



#POLICY22

Supported by:



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MOH, 2010, Maldives Demographic and Health Survey 2009

MOE, 2009, Global School-based Student Health Survey Maldives Country Report

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World Bank, 2014, Youth in the Maldives: Shaping a new future for young

women and men through engagement and empowerment.

Youth consultations

The State of the World Population report of 2014 was released on 18 November by UNFPA. The theme of this year's report is "The power of 1.8 billion: adolescents, youth and the transformation of the future" which recognizes us, young people, as the shapers and leaders of the future, and that we have inherent human rights that must be fulfilled for future development. In light of this report, and after reviewing youth related reports and having consultations with youth groups, Democracy House and its Youth Leaders are highlighting issues of concern and challenges to be addressed within the context of Maldives. Youth are defined here as those aged between 15 and 24. This booklet covers suggestions and recommendations that we would like our leaders to include in making laws and policies that affect our lives and shape the development of our country.

PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING



We comprise of 22 percent of the country's population and many of us live in remote islands with limited access to information. There is no culture of consultation with us.

- Our opinions included in developing our islands, atolls and country
- Parliamentarians to get our views during the legislative process
- Information on laws, policies and programmes that are relevant to us to be made more accessible
- Freedom of expression guaranteed by the Constitution to be ensured
- Youth Council to consist of elected members

EMPLOYMENT

We are concerned that the youth unemployment rate is significantly high at 43%, and female youth unemployment rate is more than the male rate. There is low awareness and no proper enforcement of the Employment Act



- Youth Centres to be utilized for youth leadership and capacity building
- Youth entrepreneurship to be encouraged, fostered and supported
- Opportunities for skills training to prepare us for employment for female and male youth equally, including opportunities for internships and volunteerism.

HEALTH



We face difficulties in accessing quality healthcare and health information, especially for youth in smaller islands. We have very few information sources on health, particularly adolescent sexual and reproductive health, that are reliable. While mental health issues like depression and its consequences like suicides are on the rise, there is a lack of mental health services that we can access.

- Much more emphasis on preventive health and more health information campaigns
- More information on and youth friendly access to sexual and reproductive health services, where privacy is ensured
- Access to support groups, and counselling, and campaigns to raise awareness on and remove misconceptions on mental health problems

HOUSING

We face limited availability of land and having to live in overcrowded spaces causes lack of privacy. This is causing various social problems such as family and marital discord, violence and abuse. We have no personal space and its causing youth to live on the streets, exposing young people to criminal activity.



- General standards for housing to be enforced
- Develop other urban areas to ease congestion of Male'
- More affordable housing schemes with rigid screening mechanisms that provide opportunities for youth as well

YOUTH EXPLOITATION IN POLITICS



We are often used to gain numbers at political rallies and mobilized for political activities basically to make noise rather than do anything substantial. Research suggests that gangs are utilized for political purposes as well. In a context of large numbers of unemployed youth, there is misconduct and illegal activities such as bribing and promises of advancement such as job opportunities, that occurs during campaigning.

WE WOULD LIKE

 Campaign activities to be better monitored, and candidates that go against political party and elections laws and regulations to be penalized

ABUSE AND NEGLECT

There were 420 cases of abuse reported in 2013. We face neglect by those responsible for our well being. Girls particularly experience high incidences of violence, harassment and abuse. Incidents of bullying in schools are also on the rise.



- Strict implementation of laws such as Domestic
 Violence Act and Sexual Offences Act
- Amend Child Rights Law to include protection for victims of abuse and neglect
- Rehabilitation programmes introduced for perpetrators of violence and abuse

DRUG ABUSE



Drug related offences increased from 1824 in 2011 to 3969 in 2013. Youth form the highest proportion of drug users. There is stigma attached to recovering addicts that makes reintegration very challenging for young people.

- Services such as counselling and support groups available widely for high risk youth, with emphasis on early interventions and addressing root causes of youth drug use.
- Substantial investment in rehabilitation, including for females. Emphasis on life skills and developing creative talents during recovery process.
- Support services for families and communities to integrate recovering addicts after serving sentences or undergoing rehabilitation

EDUCATION AND LIFE SKILLS

There is a disconnect between the educational curriculum and practical life skills that we are not able to handle adult responsibilities after we finish school. Higher educational opportunities are centralized. Children with special needs have limited educational opportunities, particularly in the islands, due to lack of trained teachers and proper facilities



- Integration of practical skills and knowledge, including life skills education, into the curriculum so that we are prepared to face the challenges and responsibilities of life after school
- Emphasis to further develop teaching skills among teachers
- All students to receive education at the same level and quality
- Decentralization of courses and broadening of distance learning opportunities
- Training for teachers in inclusive education, particularly to cater for children with special needs, and allowances for teachers of special needs children

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Facilities and programmes for youth are mostly available at urban centres, and those of us in rural and remote islands have limited access to these programmes. It is very important for the future of the country to promote the Maldivian culture and good values.

- Youth Centres to be utilized to build capacities such as leadership, communication and civic education among youth
- Vulnerable youth prioritised in implementing programmes
- Values such as equality and tolerance promoted among youth to facilitate peaceful communities
- Our skills and potential harnessed and utilized



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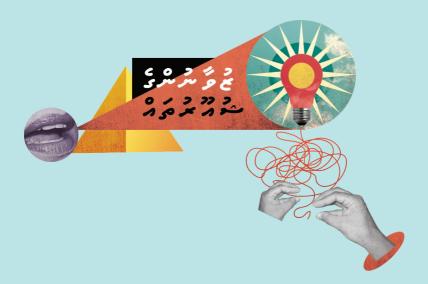
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