

Pacific Youth Voices

Volume 2 2010 Dialogue and Mutual Understanding



In this issue:
Nkabom Commonwealth Youth
Leadership Programme
Oxfam International Youth Partners
Commonwealth Video Competition
and more...



Welcome.

Pacific Youth Voices (PYV) is here again. I am delighted to talk to you our young readers of the Pacific once more. Much has happened since the last PYV issue and for the CYP South Pacific Centre it has all been good.

We now have a new CYP Regional Youth Caucus (RYC); 20 admirable young Pacific Island leaders who hail from Australia, the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. The CYP staff had the pleasure of meeting the new RYCs during their orientation meeting last July in Brisbane, Australia during which time they elected their Chair and Vice Chairpersons who in that order are Ms. Noelyn Wagapu from Solomon Islands and Ms. Tamara File from the Cook Islands. The CYP SP would like to thank the Australian Government for providing assistance to this RYC orientation meeting.

Readers have the opportunity now to also meet the new RYCs through their personal profiles

which are in this PYV issue. Let us all wish the new RYCs the best in working as youth development advocates in their respective countries.

While in this rejoicing mood I must not forget to pay tribute to the great work of the CYP's past RYC members. I want to mention you all: Nuks (Nukutau Pokura) Cook Islands member and Chair of the previous RYC, Matt (Matthew Albert) from Australia the Pan Commonwealth Youth Caucus (PCYC) Chair, Ebz (Ebonie Fifita) from Tonga and Vice Chair of the PCYC, Carthy Lavini from Niue, Kaps (Kalepo Vevea Toai) from Tuvalu, Joe Mukuya from PNG, Vince (Vincent Faaofu) Vice Chair of the RYC from Samoa and Nellie Willie from Vanuatu.

What can I say? You have all been an inspiration to the CYP, the young people of the Pacific and even the world! Nuks, Matt and Ebz; you have many a times flown the Pacific flag high during international conferences that you have represented our Pacific youth at. Your term had not been smooth sailing many a time but I thank you all for the understanding, perseverance, strength and courage that I hope CYP contributed to instilling in you. To the others: Kaps, you have been our Reverend, always the one to say the prayers during your meetings so thank you for your spiritual contribution. Carthy you were the newest in this group and I hope that you did get something out of the short time you were with the RYC. Joe and

Vince you were the listeners. You said little but we all know that like sponges you were soaking in the information which we hope was assisting you in your work with young people in your respective countries. Nellie, you attended only one RYC meeting in your entire RYC term however when I met you again in Vanuatu in May this year, I was blown away by the confidence, the outspokenness and the contribution you made during the CYP Mid Term Review held in Port Vila. You certainly have grown into a strong young woman and I look forward to the time when you will become the first female youth representative in the Vanuatu Parliament! Finally Mary; like Nelly you have certainly grown from the shy young Solomon Islands RYC member to an active Youth Development Officer with the Honiara City Council, not mentioning your role as President of Girls for Change and constantly trying to involve disadvantaged young people in Honiara City in your various youth programmes and the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Thank you Nuks, Matt, Ebz, Vince, Kaps, Mary, Carthy, Joe and Nelly for the contributions you have made to the CYP SP Centre. You all are empowered young women and men of who the CYP SP is very proud of. I wish you all a bright future and all the best.

Still on the 'thank yous' and 'goodbyes' I would also like to say a big thank you to Samantha Ryan the CYP Media Officer for

Pacific Youth Voices is supported by the Commonwealth Youth Programme, which works to empower young people 15-29 to contribute to the development of their communities. Commonwealth Youth Programme South Pacific is one of four regional centres around the world and works with young people, governments and NGOs of its 13 member countries in the Pacific region. Commonwealth Youth Programme South Pacific supports a group of young leaders from the Pacific who advocate for Pacific young people's issues, the Commonwealth Youth Programme's Regional Youth Caucus (RYC).

the past year. Sam has been a valuable contribution to the work of the CYP SP Centre. Not only has she been responsible for the last and current Pacific Youth Voices, she has conducted a communications training for the new RYC members, has done a digital storytelling workshop for the Girls for Change and done numerous other communications trainings for young people of Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Sam has also been the scribe for various CYP SP meetings and responsible for putting together their communiqués.

“We now have a new CYP Regional Youth Caucus (RYC) of 20 admirable young Pacific Island leaders who hail from Australia, the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.”

The staff of the CYP SP Centre will miss Sam’s down to earth and approachable nature and her willingness to take on tasks. I am sure the young people of Honiara where she has spent most of her one year term will also miss her especially the youth volunteers of the Honiara City Council. The CYP and your Pacific young friends wish you all the best in the future Sam.

The CYP is feeling very positive about its work in the coming three years. This is especially so with the completion of the CYP Strategic Plan which is to cover the four years period from 2008/2009 to 2011/2012.

In the past year the CYP was undergoing a review process of our strategic directions. As such you all may have experienced a lull in our activities in your countries. The review is completed; a new Strategic Plan is in place. The CYP SP Centre is now rolling out this strategic plan with assessments of Youth Ministries’ capacities in delivering

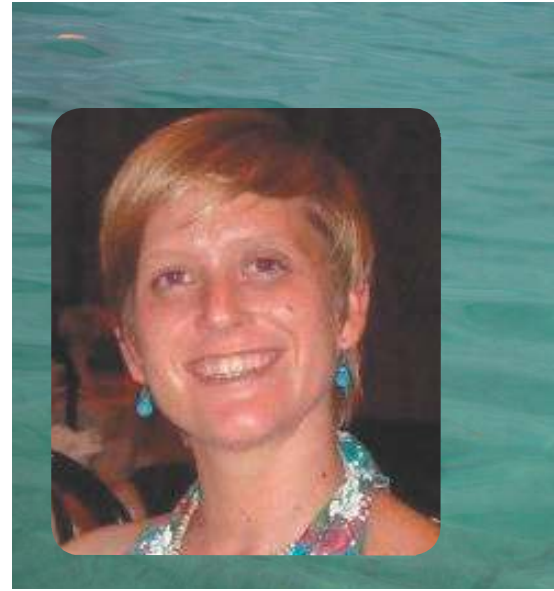
youth development work. Assessments will also be carried out with the youth ministries and other youth stakeholders in the CYP’s three strategic programme areas which are: Youth Enterprise and Sustainable Livelihoods (YESL); Governance, Development and Youth Networks (GDYN) and Youth Work Education and Training (YWET).

It is hoped that the assessments will highlight areas that CYP can address on its own or in collaboration with its regional partners.

Currently the CYP SP Centre is collaborating with the Solomon Islands Ministry of Women, Youth and Children Affairs, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and UNICEF Fiji on a Solomon Islands National Youth Summit that will focus on mainstreaming the implementation of the Solomon Islands National Youth Policy and Provincial Youth Policies into National and Provincial Government Ministries and Civil Society stakeholders’ plans, programmes and activities.

This Pacific Youth Voices contains great readings contributed by our RYC members and other young people of our region. Thank you everyone for your contributions and I wish everyone learns something new and useful to their lives.

Afu Billy,
Regional Director
Commonwealth Youth
Programme South Pacific Centre



In this issue...
there are some amazing youth voices that I want to share with you. Noelyn Wagapu and Rebecca Solomon write about their profound experience at the Nkabom Commonwealth Leadership Programme and how its focus on conflict and peace building changed their perspective on peace in their own countries. We profile some fascinating young people who have been chosen as Oxfam International Youth Partners. We hope to hear from them on their journeys. We also talk to a previously profiled climate change activist called Luana Bosanquet-Heays about her Protect Our Pacific petition campaign in New Zealand.

A big thanks to all the RYC members, who have already been named by Afu, as well as the other young writers and contributors. You gave me the words, ideas, passion and inspiration to put this publication together. You are strong leaders and advocates in your own communities, freely giving your time and energy to the causes that you believe in to help others. May you find the strength in yourself as well as the support of people who believe in you to keep going.

To everyone I have met while in the Pacific, tagio tumas. You have made my time very special.



Noelyn and other Nkabom participants paying respects at the Rwandan genocide memorial site. Photos courtesy of Noelyn Wagapu.

Young People Beacons to Peace

Noelyn Wagapu of Solomon Islands and Rebecca Solomon of Vanuatu were chosen to attend the Nkabom Commonwealth Youth Leadership Programme held in Kigali, Rwanda from September 5-15. Through a busy, interactive 10 day programme, Nkabom united 18 to 25 year olds from across the globe.

Noelyn says, "ten days of Nkabom 2010, Commonwealth Youth Leadership Programme felt like months of grassroots discovery. Knowledge of peace building and conflict resolution was acquired; networks were secured; fellowship with strategic members of the Rwandan government took place; dialogue with genocide victims and perpetrators was truly inspiring.

Constructive workshops were held for the benefit of all Nkabom participants and their respective communities and networks.

"A lot was accomplished at Nkabom 2010. It would be

wrong of me to single out one part of the programme as the most worthwhile. I felt as though each part of the Nkabom programme was a piece to an overall puzzle of discovery and experience. From the social and political interaction between participants and staff, to the experience of Rwanda

"Visits to the Rwandan genocide memorial sites often provoked an intense feeling of pity, trauma, fear, regret and sadness. However, visits to villages where victims and perpetrators lived amongst each other in harmony were moments of hope, faith and reconciliation."

as a whole; also the interactive learning sessions hosted by the Commonwealth and the dialogue with appropriate Rwandan leaders across the spectrum."

"The visit to the genocide memorial sites was the most challenging part of the programme. It would be inadequate to say the experience was haunting, even though it was in a way. It was emotionally moving, and will stay with us for the rest of our lives. These experiences were vivid and bare. Nothing was disguised or sugar coated, nothing was sensationalised or understated. Every detail surrounding the

buildup, the genocide itself, and the aftermath was laid out before your eyes. The experience carried a strong sense of reality for our young leaders. It exposed the extreme nature of humanity; it described the capability of evil and wrongdoing; the outcomes of violence, hatred

and discrimination. However, it also laid the foundation for reconciliation, hope and faith; giving us a challenge to never allow this again. It challenged us as leaders for the future to be beacons towards an era of peace and stability."

"Visits to the Rwandan genocide memorial sites evoked intense feelings of pity, trauma, fear, regret and sadness. However, visits to villages where victims and perpetrators lived amongst each other in harmony were moments of hope, faith and reconciliation."



"As President Kagame said during his inauguration, 'This nation will forgive but will never forget.'"

Rebecca Solomon agrees that the visit to the genocide memorial sites was the most challenging aspect saying, "before going to Rwanda I was expecting a scary environment as I had seen in movies and heard on the news. When we arrived in Rwanda it was a totally different thing. Looking at the memorial sites, hearing the stories and seeing the genocides victims, it's heartbreaking."

Noelyn reflects on the situation in her country saying, "the Solomon Islands is in a post-conflict peace and reconciliation process after the ethnic tension that happened in 2000. Since then the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was called in to disarm combatants and restore peace. RAMSI has been working very hard with our government to restore law and order and to maintain peace, but the struggle to go 'back to normalcy' still continues. I had this strong feeling that RAMSI can bring back the so called 'Happy Isles'. I was dead wrong. Nkabom 2010 empowered me. Today I hold a different perspective. I acknowledge the role of RAMSI in the country. However, we cannot always rely on RAMSI, thinking that it's their role and responsibility, and take it for granted. It will only lead to our eventual downfall."

"Nkabom contributed to a newly-ignited understanding for me. The future of Solomon Islands is uncertain. In order to restore peace and stability it comes back to us the good citizens of the Solomon Islands to resolve our own problems which we have caused. The fact that we have a large population of unemployed

young people in our urban center of Honiara was seen as a major contributing factor in the ethnic tensions. By finding meaningful employment and allowing these young people to positively contribute to their own societies, long term stability and peace can be achieved. In terms of ethnic tensions, I believe that young people have the power to look beyond old social divisions to forge a strong sense of nationhood and unity."

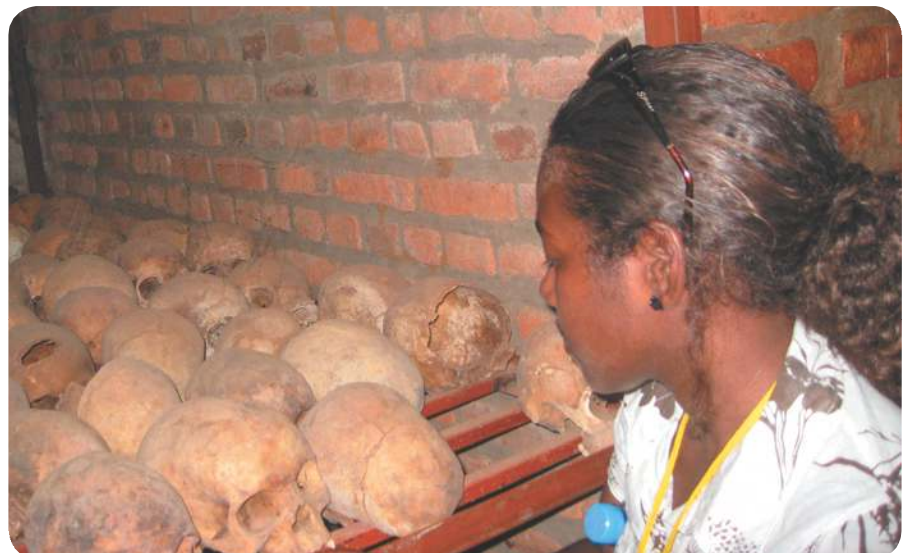
Rebecca reflects on the situation in Vanuatu saying, "In Vanuatu we don't have big conflicts that end up finding reconciliation. Land disputes are the major one. The thing that changed my way of thinking about conflict and reconciliation is when we had our field trip to a community where the killers and the survivors live together. They had forgiveness in their heart. It surprised me that the community has a young leader and the community listen to him and work together. The buildings in the community were all built by the community."

Noelyn states, "I was overwhelmed by my nomination as Solomon Island's representative to Nkabom 2010 Commonwealth Leadership programme. The process was

very competitive, and it is not common for a female to represent the country at an international level of dialogue. It was always going to be a challenge but it was one that only encouraged me to move forward. I was honored by the opportunity to serve the South Pacific region, to provide a valid contribution, and to share a South Pacific perspective at an international level of consultation and engagement."

Nkabom is directed by young people themselves, actively engaging them in international issues, particularly conflict resolution. Through fostering friendships and encouraging the exchange of ideas among people from diverse cultural backgrounds, the programme seeks to develop a network of young leaders who can pioneer and revitalise peacebuilding initiatives in their communities, their countries and beyond.

Nkabom is a flagship youth project of the Royal Commonwealth Society. Nkabom (pronounced ink-a-bom) means 'coming together' in parts of Ghana, where the first project was held in 2004. Nkabom 2010 builds on the success of previous projects in Malaysia, Ghana, the United Kingdom and Cyprus.



Sculptures and bones kept under the church where the victims were killed.

Pacific youth partner for change

Oxfam International Youth Partnerships (OIYP) is a global network of young people working to achieve positive, sustainable and equitable change in their communities. OIYP supports 300 young Action Partners to learn, develop and take action in their communities. OIYP will be launched at the Kaleidoscope event in New Dehli, India on November 20-27.



Nickson Sidlikau
Solomon Islands

Tell us about your activism and community involvement. How do you try to make change in your community?

I organise activities that will keep young people busy, like sports. I also conduct awareness on modern changes that are coming into our community that will help to develop and improve the community and changes that will spoil and destroy the community, because change can be an advantage and a disadvantage to the community.

Where is your community?

My community is in Vatupuku, on the West Coast of South Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.

What issues in your community are you most passionate about seeing change?

I want to see changes in the living standards of my community, such as housing, and their access to good drinking water and sanitation.

What do you hope to get out of the Oxfam International Youth Partners programme?

I hope to get knowledge and understanding on how to

improve, increase and manage the little resources that are available to improve my community.

What most excites you about this opportunity?

It is my first time travelling overseas. I will be meeting and interacting with young people from different cultural backgrounds.

What is the message that you would like to pass on to other young people in the South Pacific?

Let me remind all other young people of the South Pacific of their importance to the development of the region. The potential in you is demanded by your own country and the young people of the South Pacific. Do not think negatively of yourself, be positive.

You are the future leaders of your country. What young people plant today, will be harvested in the future by our young generations.



Rebecca Bird Mentor
and
Motivator
Solomon Islands

Tell us about your activism and community involvement. How do you try to make change in your community?

Firstly I would like to tell you how I first became involved with OIYP and the impact that OIYP has had in my life.

I was an OIYP from 2007-2010. The programme has really built up my capacity and empowered me to work in my community, because I really have a passion to see change. I believe that the change I create in my community contributes to change in the country, and also to change in the whole world.

In my community I did HIV and AIDS awareness with a programme called SHARP (Sexual Health Awareness Responsible Practice). This group consists of 20 young people, 10 men and 10 women and we did HIV and AIDS awareness in Gizo Town, an Oxfam funded programme, for one year.

When that project came to an end I did awareness in a church youth group. I involved young people who were school drop outs and unemployed who are involved in drug and alcohol abuse. Sometimes I organise social and cultural activities, like dance competitions or sports, to engage them.

What's involved in being a mentor and motivator?

My job is to mentor and motivate the OIYP in their work in the community. We have to support them, to help build them up with the skills that they have, facilitate sessions and training.



I want to help young people see that they don't have to wait until they get old to make a change. I want to make that clear. I want to advocate for the rights of everyone, for the rights of young people to participate in decision making.

Where is your community?

Gizo Town, Western Province, Solomon Islands.

What issues in your community are you most passionate about seeing change?

In the last three years, I have worked with HIV and AIDS. People need to know that it can be prevented.

What are you most proud of achieving in the last three years when you've been an Action Partner?

OIYP saw the potential in me. Before I never spoke up, I just kept to myself. I was like any other youth, everyone has to think low of themselves. Now I am really proud. I thought Solomon Islands was my world, I never thought about outside. Going to international conferences about AIDS or the UN Millennium Development Goals opened my eyes to see bigger things, bigger change. So when I think globally I come back and I act locally.

When I go back to my community, I become a role model to the youth. When I went out and I came back, I shared with them what I had learnt. Everytime I go they wait and anticipate new things when I came back. They get something new from me and most of the parents came and thanked me, they said thank you for what you have given them, now they make good decisions, they are in vocational school, now they are youth leaders.

What is the message that you would like to pass on to other young people in the South Pacific?

In the Melanesian culture, in Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Vanuatu we almost have the same culture, where young people and women are not allowed to speak out.

It's time to act and make a change. There are so many people who have that vision to make a change but that culture is the thing that holds them back. I really want to press on young people to break that barrier. To speak out and use their right and power, their potential. They have a powerful voice that can change the community. They don't have to wait for maturity. I want to encourage people that maturity doesn't come from age but from accepting responsibilities.

If you have a vision that you would like to change the community then you must speak, you must act out. There is no time to sit down and wait. People are dying from diseases that can be prevented. If we do awareness we can prevent these deaths. If we speak up, these things can be solved.

Tobias Karl
Papua New Guinea

Tell us about your activism and community involvement. How do you try to make change in your community?

I work on issues affecting the lives of young people such as HIV/AIDS, drugs and alcohol and family planning through conducting and organising educational awareness programmes and sports activities.

Where is your community?

My community Port Moresby, in

a notorious settlement called Morata.

How do you try to make change in your community?

By providing young people with the information to make the right decisions and programs that are useful to them.

What issues in your community are you most passionate about seeing change?

Drugs and alcohol are the main problems in my community. Young people are very involved in this and it is creating all kinds of problems such as violence, crime, poverty and HIV/AIDS.

What would you like to achieve/ change in the next three years?

I would like to achieve change in the programs and activities that I am currently doing and advance into new programs and activities to gain more knowledge and skills

What do you hope to get out of the OIYP programme?

To learn and share experiences and create effective networks.

What most excites you about this opportunity?

Oxfam is trying its best to involve young people to create positive change and an equitable, sustainable environment.

What is the message that you would like to pass on to other young people in the South Pacific?

My message is to be a role model and be self reliant and don't give up on your vision.

Gesa Yanoda
Papua New Guinea

Tell us about your activism and community involvement. How do you try to make change in your community?

I'm involved in home-based care providing basic healthcare to the sick in my community.

How do you try to make change in your community?

I make sure my clients are happy and see changes in their lifestyle.

Where is your community?

Morata in Port Moresby.

What issues in your community are you most passionate about seeing change?

Drugs and alcohol are a big problem amongst young people.

What would you like to achieve/ change in the next three years?

What I want to achieve in the next the years is seeing young people in the community involved in income-generating activities to sustain their lives.

What do you hope to get out of the OIYP programme?

New ideas that I can apply back into my community.

Seeing young people from different parts of the world and sharing experiences.

What is the message that you would like to pass on to other young people in the South Pacific?

Get yourself involved in positive activities that will keep you busy and contribute to your community.

Sharon Koituit
Papua New Guinea

Tell us about your activism and community involvement. How do you try to make change in your community?

I'm a volunteer helping young people affected by drugs and alcohol and those without access to education. I also help talking to people about climate change.

How do you try to make change in your community?

Addressing issues with my friends.

Where is your community?

My community is located in Manus Province, PNG and I'm currently in Port Moresby studying at the University of Papua New Guinea.

What issues in your community are you most passionate about seeing change?

Young people like myself and the living standards that are now affected by climate change.

What would you like to achieve/ change in the next three years?

I would like to create projects that will benefit people and help them change their way of life.

What do you hope to get out of the OIYP programme?

I'd like to learn as much as I can from other people's experiences, as well as share my own.

What is the message that you would like to pass on to other young people in the South Pacific?

The greatest happiness in life is to help other people. In the South Pacific, young people are involved in many social issues that they themselves can change. You can choose to be different and help other people.

Simon Nick
Papua New Guinea

Tell us about your activism and community involvement. How do you try to make change in your community?

I work with youth to help them find their potential in life so that they can then fight crime and violence.

How do you try to make change in your community?

By working with youth in projects that helping transform their lives and to see the change that they can bring to their communities.

Where is your community?

I live in Morata.

What issues in your community are you most passionate about seeing change?

I am passionate to see change in the lives of youth that live in my community.

What would you like to achieve/ change in the next three years?

My aim is to see a better community as long as I am alive.

What do you hope to get out of the OIYP programme?

I want to learn to solve problems in my community and get to know others.

What most excites you about this opportunity?

To see India and to bring back to my community what I will learn from Kaleidoscope.

What is the message that you would like to pass on to other young people in the South Pacific?

The message that I would like to pass on is that we need to learn from our past so that we can make changes in our future.



Young women voice out issues through digital stories

In a first for the Solomon Islands, 12 young women were given the opportunity in June to voice out issues affecting them in a creative and innovative way. The girls took part in a three day digital storytelling workshop.

Digital storytelling is a new media form which combines the ancient art of storytelling with music and photography or visual art. The stories were screened to the local community at the end of the project, as well as published to a global audience on the internet.

Regional Director of the CYPSP Centre, Ms. Afu Billy said, "It is great to see young girls from Solomon Islands participating in these kinds of new initiatives because not only are they learning a new technology that will provide them with new skills to effectively communicate among themselves and to their communities, but they will be able to identify issues and concerns that girls and young women constantly encounter.

"Digital storytelling is dynamic. The training will empower the young women to be confident to raise the issues that affect them through real life examples and experiences using pictures and music which people in their communities will identify with.

The girls will be learning about a modern advocacy tool that they will be able to use to bring about positive changes in their lives and those of other young women in their communities,"

President of Girls4Change (G4C) Mary Jionisi says, "It is a good opportunity and privilege for G4C to partner with CYP for this pilot. The 12 girls will learn something new, for the majority it will be the first time to be exposed to digital media."

This project was an initiative of the Commonwealth Youth Programme South Pacific Centre, in partnership with Girls4Change a Honiara based young women and leadership group. Supporters of the project include the YWCA, Vois Blong Mere Solomon, Honiara City Council, Wantok FM, Save the Children, Medialink Studios, Non State Actors and the Feral Arts Collective from Brisbane, Australia.

Girls4Change is a group of young women between the ages of 15 and 29 who are making positive changes in their own lives and in their communities. They want a future where young Solomon Islands women are participating equally and contributing meaningfully as respected leaders in their communities.

Tongan band wins Commonwealth video award

A seven-month search for inspiring videos from passionate young people around the Commonwealth ended with the announcement of two winners from the Caribbean and Pacific.

Best Commonwealth Band/Artist was won by a group of singers from the Kingdom of Tonga for their 'Good to be Young' video.

'On the Spot' from Nuku'alofa consists of singers Emeline Kite, Minaira Fifita and Nisyola Fifita and guitarist Samiu 'Ofa.

"In Tonga, it's traditionally the elders who are the ones who speak," explained Minaira Fifita, "but nowadays things are changing. We have more youth groups and the youth have more of a chance."

The Best Commonwealth Video accolade went to Youth of the World by Samantha Khan, a 17-year-old from Trinidad and Tobago.

Attracting nearly a hundred entries from more than 20 countries as far apart as Barbados, Cyprus, Nigeria, Singapore and Kiribati, the Commonwealth Video Contest was launched late last year to showcase talent and diversity among the 54 member states.

The winners were invited to Marlborough House in London to help mark International Youth Day on 12 August.

To view the winning video from Tonga go to <http://www.facebook.com/I/2dc62KSaGQcgeI-3KoI0qoxVwKQ>; www.youtube.com/watch?v=L8dNeGWgWns.



Young women in Girls4Change's digital storytelling project.

International Youth Day

Under the theme Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, the world united to celebrate International Youth Day, and launch the International Year of Youth. Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Cook Islands tell us about the celebrations in their countries.

Samoa's Youth Unite Against Crime

Considering the current increase of young people in Samoa committing crimes, the Division for Youth (DFY) of the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development (MWCSO) and youth stakeholders opted to address this issue by celebrating the 2010 International Youth Day under the theme of 'Youth Against Crimes.'

Using the media to advocate and to increase youth awareness regarding the theme was considered effective and appropriate to promote Youth Against Crimes.

The WT media production company put together five video advertisements on community messages on the main crimes committed by young people, such as substance/drug abuse, theft and robbery, domestic and school violence. Two youth groups, three schools (Ma'agiagi Primary School, Wesley College and Leififi College), local celebrities from the IRB Manu Samoa 7s champions as well as police officers were able to relay messages on Youth Against Crimes.

These five advertisements were aired on Samoa's TV 3 Station from August 9-12.

The media campaign generated positive feedback the public especially with the use of the popular members of the Samoa 7s team as role models.

Two community campaigns were conducted for the main islands of Savaii and Upolu. The villages were identified from the Vulnerable Youth Mapping Exercise for Samoa and participants were requested through the church youth groups as well as the village mayors and women Government representatives.

The community campaign for Savaii was held two days prior to the 2010 International Youth Day in the village of Salelavalu. More than 300 people (young and old) were able to hear and ask questions on presentations by representatives from the Ministry of Police and Prisons, Ministry of Justice and Courts Administration, Office of the Attorney General, DFY – MWCSO as well as their village mayor on issues to do with youth and the law.

The Upolu Community Campaign was the major activity to commemorate International Youth Day on August 12, and was hosted by the Assembly of God Church in the new township of Vaitele fou, located in the outskirts of the city of Apia.

The programmes for the two community campaigns started with a service led by the respective Church Ministers of the host churches followed by an opening speech by the ACEO – DFY to welcome and thank participants for attending this important programme for Samoan youth to commemorate this year's International Youth Day.

In addition the International Year of Youth was also officially launched by the ACEO – DFY with its theme of 'Dialogue and Mutual Understanding.' This theme was noted as very fitting to the celebration by Samoa of the 2010 International Youth Day through its media and community campaigns on Youth Against Crime.

By Alan Aiolutepoa.



A Samoan police officer holds a presentation on youth crime for the community.





Miss Solomon Islands contestants lead the International Youth Day march. Photo courtesy of Samantha Ryan.

Solomon Islands puts youth at the centre of dialogue

Young people as today's leaders were celebrated during International Youth Day which in Solomon Islands was held on September 9 due to national elections being held in August.

International Youth Day celebrations began on Monday with an on air radio talk back show led by young people on SIBC. Young people were put at the very heart of planning for the future in a Youth Forum on Tuesday. Young people were asked to consult on Honiara's Urban Youth Policy and the National Youth Policy as well as drafting an action plan. On Wednesday a Youth Stakeholders Forum was held where young people's policy feedback and action plans were presented, with workshops in the afternoon on topics such as the Millennium Development

Goals, youth in decision making and media and advocacy.

On Thursday main celebrations and a parade were held.

Elwyn Talo from Solomon Islands Youth for Change said, "International Youth Day and International Year for Youth is an opportunity for young people

"International Youth Day and International Year for Youth is an opportunity for young people to see their own value and importance."

Attractions on the day included popular local bands, modern and traditional dancing, drama performances, live art and more. Young entrepreneurs and youth groups were invited to sell food, art and craft, as well and to promote their work.

to see their own value and importance. Our stakeholders are putting together their resources to empower, educate and inspire young people for them to become responsible and active citizens."



High school students holding up their International Youth Day slogans. Photo courtesy of Samantha Ryan.

Tonga National Youth Congress brings International Youth Day to every doorstep

To commemorate this year's World Youth Day, the Tonga National Youth Congress and the Salvation Army collaborated by creating Roadshows.

Director of the TNYC Vanessa Lolohea commented that, 'each year the concentration is always upon the centre of Tonga, Nuku'alofa. This year's theme is very important therefore we must make an effort to reach all the youth of Tonga whether they are in the centre or still at home.' From this comment evolved the plans for the Road Show and the theme of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding was exploded through the blares of speakers, brochures, banners, t-shirts and the cheers of youths through the villages and the Centre of Tongatapu.

On August 12 there were two trucks to kick off the Roadshow. Packed into each truck were a sound system, a mini-generator and most importantly youths from various denominations, ages and backgrounds who volunteered through the Salvation Army or the TNYC.

The day could not have been more perfect with the sun's wonderful rays warming the faces of the participants and a cool southerly breeze to keep the temperature perfect. By 10 o'clock the teams were ready to soar through the villages of Tongatapu and both trucks began from the Eastern division of Tonga.

As each truck passed through the villages, announcements for the World Youth Day by the M.C 'Epipola Wangatabu and Savelio Lavelua was accompanied by music, dancing and cheers by the participants. Lavelua, the president of the Tongatapu office, embodied the support from both the Salvation Army and the Tongatapu Office for youths in the kingdom. The Roadshow woke those who were sleeping, brought curious stares from those who were already awake and brought people out into the streets to dance, shout for brochures and listen to the message of the day which was an emphasis of the theme Dialogue and Mutual Understanding and how both the Salvation Army and the TNYC could help in bringing harmony to some of the misunderstanding that continues to widen the gap between youths and the older generations.

Both group continued a vigorous journey from the Eastern end with Lavelua's team going all the way to Niutoua and Wangatabu's team travelling through all the way to Haveliku.

Team members used innovation and sheer creativity to attract attention by singing, dancing, clapping and shouting through the villages.

When the teams entered the Nuku'alofa area the teams were already combined with Wangatabu's truck at the front providing music for both of the trucks. In the Nuku'alofa area the energy of both teams had double effects for they competed with one another to see who would be the champion of the day in an explosion of Dialogue and Mutual Understanding. By 6pm the tour of the whole of Tonga was complete and the teams assembled outside of the TNYC office. Hunger and weariness was evident in the eyes of the participants but the joys of the day's hard work and successful tour kept the participants bubbly. The sun set to the chatter of youths happy and reminiscing about a day of fun-filled activities to commemorate the World Youth Day.

By Siaila Jagroop.



Wagatapu and his team on the Roadshow. Picture courtesy of Hola Mafi.



Cook Islands youth get creative

As the theme for International Youth Day 2010 was Dialogue and Mutual Understanding, the Cook Islands National Youth Council in Partnership with the Governments Youth and Sport Division and various other youth agencies, decided to try something different this year.

We gathered in the centre of Town and held a 'DIY Tshirt Day'. People were invited to come down and write a message on our dialogue board, and then they were given a tshirt. But we added a little twist. We provided fabric paints, stencils, paint brushes and rollers and each person then had to paint their own Tshirt. The event was a huge success, and people enjoyed putting their own personal touch to the International Youth Day banner.

"The event was a huge success, and people enjoyed putting their own personal touch to the International Youth Day banner."

There was music provided by Local DJ G-Dub. The sounds pumping through town, as well as a few giveaways, enticed people to check out what we were doing. The event was also broadcast over popular local radio station 88FM. All in all it was a great turnout and everyone enjoyed themselves. It was an awesome way to celebrate International Youth Day and to kick off the International Year of Youth.

By Tamara File.



Making Waves to Protect Our Pacific

In our last issue we profiled Cook Islander Luana Bosanquet-Heays as one of the youth climate change advocates who spoke out at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen. Now Luana tells us about her Protect Our Pacific campaign in New Zealand.

Protect Our Pacific (POP) is a petition-based campaign (at this stage) that calls on the New Zealand Government to take responsibility for the effects that New Zealand's emissions are having on the vulnerable neighboring Pacific. It is imperative that we as Pacific peoples in Aotearoa take a stand and ask the New Zealand Government to help us. With forced migration and displacement of peoples Pacific-

wide an issue that is just around the the corner, we need to be addressing climate change now. Adaptation is an important part of this, but it is not too late to look at mitigation, at reducing our emissions to save our Pacific.

organisations will be speaking at our fundraiser on October 14 in Auckland. I will present the petition to parliament in New Zealand in early November with the help of the Pacific community in Wellington.

“New Zealand claims it is a Pacific nation in the international community, except when it comes to real issues that are affecting the Pacific like climate change.”



Youth advocate Luana Bosanquet-Heays

New Zealand claims it is a Pacific nation in the international community, except when it comes to real issues that are affecting the Pacific like climate change. That is the reasoning behind this petition, for the New Zealand Government to wake up to the dire situation that we are in. Last year the Greenpeace Sign On Campaign called for the same reductions to be made, whereby thousands of kiwis signed the petition asking the New Zealand Government to put in place targets to reduce emissions.

There has been public support from Oxfam, The Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand and Project Survival Pacific, representatives from these three

Pelenise Alofa helped launch the petition on a trip to New Zealand and spoke of the importance for Pacific people, particularly young people, to stand up for our right to survive in the Pacific. Because that's what is at stake, our very survival. Without our land, we are not complete. Fei Tevi, Pacific Council of Churches showed his support on a recent speaking tour of New Zealand.

The petition has been a huge success, particularly at Pasifika earlier this year, but has traveled all over the world, including the Indigenous Forum on Climate Change in Europe this year.

It is my hope that the New Zealand Government will wake up to the reality for us. It is planned to present the petition just before United Nations Climate Change Conference COP16 in Mexico, where I hope to attend and represent the Pacific as part of a youth delegation.

To find out more about Protect Our Pacific and get involved email luanabkh@gmail.com.



Act Now Theatre for Social Change

Sometimes creativity and a good dose of fun can go a long way in raising social issues and beginning dialogue and understanding in communities. Samantha Ryan interviews Edwin Kemp-Attril the Artistic Director and founder of Australia's Act Now Theatre for Social Change about their theatrical approach to activism.

ActNow was started in 2007 as a street theatre ensemble highlighting the situation of Adelaide-born Guantanamo Bay detainee David Hicks.

From our first performance, we established a company which continued to create street theatre works, and later branched out into community workshops and staged performances.

ActNow exists for several reasons. All theatre is political, and our work fills the need for theatre with an awareness of its inherent political implications.

ActNow's politics are defined by the artists involved, our members, and our audiences. The company is not aligned to any political party, and does not preach any one message. Our work is liberated from constraints of 'left' and 'right' wing politics, to be able to effectively explore issues artistically.

During 2010, ActNow has been delivering interactive performances to high schools, which explore the legal implications and behavioral causes of sexual assault and rape. The project has been developed in partnership with the Legal Services Commission, and utilises forum theatre-based techniques. It's been an extremely exciting project to 'take theatre to the people'. This has been done by touring the performance to classrooms, auditoriums, libraries, gyms etc in schools. But also, as a forum theatre piece, the project shares its ownership with its audiences.

Every performance is different, because the interactions with the audience are based on their own values and experiences. Politically, the company has made a significant impact in the Adelaide theatre landscape. We have proven that young people are able to create their own youth-led projects, without the control of 'adults'. We are providing an alternative employment pathway to tertiary education, and are creating work

'Theatre is such an exciting medium to create positive social change. It's always political.'

which is of high artistic merit and has political poignancy.

ActNow has over 120 members, who consist of young emerging artists who have the opportunity to find artistic and political expression.

Forum Theatre (a style of Theatre of the Oppressed) is an extremely exciting style of theatre. It enables the audience to 'rehearse for the real world'. It does this by creating a short play which shows the problems associated with a particular situation. It doesn't provide answers or solutions. The play is shown once where things

go very badly. Then the play is taken back to the start, and the facilitators explain to the audience that 'we don't have the answers'. The audience has the answers. The play is then shown for a second time, and the audience is invited to yell 'stop' at any moment that they have an idea to do something differently. The audience members then come up on stage, and try out their possible solutions. Sometimes it works,

sometimes it doesn't. We always learn something new, explore things in a different way. That's what's exciting about Forum Theatre.

ActNow has an exciting future. We're continuing projects using forum theatre in community settings, as well as main stage productions by emerging artists.

Theatre is such an exciting medium to create positive social change. It's always political; anything that anyone does is political. So when theatre is created with that in mind, it leads to some extremely fascinating explorations.



Act Now members in one of their main stage productions UB-120. Photo courtesy of Act Now.

NYC PNG and Duke of Edinburgh forge International Award Partnership for 2011

Further to an introduction facilitated via the CYP South Pacific Centre MTR meeting in May, the National Youth Commission (NYC) Papua New Guinea (Ministry for Community Development) and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award International Association Asia Pacific Regional Office have agreed to partner in 2011 to introduce the International Award in PNG.

At a workshop in Vanimo on 4-6 July on How To Interpret National Youth Policy and to develop a Five Year Provincial Youth Development Plan an Action Plan was presented.

Award Leader Training will be conducted in May-July 2011 to be followed by a pilot across Port Moresby and two to three provinces. Translation of materials is also planned to support the provincial activity.

The Award has been included in the PNG National Youth Policy.

Five year partnership between Tonga National Youth Congress and PLP

Thursday May 27 was a fundamental day for the Tonga National Youth Congress (TNYC). In the conference room of the TNYC, the director of the Pacific Leadership Program (PLP) Cameron Bowles, signed a five year contract with the President of the TNYC, Drew Havea. This marked the beginning of close relations between the two organisations and the term of Tonga's new desk officer for the PLP, Mereani Rokotuibau.

This partnership is significant to youth development and bringing the various organisations that are stakeholders in the advancement of youth closer. In Vanessa Lolohea from TNYC said, "the youth of today is tomorrow's future and our cooperating efforts for their development is essential in creating the reef that would continue to enhance humanity."

By Siaila Jagroop and Hola Mafi

PNG announces regional scholarships

The Government of Papua New Guinea has announced 20 full scholarships for each year, for the next five years, for youths and students in the Pacific region to study at institutions in the country.

Speaking at the opening of the 8th Forum Education Ministers' Meeting in Port Moresby this afternoon, Prime Minister of PNG, Sir Michael Somare said, "PNG is committed to playing its part in ensuring that Pacific youths are equipped to compete in today's globalised environment. I therefore have the pleasure of announcing on behalf of the government and the 6.5 million people of Papua New Guinea, 20 full scholarships to be made available each year for youths and students in the Pacific region including PNG to attend tertiary institutions in Papua New Guinea,"

Sir Michael explained, "Students will be trained in science and technological subjects such as chemistry, biology, physics, geology, mathematics, marine and environmental science, agricultural science, communication, ICT and medicine."



Vanimo youth in PNG celebrating PNG NYC and Duke of Edinburgh partnership.



Peer Education Successful in the Battle Against HIV/AIDS in Tonga

The only place that caters for Peer Education in Tonga is the Tonga National Youth Congress. Polikalepo Kefu the Health Coordinator at the TNYC has successfully launched the program in two other island groups around Tonga which is 'Eua in 2008 and Ha'apai on the 1st week of May last year.

It was only Tongatapu that facilitated Peer Education before Kefu started working at the TNYC. It is significant that Peer Education be established because it marks a movement away from simple awareness programs towards involving different groups in the advocacy for the improvement of situations for victims living with HIV/AIDS and the fight to reduce the rate of HIV/AIDS in the kingdom. This year the number

of victims living with the HIV virus has climbed to 18 in Tonga and though it may seem like a petty rate compared to Africa but considering that Tonga's population is very small the rate has alarmed many.

Due to this alarming rate the innovation and energy required to battle the HIV virus has diversified to include Peer Education. This is a significant move for it not only provides youths with more responsibility but also ensures that information regarding the HIV virus is taken

to an interpersonal level as opposed to the teacher-student relationship that had been employed in the past. Through Peer Education the message has become a discussion in every place possible from church to the bust stop to the streets, because Peer Education operates like a flood. A few are chosen from various groups and they are armed with information and prevention strategies regarding the HIV virus. They take this acquired information and share



'Eua peer educators. Picture by Hola Mafi.

it with their friends, relatives or an acquaintance who would then take the new found knowledge further out to their own groups.

In this case the facts regarding HIV/AIDS operate at a personal level and people tend to have a more relaxed indulgence towards the subject instead of behaving through the mainstream behaviour of discrimination. Yet, it is the involvement of youths in the battle that makes Peer Education a ray of hope in the battle against HIV/AIDS. According to Kefu, "57

percent of Tonga's population are youths and they are the most sexually active out of all groups, therefore it is crucial to involve them because they have a higher chance of reaching their own groups then bringing someone from another group."

This year the TNYC Peer Educators have made many contributions all over Tonga in the fight against HIV/AIDS. On Tongatapu, the Peer Educators won best supporting float in the

Galaxy pageant. The theme for the float was condom promotions and the Tongatapu Peer Educators were energetic in distributing brochures during the float, marching and shouting out messages during the float. In 'Eua the team there took the message from school to school and in the afternoons

they collected people in town halls to continue spreading the messages. Ha'apai also employed methods of outreach to schools and townspeople but they went further to include sessions with prisoners every week. The TNYC Peer Educators this year have and still continue to try and live up to their theme of Exploding the Myths, Let's Keep Talking.

By Siaila Jagroop.

Breaking the Silence, Creating Dialogue and Understanding

With the International Year of Youth upon us with its theme of Mutual Dialogue and Understanding, Sialia Jagroop of Tonga looks at a community performance of 'A Love of Life: Silence and HIV' and what it has achieved in breaking down silence, misunderstanding, stigma and ignorance around the issue of HIV and AIDS.

In Tonga at the Queen Salote Hall, the Oceania Performers together with Tupou High School's choir and the University of the South Pacific Tonga Campus choir, led by dazzling solos beyond her years from Ane Finau, took this year's theme to a new level with a jaw dropping and an awe inspiring performance of 'A Love for Life: Silence and HIV'. The performance ran from August 5-8. They rocked the stage and inspired many of the youth.

The hall was packed with secondary students from all over Tonga. The message and how it was conveyed took the fight against HIV/AIDS to a level never before witnessed in Tonga. The silence was broken and the themes addressed ranged from domestic violence to mythology, modernity, Christianity, gender issues, stigma and discrimination and HIV/AIDS. The production by the Oceania Centre for Art, Culture and Pacific Studies of the University of South Pacific displayed creativity, but more importantly the centrality of the performing arts in conveying essential messages to the youth.

This piece was first produced in 2009 for the Pacific Youth Festival held in Fiji. 'A Love for Life: Silence and HIV' was produced and directed by Allan Alo and poet Frances Koya. The music directors were Calvin Rore and Damiano Logaivau. It is a piece that should remain iconic in the life of Pacific Islanders. Poet Frances Koya reported that they were invited by the Prime Minister of Tonga Hon. Dr Feleti Sevele to be associated in the Kava Kuo Heka as part of the festivities for the King of Tonga's birthday.

However the performance goes far beyond the limits of festivities to embrace the theme set up for the International Year of Youth. The show brought

dialogue to life and proved that mutual understanding brings peace to everyone.

With a heartfelt performance from Taomi Tapu-Qiliho as Mele, a mother of two who has lived under an abusive and unfaithful husband for years, the story unfolds with her liberation from misery. She not only finds the will to stand up for herself and leave her husband but also finds God in the process. Mele moves to another village with her teenage daughters, finds a man who genuinely loves her but also discovers that she is pregnant and has contracted the HIV virus.

The characters, dancing performers and choir work together to bring out a fusion of emotions with in the audience. One minute a silence falls across the hall then another minute there is an uproar of clapping and cheering. The dancing is a masterpiece.

The relationship between Mele and her eldest daughter 'Ofa, who is spectacularly played by Mele Pelenato of Tupou High School, is the source of conflict which produces both irony and heightened drama within the story. 'Ofa is a peer educator for HIV/AIDS and yet she is among the first to be ashamed of her mother. Her hatred is centered upon Maika, marvelously performed by Michael Levaci, who is the man her mother has found new happiness with and whom 'Ofa wrongfully blames for infecting her mother. The show concludes with Mele's baby's birth. Though it may seem that Mele's incurable infection was approached realistically, the baby's negative HIV status highlights the fact that life continues and that HIV does not limit one's possibility to contribute to life.

There were awesome performances by Mele Maher as Nena, Tevita Hafoka as the Doctor and Fifita Selui as Moana, Mele's youngest daughter who has a gift for sensing overwhelming events and understanding the magnitude of pain. Her visitations from the spirits of Oceania, executed by the Oceania Performers, completes the cycle of life in the Pacific which is a mixture of mythology, cultural heritage and modernity. Though the production focuses immense energy on God as the resolution for some of the most pressing problems that we face in the Pacific today, it does not overlook the ancient spiritual link that binds the past and the present of the Pacific.

The essence of dialogue and mutual understanding in dealing with problems such as HIV/AIDS and even stigmatisation and discrimination challenges stakeholders of the International Year of Youth to step up. The teams from Oceania together with Tupou High School's and the University of the South Pacific's choir have paved the way for breaking the silence that continues to produce misunderstanding and misleading assumptions. In the words of Maire, "Moana is a depiction of us all, for life is not a straight road, one moment we are not scared and the next we are scared." The performance of 'A Love for Life: Silence and HIV' in Tonga teaches its audience that breaking the silence which continues to hold people captive in ignorance, stigma and discrimination can be achieved through many ways. The battle for HIV/AIDS is indeed promising when such innovation and enchanting creations are mobilised into the field. With the International Year of Youth upon us there is anticipation that the energy of this day will be transferred into it.





Your Youth Advocates

Meet the new team of Regional Youth Council members from across the South Pacific who will be the advocates voicing out youth issues at the local, regional and international levels.



Noelyn Wagapu
Solomon Islands RYC
RYC Chair

24 year old Solomon Islander

Noelyn Wagapu wants to learn more about youth issues and start contributing to some changes in the Pacific region.

Noelyn is passionate about youth and believes that with the potential they have through their creativity, openness to new and different experiences and desire for change they have the ability to move beyond geography and time restrictions to be the dynamic group of people that are the primary enablers of social change. Noelyn believes

that young people have the power to look beyond old social divisions to forge a strong sense of nationhood and unity.

The South Pacific is unique and has always been underrepresented. Noelyn takes this role as an opportunity to acquire new skills, recognise and raise the voice of youths in the Pacific. Noelyn admits that this was always going to be a challenge, but it was one that only encouraged her to move forward.

Tamara File,
Cook Islands RYC
Deputy RYC Chair

Tamara File, Deputy RYC Chair and member for Cook Islands, is the first National Administrator for the Cook Islands National Youth Council. She has been involved as an advocate in volunteer work since she was 13 years old, but for the last five years she has focussed mainly on youth-related issues.

Having a mother working in a women's counselling centre

meant she was always absorbing information and issues from a young age, a natural progression from that is that she grew up wanting to change the world. The first organisation she volunteered for was Red Cross and it just grew from there.

In 2007 she joined up with the Youth and Sport Division to help with the re-establishment of the Cook Islands National Youth Council. She is proud of how far they have grown CINYC over the past three years, to the point that they now have a functioning office.



Tamara's main passions are youth employment, education and youth in politics. Environment is also an interest of hers. She is looking forward to the challenge of holding the position of Deputy RYC Chair and seeing how she can grow as a person during her term.



Ellie Seckold
Australia RYC

Ellie Seckold has been a youth advocate for over ten years. Involvement in representative councils, youth groups and leadership programs has cemented her interest and

passion in advocating for young people.

After completing her degree in International Social Development, Ellie has been working on and off for the last five years in Fiji in the youth and development sectors.

Enhancing the lives of youth in the Pacific has always remained high in her priorities. Living in the Pacific she discovered that young people in the region weren't given as many opportunities to make decisions about their future and were often low on the priority list of many governments.

Additionally, they were often underrepresented at regional and international levels leading other countries to forget that young people exist in the region or believe that everything was OK in these 'island paradises'.

Ellie has designed and implemented successful youth leadership programs through her work at the Fiji Council of Social Services. These programs have focused on peer mentoring, confidence building, decision-making, exam preparation and anxiety and dealing with pressures often faced by young people.





Edward Parker
Cook Islands Deputy
RYC

Deputy RYC member for the Cook Islands Edward Parker is Vice President for the Cook

Islands Youth Council. He is also Assistant Youth Leader in his church youth group as well as Director of the Pathfinder Club.

He has been running activities that teach young people life lessons and values. He joined the Cook Islands Youth Council in November 2009 as a volunteer after being introduced by Nukutau Pokura the former Chairperson for the South Pacific RYC.

Seeing young people helping others made him realise that he

can do it. He has been inspired by life lesson activities which other young people shared with him and thinks it is only fair that he pass what he has learnt. He hopes the young people he has helped will pass on what they have learned onto others.

Edward realises just how important it is to be part of this Caucus, as it is a gateway to information on what other Pacific Islands are doing in youth work and how they may have dealt with youth issues.

Tom Junior alias
Pohnpei Talagi
Misikea, Niue
RYC

Tom Junior Misikea has been a youth activist since he was 14. Tom is involved with many community activities happening on his island and also organising workshops for young people within his own community. In 2009 he was elected Youth President of Hakupu Atua Youth and was elected as a member of the Youth Parliament. It was the experience of a lifetime debating issues in the house

and voicing their opinions.

Being an active member of the youth he was required to be at the forefront of their youth work, encouraging and supporting other youth to become active members as well, not just at the government level but also at the grassroots community level. Niue's Youth Ministry (in the Department of Community Affairs) were also aware of his work and involvement with young people in the community, hence the opportunity to be RYC member for Niue.

Tom is very passionate about getting young people to come



together and share their experiences. He is looking forward to telling the youth of today to start getting active and let's work together, let's have our voices heard, for our young people around the Pacific to become advocates. He is looking forward to seeing young people take the lead.



Tamara Babao
PNG RYC

Tamara Babao has been an activist for about 8 years now, seven years with Save the Children and one year in Port Moresby. Growing up in

a disadvantaged community, seeing lots of young people throw away their lives by getting involved in crime, underage pregnancies and prostitution due to poverty and boredom are some of the reasons she got involved in activism. Also there is a general lack of information available to young people regarding the issues they face.

There are a number of factors that helped Tamara get to this point. The first was someone giving her an opportunity to realise her dream to help people. She recognised this

unique opportunity and believed in herself and worked hard to make the most of the opportunities presented to her. She has also had support from her partner, family, friends and co-workers.

Tamara is coordinator for Save the Children Youth Outreach Project's Youth Friendly Centre in Madang, PNG. This is a drop-in-centre for out-of-school and unemployed youth. The centre offers life skills training, information and health sessions focussing on youth issues people face in PNG today.





Yvonne Ono,
Solomon Islands
Deputy RYC

Yvonne Ono, the Deputy RYC member for Solomon Islands, is

also the Vice President of young women and leadership group Girls4Change (G4C), volunteers at the Honiara City Council, and is a Board member of YWCA Solomon Islands. She has been an advocate since G4C started last year.

Yvonne has a passion for helping young women. She was a founding member of G4C. She has experienced what young people in the Solomon Islands go through, and how their voices are not heard. She feels that her peers in the South Pacific face a

similar thing.

In the future Yvonne dreams that the young people should be well informed of opportunities for services, and happenings in the world. That's what she is working towards as a RYC member, to enable youths to access information and make informed decisions. She would like young women to come out from hiding and to be empowered so that then they will be able to do something for themselves.

Sialia Jagroop,
Tonga RYC

Sialia Jagroop began her involvement working with the Tonga National Youth Congress in 2008. This made her realise just how much youth and other minority groups are marginalised. Working with the Tonga National Youth Congress brought her up to date with the global as well as national issues that affect youth in negative and positive ways.

She got to where she is by working hard and having passion for her work. With her work in the Tonga National

Youth Congress she is currently involved in spreading knowledge on STIs and HIV/AIDS and trying to implement proposals that can reduce the rate of STIs. They are also trying aid the project's continuation.

Sialia believes in the value of peer education. The TNYC Peer Education team have worked so hard on a community level to continue the fight against HIV/AIDS and STIs. Peer Education has quickly made awareness of STIs and AIDS much more thorough than other forms of awareness that has been done.

Sialia is passionate about



democracy and human rights because the level of discrimination against certain minority groups is still high in some parts of Tonga. Furthermore, there is a need to make law reforms in Tonga in order to empower marginalised groups such as women, youths and transgendered people.



Lauti Wayne Ako,
Tuvalu RYC

Lauti Ako is 23 years old and hails from the majestic lands of Tuvalu. He is married with a one year old daughter. He

was selected to be a Regional Youth Caucus member from Tuvalu by the Tuvalu National Youth Council and it has been a great experience to represent his country with ten other Pacific countries and also he has learnt many new things so far. He hopes that all the Pacific countries will work together to solve the youth issues which are arising in the region. Best of luck to all. Tofa.



Puatalo Tusitala,
Tuvalu Deputy RYC

Puatalo Tustitala as the RYC representative for Tuvalu has been an activist for 11 months being involved in awareness

programmes and other activities. She became involved in youth work in Tuvalu by attending workshops, volunteering, peer education and visiting youth centres.

Puatalo is proud of being with the young people who really need her help. She is passionate about ensuring that she is a good leader in the future.

Rebecca Lily Solomon,
Vanuatu RYC

Rebecca Solomon is the part-time Administrator for the Vanuatu National Youth Council. Before that she was involved as a volunteer helping the Council with logistics, communicating with youth leaders and attending trainings with the President. She was part of Oxfam's International Youth Partners program from 2007- 2010 and has also been selected as a Mentor and Motivator for Vanuatu for the Oxfam International Youth Partners programme.

In 2004 she joined Youth Challenge Vanuatu volunteering in the community. Through this she gained knowledge and training in issues such as mental health, custom identity, research methods, literacy, gender and culture, small business, development, governance, activism, human rights and child rights and life skills.

Rebecca is passionate about working with youth and has been involved in numerous youth oriented programs over the past five years. She attended a gender and culture workshop in South Africa, represented Vanuatu in the Commonwealth



Youth Forum in Malaysia and attended Oxfam's International Youth Partnership program in Australia, attended the peace building workshop in Rwanda and attended Oxfam Mentor and Motivator training in Hong Kong. She also attended a forum in Cambodia under UNICEF about children and young people.



Ladonna Daniel,
Vanuatu Deputy RYC

Ladonna Daniel is volunteering with the Department of Youth, Development, Sports and Training and is also working closely with Vanuatu's National Youth Council Administrator.

Ladonna Daniel is 21 years old. She has been involved with Youth Challenge Vanuatu for two years. Recently she joined their eight months programme in rural Efate facilitating workshops and awareness on health issues, culture exchange and education. Also she has helped the community building their primary school classroom.

Through Youth Challenge Vanuatu she has started to learn and adopt new ideas and skills. Carrying out awareness and training has sparked her activism and helped her build up her own capacity and knowledge.

Ladonna does a lot of volunteer work trying to help out with the issues that are affecting young people's lives by giving out awareness and sharing skills, knowledge, and experience.

She is most proud of her position as a Deputy RYC member representing her country and participating in decision making with other member countries. She is also proud of being a youth advocate in her country. Her career highlights are to be a peer educator carrying out workshops and awareness with the young people about the main issues affecting their lives.

