and employment protection, unemployment insurance, and active labour market policies. In the Pacific region, they are insufficiently developed and characterised by a lack of resources and limited influence on economic development policy making and planning (ILO, 2017). Labour market legislation generally applies to the formal sector only and thus to a small proportion of the labour force. Enforcement of existing labour market legislation has been poor due to capacity restraints in the Departments of Labour (ILO, 2017).

**PICTs economies are concentrated in a few sectors.** Agriculture is important in most PICTs, particularly those with larger land areas, such as PNG. Other sectors include extractive industries (Fiji, Nauru, PNG, and the Solomon Islands), fisheries (most PICTs), and tourism (the Cook Islands, Fiji, Palau, Samoa, Tonga, and Vanuatu). With the exception of Fiji and PNG, the manufacturing sector is generally undeveloped because domestic markets are small and transportation costs are high (ILO, 2017). Services make an important contribution to GDP due to the importance of tourism (ILO, 2017).

**Limited adoption and use of new technology restricts economic opportunity.** The PICTs are in general latecomers to the economic use of ICT (ILO, 2017). ICT skills of the workforce need to be upgraded as businesses in the region are beginning to utilise ICT to improve productivity, reduce transaction costs and support innovation. Uptake of such technology in the Pacific region has transformative potential. It can help Pacific islanders overcome some of the disadvantages of remoteness as well as spur economic growth and job creation. ICT skills are increasingly important for entrepreneurship. A key challenge remains the investment in necessary ICT infrastructure to maximise its potential to create employment opportunities. Another is to provide all young people with marketable ICT skills through formal education, TVET, and other skills training opportunities.

**Migration is an important labour market policy issue.** Migration is an important factor in PICT labour markets. Migration and overseas employment is a pathway to employment for youth where the local job market is not creating enough jobs. Such opportunities vary considerably between PICTs. Some PICTs – such as Fiji, the Polynesian countries, and the Northern Pacific countries – have experienced substantial emigration, while the Melanesian countries – PNG, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu – and the atoll states of Kiribati and Tuvalu have had few migration possibilities. It appears that PICTs have been unable to take advantage of migration options within the region as evidenced by the presence of workers from Asia (China and the Philippines) in Palau and PNG in particular (ILO, 2017). This also reduces employer incentives to invest in skills development of the local workforce in those countries.

Migration is also associated with brain drain. This involves the loss of skilled workers from various sectors including health (Connell, 2004) and education (Iredale et al, 2015). The effects are most conspicuous in those countries with high rates of migration, such as the Cook Islands, Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga (ILO, 2017). High rates of workers with higher education have migrated from Fiji (OECD, 2015).

**Climate change is a major risk for the future of the region.** Labour markets are vulnerable to climate change since the sectors that provide most of the employment (agriculture, tourism, and fisheries) are highly likely to be affected (ILO, 2017). The longer-term sustainability of atoll states such as Kiribati and Tuvalu is seriously threatened by sea-level rise. Youth are considered to be among the most vulnerable population groups with regard to climate change impacts on the labour market (ILO, 2017). Climate change may also present opportunities for youth employment through foreign funded investment to mitigate the risks.

**Challenges in enhancing youth employment opportunities.** Youth unemployment is a longstanding issue (SPC, 2009). The PYDF in its problem analysis reports that youth unemployment is an enduring challenge for most, if not all, PICTs and employment prospects can be poor. The unemployment rate for young women is higher in every PICT than for young men; they are more heavily engaged in domestic work, parenting, and childcare. Many unemployed young people are not economically active; they are not engaged in paid or unpaid activity that contributes to their personal, family, or community livelihoods.

Youth unemployment is high and a growing number of youths are neither in work nor training (ILO, 2017). The rate for female unemployment (15-24) is very high in the region. The rate is higher for females than males in most countries where there are data available.

The high age-dependency ratio arising from unemployment places an enormous burden on the relatively small economically active population and limited national resources (SPC, 2011). The problem of youth unemployment is thus a chronic issue that appears to be worsening, partly as a consequence of demographic pressure.

The main reasons given for high YURs are low economic growth, high population growth, and skills mismatches (ILO, 2017). The number of labour market entrants matched with new jobs created in the formal economy reveals a stark imbalance in the PICTs where data is available. For example in Fiji 17,000 new entrants are chasing 600 new jobs, in Kiribati there are 2,000 new entrants and 400-600 new jobs, and in Tonga there are 2,300 new entrants and 180-300 new jobs (World Bank, 2016).

There is sufficient data to know there is a problem with the transition from school to work, but not enough to record progress. Data is largely inadequate to illustrate trends. It is particularly difficult to reflect progress in policy measures to address youth unemployment. There are widely varying definitions of youth unemployment and significant data gaps, including in relation to vulnerable employment and the motivation of young people to participate in the labour market.

**Barriers to youth opportunity.** The PYDF identifies several challenges to improving youth employment and economic opportunities (see box below).

#### **Challenges to youth employment and economic opportunity (PYDF)**

- Lack of data on youth labour market participation, including on NEETs;
- Little effort to showcase successful models of youth entrepreneurship;
- Barriers to the promotion of small enterprise development as a solution to youth unemployment; and
- Lack of employment creation, which results in limited employment opportunities particularly in the formal sector and competition for the limited jobs available.

The difficulty of breaking into the job market is reflected in high YURs compared with older age groups. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that the transition from school to work is grounded in technical and employable skills demanded by the labour market, including new jobs created through disruptive technologies.

Pacific youth are generally overrepresented in vulnerable employment. Youth are generally overrepresented in subsistence, precarious, and informal employment in the region (ILO, 2013; ILO, 2014). While there are significant data availability problems, it is clear that underemployment and vulnerable employment are significant problems for youth in the Pacific region (ILO, 2014). Those who do find work are often employed in poor quality jobs with limited earnings. This is illustrated by the Solomon Islands where a youth employment scan found that they face significant challenges in obtaining formal employment (Barbara and McMahon, 2016). The formal labour market is small, reflecting the fragility of its economy and the dominance of subsistence and informal sectors. The primary sector, which encompasses agriculture (including subsistence agriculture) and timber production, dominates the Solomon Islands economy. This sector provides informal, irregular and precarious employment opportunities for youth. It is not a preferred option for them or their parents. Public sector jobs carry high status and are the priority objective of the country's education pathways.

**Skills shortages and mismatches.** Data on skills shortages and mismatches are elusive. The evidence is limited and more research is needed, particularly in relation to the unmet need for specific and generic skills. Research conducted in Fiji (Voigt-Graf and Kanemasu 2015), PNG (ADB and ILO, 2017), and Tonga (Government of Tonga, 2013) highlight significant imbalances between employer needs and skills supplied by education and training institutions.

Most PICTs have an oversupply of low skilled workers with considerable skill shortages in the workforce, particularly with regard to technical, vocational, managerial, and professional skills (ILO, 2017). Entrepreneurial skills are another skill shortage area (ILO, 2017). Core work skills have been found to be lacking in Fiji (Voight-Graf and Kanemasu, 2015) and in PNG (Voight-Graf and Odhuna, 2015) and these affect employability. Across the Pacific there is unmet demand for skilled and qualified labour (AusAid, 2011). This is particularly the case in mining, construction, engineering, and tourism.

In Samoa, 59 per cent of youth in the working population are considered to be over-educated for their jobs (Government of Samoa, 2015). Evidence of skills shortages and mismatches in the Solomon Islands (Close, 2012) include employers' reports that express shortages of suitable candidates to fill positions. Difficulties are encountered in finding employees with the necessary technical and behavioural skills. This is a constraint on the viability and productivity of firms, with large firms reporting significant levels of understaffing. In the Solomon Islands there is increasing concern at the community level about the number of youth who leave school without work ready skills (McDonald and Kyloh, 2015). A study by Curtain (2013) points to employer identified skills shortages, most notably in trades and professional jobs. An inability to fill jobs with suitable Solomon Islands candidates has forced employers to look overseas. Responding to this mismatch, and emerging employment opportunities, such as regional labour markets, will depend on the ability of policy-makers to improve education access and quality together with the responsiveness of key labour market institutions to respond to the job-relevant skills mismatch and labour demand (Close, 2012).

It appears that basic education may not be sufficiently geared to developing employability skills, although the evidence for this is limited. Linking education with employment is of critical importance. The quality of TVET is low (ILO, 2017). There is growing recognition of the importance of skills development to a nation's economy and its engagement with an increasingly globalised world, but a great deal of investment is required to bring about measurable results.

Available data suggest that higher education is an important factor in employment in the region. There is a shortage of educated skilled workers. A study by the World Bank (2011) indicates that paid employment increases significantly with higher education in Kiribati, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

**Statistical challenges: poor data and the use of available data.** The lack of data in the Pacific region makes evidence-based policy making problematic (ILO, 2014). National household surveys and labour force surveys are conducted sporadically at best. A lack of technical expertise can result in data that are of questionable quality or simply out of date (World Bank, 2014). High order statistical and research skills are seemingly in short supply in the Pacific region and for the foreseeable future there is an important role to be played by technical partners such as the ILO, the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, universities, and the SPC.

**Gender inequality.** Significant gender gaps are observed across the region in terms of labour force participation by sex (ILO, 2017). Lower rates are reported for women than men. For 2016, the gap in favour of males is 34 per cent in Fiji, 35 per cent in Samoa, 13 per cent in the Solomon Islands, 21 per cent in Tonga, and 19 per cent in Vanuatu (ILO, 2017). The gap is closest in PNG (1 per cent). The female labour force participation rate in Samoa is particularly low at 23 per cent (ILO, 2017). There are cultural and institutional barriers that restrict equal access of women to productive assets and formal jobs. These include gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment (ILO, 2014). Women are under-represented in senior jobs in most PICTs.

**The regional response to youth unemployment.** The SPC noted in a report mapping the youth challenge in the Pacific Region (SPC, 2011) that little had been done with regard to youth and employment. It was observed that programmes that had been implemented tended to have a minimal focus on young people. The provision of skills training was proving to be no guarantee of employment or participation in business development. Little was being done to engage employers in addressing the issue of youth unemployment.

There has been a discernable increase in attention to youth employment in the region since 2011. By 2016, a range of initiatives had been put in place by national governments and regional organisations to support youth in finding employment (Barbara and McMahan, 2016). The most significant commitment made at the regional level was the 2011 Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Communiqué that provided a mandate for stakeholders concerned with youth and development agencies to engage with the issue.

The PYDF (SPC, 2013) identifies employment and training as one of its four priority issues. The PYC works closely with NYCs to support advocacy on youth employment. The PYC was instrumental in having employment placed on the Forum Leaders' Agenda in 2011. It is critically important, however, in the context of a general problem of lack of employment growth, that interventions targeted at youth be conceived as part of a holistic approach to economic growth and the development of the labour market.

**A need for investment in analytical work.** Some investment in important analytical work has taken place at the regional, sub-regional, and country levels. This provides support for policy-making and strategic directions for both planning and programming. It is essential for evidence-based policy making. It appears that the available analytical work is necessary, but not sufficient. Some PICTs are in relatively good shape in terms of gathering evidence on their youth employment situation (Fiji, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu) while others are at an earlier stage in the process with limited data and analysis available (FSM, Nauru, Niue, and Tuvalu).

Young people need help to find decent work opportunities, either through their own entrepreneurship or through employment in the formal or informal economies. There are few opportunities available in the formal economy. Entrepreneurship training and skill training for the informal economy may represent a promising strategy to assist them to access work opportunities. It is also important to develop core work/life skills and the employability of young people. Pathways from education to employment need to be better developed. This includes the popularization of

TVET as a pathway to decent work, rather than the perception that it is a channel for problem youth. The problem is complex. It needs better data availability for evidence-based policy making and planning. It also requires attention to developing national plans or strategies for youth employment.

Good quality primary and secondary education can significantly improve the ability of youth to find waged employment (ILO, 2013). These opportunities need to be made available to all with the universalization of both primary and secondary education. Moreover, the purpose of education in equipping young learners with capabilities for the world of work needs to be revisited and enhanced. Curriculum development in the region needs to be informed by international developments aimed at equipping learners with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. There needs to be stronger consideration of developing employability skills and dispositions in basic education. As part of employability skill development, entrepreneurial education opportunities need to be expanded in secondary and higher education across the region.

**The need for a strong focus on skills development in education and training.** There is a need to develop multiple pathways for education and training that lead to improved opportunities for employment. In particular this means developing post-basic education opportunities. Access to higher education needs to be expanded, particularly in relation to economic growth and innovation. Higher education plays an important role in educating professionals and high skilled non-manual workers such as knowledge workers (World Bank, 2015). It supports private sector development because industries require a more educated and productive workforce. Available information suggests that higher education is an important factor for employment in the Pacific region and there is an unfilled demand for skills and educated workers (ADB, 2012). Prospects for paid employment increase significantly with higher education in Kiribati, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu (World Bank, 2011). Data from the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu indicate that workers with higher education have significantly higher earnings than uneducated counterparts and this is more pronounced for young women than men (ADB, 2012). There is a need for higher education providers to work closely with employers to ensure that the quality of higher education offered develops the higher order skills needed for modern globalized economies in the region. Access to quality higher education relevant to the development needs of the Pacific region needs to be expanded. Investment in research into the links between education outcomes at this level and employability is also needed.

Enhancing youth employability involves developing a complex range of skills for the world of work. Four types of skills have been identified as being key for success in the workplace and life more generally (Brewer, 2013). These include foundation skills, which are developed through participation in basic education, including literacy and numeracy skills that are necessary for getting most types of decent work. They are also a prerequisite for continuing in education and training, and for acquiring transferable and technical and vocational skills that enhance the prospect of getting better paid jobs. Technical and vocational skills are needed for specific occupations or to perform specific tasks or duties (such as nursing, accounting, plumbing, and using technology or machinery). These skills are usually delivered through TVET programming. Professional and personal attributes such as honesty, reliability, punctuality, and work ethic are important. Core work skills involve: the ability to learn and adapt; read, write, and compute competently; listen and communicate effectively; think creatively; solve problems independently or in teams; manage oneself at work; interact with co-workers; work in teams or groups; handle basic technology; and lead effectively as well as follow supervision. These skills enable individuals to constantly acquire and apply new knowledge and skills through lifelong learning. Various agencies and organizations have given different labels to these skills, including *life skills*, *key competencies*, *soft skills*, *transferable skills* and *essential skills*.

Skills development for youth employability is at an early stage in the Pacific region. There is little evidence that education and training are equipping youth with core employability skills. A lack of generic workplace skills affects the employability of youths and makes Pacific islanders less

competitive in the domestic and global market compared to workers from other labour-sending countries (ILO, 2017).

The quality of education is a major concern. There is no evidence that improved enrolment and completion rates in themselves translate into improved cognitive skills (AusAid, 2011). Too many students are functionally illiterate and innumerate at the end of basic education. The returns from increased years of education need to be matched with quality learning outcomes. The provision of additional resources such as buildings and equipment has had disappointing results in terms of improving learning outcomes.

Skills shortages need to be identified and addressed. In the Solomon Islands, employers reported that the following employability skills were not being delivered by training providers: work attitude, communication skills, decision-making, and analytical skills (Close, 2012).

The development of TVET is a regional priority. TVET is an important pathway for youth to develop marketable skills for the world of work. What is required for skills development through TVET is increased collaboration between TVET institutions and employers to align more closely the supply of training outcomes with labour market demand (ILO, 2017). Tracer studies among TVET graduates are needed to provide evidence of the labour market outcomes of their training. TVET training should also include the development of core work skills integrated with the specific technical skills in the curriculum (Brewer and Comyn, 2015).

**The supply of skills training needs to be clearly focused on areas of domestic and overseas demand.** TVET and skills training more generally need to be linked more clearly to identified demand in the labour market. This needs to be informed by national development strategies (e.g. skills identified for priority growth sectors). For youth to be able to take advantage of migration opportunities for work, they need proficiency in skills that are in demand in those labour markets (ILO, 2017).

**Enhancing access to quality post-secondary education.** Higher education plays an important role in educating professionals and high skilled non-manual workers, such as knowledge workers (World Bank, 2015). It supports private sector development since industries require a more educated and productive workforce. There are concerns that the quality of higher education offered does not sufficiently address the high order skills needs of modern global economies.

In the Solomon Islands, three quarters of job vacancies are in critical skills areas – e.g. teachers, nurses, and public administrators (Close, 2012). There is therefore a need to expand access to post-secondary education and training. The Solomon Islands College of Higher Education has among the highest rates of employment, indicating the need to expand such training provision.

In Tonga, employment outcomes for post-secondary qualification holders across industries demonstrate varying degrees of effectiveness across the training and education system, particularly with regard to the matching of skills supply and demand. A 2011 tracer survey of the 2007-2010 graduates from Tonga post-secondary institutions showed, for example, that nursing and teaching graduates had high employment rates, whereas employment outcomes for graduates of certificate level training in information technology were much weaker (Ministry of Training, Employment, Youth and Sport, Tonga Graduate Tracer Survey 2011 results, in Government of Tonga 2013). The survey highlighted the importance of close links between training institutions and employers, and aligning training opportunities to jobs available in the industry.

**Investing in entrepreneurship education and training.** Entrepreneurship (starting and growing a new business) is becoming crucial for the success of young people in all regions including the Pacific. It is a driver of economic and technological development and important for both job and wealth creation (Baumol et al, 2007). Given the chronic slow rate of job creation in the region, the growth of entrepreneurship appears to be an economic and social necessity to promote employment in decent work.

Education to develop knowledge and skills for business and entrepreneurship is new in the Pacific region. There are currently no metrics available for assessing the coverage or quality of business or entrepreneurship education in the Pacific region. Consequently, it is not possible to measure the extent to which education for entrepreneurship or indeed employability is accessible to adolescents and youth in formal and non-formal education pathways.

How can Pacific societies promote entrepreneurship among their young people? A point of departure is entrepreneurship education, a core assumption of which is that there is an entrepreneurial mind-set that can be promoted and educated (Carsud and Brannback, 2009). In the case of vocational development, research shows that this starts in early childhood and depends on early developmental processes, including social skills, and this is likely the case with entrepreneurship development (Obschonka and Silbersten, 2017). The acquisition of age-appropriate early entrepreneurship competencies is likely to be particularly important in adolescence. These include the development of leadership, commercial skills, social skills, entrepreneurial attitudes, and self-efficacy beliefs (Obschonka et al, 2010). These can be further practiced and developed through the transition from youth to adult life.

A start has been made in creating entrepreneurial societies in the Pacific region. This involves changing mind-sets so that owning and running a business are considered to be credible and worthwhile career paths for both women and men.

An approach to entrepreneurship education, Know About Business (KAB), developed by ILO, is being implemented in secondary schools in Fiji and PNG. It is being piloted in Kiribati at KIT. Entrepreneurship training is being conducted through the Start and Improve your Business programme in PNG (SBDC), Kiribati (KCCI), Vanuatu (VCCI), the Solomon Islands (SIWIBA and YW), and Samoa (SBEC). Community-based enterprise development is being implemented in the Solomon Islands and Kiribati.

The Pacific Summit and Policy Dialogue on Youth Entrepreneurship that took place in Suva, Fiji in April 2017 provided an outcome statement that includes recommendations for promoting and developing youth entrepreneurship. It was recognized that improving the broader business environment is important for the success of young entrepreneurs. In this regard, there is a need to optimise the regulatory and policy environment, improve access to finance, and facilitate technology exchange and innovation. Entrepreneurship education, training, and skills development in formal and non-formal education needs to be expanded and the evidence base on youth employment and youth entrepreneurship enhanced. There is also a need to provide services for youth to enhance their job-seeking opportunities.

The Youth@Work (Y@W) programme, which is being implemented in the Solomon Islands as a practical response to the issue of youth unemployment, offers some insights as to how entrepreneurship development can achieve positive outcomes. There is a Youth Entrepreneurship Programme (YEP) component of Y@W for both urban and rural youth in which specific training to help start businesses is given along with applications for a small start-up grant. The evaluation of the Y@W programme (McDonald and Kyloh, 2015) found that YEP participants had begun to play a more active role in community development, displaying initiative, confidence, and purposefulness.

Some had successfully started up their own small businesses. An identified success factor was that the programme responds to the aspirations of youth. It also fits in well with Government of the Solomon Islands youth policy framework and has built good connections with the private sector and NGOs.

**Expanding career guidance services.** Relevant services are needed to support the transition from school to work. To support better employment opportunities for youth it is important to invest in public employment services such as job centres. These can help young men and women find decent jobs through the provision of information about vacancies, training in interviewing skills and curriculum vitae writing, and referral to training schemes and providers. Career guidance and counselling services are being introduced in Fiji, Kiribati, RMI, PNG, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu using a guide developed by the ILO.

**The need to enhance the role of youth organisations.** Youth organisations have an important role to play in supporting youth employment policies and programmes. There appears to have been no mapping of how they are contributing to the response to youth unemployment at regional and country levels. Limited youth engagement in long-term structural reform debates may reflect the complexity of the issues involved and limited youth organization technical understanding of the issues, the broad-fronted nature of the reform challenge (making targeted political engagement difficult), the generally muted national policy debate currently underway on youth employment issues, and the limited engagement infrastructure that might be used to include youth representatives in national policy debates.

Some illustrative country examples are provided from the Pacific Regional Youth Employment Scan (Barbara and McMahon, 2016) for Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. These are described below.

In the **Solomon Islands**, there are a number of youth organisations with an interest in youth employment issues. They have tended to understand and engage with youth employment issues in personalized and individual ways, treating employment issues in terms of individual agency (i.e. improving individual employability rather than engage with structural barriers and opportunities that might improve overall youth employment opportunities). There are a small number of youth groups focused on supporting young people to transition to work, either by improving their job search skills (resume writing, interview techniques, job match) or supporting youth entrepreneurialism. There are no youth organisations currently involved in broader policy reform debates relevant to youth employment, such as current debates on the establishment of a demand-driven TVET system or efforts to improve the operation of the seasonal worker programme. The NYC is weak and lacks capacity to engage with complex long-term reform issues. It is also removed from key debates on TVET and regional labour market engagement.

In **Vanuatu**, there is a wide range of civil society organisations (CSOs) active in areas relevant to youth employment. Youth Challenge Vanuatu (YCV) is a youth-led NGO established to respond to the challenges faced by young people in securing waged and self-employment. YCV targets out of school youth and provides services such as entrepreneurship training, career counselling, a drop-in-centre, and web-based job matching/referral services. Many youth organisations are active in livelihood and youth engagement programmes. Wan Smolbag has supported a number of activities designed to help engage unemployed youth. Oxfam International has provided support for local skills development including home economics, health, hospitality, small business management, agriculture, mechanics, and carpentry. A range of CSOs also provide support for livelihoods development including microfinance and entrepreneurship capacity building (business planning and management, etc.).

In **Tonga**, youth organisations are generally aware of the need to engage with government to advance their agendas. Despite this, they have faced challenges in meaningfully engaging with government around substantive policy issues. While there are consultation periods built into the development of frameworks and policies that address issues relevant to youth, youth organisations have struggled to influence policy development through these processes. Consequently, some youth organisations have chosen to focus their attention on what they believe to be more practical solutions to the youth employment challenge rather than engaging in policy debates. There are a number of NGOs engaging directly with the issue of youth employment with different approaches. The Tonga National Youth Congress (TYNC) has a strong focus on directly supporting income-generating activities for young people. The TYNC has also engaged with government on a broader range of issues relevant to youth. TYNC engagement with government on the issue of youth employment has focused largely on garnering support for specific projects rather than pushing for a broad-fronted policy reform on youth employment.

The **Tonga** Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (TYEE) organisation is a not-for-profit youth employment and entrepreneurship support service organisation, established in April 2015, which focuses on supporting young people's transition to work. TYEE collects and provides information on employment opportunities for young people, supports the development of a range of job-seeking skills (including resume writing and job interview conduct), provides mentorship to those who secure work, and advice to youth entrepreneurs. Since its establishment, TYEE has encountered significant demand from young people for their services, and has also received positive feedback from employers, for the most part from the private sector, who have taken on young people supported by TYEE.

**Policies are needed to foster well-managed labour migration and mobility.** Labour migration abroad has a long history in the Pacific region. Migration opportunities to Australia and New Zealand through specific programmes are well documented, but little is known about the scale and nature of migration elsewhere in the region and beyond. This lack of data impacts the ability of countries to design appropriate migration policies and strategies. Currently little is being done to explore the potential of labour markets within the Pacific region (ILO, 2014).

## 5.5 Conclusions and recommendations

### 1. Invest in analytical work to support policy-making

It is critically important for governments to be able to obtain reliable data that provide a means of assessing the current youth employment situation, follow trends over time, and track progress. This means both national and sub-national data, which is disaggregated by gender, age, urban/rural location, education attainment, and vulnerability factors such as poverty and disability.

The ILO (2014) draws attention to the cross-cutting issue of lack of data in the Pacific region. This makes evidence-based policy making highly problematic. National household surveys and labour force surveys are conducted sporadically at best. A lack of technical expertise can result in data that is of questionable quality or simply out of date (World Bank, 2014). High order statistical and research skills are seemingly in short supply in the Pacific region and for the foreseeable future there is an important role to be played by technical partners such as the ILO, the World Bank, the ADB, universities, and the SPC.

Some investment in important analytical work has taken place at the regional, sub-regional and country levels. This provides support for policy-making and strategic directions for both planning and programming. It is essential for evidence-based policy making. It appears that the available analytical work is necessary, but not sufficient. Some PICTs are in relatively good shape in terms of gathering evidence on their youth employment situation (Fiji, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu) while others are at an earlier stage in the process with limited data and analysis available (FSM, Nauru, Niue, and Tuvalu).

This agenda includes investing in regional and country level capacity building to improve data on youth employment and employability, including NEET populations. There is a need to ensure that statistical capacity development includes all PICTs. Support needs to be given to finance analytical work at the country level (e.g. on school-to-work transition studies).

There is an urgent need for more research on youth employment and employability in the region. An inclusive process to identify research gaps in relation to youth employment and employability with youth participation needs to be identified and taken forward.

Some areas to consider:

- Labour market data on the demand for youth employability skills;
- Perspectives of young people on employability and employment prospects;
- How to assess competencies involving life skills/core work skills;
- Gender barriers to decent work opportunities for youth;
- New methods (beyond current surveys) to assess skills shortages and mismatches with regard to youth employment in selected PICTs;
- Robust impact evaluations of interventions; and
- Long-term longitudinal studies.

## 2. Develop a comprehensive policy framework to address youth unemployment

### Policies to create an enabling environment for economic development

The policy response required to improve employment opportunities for youth in the Pacific region is complex and multi-sectoral. Policies to create an enabling environment for economic development should be core components of national development strategies and plans. ILO analysis (2015) identifies the following policy areas to be addressed:

- **Creating an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises.** Sustainable enterprises can be considered to be the economic engine of future growth (ILO, 2007). They can only thrive in environments of sound and stable macroeconomic policy, rule of law and transparency, and good regulatory policy. Progress in improving regulatory policy in the Pacific region has been slow, with high costs of registering a business, difficulties in obtaining land, and costly electricity and telecommunications which can be crippling for small businesses (ILO, 2014). There is a need to lower the costs of starting and running a business as well make improvements in infrastructure and transportation for better access to markets.
- **Country-specific industrial policy** is needed that addresses the potential for decent job creation and poverty reduction. Employment needs to be put at the forefront of objectives and investments and opportunities identified where more and better jobs may be created. The ILO has identified the following: fisheries and seafaring, telecommunications, tourism, and creative industries such as design, fashion, music, film, and culture-based industries (ILO, 2017). National Employment Strategies are a promising way forward with Fiji, PNG, and

Samoa working to develop these. These should have a strong focus on creating opportunities for youth employment in decent work.

- **Policies to enhance human capital and employability.** Good quality primary and secondary education can significantly improve the ability of youth to find waged employment (ILO, 2013). These opportunities need to be made available to all with the universalization of both primary and secondary education. Moreover, the purpose of education in equipping young learners with capabilities for the world of work needs to be revisited and enhanced. Curriculum development in the region needs to be informed by international developments aimed at equipping learners with 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. There needs to be stronger consideration given to developing employability skills and dispositions in basic education. As part of employability skill development, entrepreneurial education opportunities need to be expanded in secondary and higher education across the region.
- **Policies to support the transition from school-to work.** To support better employment opportunities for youth it is important to invest in public employment services such as job centres. These can help young men and women find decent jobs by providing information about vacancies, training in interview skills and curriculum vitae writing, and referrals to training schemes and providers.
- **Policies to establish and ensure inclusive employment.** PICT governments have expressed strong commitments to the economic empowerment of women. The immediate challenge is to implement the policy commitments. This includes removing practices in the workplace such as gender discrimination and sexual harassment. Disability is another issue that has only recently begun to receive attention from policy makers as a development and human rights issue. The Pacific Regional Strategy on Disability 2010-2015 provides a framework for action. There is a need to include targeted interventions to enhance participation in the workforce of such excluded groups with safe training or specific employment spaces (World Bank, 2010).
- **Policies to foster well managed labour migration and mobility.** Labour migration abroad has a long history in the Pacific region. Migration opportunities to Australia and New Zealand through specific programmes are well documented, but little is known about the scale and nature of migration elsewhere in the region and beyond. This lack of data impacts the ability of countries to design appropriate migration policies and strategies. Little is currently being done to explore the potential of labour markets within the Pacific region (ILO, 2014).
- **Support the development of national youth employment plans.** National youth employment planning provides an opportunity to develop better situation analyses at the country level, strengthen partnerships, and build an enabling environment. There should be active participation of regional and national youth organisations in developing as well as implementing employment plans. National youth employment plans need to be costed and have a robust, practical M&E framework for tracking progress.
- **Support the integration of youth employment and employability strategies in national youth policies and accompanying action plans.** These need to be costed and have a robust, practical M&E framework for tracking progress. They also need to be aligned with relevant national policies and plans.

A promising approach is the Samoa National Action Plan on Youth Employment (SNAP), which was produced by the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development in partnership with the Samoa NYC and the ILO with funding from SIDA. The overarching goal of SNAP is to promote and create more jobs for young men and women in villages in the period 2016-2020.

### **3. Build the capacity of national youth organisations**

The voice of youth is hard to find in the literature covering youth employment and employability in the Pacific region. Efforts need to be made to enhance inclusive youth voice and representation in decision-making concerning the development of employment opportunities for males and females, including LGBTQI. Youth with disabilities also need representation. This could include support for:

- Capacity building on youth employment and employability in the PYC;
- Capacity building on youth employment and employability in NYCs;
- NGO programming in advocacy and skills training for youth employability; and
- Youth-led research on employability skills.

### **4. Focus on enhancing skills development for the labour market**

Skills development is an identified factor in the complex youth employment equation. Some actions to consider:

- Invest in strengthening quality TVET development. Continue with efforts to develop TVET as part of a multiple pathways approach to skills for employment/employability development. Take steps to align TVET training with labour market demand. Involve youth organisations in the popularisation of TVET and gender mainstreaming.
- Provide support for NGO programmes to develop employability and entrepreneurship skills as part of a multiple pathways approach to lifelong skills development. Encourage NGOs to build capacity to deliver effective employability and entrepreneurship training for adolescents and youth. There are models of good practice internationally (e.g. the International Youth Foundation's Passport to Success programme for life skills development for employability);
- Incorporate core workplace skills development in TVET programmes and other skills training. Link core workplace skills development with life skills education and training in formal and informal education; and
- Invest in improving ICT skills for the labour market, including with TVET programming.





# 6. CIVIC AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

## 6.1 Background

The active participation of adolescents and youth is important in all domains of development. It is fundamental to education and learning, health and wellbeing, employability and employment, and protection. It is also a domain in its own right. To enable participation, it is important to build relevant capabilities and to provide appropriate opportunities for practice (World Bank, 2007). Skills for participation need to be developed through education, including life skills education and citizenship education. Teaching methods should promote active participation in learning in the classroom, enhancing communication and team working skills. Positive attitudes to enable effective participation such as toleration, inclusion, and anti-discrimination as well as gender equality need to be promoted. Opportunities for participation should be provided in the school, particularly in decision-making bodies.

Achieving the benefits of investment in young people depends on a secure environment and a belief by youth that they have a stake in governance, peace, and democracy (USAID, 2012). In this regard, citizenship is crucial for development. Experiences in adolescence and youth are formative and have lasting effects on political participation throughout life (World Bank, 2007). However, formal political processes and institutions are still characterized by limited youth participation and young men and women are very often disillusioned with political leadership and political institutions and excluded from policy development (UNDP, 2014).

The participation of young people in the political life of their communities shows the extent to which they are empowered and have a voice in the development of those communities (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2016). Such participation promotes social integration, combats exclusion, and by giving young people a stake in their society, creates bonds between generations. Civic engagement is a key marker of human development and full incorporation into society, and is complementary to political participation. It can take many forms, including through sport, religious groups, leisure activities, music, and drama as well as through community development activities. In the Pacific region, youth are encouraged to participate in local environmental and climate change-related activities.

Efforts to engage youth involve giving them voice and ensuring meaningful opportunities to contribute to resolving issues and promoting positive change in their communities and nations. Youth participation also necessarily involves the preparation of adults to listen to and work with young people (USAID, 2012). Given the opportunity and preparation, youth are valuable partners in development, who can offer insight, guidance, innovative thinking, and solutions to problems. By strengthening their social and leadership skills, youth participation not only reduces passivity and apathy among youth, but also promotes a positive view of young people in the wider adult community (USAID, 2012).

The PYDF identifies a number of key challenges for youth participation in the Pacific region. There is a lack of indicators for measuring the extent of participation. There is also a dearth of analytical work at regional and national levels. There appears to have been little in the way of regional analysis of young people's participation in the past decade. Qualitative research conducted by McMurray on young people's participation in the Pacific region (UNICEF, 2006) found that very few young people

participate in decision-making. Their voice in decision-making at traditional and community levels is extremely limited. A key barrier to their participation is the lack of information and understanding of youth issues in institutions. Young people also lack awareness about civic participation and human rights. Cultural traditions concerning rank, seniority, and gender can limit their involvement. There is an absence of policies, structures, and resources to encourage and facilitate inclusive youth participation; there is token participation by elite youth. Finally, some countries have imposed political limitations on citizen freedoms and democratic voice that limit youth participation and active citizenship.

UNICEF conducted a regional mapping of young people's civic engagement in East Asia and the Pacific (UNICEF 2008), which is not specific to the Pacific region and thus includes only a partial picture of participation focused on case studies from Fiji, Kiribati, PNG, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. It attempts to provide a typology of civic participation involving young people. It identifies critical success factors for youth civic participation. These include good governance (effective, transparent, participatory, and accountable government), a drive for democracy, and independent and organized civil societies. Many youth civic engagement programmes face challenges relating to sustainability, coordination, scale, and impact.

A mapping of young people's participation in Fiji (Vakaoti, 2012) found that research is struggling to keep abreast of the diverse ways in which young people participate individually or collectively. Limited research means that not much is known about "active" youth. Young people are involved in different spaces with varying degrees of participation. Traditional forms of engagement still predominate but their activities have broadened and become more diverse. Many activities benefit those in urban areas. Geographical isolation and financial limitations remain as barriers to participation. There is an absence of documented good practices in meaningful youth participation. Research offers a space for young people's participation as co-researchers and as a means of consolidating their voice in society.

## **6.2 A need to build the evidence base for youth participation**

Statistical data on youth participation in all its manifestations appear to be close to non-existent in the Pacific region (and internationally). Thus tracking youth involvement and active citizenship is problematic as metrics are hard to come by. Similarly with youth leadership, it is difficult to obtain a clear picture at a regional level of the extent to which youth leadership is being developed without statistics being available. There are no statistics available for assessing the quality of youth participation either. Some data are available on opportunities to participate at the country level. Policy mapping was possible, but not all youth policies for the region were accessible. It is not possible to measure any trends in participation in the region in the absence of baseline data.

In order to address the lack of metrics on participation a set of indicators to measure adolescent and youth participation is proposed. These cover both community and political participation.

## 6.3 Key findings

The findings on participation are mainly obtained from a review of literature relevant to youth development in the Pacific region.

### 1. **There are functioning representative structures for youth participation in national development**

Functional national representative bodies for youth have been established in many PICTs (see Table 27). These vary considerably in their stated function. These fall into different categories:

- Coordination (e.g. focal point function, umbrella organisation);
- Involvement in NYP design and implementation;
- Capacity building (e.g. training);
- Advocacy (e.g. promote holistic youth development); and
- Network building.

Most PICTs have recognised the importance of youth participation in national development and this is integrated in several NYPs. Some PICT governments have set up specific structures and mechanisms to provide youth with opportunities to participate in development at the national and sub-national levels. There is also a regional framework for youth participation.

Regional and national bodies have been set up to represent youth and promote their development (see Table 27). These seem to have quite broad coverage in terms of representation at least at the national level. This needs further investigation, especially in relation to representation and specific outcomes.

**Youth Parliaments.** Youth parliaments have been set up in several PICTs (e.g. Fiji, PNG, Samoa, and the Solomon Islands). The concept is that youth parliamentarians will learn the skills that will enable them to become future leaders. Data on their effectiveness are lacking.

**Youth Councils.** The PYC is a regional non-governmental youth organisation made up of NYCs across the Pacific region. NYCs are in FSM, the Cook Islands, Nauru, Niue, RMI, Palau, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. A General Assembly is held every three years with an elected executive board responsible for the work plan. The PYC is active within a number of United Nations and international processes and is a member of the International Coordination Meeting of Youth Organisations.

There appear to be some significant gaps in NYC formation (e.g. Fiji, PNG, and Tokelau), which would presumably limit the PYC's representation of youth in the region. Fiji and PNG have different participatory structures for youth development.

It appears that these bodies are significant assets for national youth development. The extent to which these are youth-led is unclear as is the extent to which youth participate in decision-making in activities to achieve these functions.

**Table 27. National youth representative bodies**

PICT	Youth Representative Body	Function
Fiji	National Youth Advisory Board (2004)	To advise the Minister directly on issues of concern to young people
	National Youth Council (2013)	
Micronesia	National Youth Council	No data
Kiribati	Kiribati National Youth Council	Mission is more visibility, commitment, and impact for young people
Marshall Islands	National Youth Council	No data
Nauru	Nauru National Youth Council (1994)	Promote peace and unity that empowers young people to become leaders of tomorrow
		Involved in design, implementation, and monitoring of NYP
		A member of the PYC and the Commonwealth Youth Council
Niue	National Youth Council (1982)	Consists of 14 youth groups representing villages and denominations on the island
		Mission is to develop a generation of dedicated young people who, in partnership with communities, take on positive actions towards youth development in Niue
		A member of the PYC and the Commonwealth Youth Council
Palau	National Youth Council of Palau	Focal body of all youth and young people in Palau
		It has elected youth offices
Papua New Guinea	National Youth Development Authority	The National Youth Development Authority was established by law in 2014
		It is a government agency with multiple functions, including advising on youth policy and coordinating activities at national, provincial, and local levels

PICT	Youth Representative Body	Function
Samoa	Samoa National Youth Council (2012)	<p>NGO established as the focal office for youth-led activities in Samoa</p> <p>Currently there are 132 Village Youth Representatives who are members of the Council</p> <p>The Council carries out Quarterly Forums with its members to discuss youth issues and projects that the Secretariat carries out</p> <p>These forums are also used to carry out awareness campaigns/programmes to help build the knowledge and capacity of the members</p>
Solomon Islands	Solomon Islands Youth Council (1980)	<p>Its functions include advocacy, training, developing provincial youth policies, and coordinating the National Youth Stakeholder's Committee</p> <p>A member of the PYC and the Commonwealth Youth Council</p>
Tokelau	No data	No data
Tonga	Tonga National Youth Congress	<p>An umbrella organisation for youth groups focussing on responsibility, good citizenship, community service, and leadership</p> <p>Worked on designing NYP</p> <p>A member of the PYC and the Commonwealth Youth Council</p>
Tuvalu	Tuvalu National Youth Council (1978)	<p>Umbrella organisation comprising 13 affiliated NGOs</p> <p>Promotes holistic development to become active citizens and leaders</p> <p>It focuses on spiritual development, culture, education, law, health, economic empowerment, and the environment</p>
Vanuatu	Vanuatu National Youth Council	<p>Mission is to strengthen and build networks and initiate capacity building to involve and empower youth in decision-making</p> <p>A member of the PYC</p>

## **2. Participation of youth with disabilities is enabled at the regional level**

There are functioning structures that support the participation of youth with disabilities. The Pacific Disability Forum (PDF) is a regional umbrella body that works in partnership with disabled people's organisations (DPOs) in the Pacific region. Its aim is to build the capacity of these organisations and improve the lives of persons with disabilities in the region through advocacy. The PDF Youth Committee is made up of six young people with a disability aged 18 to 35, who are living in a Pacific island country. Youth Committee members are the elected presidents of their respective DPOs. The committee meets by teleconference four times a year and in person once a year. The Youth Committee works to ensure that young people with disabilities are heard and have their issues addressed. They do this by:

- Engaging with national and regional organizations in the Pacific to recognize and address issues concerning youth with disabilities;
- Building the capacity of young people with disabilities in leadership roles;
- Ensuring that young people with disabilities are included in research and data collection;
- Advocacy and awareness raising programmes;
- Ensuring that young people with disabilities are included in all health information and services;
- Promoting the inclusion of young people with disabilities in all services and information;
- Developing and promoting independent living programmes for young people with disabilities; and
- Influencing policies at national, regional, and international levels.

The PDF holds a Pacific Regional Forum for Youth with Disabilities in conjunction with the biennial Pacific Regional Conference. This event brings together youth representatives of DPOs from around the Pacific Region to talk about issues that concern youth with disabilities such as health, education, employment, and economic empowerment. The first forum was held in New Caledonia in April 2013. The second took place in Fiji in 2015.

## **3. Civil society organisations enable youth participation**

NGOs, CSOs, and faith-based organisations (FBOs) play an important role in supporting youth development in the region and providing opportunities for participation. This whole area needs to be better mapped to adequately ascertain functions, coverage, and target groups. From the available literature, NGOs are involved in a range of activities including training programmes for youth leadership, employment skills development programming, and providing opportunities for participation in youth-friendly health service delivery.

A mapping of young people's participation by UNICEF (2008) found that NGOs are involved in volunteering (part-time and occasional), youth camps, mutual aid in communities, advocacy and campaigning, youth media, social entrepreneurship, and leadership training and practice. Updated and more comprehensive mapping of the role of CSOs in promoting capabilities and opportunities for civic participation for adolescents and youth is needed for the Pacific region.

#### 4. There are differing rural/urban opportunities for youth participation

Participation opportunities for youth are likely to differ in terms of urban and rural contexts. The mechanisms for youth participation in rural settings are not well described in the available literature.

An example of an urban structure for youth participation is the Honiara Youth Council, which was established in 2011 to coincide with the launching of the Honiara Urban Youth Policy 2011-2015. It is not involved in decision-making, but serves to promote youth development in the city, coordinate activities, and disseminate information. The Youth Council provides city youth with a voice at provincial and national levels. Honiara City Council has a Department of Youth, Sports and Women, which engages youth in sports and has established youth networks in the suburbs. It works alongside NGOs on development issues in informal settlements.

In Kiribati, strategies have been developed for youth participation through the establishment of youth centres on outer islands in rural communities. A range of approaches has been put forward to promote civic participation and social cohesion.

#### 5. Volunteering as civic participation is not well understood

Volunteering can enable young people to become active citizens and engaged members of their own communities. It overlaps with social activism and provides ways of developing a wide range of skills and competencies. It can bring about change and it builds the capacity of young people. Volunteering can also be a pathway to employment and a means of empowerment for young women.

CSOs are often established and run by volunteers. FBOs also typically involve a substantial amount of volunteerism. Youth organisations, such as youth clubs, are an important vehicle for volunteering.

There are multiple understandings of what volunteering means. The UN defines it as involving activities undertaken of free will for the general public good and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor (UNV, 2015). The concept of volunteering is foreign to many people in the Pacific region, though there are traditional practices that are similar in nature (National Youth Council of Fiji and UNDP, 2015). Volunteering can be formal through an organization such as an NGO or CSO or informal as through mutual help and collaborative activities between individual and communities.

##### **Key messages about volunteering**

The 2015 State of the World's Volunteerism Report (UNV, 2015) provides five key messages:

- i. Volunteerism can contribute to enhancing voice and participation, accountability, and responsiveness with a range of actors and at all levels;
- ii. The playing field of volunteerism must be level; there should be no barriers to volunteering based on age, sex, ability, or educational level;
- iii. Collaboration, alliances, and multi-stakeholder partnerships are essential for volunteerism to succeed;
- iv. Deepening understanding through research is critical; and
- v. Creating an enabling environment is the *sine qua non* for volunteerism to fully contribute to realizing any future sustainable development agenda.

A study by the NYC of Fiji and UNDP (2015) on youth volunteerism in Fiji found that while there is recognition of the value of volunteering, there is actually little information available about it. Data is lacking. Some enabling issues were identified:

- Volunteer infrastructure, including volunteer management capacity, to be strengthened to facilitate youth volunteerism.
- A common understanding of volunteerism to be developed through public dialogue.
- National policy development to support youth volunteering. NYPs do not mention volunteerism.
- Legal framework on volunteerism.
- The establishment of a National Volunteer Society. Fiji Volunteer Society was established in 2010.
- The need for regular and systematic research and mechanisms for measuring youth volunteering. The approach provided in the Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work (ILO, 2011) should be more widely adopted by organisations.

## 6. Climate change programming presents opportunities for participation

The PICTs need to give a high priority to climate change education for adolescents and youth in view of the likely impacts on development in the region. This involves the integration of environmental considerations into school curricula and education sector policies. Small island states need to incorporate disaster preparedness, response, and recovery into educational planning, and should examine the implications of climate change on training needs in areas such as agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and environmental management.

There are currently no statistics available on regional implementation coverage, quality, learning outcomes, or impact relating to climate change education. It is therefore unclear the extent to which PICTs are involved in its implementation and what progress has been made to date.

There are examples of effective youth networks that have been able to exert pressure on climate change policy debates. The *Pacific Climate Warriors* is a network of some 350 volunteers that actively campaigns on issues such as fossil fuels and climate change in the Pacific region. The *Pacific Youth Environment Network*, which was formed in 1999, is a network of young environmentalists (16-30-years-old) from the South Pacific region who are actively involved in the environment, sustainable development and youth projects in their own countries and further afield. Based in Fiji, Project Survival Pacific is a youth-led climate change and sustainable development movement working towards a more sustainable Pacific region. It provides a voice of youth in the region at international climate change meetings. It also educates and raises awareness about climate change.

## 7. The policy response

### Right to vote

Youth in most PICTs have the right to vote. The voting age ranges from 18 to 21 in PICTs. The PICTs with 18 years as the minimum voting age include Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, PNG, the Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Nauru has 20 as the minimum age. Samoa and Tonga have 21 as the minimum age. No data are available for FM, RMI, Niue, and Tokelau. No data are available for the extent to which young people take opportunities to participate in voting (e.g. youth voting rates in the region).

## National youth policies

NYPs in the region give some support for youth participation in their objectives and strategies (see Table 1). There is provision for participation at national, island, and community levels. Positive youth development is emphasized in some NYPs.

**Empowerment.** This includes skills building, opportunities to participate, and institution building.

**Education.** This includes literacy, legal awareness and legal education, human rights education, social values, and knowledge of government and democratic society.

**Structures.** There are policies supporting youth parliament, NYCs, district youth councils, youth networks, youth organizations, youth clubs, youth-serving organizations, and youth-friendly environments.

**Life skills development/Life skills promotion.** These include resilience, leadership skills, decision-making, critical thinking, creativity, self-discipline, and work ethic.

Themes include: climate change initiatives; environmental protection; natural resources and their use; arts culture, sports and recreation; peace building; and conflict prevention.

Much of what is included in policy statements lacks specificity and national action plans are probably needed for effective implementation. Details of how national policy on youth participation will be implemented are in short supply. The Fiji NYP is most specific in its intentions where it mentions the establishment of District Youth Councils as representative structures.

### iv) Adolescent and youth participation in policy development

Measuring adolescent and youth participation in health policy making and programming presents a significant challenge since useful and reliable metrics are hard to obtain. Better data are needed to obtain a more comprehensive picture of participatory approaches in the region. Some illustrative data is available through ICPD +10 reporting (UNFPA, 2017), which illustrates a range of participatory approaches (see table below).

Participation approach	PICTs
Involvement of youth in policy development	Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu
Holding of forums for youth to participate	Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands
Youth organizations serving as a channel for youth participation	Fiji, Kiribati, Palau
National Youth Council participates in policy development	Tonga
Involvement of youth in project development	Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Vanuatu

## 6.4 Discussion

There is a lack of data on youth participation. Statistical data on youth participation in all its manifestations appear to be close to non-existent in the Pacific region (and internationally). Thus tracking youth involvement and active citizenship is problematic as metrics are hard to come by either in terms of process or outcomes. There are no statistics available for assessing the quality of youth participation either. Some data are available on opportunities to participate at the country level. Policy mapping was possible, but not all youth policies for the region were accessible. It is not possible to measure any trends in participation in the region in the absence of baseline data.

It is clear that participation is complex and hard to measure objectively as there are multiple factors to consider relating to process, such as breadth and intensity of participation, modes of participation, meaningfulness, duration, and inclusiveness of participation. It appears to be easiest to measure at the programme level where there are clearly specified objectives and activities concerning youth participation and a monitoring and evaluation system in place to do so. In everyday life it would appear to be more difficult with a need to rely on self-reported behaviours and survey data. A great deal of resources could be invested in trying to measure phenomena that are hard to observe and that can be distorted through the act of observation. This means that countries need to be highly strategic in measuring youth participation. It is important to do since without such accountability, youth participation is likely to be undervalued and neglected.

In terms of process it is important to set standards for youth participation that can be monitored as the standards are implemented or not. The outcomes of youth participation can be measured, although there are likely to be attribution issues in some instances. The numbers of young people able to participate in formal structures such as NYCs, youth councils, and youth forums can also be measured. What this suggests is that a specific strategy needs to be developed to measure and monitor youth participation that is affordable, reliable, and routine. Statistical data should be complemented by qualitative data obtained through focus group discussions and similar participatory research methods. This may be an issue for the PYC and/or NYCs to consider taking forward.

It appears that the situation of limited opportunities for young people to participate in national and regional decision-making processes, as reported in *Urban Youth in the Pacific* (UNDP, 2011), is little changed. There is little in the way of documentary evidence to suggest that significant changes have taken place in the region in the period 2011-2015. Some local government structures have taken forward the issue of youth participation, but it is clear that much more needs to be done to make this more effective. Few examples were found in compiling this report. In the Solomon Islands, the Honiara Youth Council was established in 2011 to coincide with the launching of the Honiara Urban Youth Policy 2011-2015. However, it is not involved in decision-making, but serves to promote youth development in the city, coordinate activities, and disseminate information.

Youth Parliaments have been established in RMI, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, and Tonga. These have been well received. They provide a mechanism for young people to participate in national political forums and involve them in discussions concerning important national issues that affect them (UNDP, 2011). NGOs and CSOs are important in the region for promoting youth participation through advocacy and in programming.

The PYC provides an important regional platform for youth participation. This is key to efforts to improve both the quantity and quality of youth participation. This agenda is long-term and requires some cultural changes with regard to attitudes towards youth development.

NYCs are critically important for promoting youth participation at the national level. These organisations need further financial and technical support. They need to be assured a place at the policy table on issues relevant to youth populations. An assessment of their current capabilities would be useful in determining their capacity development needs. The data that are available on their websites are often out of date, but indicative of fundamental issues such as inadequate funding, lack of office space, inadequate levels of staffing, heavy reliance on volunteerism, capacity constraints, overstretch, lack of cooperation between youth groups and communities and government bodies, poor communications infrastructure, negative images of youth in the community, and low motivation and self-esteem. The issue of funding seems to be central and in need of a sustainable solution.

Capacity building for adolescent and youth participation is critically important. The skills, attitudes, and values that are needed for active participation in society need to be developed and practiced in adolescence and youth. Education can play an important role in this regard by enabling learners to participate in class through the use of participatory, learner-centred pedagogy. Citizenship education is also important for equipping young people with the knowledge and skills to participate as an active citizen through engagement in politics and community life. Life skills education can help young people develop a range of essential skills for active participation such as communication, critical thinking, cooperation, and self-management skills such as self-control. It appears from a wide reading of the available literature that these 21<sup>st</sup> century education approaches are generally at an early stage of conceptualization and implementation in the region.

## 6.5 Conclusions and recommendations

- 1. Build the evidence base.** Select indicators for tracking youth participation and put in place appropriate mechanisms for gathering data on a regular basis. Develop means of capturing, recording, and analysing outcome data from processes and projects/programmes involving youth participation. Conduct systematic research (quantitative and qualitative) at the regional and country levels to obtain better evidence on the extent to which youth are able to participate, the quality of such participation, and the outcomes. Ensure all statistical data is disaggregated by sex.
- 2. Build capacity for participation.** Invest in life skills education and citizenship education. Support participatory teaching and learning approaches in education. Mainstream active participation in all adolescent and youth development activities.
- 3. Enhance youth voice.** Develop new ways for adolescents and youth to express their voice (e.g. through national youth opinion surveys either on their development in general or on specific issues/themes such as gender equality or employability). NYCs have an important role to play in promoting youth voice and finding creative ways to do so.
- 4. Increase technical support and funding for NYCs.** NYCs can play an important leadership role in strengthening and expanding opportunities for youth participation as well as developing M&E frameworks to track progress. The supporting role of the PYC is critically important in this regard.
- 5. Expand local opportunities for youth to participate.** Provide greater support for establishing and maintaining representative structures for youth and establishing networks reaching marginalised groups of youth or groups in specific sectors. This includes support for youth centres in both urban and rural settings. Provide technical and financial support to create youth volunteerism opportunities.

- 6. Encourage youth activism in key issues that affect Pacific island sustainable development.** Support youth activism in the fields of climate change, sustainable development, and disaster risk reduction. Disability is another important field. Provide support to NGOs and CBOs to support youth activists and train youth leadership.
- 7. Engage and empower youth in all sustainable development activities.** Young people are powerful agents of change and must be engaged in any action around their development. Engagement should be supported with appropriate resources and time so that it is meaningful and respectful. Communities and families also play a key role in enabling and supporting adolescent development and they should also be respectfully engaged and consulted.
- 8. Ensure that NYPs promote civic and political participation.** NYPs should include a budget and M&E framework for youth participation.



STOP VIOLENCE  
AGAINST GIRLS AND WOMEN



STOP  
THE  
VIOLENCE



Against Girls and Women

# 7. PROTECTION AND SAFETY

## 7.1 Background

Protection is a key area for the development of adolescents and children. Those under the age of 18 are included within child protection frameworks. This involves a major proportion of the adolescent demographic (10-19) and an important segment of youth (15-17). The term child protection refers to preventing and responding to violence, exploitation, and abuse against children (UNICEF, 2008). It includes issues such as commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, child labour, and child marriage. Children subjected to violence, exploitation, abuse, and neglect are at risk of death, poor physical and mental health, education disadvantage, homelessness, vagrancy, and poor parenting skills later in life (UNICEF, 2008).

This means that adolescent and youth development frameworks need to include linkages with child protection laws, policies, interventions, and their monitoring systems. Protection efforts need to focus on preserving young people's rights, and bolstering and aligning programmes in adherence to national and international legal frameworks regarding vulnerable youth, conflict, and disaster response (USAID, 2012).

SOPY 2011 did not include a specific protection lens in its analysis. However, it did recognise the need for public policy to be more preventive in its approach rather than being reactive to youth problems. However, SOPY 2011 identified a number of key issues that are pertinent to protection. These include GBV. SOPY highlighted the prevalence of sexual abuse, sexual violence, and rape as major problems in several PICTs (e.g. the Cook Islands, Fiji, RMI, and Palau). The SPC (2015) reports that violence against girls and women is one of the most pervasive manifestations of gender inequality in the Pacific. The most widespread form relates to intimate partner violence and/or domestic violence. However, physical and sexual violence towards girls and women who are not related to the male perpetrators is also common.

Violence and crime are affecting an increasing number of young people in the region. A number of factors are considered to increase the likelihood of youth dissatisfaction and involvement in violence; unemployment and underemployment, inadequate education and skills, gender inequality, and the legacy of past violence. A lack of opportunities can block their transitions to adulthood. Other important adolescent protection issues for the region include child labour and child marriage.

## 7.2 Key findings

### i) Child labour

Child labour is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development (UNICEF, 2012). It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous, and harmful to children and which interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work. Child labour takes place when working children are too young to work by legal standards set by their country or when they are engaged in hazardous work, which is work that is potentially harmful to their physical, social, psychological, or educational development (UNICEF, 2012). The ILO Convention 138 establishes the age of 15 as the legal minimum age for employment.

Hazardous work is defined by ILO Convention 182 as one of the worst forms of child labour, which by its nature is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children (UNICEF, 2012).

In the Pacific region, child labour is to be found in various sectors of the economy: in the informal sector, in agriculture, forestry, marine and fishing, mining and quarrying, and domestic service.

Data on child labour in the Pacific region is elusive. No statistical data were obtained for the selected indicator. Child labour statistical databases (ILO and UNICEF) show that data are not available for most PICTs. The UNICEF survey-based database has statistics for Vanuatu only.<sup>32</sup> It is reported that 15 per cent of children aged 5-14 are involved in child labour (15 per cent boys and 16 per cent girls).

Despite the lack of available statistical data, child labour is recognised as an issue for adolescents in the Pacific region. The lack of awareness and knowledge on child labour militates against an effective response. Child labour is often deemed acceptable, especially considering cultural and familial obligations that children are required to fulfil in the region in contexts of poverty, slow economic growth, and a lack of decent work opportunity.

Data on child labour gathered by the United States Department of Labour (DoL) for the year 2016<sup>33</sup> (see Table 28), provide some indications as to its prevalence in the region. With the exceptions of the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau, there is evidence of child labour including the worst forms in many PICTs, embedded in the local economy.

**Table 28. Prevalence data from US Department of Labour (2016)**

PICT	Child labour situation
Cook Islands	No evidence of worst forms of child labour.
Fiji	Child labour is found in agriculture (e.g. coconuts, rice, tobacco, and sugarcane), fishing, domestic work, street work, garages, and recycling services.  Commercial sexual exploitation is reported, as well as involvement in drug trafficking.
Kiribati	Child labour is found in agriculture (e.g. toddy palm cutting), fisheries and seafaring, street vending, domestic work, and in construction/portering.
Niue	No evidence of worst forms of child labour.
Papua New Guinea	Child labour is found in agriculture (e.g. coffee, cocoa, copra, palm oil, and rubber plantations), domestic work, street work, and working in markets, including unloading and carrying heavy loads.  Commercial sexual exploitation is reported including working in bars, brothels, and nightclubs as well as use in the production of pornography.  Forced domestic work is also reported.
Samoa	Child labour is found in agriculture (e.g. coconut and fruit and nut gathering) and tending domestic animals.  It is also found in domestic work, street vending and garbage scavenging.

<sup>32</sup> [Data.unicef.org](https://data.unicef.org)

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/asia-pacific>.

PICT	Child labour situation
Solomon Islands	<p>Child labour is found in agriculture (palm oil plantations), industry (e.g. mining, construction, and brick making), domestic work, scavenging, and working in motels, casinos, and nightclubs.</p> <p>Commercial sexual exploitation is reported, and involvement in cultivation and trafficking of drugs.</p> <p>Forced domestic work is also reported.</p>
Tokelau	No evidence of worst forms of child labour.
Tonga	There is evidence of forced domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation.
Tuvalu	Lack of data.
Vanuatu	<p>Child labour is found in agriculture (e.g. forestry and farming) and street vending.</p> <p>There is evidence of commercial sexual exploitation.</p>

The ILO's Tackling Child Labour through Education project has contributed to raising the visibility of the issue. It has supported a number of assessments of child labour in the region. In PNG, two target groups were investigated in Port Moresby (ILO, 2011). These were children aged 12-17 who were involved in commercial sexual exploitation and who were working on the streets. The study showed that adolescents from different sectors of the community are engaged in the worst forms of child labour, including child prostitution, illicit activities, and hazardous work. They are also working below the minimum age. Many of these working children are out of school or have never been to school. Children working on the streets have different types of work and are likely to be school dropouts or have never been to school. They are clearly visible on the street and are exposed to many risks and hazards.

In a study of child labour in Fiji, it was found that children, both male and female, were engaged in prostitution (ILO, 2010). The majority had started sex work between the ages of 15-16, but some had begun as early as 10. Some children below the age of 18 were involved in drug trafficking and begging. Other children were found to be involved in hazardous work such as collecting and handling scrap metals and chemicals, carrying heavy loads, scavenging, working very long hours, and subjected to psychological abuse. Contributory factors include:

- School drop out. Most drop outs were in the 15-17 age range.
- Poverty, parental or family neglect, and other social problems.
- The need for cash for personal wants.

Currently, governments in the Pacific region often lack the capacity at the national, regional, and local levels as well as the required legislation to implement the actions necessary for its successful elimination. Problems with the availability of data make it difficult to track progress. Nevertheless, some progress can be observed in the region. These include the development of national action plans (NAPs) to eliminate child labour. The PNG NAP includes provisions for improving the knowledge base, educational opportunities for those engaging in and withdrawn from child labour, alternative employment opportunities, social support, protection services for those at risk and victims of child labour, and more effective enforcement and M&E systems.

Progress towards eliminating child labour will depend to a great extent on countries taking ownership of the issue and developing NAPs that are in turn effectively implemented. The next few years will likely provide more evidence of successful interventions in the region.

The DoL, in its published data on the worst forms of child labour in Asia and the Pacific region, analyses PICT responses to the issue<sup>34</sup> (see Table 29). These are tabulated below in terms of laws, policies, and programmes. These data indicate the complexity of eliminating child labour. Laws may contain loopholes. Enforcement of laws is another wide-ranging issue. Policy frameworks vary in the focus they give to eliminating child labour. As noted above, the NAP is a key instrument. Most countries have programmes, but whether these are sufficient to bring about changes in child protection is an open question. The DoL report illustrates how data on laws, policies and programmes can support basic monitoring of the regional and national responses to child labour.

**Table 29. Responses to eliminate child labour (US DoL, 2016)**

PICT	Laws	Policies	Social Programmes
<b>Cook Islands</b>	Employment Relations Act prohibits children younger than 13 from working  Laws do not prohibit child commercial sexual exploitation  ILO Conventions 138 and 182 not ratified	Policy on child labour, including worst forms	No programmes (no need)
<b>Fiji</b>	Government has established laws and regulations related to child labour, including its worst forms  There are gaps in enforcement	Government has policies related to child labour, including its worst forms  <i>National Plan of Action to Eradicate Trafficking in Persons and Child Trafficking</i>  <i>5 Year Strategic Plan for Combating Child Labour (2016)</i> - not approved	Social programmes include: <i>Tackling Child Labour through Education Project (2015-2017)</i> , <i>Safety Net Project</i> (rehabilitation services for female victims of commercial sexual exploitation under the age of 18)  Toll-free helpline for children
<b>Kiribati</b>	Government has established laws and regulations related to child labour, including its worst forms  There are gaps (e.g. identification of hazardous work that is prohibited for children)  There are gaps in enforcement	Government has policies related to child labour, including its worst forms  No policy to eliminate worst forms of child labour	Social programmes include: <i>Hotlines, SAFENET, and Pacific Sub-Regional Child Labour and Trafficking Programme</i> (ILO supported)

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/resources/reports/child-labor/asia-pacific>.

PICT	Laws	Policies	Social Programmes
<b>Niue</b>	<p>No law concerning minimum age for work or minimum age for hazardous work</p> <p>Laws do not prohibit child commercial sexual exploitation</p> <p>ILO Conventions 138 and 182 not ratified</p>	No policies	No programmes (no need)
<b>Papua New Guinea</b>	<p>Government has established laws and regulations related to child labour, including its worst forms</p> <p>There are gaps in the legal framework to protect children from child labour</p> <p>There are gaps in enforcement</p>	<p>Government has policies related to child labour, including its worst forms</p> <p><i>National Action Plan to Eliminate Child Labour in Papua New Guinea</i></p> <p><i>Papua New Guinea Trafficking in Persons National Action Plan (2015-2020)</i></p>	No evidence of programmes specifically designed to eliminate child labour
<b>Samoa</b>	<p>Government has established laws and regulations related to child labour, including its worst forms</p> <p>There are gaps in the legal framework to protect children from child labour</p> <p>There are gaps in enforcement</p>	Government has policies related to child labour, including its worst forms	Programmes include: <i>Samoa Decent Work Country Programme (2013-16)</i> – ILO supported, <i>Pacific Sub-Regional Child Labour and Trafficking Programme</i> – ILO supported
<b>Solomon Islands</b>	<p>Government has established laws and regulations related to child labour, including its worst forms</p> <p>There are gaps in the legal framework to protect children from child labour</p> <p>There are gaps in enforcement</p>	<p>Government has policies related to child labour, including its worst forms</p> <p>Policies include: <i>National Action Plan on Human Trafficking and People Smuggling (2015-2020)</i></p> <p>No policy on other worst forms of child labour</p>	Programmes include: <i>Protecting Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse through Empowerment and Cooperation</i> (EU funded and implemented by Save the Children)

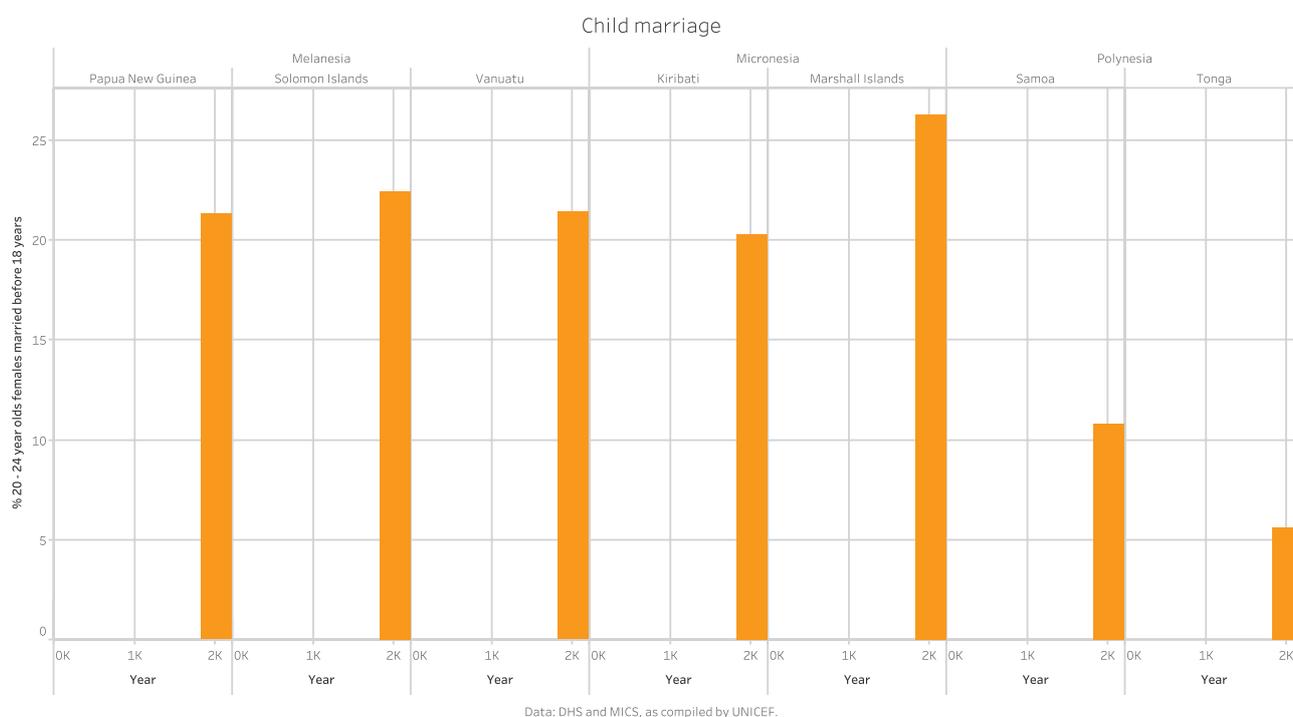
PICT	Laws	Policies	Social Programmes
<b>Tokelau</b>	<p>No law concerning minimum age for work or minimum age for hazardous work</p> <p>ILO Conventions 138 and 182 not ratified</p>	No specific policy on the elimination of child labour	No programmes (no need)
<b>Tonga</b>	<p>Government has established laws and regulations related to child labour, including its worst forms</p> <p>There are gaps in the legal framework to protect children from child labour</p> <p>ILO Conventions 138 and 182 not ratified</p>		No programmes
<b>Tuvalu</b>	<p>Government has established laws and regulations related to child labour, including its worst forms</p> <p>There are gaps in the legal framework to protect children from child labour</p> <p>There are gaps in enforcement</p> <p>ILO Conventions 138 and 182 not ratified</p>	No specific child labour elimination policy	Social Programmes include: <i>Decent Work Country Programme</i> (ILO-supported)
<b>Vanuatu</b>	<p>Government has established laws and regulations related to child labour, including its worst forms</p> <p>There are gaps in the legal framework to protect children from child labour</p> <p>There are gaps in enforcement</p> <p>ILO Convention 138 not ratified</p>	Policies include: <i>Vanuatu National Child Protection Policy (2016-2026)</i>	No programmes to eliminate or prevent child labour

## ii) Child marriage

Child marriage is defined as marriage before the age of 18 and is recognized in international legal instruments to be a violation of the child's human rights (UNICEF, 2012). From a youth perspective, child marriage appears to be a neglected protection issue in the Pacific region. Poorer health and educational outcomes, higher risk of violence and abuse, persistent poverty, and missed opportunities for empowerment are some of the main consequences of marrying too young (Inter-Parliamentary Union and WHO, 2015). Girls married at a young age are especially vulnerable to sexual and reproductive health problems, with potentially life-threatening consequences.

The highest rates are recorded in RMI (more than 25 per cent of 20-24-year-olds married before the age of 18), with Kiribati, PNG, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu all recording more than 20 per cent (see Figure 17). There is considerable variation across the region with Tuvalu and Tonga recording much lower rates. Nevertheless, the data strongly suggest that this should be an important issue for youth policy makers and programmers. Data availability issues preclude the identification of trends from 2005-2015.

**Figure 17. Child marriage**



A study conducted by Plan International Australia (2014) on child marriage in the Asia-Pacific region included PNG as a case study. It found that with limited available data, it is difficult to gain a clear picture of the prevalence of child marriage. Most marriages are not registered with the state and instead are approved according to local custom. In both rural and urban areas men and women are often considered husband and wife as soon as they begin to live together. In some rural areas, girls are frequently married as young as 13-years-old. Child marriages are reportedly arranged by parents, other family members, or by village chiefs on behalf of their families. Exploitative forms of marriage are a problem in areas where extractive industries operate, as girls are often sold as wives to logging and mining workers.

**Table 30. Child marriage rates for PICTs (Inter-Parliamentary Union and WHO, 2015)**

Country	Child marriage rate by 15 (%)	Child marriage rate by 18 (%)
Kiribati	3 (2009)	20 (2009)
Marshall Islands	6 (2007)	26 (2007)
Micronesia	N/A	N/A
Nauru	2 (2007)	27 (2007)
Palau	N/A	N/A
Papua New Guinea	3	21
Samoa	N/A (2006)	N/A (2006)
Solomon Islands	3 (2007)	22 (2007)
Tonga	N/A	6 (2012)
Tuvalu	0 (2007)	10 (2007)
Vanuatu	3 (2013)	21 (2013)

Setting the legal age of marriage at 18, for boys and girls is one of the first elements to be addressed by countries in the Pacific region. A 2015 Inter-Parliamentary Union and WHO study of legislation on the age of marriage included 11 PICTs (see Table 31). These show that there is an age range from 16 to 21 for girls and 18 to 21 for boys. In a number of PICTs girls may marry earlier than boys without any third party consent. When exceptions to the legal age of marriage are taken into account, the age is often as low as 14 for girls in PNG and 15 in the Solomon Islands and Tonga for both girls and boys.

**Table 31. Legislation on age of marriage in 11 PICTs (Inter-Parliamentary Union and WHO 2015)**

Country	Legal age of marriage with no third-party consent required	Exceptions to the legal age of marriage - in special circumstances with third party consent required
Kiribati	21 for girls and boys	18 with parental consent or with a licence to marry provided by a minister
Marshall Islands	18 for girls and boys	16 with the consent of a parent or guardian
Micronesia	18 for girls and boys (states of Kosrae, Chuuk, and Pohnpei)	16 for girls with the consent of either parent (states of Kosrae, Chuuk, and Pohnpei)  No age limit in the case of customary marriages (states of Chuuk and Pohnpei)
Nauru	16 for girls and 18 for boys	Under 16 for girls and under 18 for boys, with parental consent
Palau	No minimum legal age for marriages between Palauan citizens  18 for girls and boys if one or both is a non-citizen	16 for girls who are non-citizens with parental or guardian consent

Country	Legal age of marriage with no third-party consent required	Exceptions to the legal age of marriage - in special circumstances with third party consent required
Papua New Guinea	16 for girls and 18 for boys	14 for girls and 16 for boys with court order
Samoa	19 for girls and 21 for boys	16 for girls and 18 for boys with parental or guardian consent
Solomon Islands	18 for girls and boys	15 for girls and boys with the father's consent if possible, or the mother's, or guardian's, or a judge's/magistrate's consent
Tonga	18 for girls and boys	15 with parental or guardian consent
Tuvalu	21 for girls and boys	16 with the father's consent if possible, or the mother's, guardian's, or a Registrar-General's consent
Vanuatu	21 for girls and boys	16 for girls and 18 for boys with parental consent

### iii) Gender-based violence

GBV is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed gender differences between males and females (UNICEF, 2012). GBV has a greater impact on girls and women (UNICEF, 2012). Examples of GBV include sexual exploitation and abuse, honour killing, domestic or intimate partner violence, child marriage, and deprivation of inheritance or property (IASC, 2005).

Many Pacific cultures condone violence against women and girls; physical, sexual, and emotional violence is common (SPC, 2013). In the Cook Islands it is considered discipline rather than violence (UNICEF, 2015). There is a culture of silence around intimate partner violence in the region. For example, in the Solomon Islands, 70 per cent of women tell nobody about partner violence (ADB, 2016).

Reliable data on GBV are notoriously difficult to obtain. Attempts to obtain data on the 15-24-year-old demographic were unsuccessful in relation to the indicator selected. Data were obtained for prevalence estimates of lifetime exposure to intimate partner violence of women 15-49-years-old. The data from 2000-2010 were obtained from population-based surveys (WHO, 2014) using a standardized methodology. They indicate very high levels of GBV experienced by women in Kiribati (68 per cent of women), Fiji, the Solomon Islands (64 per cent), and Vanuatu (60 per cent), and somewhat lower rates in Samoa and Tonga (46 and 40 per cent respectively). UNICEF (2015) reports that in the Cook Islands, 44 per cent of young men (15-24) having sex with men had experienced forced sex in the last six months; overall 25 per cent of 15-24-year-olds had experienced forced sex.

There are multiple factors involved. Risk factors for men as perpetrators included: low levels of education, sexual abuse, harmful use of alcohol, acceptance of violence, and infidelity. For women as victims, the risk factors include young age, low levels of education, intra-parental violence, harmful use of alcohol, and acceptance of violence.

Countries in the Pacific region are committed to eliminating GBV by enacting legislation and providing services, including legal support to survivors and the provision of shelters (ADB, 2016). The response appears to be primarily focused in the health sector although there is also involvement of police and other authorities. The extent to which adolescents and youth are involved is not clear.

According to UNICEF (2015, the barriers to eliminating GBV against young people include:

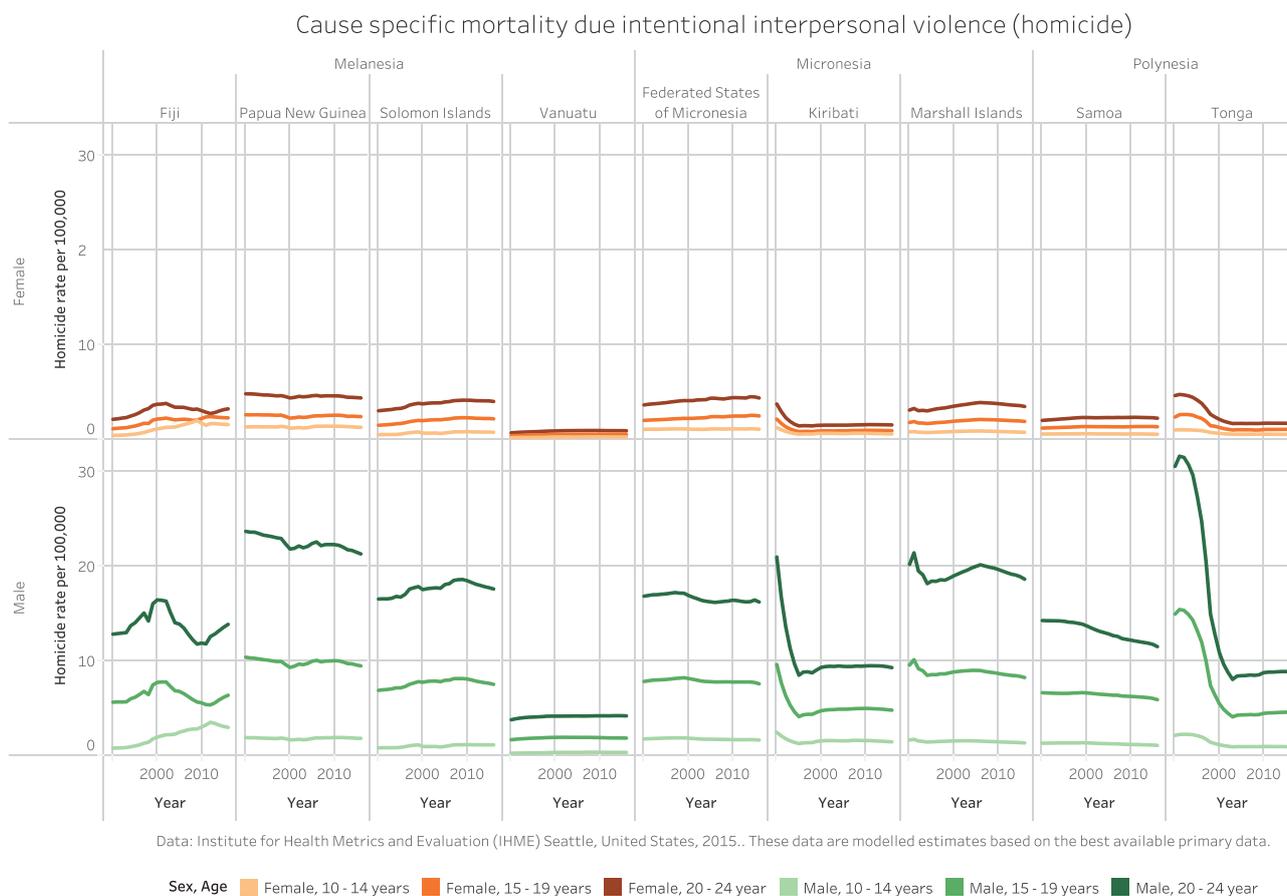
- Social norms and culturally accepted practices, community mind-sets;
- Limited resources;
- Lack of data collection and data sharing, lack of reliable and available data, storage of child protection data;
- Lack of technical skills capacity and weak institutions;
- Lack of social services including those dedicated to ending GBV;
- Lack of legal support; and
- Limited collaboration, coordination, and partnerships.

#### iv) Homicide and violence

Homicide rates are an indicator of violence in society (see figure 18). High levels of male homicide are to be found scattered across the region, with particularly high rates in PNG. High rates are also found in Fiji, the Solomon Islands, FSM, and RMI. Kiribati and Tonga have both experienced sharp drops in homicide rates, particularly for the 20-24 age group.

The risk of homicide increases progressively from 10-14, 15-19, and 20-24. This is also the case for females. Low levels of female homicide are reported in most of the PICTs with higher levels in FSM, RMI, PNG, and the Solomon Islands. Tonga has experienced a decline in female homicide rates.

**Figure 18. Homicide (10-24)**



Data on lifetime experiences with violence since the age of 15 are available for most of the PICTs. We have already seen that reported intimate partner physical and/or sexual violence is particularly high (more than 50 per cent of women) in Kiribati, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Emotional violence by an intimate partner is especially high in Fiji, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu (more than 50 per cent of women).

According to ADB statistics (2016), physical violence by someone other than an intimate partner is particularly high in Tonga (68 per cent), while sexual violence by someone other than an intimate partner is highest in Nauru (47 per cent). The main perpetrators of physical violence in Tonga are fathers and teachers, with corporal punishment of adolescents a common form of discipline in families and schools. Experiences with violence during the past 12 months are highest in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands (more than 40 per cent for physical/sexual and emotional violence). Data are not available for PNG, Tokelau, and Tuvalu.

### **Cyber-bullying and on-line security**

The way that children use the Internet may put them at risk. A study by the Internet Society on On-line Security for Children in the Asia Pacific Region (2017) found three emerging challenges. The first concerns the types of content that children create and share with others. The types of content children encounter on-line may be inappropriate, potentially dangerous, and illegal, such as websites that promote self-harm, hate speech, and pornography. The second involves risks that range from cyber-bullying, sexting, and fraudulent transactions, to privacy and security concerns. Internet addiction is also becoming a concern for many countries. The third concerns interacting with individuals, especially on social media networks and in chat rooms, which can expose children to risks such as on-line grooming and arranging to meet with potentially or actually abusive strangers.

PICTs tend to have moderate Internet penetration and typically have limited resources at their disposal to address on-line protection of children. In these countries, the public sector has taken initiatives to address child on-line safety issues, but less rigorously than those with high Internet penetration (Internet Society, 2017). UNICEF has been working in these countries to address child on-line safety, mainly to support research that will guide policymaking and help raise awareness on the issues.

### **Juvenile Justice: adolescents and youth in prison**

Some PICTs are incarcerating young people under the age of 18. The numbers are small and overwhelmingly male. The highest percentage of young juvenile prisoners is in Tonga (9 per cent), followed by the Solomon Islands, and Palau (5.6 and 5 per cent respectively). Nine PICTs have juveniles incarcerated (see Table 32).

**Table 32. Juveniles incarcerated as a proportion of total prison population (World Prison Brief Data)<sup>35</sup>**

PIC	Prison population (Number)	% female	Young prisoners (% of prison population)- under 18
Cook Islands	48 (2016)	8.3 (2016)	3.1 (2013)
Fiji	1,423 (2016)	3.1 (2014)	0.7 (2013)
Kiribati	129 (2016)	0.7 (2016)	0 (2014)
Marshall Islands	35 (2014)	0.0 (2014)	0 (2014)
Micronesia	132 (2014)	0.0 (2014)	0.9 (2013)
Nauru	14 (2014)	7.1 (2014)	0 (2012)
Niue	N/A	N/A	N/A
Palau	343 (2015)	4.2 (2015)	5.6 (2014)
Papua New Guinea	4,945 (2016)	5.0 (2014)	3.9 (2014)
Samoa	500 (estimate, 2016)	6.0 (2016)	5 (2016)
Solomon Islands	435 (2016)	1.4 (2016)	5.9 (2014)
Tokelau	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tonga	176 (2014)	4.5 (2014)	9.7 (2014)
Tuvalu	11 (2014)	0.0 (2014)	0 (2014)
Vanuatu	192 (2016)	1.0 (2015)	0.5 (2016)

## Policy response

### National youth policy

Some protection issues are included in available NYPs (see Table 1). These show a considerable range of policy responses to issues that require a protection response of some sort. It is notable that child labour, child marriage, and GBV are not included.

**Protection issues** include physical and psychological abuse.

**Target populations** include at risk youth, vulnerable youth, unemployed, street people, school dropouts, incarcerated, etc., youth offenders, and victims of crime.

**Life skills.** These include the development of resilience and problem solving.

### Strategies include:

- Targeted programmes (community, church, sport, etc.);
- Rehabilitation programmes;
- Active engagement;
- Provision of support services (information, legal, etc.);
- Empowerment training;
- Networking;
- Advocacy;
- Counselling;

<sup>35</sup> www.prisonestudies.org

- Community education;
- Engagement with police; and
- Legal education.

A significant concern is juvenile justice, crime, and conflict with the law. This is an important area of social policy that has been under-represented in previous regional reports and merits more detailed analysis in its own right. Some attention is being paid to child marriage, underage alcohol consumption, and sex. There is a strong emphasis on legal aspects of protection in the policies obtained.

## 7.3 Discussion

Statistics regarding protection issues are elusive. Some thematic areas have received more attention than others. Statistical data on GBV have been obtained through national surveys based on international standards. These gather data on the percentage of the population who have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence committed by an intimate partner or others. These data reflect lifetime experience (e.g. 15-49, 15-64, or 18-64) and are not disaggregated by age groupings such as youth.

Protection is needed for adolescents, in particular in relation to issues such as child marriage, GBV, and crime. Available data indicates that child labour is an issue in PICTs across the region; better statistical data is needed for individual PICTs. Child marriage is prevalent in the region, although there are wide variations among PICTs in rates by the ages of 15 and 18. The highest rates are recorded in RMI. Robust GBV data is notoriously difficult to obtain, particularly for youth. Available data suggests very high levels of GBV in the region. Homicide through violence is a related issue. There are high levels of male homicide for 20-24-year-old males in some PICTs, especially PNG, but also in Fiji, the Solomon Islands, FSM, and RMI. Juvenile justice is another issue, with some PICTs incarcerating small numbers of under-18-year-olds. Young prisoners are almost 10 per cent of the prison population in Tonga.

There is a need to incorporate child protection issues in adolescent and youth development policies and strategies. This includes making the issues more visible and developing strong linkages with child protection systems for vulnerable and at risk populations, in the 10-18 age group in particular.

## 7.4 Conclusions and recommendations

- 1. Invest in better data systems.** Strengthen child protection M&E systems. Conduct systematic research (quantitative and qualitative) at the regional and the country levels to obtain better evidence on the extent to which adolescents and youth need and are able to benefit from protection interventions.
- 2. Update NYPs** as well as relevant sectoral policies to incorporate key protection issues such as child labour, child marriage, GBV, and sexual harassment. Ensure NYPs include all relevant protection issues and a budget and M&E framework.
- 3. Strengthen the child protection and technological capacity of law enforcement agencies.** Strengthen linkages with national child protection systems in NYPs and with national youth organisations.

4. **Make digital citizenship a priority in on-line child protection policies.** Digital skills, including safety on-line, must be taught from the earliest age possible. In practice, for today's environment, this means from early primary (or elementary) school age. Engage with children to develop robust research on child on-line safety and integrate findings in child protection systems. Develop consistent indicators to assess and monitor child on-line safety. Develop a coordinated strategy for different actors to raise awareness and provide education on child on-line safety. This includes engaging with and empowering parents, guardians, teachers, and other authority figures with whom young people regularly interact.
5. **Build the capacity of national youth organisations and NGOs to enable youth participation** in support of national legislation, policies, and programmes to address GBV, child marriage, child labour, violence, and crime/juvenile justice. Encourage youth activism to eliminate child labour, child marriage, and GBV.
6. **Develop youth capabilities to enhance protection efforts.** Life skills development is needed from an early age to support personal empowerment among youth through the building of resilience, self-esteem, negotiation skills, communication skills, critical thinking, and problem solving.





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## 8. SUMMARY AND KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### 8.1 Summary of key issues by domain

#### A. Health and wellbeing

- i) **Progress has been limited in improving health outcomes.** Adolescent and youth in the Pacific have complex and poor health outcomes. Mortality rates are high. There is a very large burden of disease to which NCDs made a large contribution. Mental health is an emerging problem and suicide rates are among the highest in the world. SRH continues to be important. STIs are common and teenage motherhood is common, particularly in rural and remote communities.
- ii) **There are significant health risks with implications for wellbeing over the life course.** Overweight and obesity are increasingly common among adolescents and youth and are emerging as a serious problem for young women. Substance abuse is a serious problem, particularly alcohol. Tobacco use is another common health risk, most common among young men (20-24).
- iii) **The current response to adolescent and youth health needs is inadequate.** More investment is needed in SHN, sexuality education, health promotion activities, and accessible, quality adolescent- and youth-friendly services. Better data, analysis, and use of findings are also required.

#### B. Education and learning

- i) **Educational preparation of adolescents and youth for the world of work and adult life in general is inadequate.** Greater attention needs to be given to ensuring the relevance of education curricula to the needs of Pacific island sustainable development. Some important progress has been made in climate change education and CSE, but teaching and learning in these thematic areas need to be strengthened. Particular attention needs to be given to SHN to help address emerging health issues. Education for employability and the world of work is critical. This includes development of TVET to continue to increase enrolments, improve skills development, and enhance its acceptability. Entrepreneurship and business education need to be strengthened. Citizenship education is another area that needs investment across the region.
- ii) **There is a need to focus more on improving the quality of education and in particular developing the skills of young people for adult life.** Young people need better capabilities and more opportunities to acquire skills. There is a need to enhance the teaching and learning of life skills, including core work skills. There is also a need to put in place a mechanism to assess learning outcomes at the post-primary level across the region. Currently none exists. This should assess skills development (e.g. problem solving and critical thinking).

- iii) **Investment in education for adolescents and youth needs to focus on building capabilities and expanding opportunities to learn for all.** This entails universalising basic education across the region and expanding participation in post-basic education, including tertiary education. This also means diversifying educational delivery to include second chance education for those who drop out. It involves ensuring that inclusive education is effective for young people with disabilities. It also includes the promotion of gender equality in all areas of education, including TVET and STEM.

## C. Employment and employability

- i) **Youth unemployment is a chronic and complex problem that requires a multi-sectoral response.** The lack of adequate preparation for the world of work, including TVET skills, is only a part of the problem. PICTs need to be better at putting in place enabling environments to promote the creation of jobs and decent work. A raft of responses is required to help young people find decent work. These include a general education that is more geared to the development of employable skills and attitudes, quality TVET, information and counselling services, promotion of migration for work opportunities in the region, and support for youth entrepreneurship and small businesses.
- ii) **More comprehensive data on youth employment and unemployment are required.** Data is generally elusive in this regard. It would be helpful to have better data that are gender and disability disaggregated on the demand for and supply of skills in the labour market. TVET tracer studies, the situation of NEETs, and school to work transition studies are also needed.
- iii) **Enhance the role of youth organisations across the region in the world of work.** Youth organisations at national and community levels can play an important role in better preparing young people for the world of work. These can provide services such as training, counselling, support services, and job matching. They can also engage in advocacy and policy dialogue with governments and the business sector as well as giving youth, including marginalised youth such as those with disabilities, a voice on the world of work.

## D Civic and political participation

- i) **Enhanced opportunities for adolescent and youth participation are needed across the region, across sectors.** Current opportunities for youth participation through the PYC, NYCs, various youth organisations and networks, NGOs, and CBOs provide proof of concept of the value of active youth engagement in sustainable development in the Pacific region. This needs to embrace all relevant sectors that involve adolescent and youth development. In particular, this means education, health, employment and livelihoods, and the environment/ climate change. Support needs to be given to efforts to promote volunteering. More resources need to be provided to NYCs as umbrella organisations for supporting youth participation. Gender equality needs to be actively promoted and monitored in youth participation. Statistics urgently need to be obtained for selected indicators to measure the quantity and quality of youth participation.
- ii) **Skills for participation need to be enhanced among young people.** There appears to be little focused attention paid to capability development for participation. Participation skills need to be acquired from an early age in basic education, including the use of participatory teaching methods and life skills education. Citizenship education is important for both civic and political participation. This should include human rights education, voter education, and legal education. Leadership training is an important field for youth participation. Generally, in all education and training, there needs to be a strong emphasis on building competencies for active participation in work and society.

- iii) **Enhance opportunities for the participation of marginalized youth and develop case studies for wider dissemination among Pacific youth.** Opportunities already exist to some extent. There is a need to enhance targeted involvement of youth at risk/marginalised youth in participatory development activities. It would be helpful for documenting lessons learned and for advocacy purposes if case studies could be developed showcasing the active participation of marginalised youth (e.g. rural and remote island youth, youth with disabilities) in key areas of sustainable development such as environmental protection, peace building and conflict prevention, climate change initiatives, disaster risk reduction, health promotion, and human rights promotion.

## E. Protection

- i) **There is a need to include a stronger protection dimension in adolescent and youth policies and strategies.** Some NYPs already include protection issues. These primarily relate to youth at risk (unemployed, street people, school drop outs) and youth justice (the victims of crime and those incarcerated). A consistent regional approach is lacking. Some key issues are not yet present in NYPs such as GBV, trafficking and exploitation, bullying and violence, child labour, and child marriage.
- ii) **Gender-based violence is a significant protection issue for the region that needs a stronger youth focus.** Better age-disaggregated data are needed on GBV in the region. A stronger focus is needed on the adolescent and youth demographic with a view to changing attitudes and behaviours that enable GBV to take place. This includes CSE and education to address violent and harmful masculinity. Youth activism could be harnessed to prevent GBV through advocacy efforts aimed at changing societal attitudes towards power, violence, and abuse in relationships. Youth-friendly services need to be widely available for the victims of GBV.
- iii) **Youth capabilities need to be developed to enhance protection efforts.** Life skills development is needed from an early age to support personal empowerment among youth through the building of resilience, self-esteem, negotiation skills, communication skills, critical thinking, and problem solving.

## 8.2 Overarching recommendations

### 1. Improve data collection and analysis of adolescents and youth by:

- Adopting a set of core indicators that can be used to monitor, report on, and track progress of youth development across the Pacific region;
- Developing national institutional capacity to obtain disaggregated data and conduct trend analysis;
- Evaluating the performance and outcomes of NYP implementation; and
- Conducting policy-relevant research, including youth-led research, in priority areas for adolescent and youth development.

## **2. Improve the governance of youth by:**

- Strengthening evidence-based NYP making and related planning, including ensuring that all NYPs have costed, time-bound action plans, with robust M&E frameworks; and
- Strengthening the capacity of NYCs in supporting the creation of opportunities for the inclusive and meaningful participation of youth in policy making and programming; and
- Taking concrete steps to strengthen child protection systems and eliminate child labour, child marriage, and GBV as well as addressing emerging issues such as on-line safety and cyber-bullying.

## **3. Mobilise resources for adolescents and youth through:**

- Ensuring that all NYPs and action plans are clearly backed by adequate dedicated resources and budgets;
- Allocating additional resources to priority policy areas for adolescents and youth such as capacity building, establishing and expanding youth-friendly services (e.g. in health and employment), and creating opportunities for participation at the local and national level; and
- Allocating enhanced resources for research and evaluation regarding adolescent and youth priority issues such as employment in decent work, civic participation, skills development, and wellbeing.



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# ANNEX 1



## National youth policies and education

PICT	Policy	Key strategies on education for youth
<b>Cook Islands</b>	National Youth Policy 2015-20	<p><b>Education and economic opportunities</b></p> <p>Providing economic, education, and lifelong learning opportunities for young people.</p> <p>Ensure that young Cook Islanders gain the necessary knowledge and skills to equip them for the career and lifestyle of their choice.</p> <p>Strengthen academic and career guidance counselling services to ensure young people are informed of educational and employment opportunities available.</p> <p>Improve access to support, guidance, counselling services, and information to young people, especially those living in the Pa Enea.</p> <p>Strengthen and promote programmes that will assist young people transitioning into employment opportunities after school.</p> <p>Promote business development and entrepreneurship for young people.</p> <p>Ensure young Cook Islanders develop financial skills to manage their personal finances and responsibilities.</p>
<b>Fiji</b>	National Youth Policy 2011	<p><b>Life skills training</b></p> <p>Support and encourage life skills initiatives that will complement and enhance the abilities and competencies of youths.</p>

PICT	Policy	Key strategies on education for youth
FSM	National Youth Policy 2004	<p><b>To encourage on-going learning through non-formal and informal education</b></p> <p>Conduct training programmes in cultural/traditional preservation, the first of which is to begin within the first year of acceptance of the National Youth Policy.</p> <p>Every state to conduct annual training programmes on self-esteem development.</p> <p>Within five years, a 15 per cent increase in young people who are computer literate by teaching computer skills and enabling young people to enter the workforce.</p> <p>Educate young people in small business development as well as income-generating activities.</p>
Kiribati	National Youth Policy 2011-2015	<p><b>To provide young people with opportunities to develop vocational skills and life skills to enable them to become responsible, self-reliant, and contributing members of the community</b></p> <p>Provide education and/or skills development for children and young people at risk or living with disabilities, particularly for secondary level education.</p> <p>Raise awareness for parents and guardians to understand adolescent development and the importance of education and their roles in supporting and guiding young people appropriately.</p> <p>Provide student support services to offer career counselling, vocational guidance and work experience programmes for students.</p> <p>Expand formal school curricula to provide relevant learning for young people, including non-formal options for skills development at primary and junior secondary level education, life skills education, cultural heritage, and promoting use of information technology.</p> <p>Expand and strengthen the range of vocational training centres focusing on specialized areas, including for example marketing for handicrafts, for young women and men, outside of the formal education system.</p> <p>Expand community learning centres to provide a wider range of training for youth, and greater access to information by establishing libraries.</p>

PICT	Policy	Key strategies on education for youth
Nauru	National Youth Policy 2008-2015	<p><b>Develop skills and capacity of young people for self-sustenance</b></p> <p>Develop and implement vocational, formal and informal training schemes for skills development including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Leadership programmes;</li> <li>▪ Vocational and life skills;</li> <li>▪ Sports and literacy for young adults; and</li> <li>▪ Develop links with private sector, NGOs, and Government for skills development.</li> </ul> <p><b>Student support</b></p> <p>Incentives for students to encourage young people to stay in school. Encourage school leavers to continue with higher education and training (i.e. USP, vocational training)</p>
Niue	National Youth Policy 2009-2013	<p><b>Skill building and vocational training introduced to contribute to career options and enhance employable skills</b></p> <p>Increase utilisation of regional TVET programmes.</p> <p>Increase awareness of the Vocational Foundation Programme (VFP) at schools (primary and secondary) and in the community, with the goal of having the community take ownership of the programme.</p> <p>Use community-based TVET programmes for tertiary/work transition, preparing young people leaving school to identify and strengthen interests and to assist in carving definite career pathways in government, NGOs, and the private sector.</p> <p>Coordinate career expo day in collaboration with NGOs and government departments.</p> <p>Establish a system to disseminate information on scholarships and study opportunities abroad.</p>
Palau (1)	National Youth Policy	<p><b>Develop strategies to maximize attendance in school</b></p> <p>Strengthen strategies for high school graduates to be adequately prepared to enter college or the workforce.</p> <p>Strengthen character building and promote nationalism and patriotism.</p>

PICT	Policy	Key strategies on education for youth
Palau (2)	National Youth Policy (2016-2021)	<b>Create a productive workforce that can make a sustainable contribution to Palau's economic development</b>
Solomon Islands	National Youth Policy and Strategic Plan of Action 2010-2015	<b>Improved and equitable access to education, training, and employment for young women and men</b> Actively support gender equitable access to education.
Tuvalu	National Youth Policy (2005-2010)	<b>More skilled people</b> Establish practical programmes that provide opportunities for young people to successfully gain technical and vocational skills. Conduct on-going computer training programmes. Conduct regular leadership, management, and life skills training programmes on various subject areas including HIV/AIDS. Conduct communication skills training. Provide business management training once a year. Provide on-going training in 10 areas of motor mechanics, electrical, and plumbing. Establish small business and domestic development centre.

PICT	Policy	Key strategies on education for youth
Vanuatu	Vanuatu National Development Policy 2012-2022 and Strategic Plan of Action 2012-2015	<p><b>Provision of educational opportunities for youth</b></p> <p>Expand enrolment and significantly increase the percentage of students transitioning from primary to secondary education and from secondary to tertiary levels.</p> <p>Emphasize quality and relevance of education as well as accessibility and equity.</p> <p>Provide quality education to enhance creativity, self development, and prospects for self and gainful employment.</p> <p>Provide vocational training for youth to make them self-reliant and employable citizens.</p> <p>Make TVET a separate division within the MoY to implement and monitor national TVET policy.</p> <p>Support business training.</p> <p>Promote health services, sex education, family planning, and sport through family life education.</p> <p>Provide specialized education programmes and institutions to cater for those with disabilities.</p> <p>Promote basic and compulsory computer literacy programmes at all levels.</p> <p>Expand non-formal literacy programmes to capture young persons/NFE re-entry for school push outs.</p>

## National youth policies and health

PIC	Policy	Key strategies on health for youth
Cook Islands	National Youth Policy 2015-20	<p><b>Supporting young people to achieve optimal health and improving youth access to health information, secure services and on-going support</b></p> <p>Ensure youth health programmes are appropriate and relevant so that young people are engaged and their needs are met.</p> <p>Ensure Cook Islands youth make good health decisions through improved access to information and awareness raising on major health issues and risks relating to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substance abuse;</li> <li>• Sexual and reproductive health and sexually transmitted infections; and</li> <li>• Non-communicable diseases.</li> </ul> <p>Encourage young people to use health services, ensuring that services are secure and appropriate to their needs.</p> <p>Ensure that adequate mental health support systems are available to youth.</p>
Fiji	National Youth Policy 2011	<p><b>Youth health</b></p> <p>To encourage youth to appreciate and practice high standards of personal health, hygiene and healthy lifestyles.</p> <p>Support and encourage programmes that discourage young people from anti-social behaviour such as drug and substance abuse, sexually transmitted infections and HIV-AIDS, juvenile delinquency any other issues identified by young people and youth stakeholders.</p> <p>Support adolescent and reproductive health education in schools and out of schools, preventative and community health programmes to deal with infectious and non-communicable diseases, and mental health awareness and advocacy programmes.</p>

PIC	Policy	Key strategies on health for youth
FSM	National Youth Policy 2004	<p><b>To strengthen and foster the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of young people</b></p> <p>Reduce unplanned and early teenage pregnancies by 50 per cent by 2010 and increase awareness of consequences.</p> <p>Increase awareness and decrease incidence of HIV and STIs.</p> <p>Reduce number of substance abusers and increase recovery.</p> <p>Decrease incidence of malnutrition among youth.</p> <p>Decrease incidence of iron deficiency from 12 per cent to 6 per cent, and VAD from 79 per cent to 35per cent by 2010.</p> <p>Achieve healthy weight levels and higher self-esteem levels.</p> <p>Decrease incidence of diseases such as TB from 54 per cent to 25 per cent, and eradicate leprosy by 2010.</p> <p>Decrease incidence of suicide.</p>
Kiribati	National Youth Policy 2011-2015	<p><b>To promote healthy lifestyles amongst youth with special focus on the dangers of alcohol and substance abuse, unwanted pregnancy, STIs, HIV and AIDS, and other social problems</b></p> <p>Provide access to improved and youth-friendly health services, including sexual and reproductive health and counselling services for both young men and young women, in both rural and urban areas, as well as to young people in positions of greater risk and vulnerability. Young men and women should be involved in the process of development and implementation.</p> <p>Develop communication strategies with the involvement of both young men and young women to reduce alcohol and substance abuse, address violence, abuse, and exploitation issues, and promote healthy sexual and reproductive behaviour.</p> <p>Develop and implement strategies with young people to promote mental health for young people.</p> <p>Develop interventions to reduce road accidents that specifically target young men and involve them in the process of development and implementation.</p> <p>Promote healthy living through good nutrition and physical activity, through both the school system and through community-based programmes.</p>

PIC	Policy	Key strategies on health for youth
Nauru	National Youth Policy 2008-2015	<p><b>Create and support social development programmes to improve lifestyles of young people</b></p> <p>Develop innovative means of raising youth awareness of health issues and providing options for safe practices such as condom availability and access.</p> <p>Increase youth awareness on mental health and design activities to address care and support for young people with mental illness.</p> <p>In partnership with sports groups, support on-going sports programmes for young people.</p>
Niue	National Youth Policy 2009-2013	<p><b>Improved health of young people</b></p> <p>Encourage proactive health seeking behaviour by young people.</p> <p>Develop youth-friendly health services.</p>
Palau (1)	National Youth Policy 2005	<p><b>Youth and health</b></p> <p>Develop strategies for physical fitness, with special attention to addressing weight problems, including obesity.</p> <p>Develop strategies to strengthen mental health, paying special attention to addressing issues of substance abuse, depression, and suicide.</p> <p>Strengthen education, awareness, and strategies for sexual and reproductive health (HIV, STIs, unplanned teen pregnancy).</p> <p>Address spiritual health.</p> <p>Ensure safety of young people in homes, the school, and workplaces.</p> <p>Provide health care services for youth in special circumstances (e.g. disability).</p>
Palau (2)	National Youth Policy 2016-2020	<p><b>Develop a healthy and strong generation equipped to take on future challenges</b></p>

PIC	Policy	Key strategies on health for youth
<b>Solomon Islands</b>	National Youth Policy and Strategic Plan of Action 2010-2015	<p><b>Youth health improved through equitable access to health services for young women and men</b></p> <p>Develop positive health education programmes, partnerships, and activities that promote healthy lifestyles among young people with a focus on mental health and youth wellbeing, sexual and reproductive health (including STIs, HIV/AIDS), and addictions.</p> <p>Promote healthy families through effective communication, understanding, and interaction between young individuals and their families and communities to create a safe and sanitary environment secure from disease, violence, neglect, and discrimination.</p> <p>Foster and encourage healthy lifestyles through sport, creative arts, and music, whether organized or informal.</p>
<b>Tuvalu</b>	National Youth Policy (2005-2010)	<p><b>Healthier young people</b></p> <p>Promote initiatives that encourage young people to live a healthier lifestyle.</p> <p>Conduct awareness workshops on priority health issues such as HIV/AIDS and STIs, alcohol/smoking, teenage pregnancies, adolescent reproductive health, etc.</p> <p>Promote Good Healthy Living Environment campaigns.</p> <p>Conduct healthy lifestyle training (physical fitness programmes and mental development initiatives).</p>

PIC	Policy	Key strategies on health for youth
Vanuatu	National Youth Development Policy (2012-2022) and Strategic Plan of Action 2012-2015	<p><b>Personal development issues</b></p> <p>Healthcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish and support peer educators.</li> <li>Explore opportunities for partnership with the Ministry of Health and its partners in implementing the Adolescent Reproductive Health Policy and NCD and NAC programme areas.</li> <li>Encourage healthy recreation activities (sports and recreation).</li> <li>Enhance access to basic hygiene, health care, and health education.</li> <li>Prevent communicable diseases such as STIs and HIV/AIDS.</li> </ul>

## National youth policies and employment

PICT	Policy	Key strategies on youth employment
Cook Islands	National Youth Policy 2015-20	<p><b>Education and economic opportunities</b></p> <p>Provide economic, education, and lifelong learning opportunities for young people.</p> <p>Ensure that young Cook Islanders gain the necessary knowledge and skills to equip them for the career and lifestyle of their choice.</p> <p>Strengthen academic and career guidance counselling services to ensure young people are informed of available educational and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Improve access to support, guidance, counselling services, and information to young people, especially those living in the Pa Enua.</p> <p>Strengthen and promote programmes that will assist young people transitioning into employment opportunities after school.</p> <p>Promote business development and entrepreneurship for young people.</p> <p>Ensure young Cook Islanders develop financial skills to manage their personal finances and responsibilities.</p>

PICT	Policy	Key strategies on youth employment
<b>Fiji</b>	National Youth Policy 2011	<b>Empower youth to explore and use their abilities and potential to help create an enabling environment for sustainable livelihoods and success and the further acquisition of knowledge and skills</b>
<b>FSM</b>	National Youth Policy 2004	<p><b>Encourage the active participation of young people in economic development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Privatization strategies</li> <li>▪ Expansion of formal education to include entrepreneurship education;</li> <li>▪ Financial support for youth to engage in business creation;</li> <li>▪ Establish a Coalition of Youth Economic Development for each state;</li> <li>▪ Training workshops on fundamentals of business</li> </ul>
<b>Kiribati</b>	National Youth Policy 2011-2015	<p><b>Explore and increase opportunities and means of providing decent employment and livelihoods for young entrepreneurs</b></p> <p>Increase opportunities in the formal sector in a larger range of technical professions and small business development.</p> <p>Support youth recruitment or small business development.</p> <p>Provide opportunities in outer islands where there is greater youth unemployment.</p>
<b>Nauru</b>	National Youth Policy 2008-2015	<p><b>Facilitate and create income earning and employment opportunities for young people</b></p> <p>Strategies include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Income generation activities;</li> <li>▪ Market research and development;</li> <li>▪ Employment prospects (advocacy for youth employment).</li> </ul>
<b>Niue</b>	National Youth Policy (2009-2013)	<p><b>A conducive environment for youth enterprise and employment to contribute to economic development</b></p> <p>Provide adequate employment conditions for young people including compensatory allowances for shift workers and those in high-risk jobs.</p> <p>Support youth entrepreneurship.</p>

PICT	Policy	Key strategies on youth employment
Palau (1)	National Youth Policy (2005-2010)	<p><b>Strengthen role of family and home education on the value of work, work ethic, and industriousness</b></p> <p>Strengthen role of schools in enforcing value of work ethic and industriousness (teamwork, cooperation, coordination).</p> <p>Strengthen career-counselling programmes.</p> <p>Ensure employability and marketability of youth.</p> <p>Develop entrepreneurship schemes.</p> <p>Specifically address gender issues in the workplace (all forms of harassment, maternity/paternity leave, and compensation, including salary/wages, promotion, and training).</p>
Palau (2)	National Youth Policy (2016-2021)	<p><b>Policy objective</b></p> <p>Create a productive workforce that can make a sustainable contribution to Palau's economic development.</p>
PNG	National Youth Strategy (2007-2017)	Not available

PICT	Policy	Key strategies on youth employment
<b>Solomon Islands</b>	National Youth Policy and Strategic Plan of Action 2010-2015	<p><b>Priority policy outcomes</b></p> <p>Improved and equitable access to education, training, and employment opportunities for young women and men (Youth and Career Pathways).</p> <p>Actively promote gender equitable access to education, training, and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Strengthen skills-oriented training in formal and non-formal environments.</p> <p>Promote initiatives that have a proven track record assisting young people to start small business enterprises.</p> <p>Provide special youth entrepreneurship programmes for young women and men with disabilities, especially in small-scale income-generating projects.</p> <p>Facilitate the creation of opportunities for young peoples' participation in businesses, especially in agribusinesses, fisheries, tourism, the environment, and natural resources.</p>
<b>Tuvalu</b>	National Youth Policy (2005-2010)	<p><b>Policy objectives</b></p> <p>Economically empower young people.</p> <p>Establish innovative programmes that engage young people in income-generating activities.</p> <p>Promote farming initiatives for young people in Funafuti and the outer islands.</p> <p>Promote organic home gardening initiatives for young people in Funafuti and the outer islands.</p> <p>Establish micro-credit scheme for young people to establish small-scale enterprises.</p> <p>Promote reef ecotourism initiatives.</p> <p>Promote production of high quality handicrafts, carvings, local jewelry, art, etc.</p>

PICT	Policy	Key strategies on youth employment
Vanuatu	National Youth Development Policy (2012-2022) and Strategic Plan of Action 2012-2015	<p><b>Enterprise development</b></p> <p>The policy encourages youth to start their own businesses through supportive policies including access to financial and non-financial services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A <i>Youth Challenge Fund</i> to will enable youth to start a business.</li> <li>▪ There is a provision to support <i>Youth Cooperative Societies</i> in agriculture and industry by facilitating access to microcredit services.</li> <li>▪ Young women with skills and training are to be targeted for financial and material assistance.</li> <li>▪ Youth with disabilities are to be provided with soft credit facilities and specialized training.</li> <li>▪ The policy also supports youth enterprise development by supporting business training, workshops on microcredit, and small entrepreneurship schemes.</li> </ul> <p><b>Work experience</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A <i>Student Industrial Attachment Programme</i> will be considered to provide students with work-based experience to develop new skills.</li> <li>▪ A <i>National Open Apprenticeship Scheme</i> is planned to enable youth from low-income households to access training more easily.</li> <li>▪ The National Youth Employment Unit will be in charge of implementation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Career guidance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reorganize counselling at all education institutions with the creation of career advisory departments.</li> <li>▪ Develop a national action plan on youth employment and allocate resources to its implementation.</li> </ul>

## National youth policies and participation

PIC	Policy	Key strategies on youth participation
<b>Cook Islands</b>	National Youth Policy 2015-20	<p>Encourage young people to positively participate in society by engaging in community, island, and national programmes.</p> <p>Promote life skills programmes in schools and the wider community to ensure young people and their families are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be resilient and empowered members of society.</p>
<b>Fiji</b>	National Youth Policy 2011	<p><b>Facilitate equal opportunities for participation in leadership and decision-making processes at all levels</b></p> <p>Support the role of the National Youth Council and the establishment of District Youth Councils throughout Fiji, to ensure equal representation of young women, young men, and marginalized groups of all ethnic groups.</p> <p>Promote the enhancement of youth capacity in various aspects of leadership and good governance, ably equipping young people for effective engagement at family, community, institutional, national, and international levels.</p> <p>Support the protection of young people's legal rights (e.g. literacy training, legal awareness workshops, and awareness programmes on human rights conventions for our target audiences).</p>
<b>FSM</b>	National Youth Policy 2004	<p><b>Strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of youth organizations in the planning and delivery of youth programmes, promoting youth networks, and implementing, monitoring and evaluation of the national youth policy</b></p>

PIC	Policy	Key strategies on youth participation
<b>Kiribati</b>	National Youth Policy 2011-2015	<p><b>Social cohesion and civic participation</b></p> <p>To promote youth-friendly environments within communities and institutions and at national levels that nurture youth participation and that have the commitment and capacity to respond to youth needs.</p>
<b>Nauru</b>	National Youth Policy 2008-2015	Not available
<b>Niue</b>	National Youth Policy 2009-2013	<p><b>Promote and increase youth participation in national and community environment and climate change initiatives</b></p> <p>Support young people to implement national and community environment and climate change activities.</p>
<b>Palau (1)</b>	National Youth Policy (2005)	<p><b>Strategies on youth and their voices at state and national levels</b></p> <p><b>Strategies on youth and their participation in decision-making/resource appropriation</b></p> <p>Develop mechanism to ensure youth participation in discussions and appropriation of national resources and their use.</p>
<b>Palau (2)</b>	National Youth Policy (2)	<p><b>Instil social values and promote community service to build national ownership</b></p> <p>Facilitate participation and civic engagement at all levels of governance and provide a platform to support positive youth development through promotion of arts, culture, sports, and recreation.</p> <p>Create a platform for collaboration and cooperation among youth-serving organizations while maintaining a focus on building the capacity of systems and supporting youth-serving organizations and agencies.</p>
<b>PNG</b>	National Youth Strategy (2007-2017)	Not available

PIC	Policy	Key strategies on youth participation
<b>Solomon Islands</b>	National Youth Policy and Strategic Plan of Action 2010-2015	<p><b>Increase equal opportunities for young women and men to participate in decision-making and leadership</b></p> <p>Create an enabling environment for youth to participate in planning, decision making, implementing, leading, and monitoring and evaluation of development opportunities.</p> <p>Create and strengthen consultative mechanisms for involving young women and men in planning, leading, and implementing programmes that contribute to the government's national development plan.</p> <p>Encourage and facilitate equal opportunity access for disabled youth to a wide range of health, education, political leadership training, and employment opportunities.</p> <p>Foster and encourage the participation of young women and men in policy and leadership training, including on the job training.</p> <p>Facilitate leadership and other opportunities for young people to acquire critical awareness and knowledge of government, business, and civil society and their roles in a democratic society.</p> <p>Increase number of young people participating in activities that promote peace building and conflict prevention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Instil critical awareness in young people of the cross-cultural and ethnic considerations that promote understanding, toleration, and tolerance.</li> <li>▪ Establish or develop mechanisms at both national and community levels that help prevent conflict and help rehabilitate those young people who have violated the law.</li> <li>▪ Complement existing peace and reconciliation, respect, and understanding activities by facilitating young peoples' creative and innovative expression through the various arts.</li> </ul> <p>Increase number of people promoting sustainable development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote the need to protect the natural and cultural environments across the Solomon Islands.</li> <li>▪ Establish youth-led actions in environmental conservation in urban and rural areas.</li> <li>▪ Encourage and support youth in taking responsibility for their environment through their own actions.</li> </ul>

PIC	Policy	Key strategies on youth participation
Tuvalu	National Youth Policy (2005-2010)	<p><b>Law-abiding young people</b></p> <p>Promote initiatives that develop self-respect, respect for authority and the elders, and respect for others.</p> <p>Conduct targeted campaigns to educate young people about the law, CEDAW, and CRC.</p> <p>Include legal awareness programmes in the formal education curriculum.</p> <p>Print and distribute copies of the constitution for youth organizations to use in their campaigns.</p> <p>Organize the Tuvalu Youth Parliament.</p>
Vanuatu	National Youth Development Policy (2012-2022) and Strategic Plan of Action 2012-2015	<p><b>Civics, citizenship and leadership training</b></p> <p>Produce purposeful and well-focused youth who internalize the virtues of the positive aspects of our societal values, ethics, and culture.</p> <p>Nurture youth who will have a deep sense of responsibility, civility, and discipline and capacity for self-sacrifice, hard work, creativity, and originality in dealing with public and national issues.</p> <p>Promote the emergence, growth, and development of youth with good leadership qualities, sense of social justice, and disposition towards active participation and cooperation with public and national issues.</p> <p>Inoculate the universal values of democracy and good governance among youth.</p> <p>Devote a significant proportion of funding to the National Youth Council to develop programmes for leadership and citizenship training, community development activities, and a national volunteering scheme.</p> <p>Participation in self-help and community development.</p> <p><b>Environment and Climate Change</b></p> <p>Encourage the participation of youth in programmes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are aimed at cleaning the environment of pollutants such as plastic bags and garbage, and</li> <li>▪ Deal with the problem of soil erosion through tree planting and other effective methods.</li> </ul> <p>Encourage the establishment of environment protection clubs.</p> <p>Ensure that climate change policies have a focus on young people.</p>

## National youth policies and protection issues

PIC	Policy	Key strategies on protection
<b>Cook Islands</b>	National Youth Policy 2015-20	<p><b>Safeguarding young people and our communities by positively engaging at-risk youth, and adopting a holistic approach to building resilience</b></p> <p>Improving wellbeing and welfare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve the wellbeing and welfare of youth so that they are happier and more resilient.</li> <li>▪ Protect young people from physical and psychological abuse by strengthening support services and co-ordination between relevant government agencies, NGOs, and communities.</li> <li>▪ Identify “at-risk youth” and engage them in targeted programmes (community, sport, church) to prevent their engagement in criminal activities.</li> <li>▪ Reduce youth reoffending through targeted and effective restorative and rehabilitation programmes.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the legal framework allows for fair and appropriate treatment of youth, promoting restorative care and rehabilitation where possible.</li> <li>▪ Engage with traditional and community leaders and government entities involved in addressing youth justice issues to ensure a collective effort is made to adopt a “problem-solving approach” that actively engages youth offenders.</li> <li>▪ Ensure young offenders have access to legal and other support services, information, and on-going assistance.</li> </ul>
<b>Fiji</b>	National Youth Policy 2011	<p><b>Vulnerable youth</b></p> <p>Enact policies targeting young people who are categorically vulnerable – unemployed, street frequenting young people, drugs and substance abuse, sexually transmitted infections, teenage pregnancies, school dropouts, incarcerated youths, human trafficking, young people in special homes, and young people with special needs.</p> <p>DYS will support initiatives and mandates of key stakeholders and youth development partners that partake in effectively addressing the needs of vulnerable youth. These include empowerment training and capacity building, networking, advocacy, advice, referrals, and counselling.</p>

PIC	Policy	Key strategies on protection
FSM	National Youth Policy 2004	<p><b>To support a system of justice that recognizes and respects the special needs of juveniles and aims to restore social harmony, make amends to victims, and reintegrate offenders into the community</b></p> <p>Protect the rights of juveniles.</p> <p>Apply the provisions of the law in relation to youth in an appropriate and supportive manner.</p> <p>Minimize the negative impacts of the criminal justice system, particularly on those young people who are victims of crime.</p>
Kiribati	National Youth Policy 2011-2015	<p><b>Social cohesion and civic participation</b></p> <p>Review and reform legislation and policies at national and island levels to ensure that young people are protected and provided for with regard to the principles and policy areas of this policy. Particular attention should be paid to regulations controlling consumption of tobacco and alcohol, justice for young offenders, and enforcement of compulsory education.</p> <p>Promote restorative justice practices for young offenders at legislative, institutional, and community levels.</p> <p>Provide support for young people facing social stigma and victimisation, such as teenage mothers, ex-offenders, or young people living with disabilities by providing counselling and educating communities.</p>
Nauru	National Youth Policy 2008-2015	<p><b>Law and order</b></p> <p>Advocate for laws to be enforced for illegal and underage activities such as consent (marriage) age, sexual activities, and underage drinking.</p> <p>Establish community policing to increase interaction and partnerships between youth and police.</p>
Niue	National Youth Policy 2009-2013	<p>Increase interactions between police and young people to reduce substance abuse.</p> <p>Ensure fair legal representation of young people in court.</p> <p>Inform young people of their rights and what is expected from the court process.</p>

PIC	Policy	Key strategies on protection
<b>Palau</b>	National Youth Policy 2005	<p><b>Youth and justice</b></p> <p>Establish a specific programme to address issues in conflict with the law.</p> <p>Provide public education on laws.</p> <p>Strengthen rehabilitation programmes.</p> <p>Encourage non-criminal and non-violent activities.</p>
<b>Vanuatu</b>	National Youth Development Policy (2012-2022) and Strategic Plan of Action 2012-2015	<p><b>Elimination of child labour and early parenthood</b></p>



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