

United Nations Development Programme



Country: Niue Initiation Plan

Project Title: Youth Employment Scheme (YES)

Expected UNPS Outcome: **Outcome 3: Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Empowerment**
By 2022, people in the Pacific, in particular youth, women, and vulnerable groups, benefit from inclusive and sustainable economic development that creates decent jobs, reduces multi-dimensional poverty and inequalities, and promotes economic empowerment.

Expected SRPD Output: **Output 3.2.** Green/blue economic policies in place to support private sector initiatives that create sustainable and environmentally friendly jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities for women and youth.

Initiation Plan Start/End Dates: 1 October 2021 – 31 September 2022

Implementing Partner: UNDP Samoa MCO

Brief Description

This project seeks to support the Niue Chamber of Commerce in re-establishing the Youth Employment Scheme, a 4-week holiday work placement for senior high school students in both private sector businesses and the public sector. The scheme can (i) expose students to a wider variety of options for their future careers and build their capacities in basic workplace skills and professionalism, (ii) encourage relationship-building between students and their employers, attracting students to seek employment in Niue after graduation, and (iii) provide financial support to students' families in light of the socio-economic impact of COVID19.

Programme Period: 01 October 2021 –
31 September 2022

Atlas Project Number: 00140010

Atlas Output ID: 00129371

Gender Marker:

Total resources required USD 20,000

Total allocated resources: _____

• Regular USD 20,000

• Other: _____

○ Donor _____

○ Donor _____

○ Government _____

Unfunded budget: _____

In-kind Contributions _____

Agreed by UNDP:

Jorn Sorensen - Resident Representative

Date

I. PURPOSE AND EXPECTED OUTPUT

Background

Niue is a small self-governing island state in free association with New Zealand. One of Niue's key development challenges is its small population. As of 2017, the total population of Niue was 1,719 (92% of those were permanent residents and the other 8% were visitors). Most Niueans are New Zealand citizens by birth, descent, or grant under New Zealand citizenship law. Due to high levels of out-migration, Niue's population in 2017 was one-third of its peak of 5,200 in 1966, and a 2013 survey suggests that close to 23,900 people of Niuean ancestry, with more than 20% born in Niue, were living in New Zealand in 2013.¹

As a result of Niue's small and slow-growing population, there is a shortage of labour and skills which stand as barriers to its economic diversification and the widening of its economic base. In 2017, almost 46% of the population, or 789 people made up Niue's labour force, representing 69% of the working age population (persons aged 15 or older). Apart from out-migration, the mismatch of education/skills and labour market demands is also cited as persistent concerns, according to the opinion surveys run by the Niue Chamber of Commerce (NCOC), the national private sector organisation. Further, there exists gender disparities in labour force participation and employment. While there are more women (52.4%) than men (47.6%) among the working age population, labour force participation is lower among women (60.1%) than that of men (77.4%). This gap in labour force participation is particularly pronounced among young people aged 15-24.² The private sector, which employs another 30.4% of men and 27% of women in the labour force, employs 1.2 more men than women.

Responding to the above persistent concerns in business development, the NCOC established a Young Entrepreneur Programme and Youth Employment Scheme aiming at promoting linkages between education and industry needs, through skills training and practical work experience (temporary holiday placement). The target was to assist 40 high school students per year. This initiative aligns well with the priorities of the Niue National Strategic Plan 2016-2026 which identified the private sector as one of the strategic areas for development, given the large share of its contribution to the national economy as well as employment. A vibrant private sector can notably increase employment and investment opportunities for all residents of Niue and accelerate economic growth.

The Entrepreneurship Programme, on one hand, has been very successfully delivered over the years to senior high school students, and more recently to Year 5-6 primary school students,³ and have received strong support from the school, parents and the Education Department. An average of 100+ students are involved each year in these programmes designed and delivered by the NCOC. Throughout the academic year, students learn the basics of setting up small businesses, business planning techniques, financial and marketing strategies and employment and production skills. The Niue Development Bank is also a partner in this programme where they conduct mock interviews with students applying for start-up loans and presenting their business proposals.

The Youth Employment Scheme (YES), on the other hand, began in 2009 and targeted Year 11-13 students at the Niue High School. It sought to provide students with practical work experience that complements their entrepreneurship education, and also introduced them to wider options for their future careers. Students were placed into private companies or the public sector during the year-end holidays for 150 hours (equivalent to 4 weeks' work, 37.5 hours per week), and they were remunerated at a rate of \$8 per hour. An average of 20 students in total were registered in the YES programme each year, which was around 25% of the total number of students in Years 11-13. The programme had been funded by Niue Department of Community Affairs and managed and administered by NCOC over the years. Since 2019, however, NCOC had not been able to continue with the YES programme as the Department of Community Affairs discontinued the budget for this programme.

Expected Results

Given the above, this project seeks to support the NCOC in re-establishing the YES, the benefit of which is three-fold:

1. Through placing students in their areas of interests in private sector businesses, as mentioned, they are exposed to the business environment which can complement their entrepreneurship education and encourage an enterprising spirit in the students. Working in a corporate environment also provides students with the first-hand opportunity to gain basic workplace skills in meeting the expectations of employers, as well as to realise the importance of professionalism and work ethics. UNDP will also support in applying a gender-sensitive lens to the provision of these placement schemes, ensuring that

¹ CIA World Factbook.

² Niue CCA; Census 2017, Figure 4.2, pp.30.

³ There is only 1 high school and 1 primary school in country.

the opportunities are given to both girls and boys equally, as well as any students with disabilities. This can contribute to reducing current gender disparities in the Niue labour force participation and create an inclusive environment for education and employment opportunities.

2. The 4-week placement schemes allow students and their employers to build both professional and personal relationships. Anecdotal evidence from NCOC suggests that there is a tendency for students to return to the same workplace the following year based on the working relationship they have built, especially where the placement is independent of the YES. Not only can students learn how to meet employers' expectations, but employers can also gain organizational skills and insights on good practices and how to attract young professionals. Importantly, this encourages students who had gone for their tertiary studies overseas to return to Niue for work after graduation, contributing to the increase of local skills, knowledge and labour force.
3. Lastly, the remuneration received by the students can provide some financial assistance to their families, especially during the festive seasons. The impacts of COVID19 and travel restrictions imposed led to significant socio-economic impacts for many businesses and households as Niue's economy is highly dependent on tourism. Many employees have been laid off and families have little or no regular income as a result. Every student can earn up to \$1,200 for their placement, which can be beneficial in such financially challenging times.

II. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

As a directly implemented project (DIM), UNDP will be responsible for the implementation of the Initiation Plan. Staff time of existing MCO Staff (including the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Communications Analyst, Project Analyst, Procurement Associate, Operations Manager) will be drawn on as required to support project implementation.

UNDP as the Implementing Partner will enter into contractual agreements with entities in line with UNDP policies and procedures and carry out project activities in accordance with the project budget. The list of entities is as follows:

- Niue Chamber of Commerce

To ensure that results are achieved, a Project Board (PB), comprising of all stakeholders as per the standard UNDP project management arrangements will be established to provide high-level oversight, strategic advice and guidance for the project, and will meet at least biannually. Its oversight ensures that the required resources are committed, and it arbitrates on any conflicts within the project or negotiates a solution to any matters with external bodies.

The Initiation Plan is subject to standard UNDP requirements for DIM audit.

III. MONITORING

All RPs/Grantees will be required to submit quarterly progress and final reports to UNDP, with both narrative and financial reporting in line with the terms of the relevant legal agreements with UNDP.

The UNDP M&E Officer and relevant UNDP staff will conduct biannual site visits for verification of the progress of activities and monitoring of results in line with the Annual Work Plan for the project. Site visits will be documented in the standard UNDP Samoa monitoring format. Where physical site visits are unfeasible due to COVID19 travel restrictions, they shall be conducted virtually.

The UNDP Programme Manager and M&E Officer will be responsible for Project Assurance in line with standard UNDP policies and procedures, including Project Quality Assurance, Project Management in UNDP's ERP system (Atlas) and implementation of the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT).

WORK PLAN

Period⁴:

EXPECTED OUTPUTS <i>And baseline, indicators including annual targets</i>	PLANNED ACTIVITIES <i>List activity results and associated actions</i>	TIMEFRAME				RESPONSIBLE PARTY	PLANNED BUDGET		
		2021 Q4			2022 Q1		Funding Source	Budget Description	Amount (USD)
		Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan				
OUTPUT 1 Successful Implementation of the Niue Youth Employment Scheme, thus establishing career and employment pathways for youths, through gaining first-hand experience and exposure to learning opportunities to learn and acquire employability knowledge and skills. Baseline: Indicators: <i>Number of Youths that have successfully completed the Youth Employment Scheme</i> Targets: <i>20 Youths successfully completed the 40 Weeks YES, with at least 50% are female.</i>	RESULT: National Awareness of the Youth Employment Scheme ACTIVITIES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop promotional material for student/parent/workplace interest for participation in program on following platforms: -Local Radio/TV news ○ Dissemination of information on YES via different media outlets and platforms such NCOC Private Sector Newsletter/Social media platforms, and the Niue Star (Niuean newspaper sold local and overseas) 	X				Niue Chamber of Commerce	UNDP TRAC	Grants	1,500
	RESULT: Relevant employment opportunities for YES mobilized, with successful facilitation of registration and vetting process for participating youth. ACTIVITIES: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Coordinate and facilitate workplace visits and meetings to secure interest and register to participate both in privates sector businesses and government departments ○ Conduct registration of Students, and facilitate capacity building and vetting trainings for youths on work ethics, professionalisms, and basic workplace requirements 		X			Niue Chamber of Commerce	UNDP TRAC	Grants	1,500

⁴ Maximum 18 months

<p>Related CP outcome:</p>	<p>RESULT: Successful implementation of the Youth Employment Scheme for Youths</p> <p>ACTIVITIES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Overall administration of the YE Scheme and wages of youths, with available support for youths (bank accounts set up, etc.) ○ Monitoring and Evaluation of Programme at the end of 4 weeks gauging youth's feedback, parents, and that of workplaces. 			X	X	Niue Chamber of Commerce	UNDP TRAC	Grants	17,000
TOTAL									\$20,000