

Promoting youth livelihoods in the Pacific & Timor-Leste

- **The Pacific region and Timor-Leste has a combined population of close to 10 million.**
- **The largest country is Papua New Guinea, with over 6 million people.**
- **There are three distinct sub-groupings: Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia.**
- **Timor-Leste is not considered part of the Pacific Region but is included here because it shares many of its characteristics, especially in relation to the size of its youth population.**

Acknowledgement

- This presentation is drawn from an unpublished report commissioned by UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Region in 2006 entitled:
- **What to do when jobs are scarce: promoting young people's livelihoods in Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and Pacific Island countries**
- **Views expressed here are the author's alone**



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Sub region & country	Estimated total population
Melanesia & Timor-Leste	
Fiji	828,000
Papua New Guinea	6,071,000
Solomon Islands	472,000
Vanuatu	216,000
Timor-Leste	1,069,000
Polynesia	
Cook Islands	13,851
Niue	1,630
Samoa	185,000
Tonga	100,000
Tuvalu	9,634
Micronesia	
Kiribati	91,888
Marshall Islands, Rep	55,318
Micronesia, Fed. States	111,000
Nauru	10,111
Palau	19,932
Overall total	9,254,364

Factors limiting young people's livelihoods prospects

- **The prospects for livelihoods for young people in the fragile states of the Pacific are limited**
- **low level of opportunity created by a lack of new jobs,**
- **little prospect of job growth from domestic sources for the foreseeable future.**
- **Demographic pressures on the economy and society of a large youth cohort.**
- **Their lack of basic capabilities.**

‘Bottom billion’ countries & fragile states

- **Many Pacific island countries, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea are part of what Paul Collier calls the ‘bottom billion’ of the world’s population**
- **These people live in countries falling behind the other four billion people in countries which are developing rapidly**
- **Most of ‘bottom billion’ countries are found in Africa**
- **But World Bank’s list of ‘fragile’ or ‘borderline fragile’ states also includes: Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga & Vanuatu along plus other countries in East Asia & Pacific: Cambodia, Laos & Myanmar.**

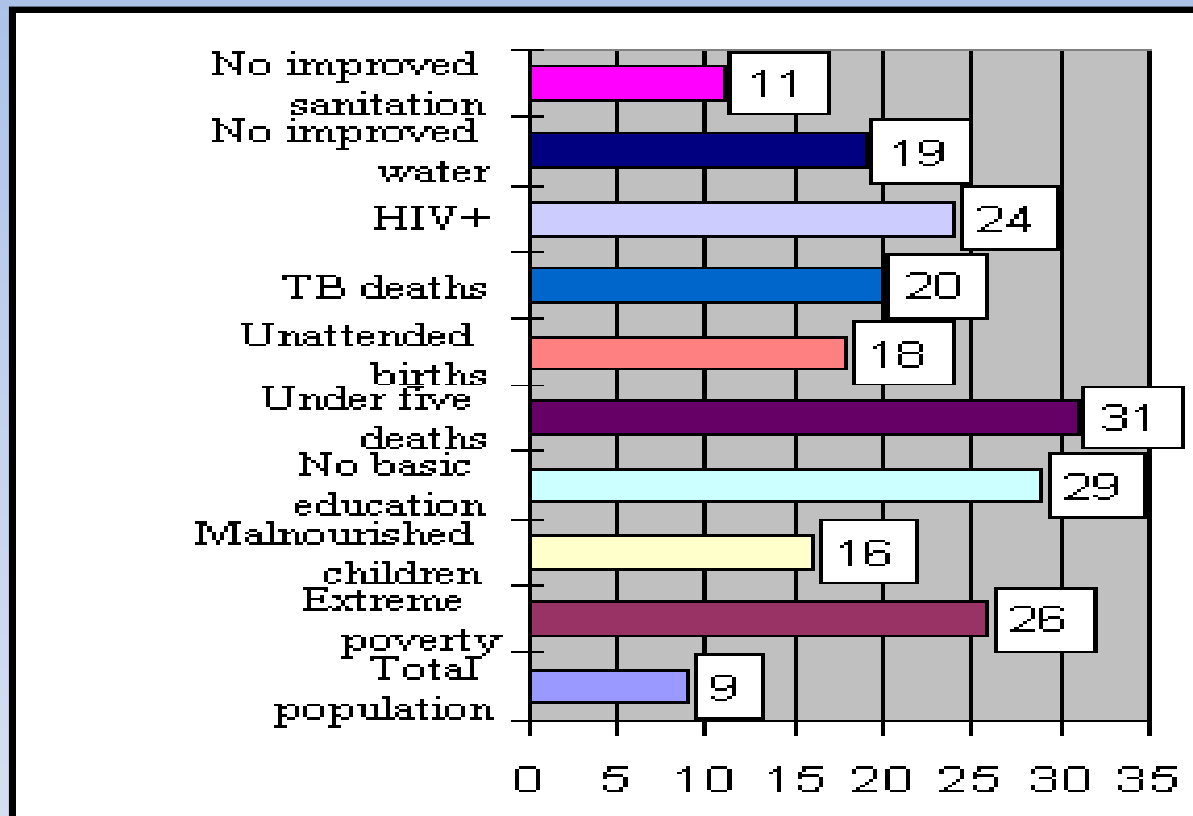
Weak record of economic growth

- **The Pacific Region has experienced low or negative growth in income per person.**
- **Over the last decade to 2004, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands & Marshall Islands have been going backwards in economic terms, taking into account their rate of population growth.**
- **In long-term economic decline, requiring many years of sustained growth just to return per capita gross domestic production (GDP) levels to previous high points in their economies**

Performance of Fragile states on the Millennium Development Goals

- **Countries of the ‘bottom billion’ share the common characteristic of having low levels of per capita income and weak per capita GDP growth.**
- **They also have poor policy, institutional and governance capacities defining them as ‘failed states’, ‘low Income countries under stress’ or ‘difficult development partners’**
- **35 fragile states only account for 9 percent cent of pop of developing countries, but in relation to achieving the MDG targets they account for a much greater share of the poor performers.**
- **Fragile states account for a quarter of all those in extreme poverty, nearly a third of the children born in 2005 and expected not to survive to age five, 29 percent of children who had not completed primary school, and a quarter of those with HIV and AIDS**

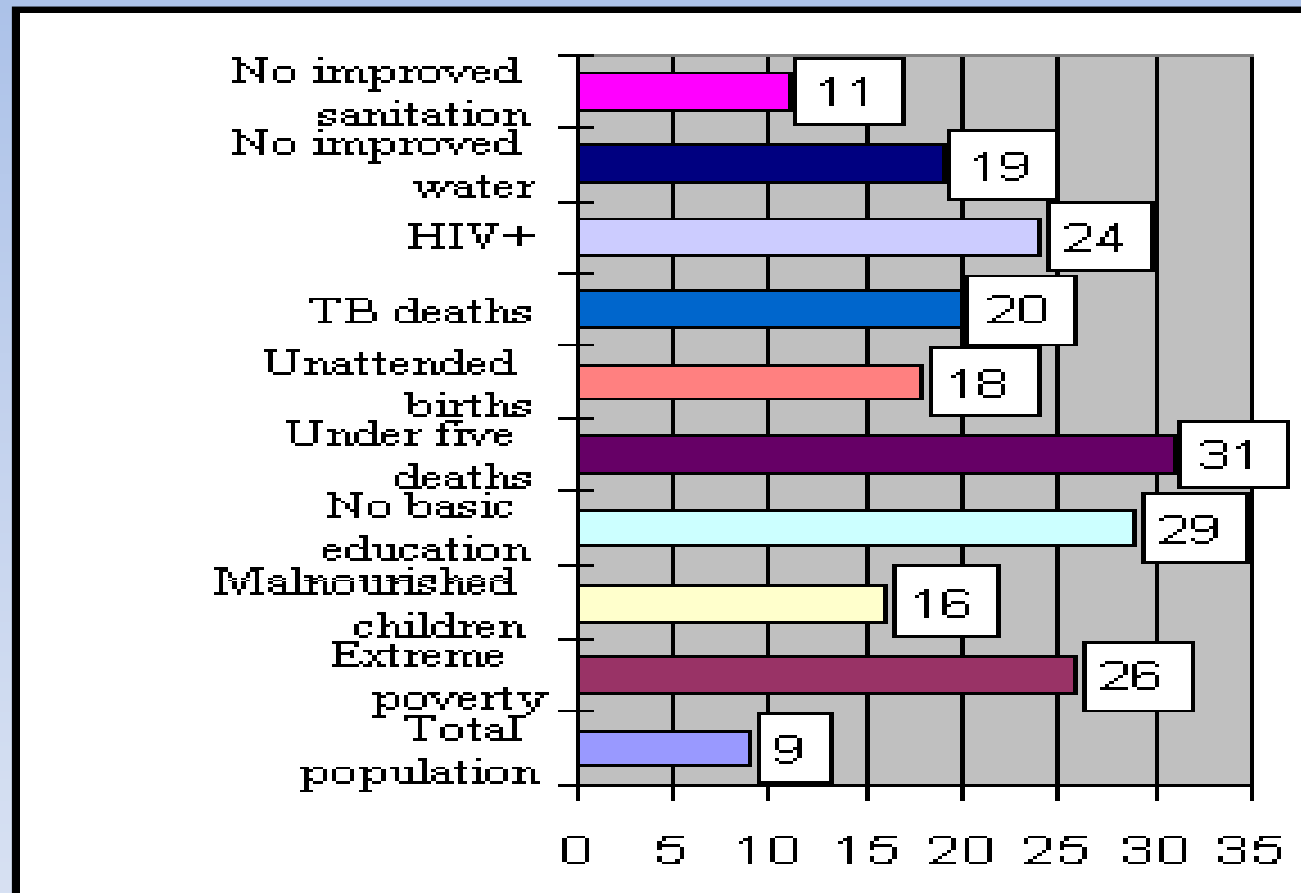
Performance of Fragile states on the Millennium Development Goals, 2004 and 2005



High rate of joblessness among young people

- Large numbers of young people in the Pacific region want jobs but few job openings are available.
- The data for eight Pacific island countries shows a range of between 15 and 40 percent of young males are not in education or paid work.
- In Kiribati, 43 percent of those aged 15 to 19 years and 53 percent of 20 to 24 year olds are seeking a job – the highest proportion of any age group.
- Some 7.4 percent of young people aged 15 to 29 years In Dili, Timor-Leste are looking for work and are available for work. But 41 percent in the same age group are not working and gave 'no work is available' as the reason.

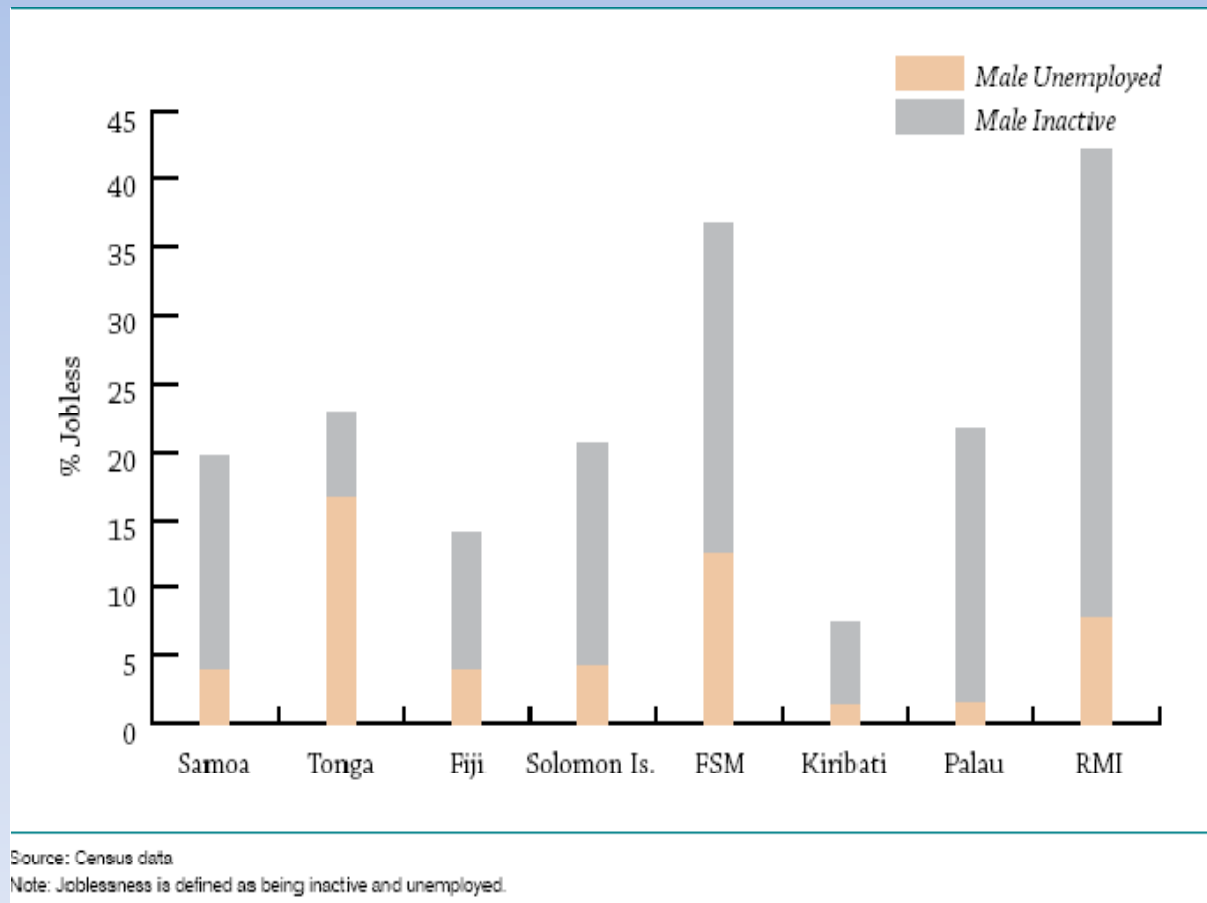
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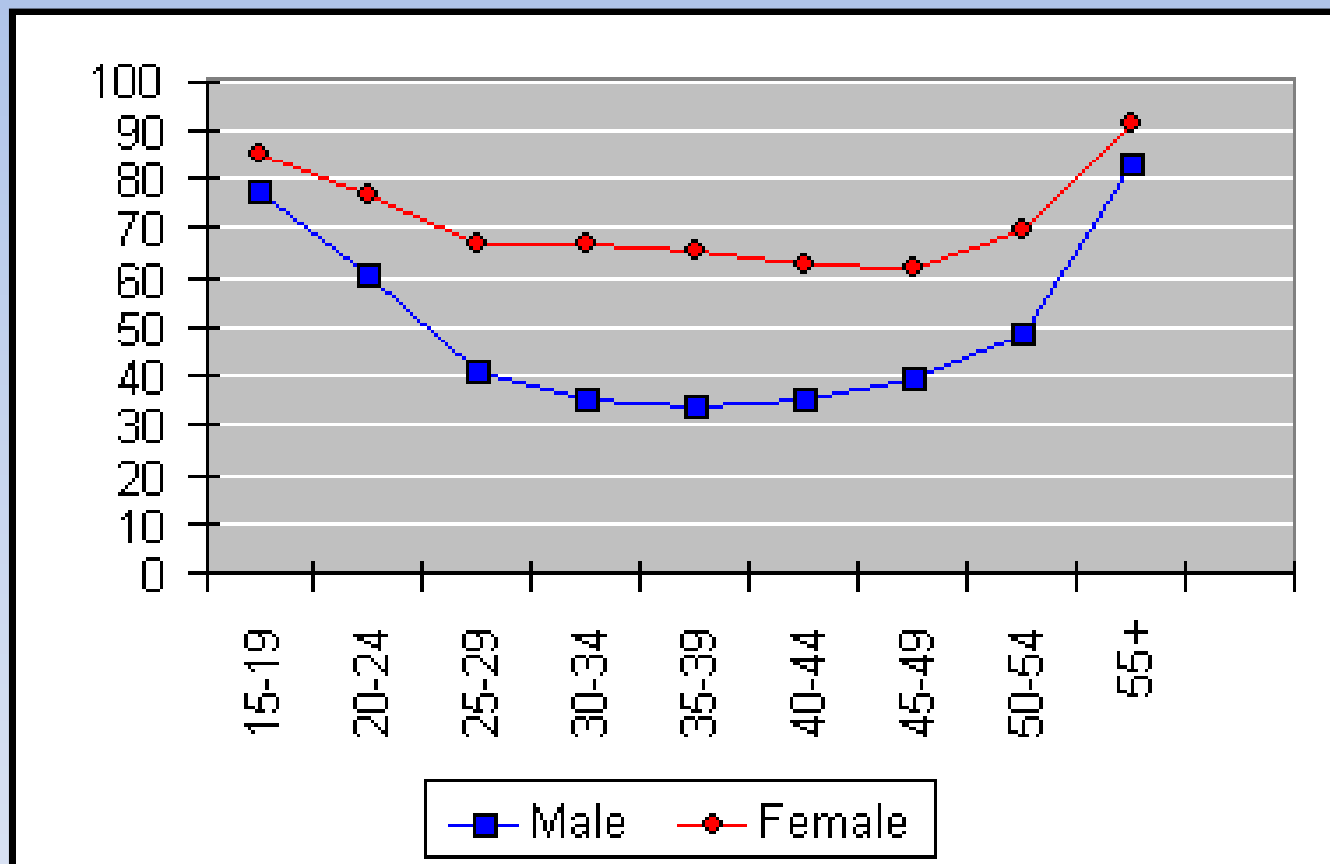
Jobless in Pacific

- **Next Figure shows the jobless rate for each age group.**
- **Jobless refers to those not in education and not in work. Young people aged 15 to 19 years and 20 to 24 years experience the highest jobless rates - three quarters of the 15 to 19 year old males and 85 percent cent of females in the same age group are not in work and not in education.**

Jobless rate of young males aged 15 to 24 years, selected Pacific Island countries



Jobless rate - 'out-of-school and out-of-work': proportion of population in each age cohort neither in paid work nor in education, Dili urban area, 2004



National Census 2004, author's calculations

Demographic pressures

- **Most countries in the Pacific have more than 30 percent of their populations aged 10 to 24 years.**
- **Eight countries have 32 percent or more of their populations in this age group.**
- **In contrast, only four East Asian countries have youth shares in their total population of 32 percent or higher: Cambodia, Mongolia, Laos and the Philippines.**
- **In terms of the near future, the youth share of the population will decline in most countries in the Pacific region. By 2015, the proportion of 10 to 24 year olds will be lower in 11 countries**
- **But the youth share of the population will rise in two countries, Papua New Guinea and Samoa. Papua New Guinea will increase from 2.92 million to 3.62 million young people**

Effect of large youth cohort in the adult population

- **A cohort effect is the influence that people born around the same time & experiencing life cycle transitions in common have on themselves and the wider society.**
- **This cohort effect applies particularly in poor societies when a large cohort of young people goes through the range of child-to-adult transitions at the same time.**
- **Henrik Urdal has found that a large youth share in the adult population is strongly associated with a country's propensity for internal armed conflict, terrorism and rioting if the country also has a poorly performing economy, and weak governance.**
- **Table below shows the share of the youth cohort aged 15 to 24 years in the adult population aged 15 years and above in Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific Island countries for 2005.**

Effect of large youth cohort in the adult population

- **Youth as a proportion of the adult age group, rather than young people's share of the total population, highlights the youth cohort's relative size in the adult population**
- **The measure better reflects the competition this age group faces and in particular, the pressure from peers competing for the same scarce resources, such as jobs.**
- **It also highlights a country's potential for social conflict and the damaging effect on its economy.**

Youth share of the adult population 2005

Country	Total adult population 15 years	Young people 15-24 years	Proportion of young people 15-24 years in total population above age 15
Micronesia Federated States of	41,902	19,370	37.6
Marshall Islands	26,405	13,305	34.2
Vanuatu	86,689	34,716	33.3
Kiribati	38,701	15,249	33.2
Samoa	88,983	34,741	32.8
Timor-Leste/2004	524,387	170,975	32.6
Tonga	50,306	21,834	32.3
Nauru	5,106	1,967	31.9
Solomon Islands	233,079	97,205	31.2
Papua New Guinea	3,524,922	1,060,855	30.9
Fiji	552,047	165,608	30.0
Tuvalu	4,648	1,300	26.0
Niue	1,007	290	25.6
Cook Islands	7,095	1,676	25.1
Palau	12,396	2,853	18.1
Source: Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Noumea, 2006 and Census of Population & Housing 2004, Government of Timor-Leste			

Large Youth cohorts and conflict

- **The countries experiencing conflict in recent years: Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Fiji, also have high proportions of young people aged 15 to 24 years in their adult populations.**
- **Papua New Guinea experiences major law and order problems, has a weak economy and ranks low in the World Bank's governance effectiveness rankings.**
- **Kiribati and the Marshall Islands have weak economies with a third and more of their adult population aged 15 to 24 years, features suggesting a high risk profile for social conflict - signs of social tension exist, such as widespread abuse of alcohol by young people.**
- **The low youth shares of the resident populations of Niue, Cook Islands and Palau are due in part to the opportunity these countries' residents have to migrate to work in New Zealand and the USA.**

Future population growth and lack of job opportunities

- **The situation is not likely to improve soon. With estimates of greater than two percent annual population growth rates for the next decade and more, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Timor-Leste will all be experiencing major population pressures on their livelihoods resources.**
- **These high population growth rates are due to high fertility and low to very low levels of outmigration.**
- **The result will be high levels of excess supplies of labour for the future and an increasingly large pool of young people seeking work.**
- **A World Bank commissioned analysis shows that less than ten percent of job seekers in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu will be able to find paid work at home.**

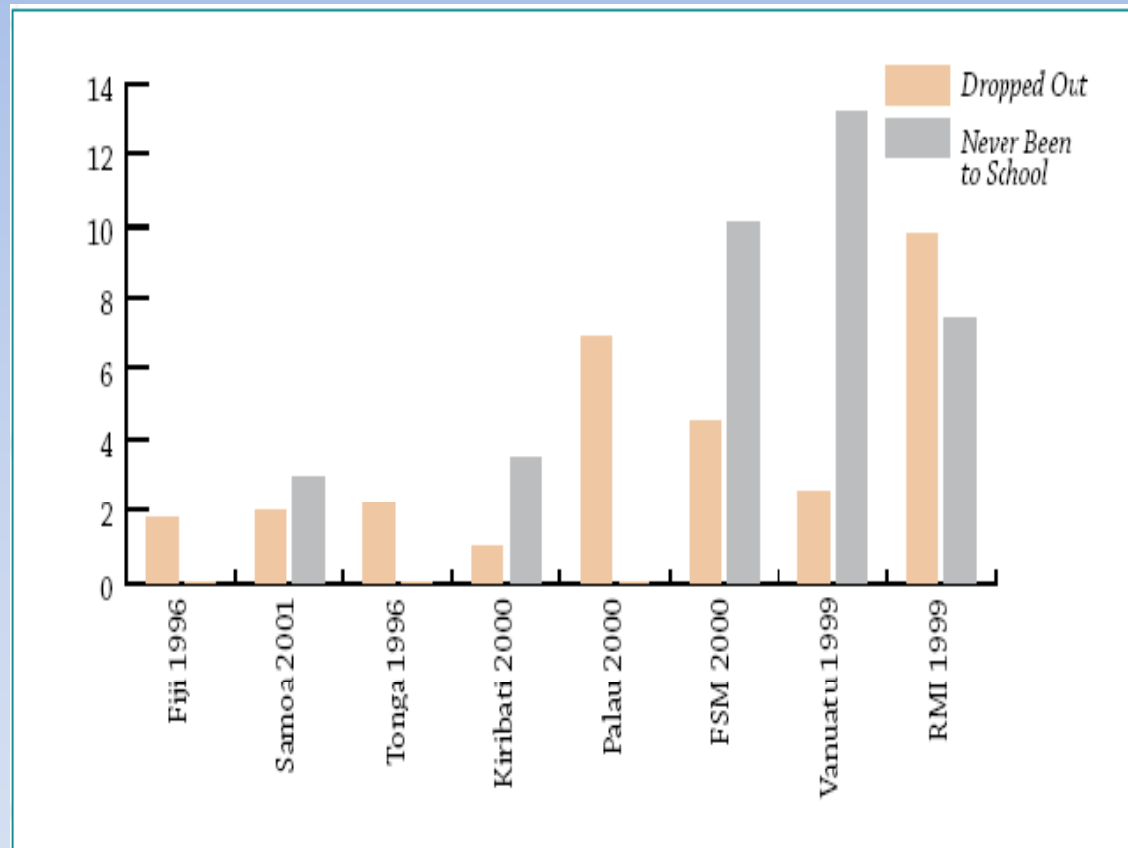
Lack of access to high-income labour markets

- **Some Pacific island countries have access to high-income labour markets but many do not.**
- **Immigration access to the USA is open for the former US Territories in Micronesia, with significant migrant flows and remittances.**
- **Immigrant access to New Zealand is available to the Polynesian countries, with high levels of migrant flows and remittances.**
- **For Fiji, immigrant access to high-income labour markets is more restricted, with only the more highly skilled and soldiers able to benefit.**
- **However, the Melanesian countries and Kiribati are denied immigrant access to high-income countries, making them virtually closed with negligible migrant flows and remittances.**

Lack of access to basic education

- **Lack of access to basic education is a major disadvantage suffered by young people in the region.**
- **Many children in the Pacific island countries have never been to school (around one in ten in Vanuatu, the Federated States of Micronesia and Marshall Islands).**
- **Other children leave primary school early due to financial costs or are ‘pushed out’ due to poor facilities, as is the case in many Micronesian countries**

Percentage of children never enrolled in school or who have dropped out, various years

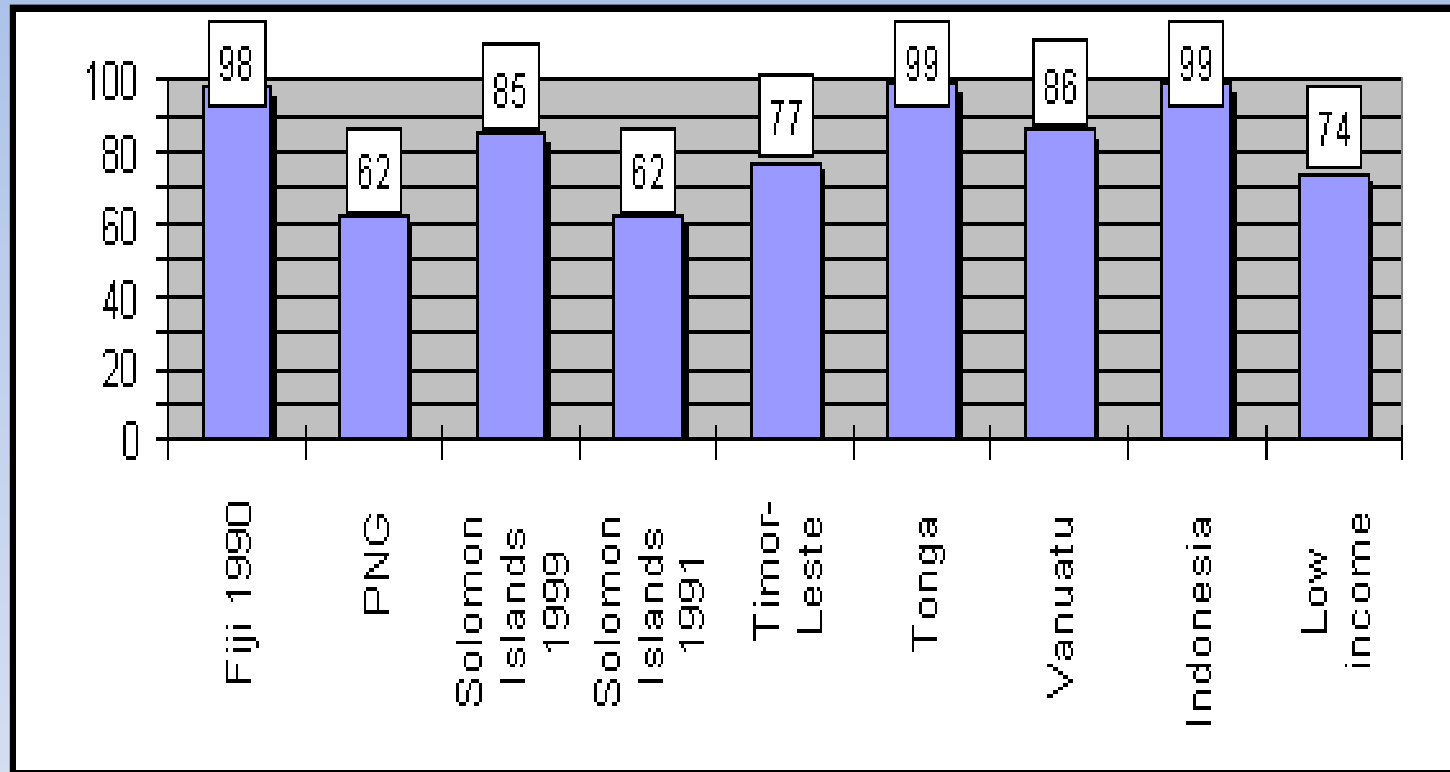


Source: Census data.

Low literacy rates

- Youth literacy rates are available for only six countries in the Pacific region and Timor-Leste. These range from 62 percent for Papua New Guinea to 99 percent in Tonga
- The rate for Papua New Guinea is very low compared with the average for other low-income countries.
- The lack of universal primary education in Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Timor-Leste means that they cannot match the near complete youth literacy rates of Fiji, Tonga or Indonesia.

Youth literacy rates



Source: World Bank, 2006, Millennium Development Goal Indicators.

Poor quality, basic education fails many

- Young people are also severely disadvantaged by the poor quality of the education they receive.
- The Pacific Island Literacy Levels (PILL) tests provide proof that many students fail to acquire literacy and numeracy.
- Regional level data show that one third of the students are 'at risk' of failure in reading, writing and in basic numeracy.

Low participation rate for secondary education

Country	Secondary School Enrollment
Fiji	83%
Kiribati	65%
Marshall Is.	41%
FSM	32%
Palau	63%
Samoa	64%
Solomon Is.	28%
Tonga	99%
Vanuatu	32%
Barbados	69%
Singapore	94%
Maldives	69%
Mauritius	64%
Trinidad & Tobago	69%

Low access to higher levels of education

- **Limited access to secondary schooling means few complete high school and few graduate from post secondary education.**
- **Even fewer young people reach tertiary education**
- **Another important indicator of young people's lack of access to livelihood opportunities is their low participation rate in tertiary education.**
- **Fiji has the highest tertiary enrolment rate with 15.3 percent, followed by Timor-Leste with 10.2 percent and Tonga with 6.1 percent. By comparison, Australia's tertiary enrolment rate in 2005 was 72 percent.**
- **In Papua New Guinea, only one in twenty (5.3 percent) of the population aged 15 years and above in 2000 had a tertiary qualification (7.2 percent for males and 3.4 percent for females). The situation is worse for younger age cohorts.**

R1. Advocate for greater investment in young people

- **UNICEF is well placed to advocate to governments and donors for the need to invest more in young people.**
- **A simple statistical profile highlighting their share of the adult population, and their assets and capacities**

R1. Advocate for greater investment in young people

- **Relevant indicators are:**
 - **illiteracy rate for 15 to 24 year olds by sex,**
 - **rate of primary school completion**
 - **literacy attainment at end of primary schooling, the transition rates to secondary schooling; and the quality of education assessed against external benchmarks**
 - **Also needed are measures of: adolescent pregnancy rate, maternal mortality for young women, incidence by sex of HIV/AIDS and the employment status of young people compared with older age groups.**

R2. Advocate for a customised national poverty reduction strategy:

- **The starting point for investing more in young people has to be a national development and poverty reduction strategy.**
- **The strategy needs to be comprehensive and tailored to the strengths and weaknesses of the country's economy and society.**
- **Developing a customised national development and poverty reduction strategy requires governments to undertake an extensive consultation process which engages with citizens, including young people, at different stages of the policy development and implementation process.**

R3. Advocate for a national strategy to promote young people's livelihoods:

- **UNICEF, jointly with UNDP and the ILO, should propose to governments that they formulate a livelihoods strategy for young people.**
- **The terms of reference for the strategy should include both employment promotion and broader livelihoods strategies.**

R4. Create mechanisms for young people to provide extensive inputs into livelihoods strategies, policies and programmes:

- **UNICEF could assist young people to participate in formulating the livelihoods strategy and support them in implementing particular livelihood strategies.**
- **Also needed is a broader ‘capacities for livelihoods’ perspective to offset a narrow employment focus which is likely to dominate.**
- **UNICEF could provide information about ways other countries have involved young people in national poverty strategies and how these strategies have addressed the needs of young people.**

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R6. Build young people's livelihood capabilities through volunteering and civic engagement:

- **NGOs use volunteers extensively, most of whom are young people, to carry out significant elements of their work.**
- **UNICEF's use of peer educators to deliver life skills education is a good example of this practice. These volunteer work assignments can offer major opportunities for young people to acquire work experience in structured and unstructured work settings.**
- **UNICEF is well placed to work with other NGOs to formalise arrangements for engaging volunteers so as to maximise the benefits for young people.**

R7. Link community-based life skills education into other basic capabilities training

- **UNICEF's Pacific Stars Life Skills Education Programme needs to be integrated with other training programmes for young people. These programmes should offer a range of skills to young people in addition to inter-personal life skills.**
- **These should include basic literacy, financial literacy, second language skills, human rights especially in relation to migration, basic business concepts and livelihoods skills such as sustainable agricultural practices.**

R8. Capture all relevant work experiences in a personal skills passport:

- **Young people's experiences in 'learning by doing' should be captured in the form of a personal Skills Passport.**
- **This passport can be a record of achievement that describes the demonstrated work-related competencies the individual has acquired.**
- **The skills passport, if widely promoted, can provide young people with the incentive to start with a low-status work option, such as volunteer work, knowing that it can open up more attractive work opportunities**

R9. Create opportunities for community service:

- **As part of the livelihoods strategy, use volunteer work opportunities to set up a basic, low-cost form of community service for young people**
- **Governments, in association with international NGOs, could use volunteer work opportunities to offer young people the opportunity to perform community service on an extended and systematic basis**

R9. Create opportunities for community service:

- **An easy way to do this is to expand existing volunteer work for not-for-profit organisations delivering services aimed at poverty reduction or social protection.**
- **Examples of donor-funded volunteer work that could be expanded are: participating in a national anti-malarial campaign; undertaking disaster preparedness appraisal, education and mitigation work; or joining emergency assessment, management and recovery teams.**
- **Government would need to set up an enabling framework to give the volunteer work assignments national status, coverage and protection from abuse.**

R10. Investigate setting up a larger-scale community service programme for young people:

- **Once the viability of community service for young people based on volunteer work is demonstrated, the scope for implementing a national community service programme for young people should be investigated.**
- **This programme could aim to meet three objectives:**
 - **reduce poverty in nominated areas such as education and health on a large-scale by mobilising young people capacities;**
 - **build social capital with and between communities by helping large numbers of young people to perform for their community a valued role; and**
 - **build skills by giving young people the incentive and opportunities to acquire and exercise their capabilities.**
- **A successful model for the community service programme run by young people already exists in the form of the Youth Challenge International in Vanuatu.**

R11.Support existing youth-based organisations:

- **UNICEF could work more closely with youth-based organisations, such as the scouts and guides to support them to involve more out-of-school young people.**
- **UNICEF support could help youth-based organisations to attract more funding from donors, especially in relation to rights-based initiatives and to support them in undertaking simple poverty reduction activities for the wider community.**

R12. Give youth-based associations access to resources to perform community service work:

- **Setting up a national youth fund in each country in the region could provide small grants to established youth associations. This would enable youth-based associations to undertake activities to meet the Millennium Development Goal targets.**

R13. Provide access to high-income labour markets:

- **Migration for temporary work in high-income countries acts not only as a safety valve for demographic pressures.**
- **It also provides young people with a strong incentive to upgrade their skills and literacy.**
- **The prospect of well-paid work will create a strong and persistent demand for education and training providers to improve their education standards to match those of the high-income labour markets.**

Provide access to high-income labour markets:

- **Returning migrants will also deepen their country's shallow skills pool. Migrant remittances can have a major development impact because they help the poorest, most vulnerable households and can also stimulate local business activity and lift participation in secondary education.**
- **It is essential that young people migrating for work overseas are aware of their rights and entitlements. UNICEF could take the lead in ensuring that young people as potential migrants are fully informed of their rights and entitlements in their new work setting.**

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R4. Create mechanisms for young people to provide extensive inputs into livelihoods strategies, policies and programmes:

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- **UNICEF could provide information about ways other countries have involved young people in national poverty strategies and how these strategies have addressed the needs of young people.**

**R5. Build young people's livelihood capabilities:
Ensure all young people attain basic education:**

- **The MDG target of 100 percent literacy for 15 to 24 year olds should be widely promoted, with progress towards the target based on evidence of demonstrated literacy.**
- **Literacy instruction for out-of-school young people should be linked closely to both life skills education and livelihood skills training.**
- **Young people will have a stronger incentive to improve their literacy if they can see how it will enhance their capacity to make choices and improve their livelihood prospects.**
- **A key element of basic education for out-of-school young people should be attaining financial literacy.**

Provide access to high-income labour markets:

- **Research is also needed into how governments can put in place supporting policies to minimise the costs and maximise the benefits of short-term migration for work.**
- **Governments need to ensure that there are strong incentives to return. In the host country, supporting policies should include a register of good employers**

R14.Measure performance and outcomes:

- **A small number of outcome measures could be used to monitor changes to young people's livelihood prospects. UNICEF could utilise existing data or commission new data collection to report on the results each year, and to publish the results.**
- **Four proposed measures are: basic literacy and numeracy, the adolescent pregnancy rate and changes in average rural and urban incomes of young people over a nominated period.**
- **The literacy measure should be based on demonstrated ability to read and write and not use years at school as a proxy measure. Also where possible, it is important to seek the information directly rather than rely on administrative data.**

R15. Encourage young people to collect performance data on basic services

- **Performance data are essential to assess progress toward meeting the targets of national development strategies. Within a suitable supporting framework, young people could be encouraged to collect data on education and health outcomes.**
- **Examples of former could measures of education outcomes such as literacy and numeracy attainment or student satisfaction;**
- **Include education outputs, such as school retention rate compared to national data; and education inputs, such as teacher attendance and whether the school's allocated budget matches its actual budget.**