

# Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund

## United Nations Development Programme

### EOI-1308: Strengthening youth participation in the transition to democracy

#### 1. General Information

Year: 2012

Country: Fiji

Region: Asia-Pacific

Country group: Group 3

Project Title: Strengthening youth participation in the transition to democracy

Service Area: Civic Engagement

Outcome Area: [2.1] Civil society, including civil society organizations and voluntary associations, and the private sector contribute to the MDGs in support of national planning strategies and policies

Key Result Area: Fostering inclusive participation

Requested Amount: \$300,000

#### 2. Project Description

##### What are the objectives and expected outputs?

Fiji's recent political history has been marked by four coups and it has been under a military regime since 2006. The constitution has been abrogated and human rights abuses, censorship, and arbitrary detainment are common. This has resulted in a generation of young people with little understanding of democracy and access to decision making. In 2009 the interim Prime Minister announced that work on a new constitution and electoral system will begin in 2012, and that parliamentary elections will be held in September 2014.

Key Objective: To build capacity and empower young women and men to be active citizens and to facilitate their access to political decision making structures and processes as Fiji returns to democracy. Outputs:

1. Training programme developed and delivered with the Fiji National Youth Council (FNYC) and the Pacific Youth Council (PYC) in collaboration with national counterparts to build the skills of young women and men. Result: Young people have increased awareness of democratic governance processes and skills such as policy research, dialogue, messaging, advocacy, and mobilizing, and are able to engage politically and constructively with rights based approach.
2. Access facilitated and safe space created for young people to engage with existing government decision making processes and political dialogue on the transition to parliamentary democracy, new constitution and electoral system through the utilization of youth champions and trusted government officials for structured and regular dialogue in private and public forums.

Result: The views of young people are taken in to consideration and reflected in political and development policy decisions.

##### In what ways is your project innovative and catalytic? Please refer to the criteria from the guidelines.:

Innovative:

- Support youth involvement in the transition from a military regime to a parliamentary democracy as announced by the government
- Utilizes UNDP's strong relationship with government based on its cooperation and track record on peacebuilding dialogues and civic education in order to facilitate interaction and rebuild trust between young people and the government.
- Provides safe and enabling environment for young people despite the fact that some may have been the victims of human rights abuses
- Creates opportunity for young people to be included in national decision making for the first time and recognises the equal rights of men and women in these processes•

Targets many young people who have never had opportunity to vote with the last election held in 2006 and decision to lower the voting age from 21 to 18

Catalytic:

- The FNYC was recently revived with government endorsement after becoming defunct in the 90s due to government restructuring and internal mismanagement. The initial capacity and strategic support will make FNYC an effective peak body for youth issues
- Builds upon the civic education project by UNDP in primary and secondary schools (2008-11) and will try to capture these young people as they reach voting age

- Targets the empowerment of almost half of the electorate (aged 18-34 in 2014). For long term good governance, civic education of this generation is vital
- Has the tentative support of the Prime Minister's Office and the Dept. of Youth and Sports
- Is adaptable to other Pacific nations that face political transitions through south-south cooperation
- Appeals external partners looking to ensure stability and democratic leadership

**How does your project support the Democratic Governance Key Result Areas and Outcomes of the Strategic Plan (2008-2011) ?**

The project supports Key Corporate Outcomes of the Strategic Plan. In terms of inclusive participation it:

- Fosters participation of previously marginalized young people in the decision making and electoral processes
- Builds the capacity of young people to participate meaningfully and constructively in the political process at the national level at a critical juncture in Fiji's history.

For responsive institutions it:

- Strengthens the government's responsiveness to the issues identified by young people For supporting national partners it:
- Works with key government agencies such the PM's office and the Dept. of Youth and Sports
- Opens the government up to engagement with young people in a structured and facilitated environment.

The project addresses MDG 3 to promote gender equality and empower women through ensuring that young women participate, are trained, and that the issues affecting young women are brought to the attention of government. It will challenge cultural norms around women in decision making roles. MDG 7 to promote a global partnership for development will be addressed through working other UN agencies in developing and delivering training topics and follow on support in line with their core competencies.

**3. Other Funding**

TRAC: 300000US\$

Government: N/AUS\$

Other funding

Amount: N/AUS\$

Source: N/A

Comments: The TRAC funds will mainly be used to build the institutional capacity of partner NGOs and government bodies during the initial phase of the project. TRAC funds will also be used to cover the expected extensive travel costs used to reach rural areas and outer islands which are seldom included in public outreach such as this. The DGTF funds will be used to support the capacity building of young people and interaction with the government.

**4. Themes**

Specific to this Tranche:

General:

- UN System Coherence
- National Ownership
- South-South Cooperation
- Capacity Development
- Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)

**5. Project Owners Primary Contact/Owner**

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