

FAST FACTS

United Nations
Development Programme



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

Enhancing Youth Participation and Leadership in Fiji

Youths make up one-third of Fiji's population and have the potential to make a difference in the community, improve current living standards and increase access for all in the development process.

With the lowering of the voting age from 21 to 18, young people in Fiji have been given a unique chance to shape Fiji's political future beyond the 2014 national elections and to ensure that their views and aspirations are considered by their elected leaders and government.

The Enhancing Youth Participation and Leadership in Fiji project aims to contribute to developing the capacity of, and empower, young women and men to be active citizens participate freely in the democratic process.

The project facilitates strengthening institutional capacity of youth organizations and youth leadership. The two-year project started in 2012 in close collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Fiji.



Youth studying at the University of the South Pacific's Laucala Campus in Suva, Fiji. Credit: Sheryl Ho/UNDP.



Participating youth at the post-2015 development agenda at the University of the South Pacific. Credit: Sheryl Ho/UNDP.

Revitalizing the National Youth Council of Fiji

The National Youth Council in Fiji, as the umbrella youth organization at national level, has been resurrected through the project after a lapse of two decades. Its Constitution and five-year strategic plan have been drafted in 2013.

During the corporate planning and constitution-making process, a total of 157 youths, of which 36 percent were women, participated in the series of meetings. The Constitution and the Strategic Plan was recently reviewed for endorsement by all stakeholders at the the National Youth Council of Fiji Annual General Meeting. The meeting was attended by 144 youths and included representatives from the Provincial Youth Forum of the Fiji Islands which includes the 14 provinces in Fiji, including Rotuma while Kioa and Rabi are included as part of the Cakaudrove province, and members of the Youth Assembly of the Fiji Islands.

The process has given confidence to youths to participate constructively in national policy dialogues relating to the return of the country to democratic governance. National Youth Council of Fiji is planning to become autonomous after the 2014 elections.

The participatory approach was taken to discuss democratic political processes, which will enable them to make effective contributions in their own constituencies.



Young men participating in a gender assessment on renewable energy in Koro Island. Credit: Sheryl Ho/UNDP.

National Youth Council of Fiji and the Pacific Youth Council

The National Youth Council in Fiji participates in the Pacific Youth Council with official observer status. This status was provided in recognition of the national youth council's move towards attaining full membership at the next General Assembly in 2016.

The Pacific Youth Council was established in 1996 in Noumea, New Caledonia as an independent regional non-governmental organization made up of member national youth councils.

UNDP's Commitment to Youth Empowerment

UNDP is increasingly supporting youth policy and programme at the country, regional and global levels. Since 1998, 19 UNDP National Human Development Reports have been dedicated specifically to youth, and many more have focused on youth as a cross-cutting theme.

Over the period 2012-2014, the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund is supporting 38 projects globally in

support of youth participation and empowerment. Several of the projects focus on solving the exclusion that is a root cause of trends such as youth violence and crime. They recognize that youth brought fully into the mainstream are tremendous agents for change. With the right opportunities to participate, politically and economically, young people become an asset critical to a future of peace and development.

As part of its commitment to youth development, in 2012, UNDP launched its Strategy for Engaging Pacific Youth in Development 2013-2017. This Strategy sets out guidelines for engaging with Pacific youth in development as a long term path to better outcomes for young people and for the broader society that they are an integral part of.

UNDP has been involved in youth empowerment in the Pacific as part of a network of youth stakeholder organizations in the Pacific including other UN agencies, regional organizations and programmes like the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Pacific Leadership Programme, Commonwealth Youth Programme and Secretariat of the Pacific Community and civil society organizations like the Pacific Youth Council and FemLINK Pacific.



For more information, contact:

Sainimili Nabou, UNDP Democratic Governance Resilience Building Team Leader, sainimili.nabou@undp.org

Mohammed Mozeem, UNDP Programme Analyst, mohammed.mozeem@undp.org

United Nations Development Programme

Level 8 Kadavu House
414 Victoria Parade,
Suva, Fiji
Ph: +679 331-2500
www.fj.undp.org



*Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.*