

# **YOUTH VOICES**

## **FACTS, OPINIONS AND SOLUTIONS**

**2005**

**MINISTRY OF YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND SPORTS  
MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
UNITED NATIONS TASK FORCE ON ADOLESCENTS AND YOUTH**

**PHOTOS BY: GIACOMO PIROZZI**

## MINISTER'S FOREWORD

Youth, comprising a large percentage of our population, plays an essential role in the development and productivity of the nation. The sheer energy they possess and their undeniable ability for its application makes them a vastly valuable asset. However, the age group in which the youth lies is indeed an age at which we are most volatile and vulnerable, leading to many high and low risk behaviors. Hence, it is of great concern and vast importance to maintain stability amongst the youth in which their brilliant energy can be directed to lead to greater harmony and efficiency. This can only be done if we truly recognize and comprehend their problems and their vulnerability. Their voices need to be heard.

‘Youth Voices – Facts, Figures and Opinions’, has commendably lead us to understand most of these issues and identified ways in which we can overcome the issues and solutions implement. The project provided Maldivian youth the opportunity to voice their views about the issues that concern them and to recommend solutions to these issues. Undoubtedly, the youth are the real experts on their views and we depend on to enlighten us to facilitate their progress. Being a vastly youth effort, gives immense credit to the reliability and applicability of the information gathered. It is from the youth, to the youth.

The report had been completed, their voices had been heard. This report will be a very useful guideline for policy makers, NGOs, and other communities working for the development of youth. I am thankful to the young people who had contributed in making this report reality. Their genuine support had given us a more in depth understanding of the related issues. I would like to express gratitude to all the UN agencies, government representatives, other NGOs and all individuals who put in an enormous endeavor to get the report this far.

However this is not the end. It’s just the end of the beginning. There are many further steps to take. The next phase would be that of implementation, which would indeed be the most important. Full co-operation from various concerned sectors would be required. We need to devote our time and dedication to make it a success.

Hussain Hilmy  
Minister of Youth and Sports

## FOREWORD BY A YOUTH FACILITATOR

Firstly, I would like to thank all concerned for giving me the opportunity to share my views on such a significant report on youth and their development.

Youth, is regarded as the most valuable citizens in of a nation in their quest for development. As youth consists of a large percentage of the world population and as they are responsible for the smooth transition of a society from one generation to another, it gives them a titanic responsibility towards enabling sustainable development.

Likewise, this small country of ours; the Maldives, also consists of a substantial youth population. And it is delightful to note that, they are already a vital asset to the nation. They are already involved in social, economic, and health issues as well as many more important areas.

Hence, I believe, that it is in the interest of the development of the nation, that the youth be provided with opportunities to express their opinions on issues of policy. Until the youth can truly voice themselves, the hopes and needs of the youth will go unheeded and unattended. However, I do believe that our voices are respected.

This survey has been conducted throughout the Maldives, in each atoll. Fortunately, I have had the opportunity to play an active role in the survey. And it had been an insightful and joyful experience. Without a doubt, this survey; concerned with economic, social and cultural well being of the youth in such developing times for the nation, would enable mass youth participation in coordinating, conducting and developing various activities beneficial to the nation. Hence, I regard this as an enormous development in the area of Youth.

My wish and prayer is that Almighty Allah bestows wisdom and will to all those supervising and coordinating all youth related affairs of the country. Thank You.

Abdullah Ali  
Youth Facilitator

## FOREWORD BY THE UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR

Policy interventions and programmes that strengthen the wellbeing and status of young people are essential for reaching the Millennium Development Goals. The active role and the participation of Youth in contributing towards the success of policy interventions and programmes cannot be underscored.

The Youth Voices: Facts, Opinions and Solutions Report is a one of the first such endeavours in the Maldives where Youth were empowered to lead nationwide consultations and research on issues that concern them. This project has now been successfully completed and the main findings of this two year process have been presented to high level policy makers, including His Excellency President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom and key Members of the Cabinet at a National Consultation workshop, held in December 2005.

I am pleased to note that most of the findings have been very encouraging. The research shows that the youth in the Maldives have strong family bonds and are well respected by their peers. Over 90% of youth feel that they receive adequate the emotional help and support from their families and that they can communicate well with their parents. Over 85% of the Youth feel that their peers respect them. Findings also reveal that religion plays a positive role in young people's lives and that young people realize that their lives have sense and purpose. These are some of the positive findings and can contribute as the building blocks for a better future for young people in the country.

While the findings are overall encouraging; there are many challenges as well. They include the relatively high number of youth who are neither working nor attending a formal institution. A very few numbers of youth seem interested in and/or engaged in civic issues and community work. It is also noteworthy that an alarming number of youth, over 80%, feel that it is not important to respect other religions. These challenges that emerge from the survey highlight the need of the hour on youth matters.

I applaud all Youth who participated and undertook this activity nationwide, and sincerely hope that their effort would contribute towards bringing a renewed focus and attention to addressing youth issues and concerns.

Finally, I would also like to congratulate Ministry of Youth and Sports and Ministry of Planning and National Development for facilitating this innovative and important initiative. The UN Taskforce on Adolescents/Youth consisting of UNFPA, UNICEF, UNDP and WHO, were pleased to assist and support this initiative.

It is my hope that through this and other related initiatives, all concerned stakeholders would re-dedicate and re-commit themselves with a renewed impetus to work together for a better future for the coming generations.

Patrice Couer-Bizot  
UN Resident Coordinator  
Maldives

## CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| FOREWORD BY THE MINISTER OF YOUTH AND SPORTS                      | 3   |
| FOREWORD BY A YOUTH FACILITATOR                                   | 4   |
| FOREWORD BY THE UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR                           | 5   |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY   | 7   |
| 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND                                    | 12  |
| 2. YOUTH AND DEMOGRAPHICS   | 25  |
| 3. ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND YOUTH                               | 30  |
| 4. SOCIAL BONDING, SUPPORT AND INTEGRATION AND YOUTH              | 42  |
| 5. YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES                                | 54  |
| 6. YOUTH: SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL COMPENTENCIES                    | 57  |
| 7. YOUTH: THEIR SELF IMAGE AND IDENTITY                           | 60  |
| 8. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND YOUTH                                     | 62  |
| 9. POST TSUNAMI SITUATION OF YOUTH                                | 65  |
| 10. PRACTICES AND POLICIES REVIEW                                 | 69  |
| 11. RECOMMENDATIONS: THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE | 89  |
| ANNEXE I  |     |
| TECHNICAL SAMPLE NOTE   | 106 |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The number of adolescents and youths in the Maldives is rapidly approaching 40% of the country's total population. This period in time is thus crucially important. Policy interventions need to be made and programmes that meet the need of the youth need to be strengthened. Harnessing the potential that the youth possess will help the Maldives reach its national potential and boost her competitiveness in the global economy.

The Youth Voices project aimed to unite and build consensus amongst all stakeholders about the main challenges facing the youth today and generate strategies for addressing the challenges identified through the research. In order to ensure the report's participatory process, a core group of young people were recruited to participate in the initial planning and conceptualization of the report. The reports Task Force brought more than 100 youths from diverse cross-sections of Maldivian society to the project.

Youth facilitators were trained and dispatched throughout the country to lead nation wide discussions between youths and adults. Surveys based on the research focus areas were administered to more than 4000 youths throughout the country. Discussions on the findings of the research were then held across the nation between youths and adult groups to propose recommendations and solutions.

The major issues that both youth and adults identified as challenges facing Maldivian youth today are listed below in order of priority

The Report's Research Committee decided to focus studies on five main areas;

- employment,
- education,
- family,
- recreation/leisure time and
- religion/ culture.

## EMPLOYMENT AND EDUCATION

Most Youth in the Maldives are either attending an educational institutions (40%) or engaged in an economic activity for income generation (35%). However an alarming 10.5% reported themselves as neither working nor studying. As is expected young men are more involved than young women in income generating activities outside the home (24.7% vs. 9.2%) where as young women are much more involved than young men in household chores and child care (9.5% vs. 0.8%).

A significant number of young people said they were students- 39.9% of young men and 45.8% of young women. Student proportions reported among the youth populations is highest in Male' (57%) followed by the Central North region (52.1%). The Central region is the lowest with just (20%). Considerable regional disparities exist in terms of opportunities for training and advancement, with high rates in the North region (69.2%) and Male' (61.6%) and the lowest rates in the in the South (47.7%). However, there are no major gender differences in this respect. 63% of the youth do have career aspirations. Of the 43% of youth who completed studies 91% completed O'levels, 5% completed A' levels, 2% have a university diploma and only 1% have no standard. There is no major gender difference in this regard

Solutions suggested by youth based on the findings of the report include, expanding educational opportunities for young people, providing access to career guidance and counseling in all secondary schools, changing behavioral attitudes towards work and focusing on gender disparities.

## SOCIAL BONDING, SUPPORT AND INTEGRATION

Most Maldivian youth- 86% - live with either parents or relatives, of which 60% live with both parents. There are both economic and socio-cultural reasons for these high proportions. Closer examination shows that the greater part of the small proportion of youth who live by themselves are in fact those enumerated in tourist resorts.

Strong family bonds help to increase the self confidence of young people. Over 90% of youth feel that they receive from their families, the emotional help and support they need, with no major gender differences. The same percentage has at least one adult who they can approach for advice and support. There seems to be a healthy relationship of trust and encouragement between parents and youth. 91% of youth consider they communicate well with their parents or guardians with little gender or regional differences. Overall, these are positive indicators on youth development in the Maldives.

The survey found that high percentages of the youth felt that the community respected their opinion (87%) and they are generally treated with dignity (95%). It also found that 66% of the youth felt that government officials would listen and try to solve their problems. The majority (52%) also feel that community leaders are concerned with the problems of the youth.

Most youth -96% consider that religion has an important influence on their day to day life and behavior, with no gender difference. The major sources of information on religion for youth are family (42.9%), school (31.4%), books (25.4%) and the media (20.4%). A large majority of the youth (96%) believe that there are many benefits of taking part in religious activities and over 90% believe that religious values and principles are very relevant in today's world. 78% of the youth believe that they are not at risk from the major issues facing youth today and a further 58% believe they have access to counseling and support in the community if they are ever at risk.

As a response to these findings that youth felt there should be more opportunities for youth, adults and Government to interact. This is proposed to be done by organizing volunteer and community work, promoting mutual understanding amongst youth and adults, increasing opportunities for youth to become more involved in community life and decision making, promoting awareness among youth, overcoming traditional obstacles to gender equality and acquiring resources to provide beneficial leisure activities

## DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Only 9% of Maldivian youth were members of any formal associations, organizations or civic bodies and only 30% have volunteered in their community. The survey found that 53% are interested in politics. 56% of the youth do take part in extra-curricular activities at school and 60% say they don't volunteer because there are no opportunities. When it comes to other cultures; 61% of the youth feel it is not important to learn about other cultures, 50.7% of the youth find it unacceptable or uncomfortable if people from other cultures live in the neighborhood and 81% feel that it is not important to respect others religions.

When suggested with these findings the youth suggested that the legal frame work governing clubs and associations needs to be revised. They also called on clubs, associations, government, island offices other establishment of charities and the private sector to involve the youth more in these activities. They further propose increased opportunities to learn about other religions and cultures and facilitating freedom of expression.

## SOCIAL BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

It was heartening to see that 88% of the youth were positive that they could change their life's circumstances through their own efforts and 91% believe that their lives have sense and value. 85% of the youth consider their future to be bright. It was also found that 81% of the youth are proud of their achievements. Another encouraging statistic is that 71% of youth say that they would stand by their principles even if their friends don't approve. A healthy percentage of youth showed a good level of knowledge about negative influences and their consequences. 75% of the youth also said that they are more responsible for their future than society and a further 95% said they take responsibility for their decisions even when they make mistakes.

An indication of the youth's ability to manage differences was that a large majority of the youth (91%) say that they can work out differences without resorting to abusive language or violence.

Some of the ideas that the youths have concerning how to improve social and behavioral competencies include; monitoring and evaluating current life skills programmes and further strengthening them, mobilizing more support from the government for such programmes especially in the academic sector and raising awareness throughout the community about the issues involved. They also believe that improving counseling services and training mentors and parents to address life skills issue would be beneficial in this regard.

## SELF IMAGE AND IDENTITY

The report was successful in identifying what the youth think the major problems in society are, what they feel could be done to face these problems and what they think their role in addressing these problem is. 77% of the youth said they would try to change decisions that are unjust to them. The report also found that the majority of the youth are confident about their future and also about themselves.

Greater awareness, increased employment with greater job security, more opportunities for school drop-outs and more opportunities for the youth to voice their opinions and be heard are among the steps that the youth suggest in order to further improve self image and identity.

The South Asian Tsunami of 2004 resulted in many socioeconomic setbacks for the Maldives. The youth of the country made up the majority of the displaced persons and also suffered through lost livelihoods in the community. The tsunami exacerbated the existing problems facing the youths while also creating new problems such as loss of privacy, loss of communal networks and psychological problems.

In addition to bringing together youth from different specters of society, identifying their concerns and bringing out their opinions on issues this report also looks at different youth programmes and policies being used internationally.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

### BACKGROUND

#### AN EXPANDING POPULATION

The number of adolescents and youth in the Maldives has increased substantially in recent years, and is rapidly approaching 40% of the country's total population. The percentage of adolescents and young people between the ages of 15 and 24 recently peaked in 2004, and now constitute approximately 25% of the country's total population, while the 10-14



year old age group is expected to peak in 2011. These statistics clearly show that the current period is crucial for policy interventions and strengthened programmes that meet the needs of Maldivian youth, who represent the future and are an inexhaustible resource for the nation. Tapping into and nurturing young people's talent and energy in a positive way will enable the Maldives to achieve her national potential and boost her competitiveness in the global economy in years to come.

#### ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES

With the rapid increase in the youth population it is imperative that the country match this growth with its capacity to engage its young people in economically and socially productive ways. Reports (the Government's Sixth National Development Plan (2001-2005) and the National Youth Policy report suggest that young people in the Maldives have begun to face a unique set of challenges as we enter the new millennium. Unemployment rates for young people throughout the country appear alarmingly high. As many as half of the approximately 30,000 youth living in the capital Male', aged 18-24, are unemployed. In addition to economic hurdles, Maldivian youngsters appear to be facing increasing social and developmental challenges. Widespread idleness, caused in part by unemployment and a lack of healthy recreational activities, is putting more and more youth at risk for a host of social problems that include crime and substance abuse. A recent UN study (Rapid Situation Analysis on Drugs Published by National Narcotics Control Board, Fashan, UNDP and UN-ESCAP in 2003) suggests that drug use is on the rise amongst the country's young people and will likely increase unless the underlying causes are addressed.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS REPORT

While discussion on the state of the nation's youth has been continuing amongst adults from all sectors of the country, Maldivian youth have not previously been afforded a formal or systematic opportunity to participate in the national dialogue. Prior to this report, no organized effort had been made to find out how young people themselves perceived the challenges and opportunities now facing them. Recognizing that young people should play an active role in examining these challenges and working towards solutions, the government recommended in its most recent development plan that youth be represented "in all levels of government, non-government, and community decision making" with regards to youth policies, programming, and services.

To this end, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, together with UN Inter-Agency United Nations Task Force on Adolescents and Youth (TF) and the Ministry of Planning and National Development, initiated a project to oversee the production of a youth-driven report on the state of young people in the country, titled "**Youth Voices - facts, opinions and solutions.**" This is the first joint UN project report of its kind in the Maldives. Coordination and production of the report was implemented by the Task Force and the Ministry of Youth and Sports with assistance from the Ministry of Planning and National Development and international experts. However, the majority of the effort was shaped, directed, and implemented by young people themselves, with the hope that the report will help to generate facts, opinions and solutions on issues of direct importance to Maldivian adolescents and young people. Thus far, this participatory process has contributed towards empowering both youth and adult stakeholders, helped to build consensus, developed unprecedented collaboration amongst all sectors, and commanded political attention. Ultimately, we hope that this report and the process by which it was created will mobilize action for addressing the challenges facing youth in the Maldives today.

## THE YOUTH GROUP

Recognizing that early engagement of young people to support and lead the project was vital to ensure the report's participatory process, a core group of young people were recruited to participate in the initial planning and conceptualization stages. In collaboration with the Youth Ministry, the Task Force reached out to local community centres in Male', schools, and independent clubs and succeeded in bringing more than 100 youth from diverse cross-sections of Maldivian society ( largely for Male') to the project. During the first meetings, project objectives were presented to the youth to solicit their feedback and guidance in designing the research effort. Over the course of the following year and a half, members of the youth group participated in each phase of the project including both stages of research, the national discussions on findings, creation of the Youth Development Index, a logo design contest and final discussions to recommend program and policy solutions.

## PROJECT GOALS

By bringing both youth and adult stakeholders into the process of creating the Youth Voices Report, the project has generated meaningful dialogue and debate amongst all vested sectors. The participatory process has helped guide the research effort and will hopefully foster collaborative policy and program recommendations upon dissemination of the report and its findings.

“Youth Voices” aims to achieve the following goals:

- To unite and build consensus amongst youth and adult stakeholders from diverse sectors of the population/country as to the main challenges facing young people today.
- To create and implement a Youth Development Index that measures young people’s over-all well being within specific research focus areas identified by the nation’s youth. This index will enable measurements of trends over time.
- To generate effective, unprecedented, and collaborative strategies for addressing the challenges identified through the research.

## PROJECT STAGES

The project was implemented in four main stages:

- 1 Train and dispatch youth facilitators throughout the country to lead nation-wide discussions between youth and adult groups in order to identify priority issues, elect members to a Research Committee and propose research focus areas for the second stage of research.
2. Administer survey questionnaires based on the research focus areas and a Youth Development Index to more than 4000 youth throughout the country.
3. Nation-wide discussions by youth and adult groups on the findings in order to propose national, regional, and island-specific recommendations and solutions.
4. Completion and dissemination of the report

## **EXTERNAL IMPACTS ON RESEARCH PROCESS AND RE-ALIGNMENT**

Over the course of the project, several external factors impeded or influenced the timing and structure of the process. As Youth Voices has involved collaboration amongst government ministries and multiple agencies within the United Nations, approval processes were often slower than predicted, and subsequently several phases of research were delayed. Weather also played a role in delaying research, as many of the islands that participated could only be reached by small launches that were very vulnerable to weather conditions. Political disturbances surrounding an incident involving incarcerated youth in August of 2004 likely impacted public support for the research, and may have influenced subject availability and responses. Lastly, before the findings from the final phase of research could be analysed, the 26th December 2004 Tsunami devastated many atolls and islands in the country. While initial rapid-assessments suggest that many of the issues discussed in the report remain critical, relevant, and aligned with the pre-disaster research findings, there is consensus amongst stakeholders that Maldivian society has been significantly impacted by the Tsunami in ways which could not be measured in time for the report's completion. To the extent possible, the tsunami's impact on youth is examined in the chapters that highlight recommendations from the nation-wide discussions held in late 2005.

## **DISSEMINATION**

A key feature of the Youth Voices Report is that it recommends regional, stakeholder-developed approaches to addressing the issues identified in the research. As such these discussions have been held at the island, regional, and national levels. Youth and adult representatives examined findings, discussed their implications with expert consultants and additional stakeholders, explored effective policies, strategies and programming, and devised national, regional and island level solutions to youth problems. The recommendations included large and small scale approaches for enabling the development of productive, healthy, and well-adjusted adolescents, youth and adults for the future. The project was linked with other youth development projects in order to ensure mainstreaming of the research findings with regard to national youth development. The nationwide discussions at island, regional and national levels were designed to

- Discuss research findings and implications
- Examine internationally-effective policies, initiatives, and programming
- Identify stakeholder capacities for implementation
- Devise integrated, collaborative solutions based on findings, internationally effective practices, and stakeholder capacity.

An important aspect of the dissemination process is that it is inclusive and ongoing. Throughout the research and follow-up phases of the report, staff and stakeholders have

aimed to be transparent with any implementation, planning and decisions, and have invited continuous feedback and advice from youth and adults alike. Other examples of project stewardship include a project logo competition in which young people from throughout the country participated, and selected the winning entry. Moreover, the final recommendations detailed in the last chapter of this report were generated not only through research on effective programs and policies, but also through regional level discussions amongst adult and youth stakeholders from throughout the country. The hope is that through such active participation in devising solutions, Maldivians from all levels of society will unite to support the country's youth.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION**

The research was conducted in two stages: Stage I launched youth-facilitated, nation-wide discussions, in 20 islands from 20 atolls and Male', amongst local youth and adults to identify the priority issues facing young people. Youth and adult representatives were elected from these discussion groups to travel to Male' for the first national meeting. At a national meeting, participants discussed the preliminary findings and a Research Committee consisting of youth and adults was elected to determine the key areas for in-depth research during the second stage. Stage II involved creation of survey instruments based on these focus areas. The survey was then administered to over 4000 youths and 700 adults from all regions of the country under the technical guidance of the Ministry of Planning and National Development. Focus group discussions and key informant interviews provided a qualitative component to the research that augmented findings from the survey.

### **STAGE I: NATION-WIDE DISCUSSIONS TO IDENTIFY PRIORITY ISSUES AND RESEARCH AREAS**

Youth facilitators leading the Stage I research were volunteers from many different parts of the country. More than fourteen youth from eight national regions and Male' were recruited through the regional youth centres, under the Ministry of Youth and Sports. In addition to these youth, six young people from the Male' based Youth Group volunteered for the project, bringing the total number of youth facilitators to twenty. Utilisation of existing networks within regional and island Youth Centres and Youth NGOs helped with the recruitment of research participants on each island. The application process for becoming a youth facilitator was available to anyone interested in the project.

Once recruited, the twenty facilitators were trained by a national meeting in **Participatory Rural Appraisal** (PRA) technique, a qualitative form of research. PRA was selected amongst other methodologies for several key reasons: The approach is designed for optimal community participation ideal for gathering the kind of qualitative data the research required, it provides a technique for “ranking” items of importance, It

requires minimal training and it is highly efficient for research conducted with limited time and resources. Once trained, the youth facilitators were dispatched to their assigned regions/islands to conduct interviews with groups of youth, adults, and the island administration.

Over the course of two months from mid-June to mid-August of 2004, the youth facilitators went to 21 islands in the Maldives and conducted PRA discussions with 84 groups of Maldivian youth and adults. The groups were divided into three types: Youth groups (participants ages 15- 24), Adult groups (participants ages 25 and up), and Island Administration. In all, 41 youth groups were interviewed, 37 adult groups, and 6 groups consisting of members of the Island Administration. Over all, almost 1200 people contributed to the discussions. All participants were asked to discuss youth issues in small groups, arrive at a consensus and rank the issues facing young people in the Maldives according to the importance they placed on them.

## LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

There was a significant time lapse between training the facilitators and implementation of the field work due to delays in signing the project amongst partner ministries. It is therefore possible that some facilitators may have been rushed in their data collection. In addition, the small time window may also have limited the extent to which facilitators could recruit diverse participant populations in some of the larger islands.

As with other research and aid efforts, island access was also affected by the geographic location of some of the islands and by limited flight availability. These factors also extended the amount of time that some of the facilitators had to spend travelling compared to time spent conducting the actual research. Bad weather in some of the regions further hampered the research efforts by limiting the facilitators' travels.

At the same time that the TF and project stakeholders were trying to implement the National Meeting and discuss the summary of findings, the Maldives was in an environment of political disturbances. Stakeholders felt that a recent government crackdown during a public protest and the subsequent incarceration of people who voiced opposition to the government and its policies might have affected open participation in the research. Ultimately the extent to which the TF and youth involved in the research were able to assuage concerns over open political discussion during the National meeting is unknown. However, participants at the meeting appeared to be fairly uninhibited when discussing current social and political challenges. Moreover, the staff hope that people surveyed during the subsequent round of research would have recognized the steps taken by the researchers to ensure the confidentiality of their responses and would have been encouraged to be honest and forthcoming with their opinions.

## METHODOLOGY

The PRA data presented below was collected by the youth facilitators using a qualitative methodology. Facilitators elicited open-ended information from participating group members about issues facing youth, and then listed and ranked the issues accordingly.

A quantitative approach - basic descriptive statistics - was then used to analyze this data. The issues cited were classified into broad themes. A value of “1” was then given to each theme identified in a report. If a variation on the same theme was also cited, no value was given in the general tally. Therefore in order to capture all of the issues cited, sub themes, or “sub-frequencies” were identified for broad themes with high frequencies and multiple variations. A value of “1” was given each time a sub-frequency appeared in a report, both when it was listed as an issue, and when it appeared in the “comments” section next to it. The top five issues were ranked 1-5 in decreasing order of importance.

The results of this analysis are presented below and represent national trends or challenges identified by the majority of groups across all regions. Other more anecdotal themes were brought up in different communities but were not prevalent enough to be considered at the national level.

## SAMPLE POPULATION FOR PRA STUDY

During the PRA research, a fairly balanced population of Maldivians was interviewed and included in the process when considering characteristics such as gender, age, marital status, employment, and education. However, despite significant efforts on the part of the TF and youth researchers (including a component on diversity during the research training, targeting specific populations, etc), there is some concern that youth and adults from some of Maldivian society’s more marginalized populations were under-represented. These included the physically and emotionally disabled, low-income youth, religiously conservative youth, incarcerated youth, and drug addicted youth.

## MAIN PRA FINDINGS FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> PHASE: YOUTH AND ADULTS

The major issues that both youth and adults identified as challenges facing Maldivian youth today (with percentages of youth and adult groups citing the issue) were as follows:<sup>1</sup>

|                                    | <u>Youth</u> | <u>Adults</u> |
|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| <b>1. Employment</b>               | 98%          | 100%          |
| <b>2. Recreation/Entertainment</b> | 90%          | 92 %          |
| <b>3. Education</b>                | 85%          | 73%           |
| <b>4. Drugs</b>                    | 68%          | 62%           |
| <b>5. Health Services</b>          | 61%          | 44%           |
| <b>6. Religion*</b>                | 56%          | 41%           |
| <b>7. Infrastructure*</b>          | 37%          | 46%           |

\* Religion and infrastructure were inverted on youth and adult lists in order of importance

## IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the PRA findings was that both adults and youth agreed on the top seven issues facing the youth today. This consensus suggests there is an opportunity for improved dialogue and inter-generational understanding between youth and adults that could contribute greatly towards efforts to find unified solutions. A discussion of each of the main PRA issues follows:

### EMPLOYMENT

Almost every group interviewed (98% of youth groups, 100% of adults and 83% of Island Administration groups) listed challenges in securing and sustaining gainful employment as the main problem facing young people in the Maldives. “Lack of job availability,” or “no opportunities for advancement within existing jobs” was the most often cited sub category. After this, both adults and youth felt that a lack of professional training and guidance was a major contributor to unemployment. Competition created by the influx or presence of expatriate workers was tied for third place with an increase in population and low turnover of older employees.

---

<sup>1</sup> Please see appendix A for a table of all issues identified in the PRA research.

## OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

Participants listed a lack of facilities, space, and equipment as substantial challenges facing youth throughout the country. Adults and youth alike felt that young people don't have the necessary means for positive recreation and entertainment. Many seemed to feel that this contributed to the overall idleness of the youth and several respondents cited this as a reason for crime and drug abuse. In addition to a lack of space and equipment, a dearth of clubs/associations and a lack of qualified staff were cited as challenges to positive recreation for youth in the islands and the capital.

## EDUCATION

A lack of social and awareness programs, particularly those focused on women's social and professional development was the most often cited educational issue facing young people. After this, Maldivian youth listed inadequate facilities and a lack of professional educators as significant challenges. In addition, participants felt that more educational programs/strategies were needed to assist youth who had dropped out of school.

## RELIGION

The facilitators, the TF, and consultants were struck by the high prominence given to religion in both adult and youth lists, and felt that it was an area that warranted further discussion and examination given its connection to other issues in the PRA findings. . It is also interesting that religion was listed as more important (sixth in ranking) by youth. This could suggest a changing trend in the Maldives where youth perhaps find tradition and religion more relevant and/or important. There was consensus amongst stakeholders and participants in the National Meeting that religion could be connected to many of the other prominent issues cited including loss of culture, lack of values, lack of youth awareness/conduct, lack of community, family breakdown, an increase in Islamic fundamentalism and others.

## DRUGS

The influence and prevalence of drug abuse was another major issue cited by participants throughout the country. Its prominence in the findings was striking to both the TF and Stakeholders, and as the discussion over its significance evolved, connections between the drug issue and others emerged. For example, based upon studies in other countries (and in the Maldives), it is widely held that lack of employment opportunities combined with little or no opportunities for constructive use of free-time, lack of adult guidance and support and ignorance of health and social risks contribute to drug abuse amongst young people.

## FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

While not included in the top seven, the prominence of “family breakdown” on both adult and youth lists was another compelling finding for the TF, stakeholders, and National Meeting Participants. Once again, the possible connections between many of the other issues cited made this particular finding intriguing. In addition to its prevalence in the discussions, it can be easily connected to areas such as youth awareness, loss of culture, drug abuse, religion, and even employment. Furthermore, as lessons learnt from other countries show that consistent, caring adult support is an important benchmark for positive youth development, staff and stakeholders felt it was an area that warranted further examination.

## NATIONAL MEETING / RESEARCH COMMITTEE

During the PRA research, facilitators helped participating groups elect two adults and two youth from each region to participate in the National Meeting held in Male’ in August of 2004. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the PRA findings and select in-depth research areas for second stage of the project. A Research Committee consisting of 5 youth and 5 adults was elected from the group of participants at the national meeting. The committee was then charged with the task of identifying a select number of research areas from the PRA findings that they felt required in-depth study in order to adequately measure the main challenges and opportunities facing youth in the country. After much discussion and debate, the Committee decided that the second phase of in-depth research should focus on five key areas:



## RESEARCH FOCUS AREAS

- **Education**
- **Employment**
- **Family**
- **Recreation/Leisure Time**
- **Religion/ Culture**

While high in the list of problems facing young people in the PRA findings, the Committee decided not to include drugs in the Stage II research focus areas for two key reasons: First, a rapid-situation assessment had recently been completed on the subject by the UN, so there was some concern that the report would be replicating research already conducted. Secondly, as discussed above, international research suggests that many of the reasons that young people turn to drugs include deficits or risk factors in the other five areas.



## STAGE II: NATION-WIDE SURVEY OF 4002 YOUTH

The second round of research employed the survey, focus groups, and key informant interviews, and was carried out under the guidance and supervision of an international research consultant, the Ministry of Planning and National Development and a private research company. Use of the survey enabled researchers to identify quantitative benchmarks from which percentages and averages could be calculated as well as to identify broader themes through qualitative discussions. To augment these findings, key informant interviews were also conducted with island leaders and other adults in all regions to record their views on young people's lives. Together, the two approaches offered a view into young people's lives from multiple perspectives.

As in the previous stage, young people from several regions of the country participated in the design and implementation of the Stage II research. Selected youth were trained in undertaking the data collection exercise and in handling data, including data entering and cleaning, research protocol, orientation with the survey instruments, facilitation of focus group discussions, interviews etc. The process helped to ensure that the data gathered was inclusive and relevant to the local youth/adolescent populations.



The research, conducted over three weeks in September and October of 2004, surveyed approximately 7% (4002) of the country's total youth population in 17 inhabited islands and Male'. Due to an initial lack of male respondents in the islands, the survey was extended to 18 resorts, where a high percentage of male youth are employed, in order to address the gap.

Of the 4002 youth who completed surveys, 52% were male and 48% were female. Participants ranged in age between 15-24 years. Of the 489 adults responding, 23% were male and 77% female with an average age of 41 years. 76 Focus Groups were conducted with 660 people participating, of which 49% were youth between 18-24 years; 25% were youth between 15-17 years and 26% were adults.

The findings were written up under the guidance of the national and international consultants and were compared with data from previous Government and NGO reports<sup>2</sup>. As part of the data cleaning process, the data was also shared and synthesised during several meetings with key stakeholders and personnel from relevant institutions.

An in-depth look at the findings from the Stage II research and their implications constitutes the bulk of this report, and is the focus of the following six chapters.

## THE STRUCTURE AND DESIGN OF THIS REPORT

Chapters 2- 8 of this report examine the findings from the Stage II survey data with a chapter on the youth demographics.

- Chapter 2: Demographics and Youth
- Chapter 3: Economic Opportunities and Youth
- Chapter 4: Social Bonding, Support, Integration and Youth
- Chapter 5: Youth Development Opportunities
- Chapter 6: Youth Social and Behavioural Competencies
- Chapter 7: Youth Positive Self-Image and Identity
- Chapter 8: Civic Engagement and Youth

Each chapter will discuss the findings and their broader implications for young people in particular and the broader Maldivian society.

---

<sup>2</sup> Census 2000, the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2002, the Rapid Situation Analysis on Drugs 2003 the planned Vulnerability and Poverty Monitoring Assessment, the Youth Employment Survey 2003 and the Reproductive Health Survey

Because research for this report was conducted prior to the Tsunami of December 2004, Chapter 9 examines how the disaster may have impacted young people across the social, economic, and environmental spectra, and the degree to which it affects the findings of this report. This section will provide an overview of rapid-assessment post-tsunami studies conducted in different atolls with a particular focus on tsunami-affected youth.

Chapter 10 provides a review of government policies, social and workforce development initiatives and youth development programs from other countries that have successfully addressed systemic challenges similar to those identified in this report. Recommendations for effective government, NGO and private sector involvement in supporting Maldivian youth are also discussed.

Chapter 11 looks at the recommendations and strategies that were compiled by the participants of the final National Level Consultations. This is the draft of the National Strategic Plan for Youth 2006 – 2008 and it is hoped that this will provide useful information for future interventions and initiatives.

## REFERENCES

- Grossman, Jean Baldwin. (1999). Contemporary Issues in Mentoring. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
- James, D.W. (1999). More Things That Do Make a Difference for Youth. Washington D.C. American Youth Policy Forum.
- 2004 Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health, Palo Alto California  
www.search-institute.com
- Maldives Census 2000
- The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2002,
- The Rapid Situation Analysis on Drugs 2003
- Vulnerability and Poverty Monitoring Assessment,
- Youth Employment Survey 2003
- Reproductive Health Survey

## CHAPTER TWO: YOUTH AND DEMOGRAPHICS

### DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

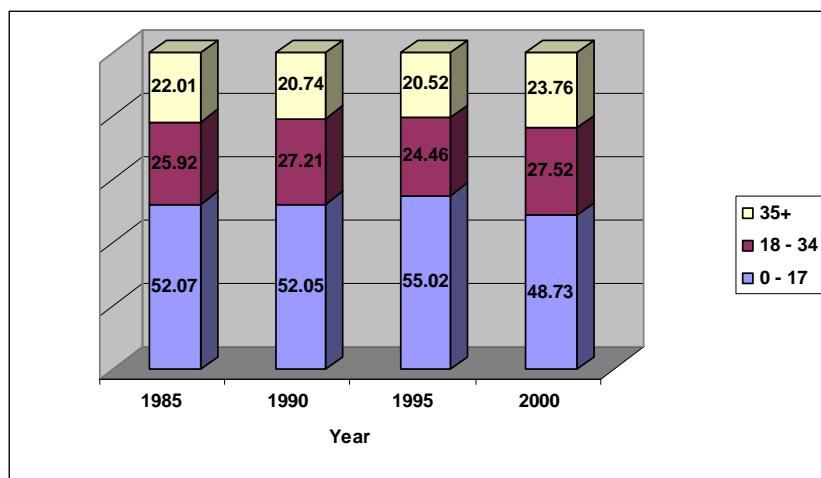
Maldives has historically had very high levels of fertility and mortality. As a result of a successful primary health care programme which began in the 70's, mortality levels, particularly at the very early ages, began to decline rapidly, resulting in extremely high rates of population growth. The population growth rate peaked during the inter-censal period 1985 – 1990 at an average of 3.4 percent per annum. The effect of the onset of a rapid decline in fertility levels during the latter part of the 90s has resulted in major age-structural changes. For the first time in the history of the country the base of the population pyramid began to narrow, gradually losing its original pyramid shape.

The population of the Maldives is presently going through a phase of significant age structural transition. These changes have major implications for the country's youth policy and development. This section provides an analysis of population trends and their impacts on the youth.

The age composition of the Maldivian population has been changing from census to census. It can be seen that while the proportion of youth in 1985 was just under 26 percent, this proportion increased slightly to more than 27 percent by 1990. By 2000, the percentage of youth in the population had increased to 27.5. These age structural changes are a reflection of the changes in the birth rates and infant mortality rates.

The high proportion of the population under age 18 has imposed a heavy demographic burden in recent decades. However, it can be seen from figure 1 that this proportion has declined significantly between 1995 and 2000.

**FIGURE 1: POPULATION BY BROAD AGE GROUPS**



*Source: Census reports, various years*

There are several important implications of these demographic shifts. To note at least two major implications of these demographic shifts, firstly, there is a gradual lessening of the pressures on the primary school system that the country experienced during the late 1980s and the 1990s as the cohorts of births from the high fertility period moves upward.

Secondly, and more significantly, these cohorts from the high fertility period are beginning to emerge in the labour market and are looking for more value-added employment opportunities than their parents did a generation ago. This is a process that will have major implications on the socio-economic development of the nation. Prevailing demographic trends suggest that the proportion of population in the youth age group is likely to continue to increase for the next two or three decades.

## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SURVEY POPULATION

The sex ratio of the survey sample is 109 males for every 100 females or 52.2 percent males and 47.7 percent females. Comparing this with the overall sex ratio of 105 for the total population from the census of 2000 we observe that the difference is not large.

**TABLE 1: SURVEY POPULATION BY REGION AND SEX**

| <b>Region/Island</b> | <b>Total</b>      |                | <b>Males</b>      |                | <b>Females</b>    |                |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
|                      | <b>Population</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Population</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Population</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
| All Regions          | 4002              | 100            | 2088              | 52.2           | 1908              | 47.7           |
| Male                 | 1068              | 100            | 506               | 47.4           | 559               | 52.3           |
| North                | 337               | 100            | 117               | 34.7           | 220               | 65.3           |
| Central North        | 470               | 100            | 196               | 41.7           | 274               | 58.3           |
| Centre               | 885               | 100            | 687               | 77.6           | 195               | 22.0           |
| Central South        | 354               | 100            | 171               | 48.3           | 183               | 51.7           |
| South                | 664               | 100            | 284               | 42.8           | 380               | 57.2           |
| Not stated           | 224               | 100            | 127               | 56.7           | 97                | 43.3           |

Regional distribution of the survey population by sex clearly shows the urban bias in employment opportunities that exist in the country. In all regions except the centre, a far smaller proportion of males were enumerated compared to females. This is the reverse in the Centre where of all those enumerated, close to 78 percent were males.

**TABLE 2: POPULATION BY LOCALITY AND AGE GROUP COMPARING SURVEY POPULATION BY CENCUS 2000**

| <b>Region</b>      | <b>Total</b> |                | <b>15 - 19</b> |                | <b>20 - 24</b> |                |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                    | <b>Total</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Total</b>   | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Total</b>   | <b>Percent</b> |
| All regions        | 3957         | 100            | 2350           | 59.4           | 1607           | 40.6           |
| Male'              | 1050         | 100            | 656            | 62.5           | 394            | 37.5           |
| North              | 334          | 100            | 215            | 64.4           | 119            | 35.6           |
| Central North      | 468          | 100            | 326            | 69.7           | 142            | 30.3           |
| Centre             | 872          | 100            | 347            | 39.8           | 525            | 60.2           |
| Central South      | 351          | 100            | 231            | 65.8           | 120            | 34.2           |
| South              | 662          | 100            | 447            | 67.5           | 215            | 32.5           |
| Not stated         | 220          | 100            | 128            | 58.2           | 92             | 41.8           |
| <b>Census 2000</b> |              |                |                |                |                |                |
| All regions        | 51081        | 100            | 30382          | 59.5           | 20699          | 40.5           |
| Male'              | 21510        | 100            | 12372          | 57.5           | 9138           | 42.5           |
| North              | 6908         | 100            | 4252           | 61.6           | 2656           | 38.4           |
| Central North      | 7802         | 100            | 4817           | 61.7           | 2985           | 38.3           |
| Centre             | 3532         | 100            | 1873           | 53.0           | 1659           | 47.0           |
| Central South      | 3803         | 100            | 2289           | 60.2           | 1514           | 39.8           |
| South              | 7526         | 100            | 4779           | 63.5           | 2747           | 36.5           |

A breakdown of the youth population by broad age groups show that, both in the survey sample as well as the actual census population, about 60 percent were in the adolescent ages while 40 percent were in the young adult ages,. These proportions reflect the current population dynamics of the Maldives and the impending growth of the labour force in the coming years.

The highest proportion of adolescents in the survey population was found in the Central North region where almost 70 percent of the enumerated population belonged to this age group. In comparison, the proportion of adolescents in this region in the actual census population was only 62 percent (see Error! Reference source not found.2).

The proportion of population in the 20-24 years age group is highest in the Centre region with 60.2% and lowest in the Central North region with 30.3%. This is likely to be due to the high number of youth interviewed in the resorts – where they are likely to be in the young adult age group rather than the adolescent age group.

Among the male youth covered in the survey 56.5% were in the 15-19 age group and 43.5% were between 20 and 24 years old. In the South region just 24.7% of the youth male were between 20 and 24 years old. In the centre region, youth in this age group comprised 65.8% of the total youth population. The highest proportion of males among

the enumerated youth, outside the tourist resorts were found in F. Nilandhoo with 92.3% of those surveyed being male youths.

**TABLE 3: POPULATION BY REGION, BROAD AGE GROUP AND SEX, CENSUS 2000**

| <b>Region</b>        | <b>15-19</b> |              |                | <b>20-24</b> |              |                |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|
|                      | <b>Total</b> | <b>Males</b> | <b>Females</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>Males</b> | <b>Females</b> |
| <b>All Regions</b>   | 100          | 48.3         | 51.7           | 68.1         | 31.6         | 36.6           |
| <b>Male'</b>         | 100          | 49           | 51             | 100          | 52.6         | 47.4           |
| <b>North</b>         | 100          | 44.3         | 55.7           | 100          | 34.6         | 65.4           |
| <b>Central North</b> | 100          | 50.2         | 49.8           | 100          | 42.1         | 57.9           |
| <b>Centre</b>        | 100          | 56.5         | 43.5           | 100          | 61.1         | 38.9           |
| <b>Central South</b> | 100          | 49.1         | 50.9           | 100          | 44.8         | 55.2           |
| <b>South</b>         | 100          | 44.9         | 55.1           | 100          | 33.3         | 66.7           |

On average 62.4% of the surveyed female youth were in the 15-19 years age group while 37.6% were in the 20-24 years age group. The highest proportion of female youth in the adolescent age group was found in the Central North region with 66.8% and the highest proportion in the 20-24 years age group was found in the Centre region with 40.7%. This compares to 51.7 percent in the 15-19 year age group and 36.6 percent in the 20-24 year age group for females in all regions from the Census of 2000.

**TABLE 4: POPULATION BY MARITAL STATUS, SEX AND REGION**

| <b>Region/<br/>Marital<br/>status</b> | <b>Total</b> |                | <b>Male</b>  |                | <b>Female</b> |                | <b>Not stated</b> |                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
|                                       | <b>Total</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Total</b>  | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Total</b>      | <b>Percent</b> |
| All regions                           | 4,002        | 100.0          | 2,088        | 52.2           | 1,908         | 47.7           | 6                 | 0.1            |
| Never married                         | 3,417        | 85.4           | 1,910        | 47.7           | 1,502         | 37.5           | 5                 | 0.1            |
| Married                               | 495          | 12.4           | 136          | 3.4            | 359           | 9.0            | -                 | -              |
| Divorced                              | 36           | 0.9            | 9            | 0.2            | 27            | 0.7            | -                 | -              |
| <b>Male'</b>                          |              |                |              |                |               |                |                   |                |
| Never married                         | 928          | 86.9           | 470          | 44.0           | 455           | 42.6           | 3                 | 0.3            |
| Married                               | 121          | 11.3           | 26           | 2.4            | 8.9           | 8.9            | -                 | -              |
| Divorced                              | 7            | 0.7            | 2            | 0.2            | 5             | 0.5            | -                 | -              |

According to the survey, 85.4% of the youth in Maldives have never married, 12.4% are married and 0.9% are divorced. The divorce rate for youths remains low in all the regions of the country. The highest married proportion is found in the North region where 16.6% of the youth population were married. The lowest married proportion was found in Central North where only 9.8% of the youth population were married.

In all the regions, comparatively more females were married than males. In the survey population 9 percent of females compared to 3.4 percent of males were married. This pattern is also seen from data on marital status and sex from the Census 2000. In the census, close to half of all males in the 15-19 year age group have never married compared to 44 percent for females. In the 20-24 years age group, 36 percent of males were married and 11.2 percent were divorced. In comparison 18 percent of females were married whereas close to 30 percent were divorced.

**TABLE 5: YOUTH POPULATION BY MARITAL STATUS, AGE AND SEX, CENSUS 2000**

| Marital Status and Sex | 15-19         |         | 20-24         |         |
|------------------------|---------------|---------|---------------|---------|
|                        | Population    | Percent | Population    | Percent |
| <b>Both Sexes</b>      | <b>33,266</b> | 100.0   | <b>23,514</b> | 100.0   |
| Never Married          | 31,052        | 93.3    | 12,888        | 54.8    |
| Married                | 2,026         | 6.1     | 9,567         | 40.7    |
| Divorced               | 182           | 0.5     | 867           | 3.7     |
| Widowed                | 4             | 0.0     | 21            | 0.1     |
| Not Stated             | 2             | 0.0     | 171           | 0.7     |
|                        |               |         |               |         |
| <b>Males</b>           | <b>16,590</b> | 49.9    | <b>11,620</b> | 49.4    |
| Never Married          | 16,380        | 49.2    | 8,638         | 36.7    |
| Married                | 198           | 0.6     | 2,642         | 11.2    |
| Divorced               | 11            | 0.0     | 230           | 1.0     |
| Widowed                | 0             | 0.0     | 6             | 0.0     |
| Not Stated             | 1             | 0.0     | 104           | 0.4     |
|                        |               |         |               |         |
| <b>Females</b>         | <b>16,676</b> | 50.1    | <b>11,894</b> | 50.6    |
| Never Married          | 14,672        | 44.1    | 4,250         | 18.1    |
| Married                | 1,828         | 5.5     | 6,925         | 29.5    |
| Divorced               | 171           | 0.5     | 637           | 2.7     |
| Widowed                | 4             | 0.0     | 15            | 0.1     |
| Not Stated             | 1             | 0.0     | 67            | 0.3     |

## CHAPTER THREE: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND YOUTH

Youth were classified according to the main activity they were engaged in during the survey reference period. Table 6 summarises the responses according to the main activity and sex of the respondent.

**TABLE 6: TYPE OF ACTIVITY DISAGGREGATED BY SEX**

| Activities                                | Total |         | Male  |         | Female |         | Not stated |         |
|---|-------|---------|-------|---------|--------|---------|------------|---------|
|   | Total | Percent | Total | Percent | Total  | Percent | Total      | Percent |
| <b>All regions</b>                        |       |         |       |         |        |         |            |         |
| Total                                     | 4002  | 100     | 2088  | 52      | 1908   | 48      | 6          | 0       |
| Economic activity/ income generating      | 1359  | 34      | 989   | 25      | 370    | 9       | 0          | 0       |
| Unpaid family work                        | 167   | 4       | 62    | 2       | 105    | 3       | 0          | 0       |
| Household chores and childcare            | 415   | 10      | 34    | 1       | 381    | 10      | 0          | 0       |
| Attending school/ educational institution | 1560  | 39      | 728   | 18      | 828    | 21      | 4          | 0       |
| Voluntary work                            | 17    | 0       | 11    | 0       | 6      | 0       | 0          | 0       |
| Doing nothing                             | 420   | 11      | 214   | 5       | 205    | 5       | 1          | 0       |
| Not stated                                | 64    | 2       | 50    | 1       | 13     | 0       | 1          | 0       |

According to the present survey almost 40% of Maldivian youth were attending an educational institution as a full-time activity. The proportion of those engaged in an economic activity for income generation follows closely with 34% of the youth population reporting in this category. A significant percentage (10.5%) reported to be ‘neither studying nor working’ and an equal number (10.4%) reported to be engaged in ‘household chores and childcare’. As for the rest of the youth population, 4.2% reported to be in unpaid family work and 0.4% of the surveyed youth were doing voluntary work for the most part of the reference period.

Comparing the survey findings with comparable indicators from the census of 2000, it can be seen that 25% were engaged in full-time schooling or education while 47% were engaged in economic activity. A proportion almost identical to the survey population 10% were engaged in housework and family responsibilities with a comparable 12% not working for various reasons.

Findings from the Male' Youth Employment Survey suggest that while only 8 percent of female youth remain inactive 33 percent of male youth were found not to be engaged in any particular activity. Neither the present survey, nor the census data lend much support to these findings. However, it is important to conduct an analysis of the Male' sample in order to further establish the extent of this problem.

While the male youth are mainly involved in income generating activities (24.7% of males vs. 9.2% of females), there is no significant difference between female youth and male youth in terms of school attendance (20.7% of the females vs. 18.2% of the males). There seems to be only a small gender difference in proportions engaging in unpaid family work (1.5% for males and 2.6% for females). The biggest difference between males and females was found in household and childcare where 9.5% females were reported in this category compared to 0.8% for males. Voluntary work remains negligible and almost the same for both gender groups (0.3% for males and 0.1% for females).

The largest proportion of youth (22.4%) that reported themselves as neither working nor studying is located in the South region (8.6% males and 13.9% females) followed by the Central South region (6.8% males and 9.9% females). The lowest rates in this category were found in the Centre region (2.5%), Male' (9.9%) and Central North (6.6%). This is cause for concern as the Southern region is the largest population outside Male'.

Of all employed youth 34% work for an average of 16 hours per week.

The type of work the youth are involved in is:

1. (Non – specified) income generating activity (86%)
2. Office work (12%)
3. Studies/training (2%).

There is a high degree of job satisfaction reported among the employed youth with 93% of them satisfied with their job (66% to a great extent and 27% to some extent).

As expected, there is a high degree of job mobility among the youth - 67.2% of the employed youth have changed their jobs during the last 2 years at least once (79.1% females and 63.6 males) with a high rate of 88.9% in the North region. The changes in job were as follows;

- o From one section to other (18%)
- o From one government office to other (16%)
- o From government to private/own business (15%)
- o From a dhoni to a resort (10%)

In cases where they left the previous job it was mainly because of:

- Low salary, or
- To search for a better job.

## SCHOOLING AND EDUCATION

The survey shows that 35.8% of youth in the 15-19 years age group are students while the corresponding figure for the 20-24 years age group is only 3.3%. There is no significant gender difference in the proportions in these two age groups.

The regions with the highest proportions in the 15-19 years age group who reported to be studying are located in the Central North Area (48.5%) followed by Male' (44.4%) and Central South (43.3%). The region with the lowest proportion in this age group reporting as students was the Central region (15.5%).



In the 20-24 years age group where most youths are involved in income generating activities, the highest proportion that reported themselves as involved in income generating activities were in the Centre region with 52.8% of the youth, followed by Male' with 17.5%. The lowest proportion of working youth was reported in the North region with 9.9%.

A significantly higher percentage of youth in the 15-19 years age group (6.8%) reported 'neither working nor studying' compared to the 20-24 years age group (3.7%).

As expected, student proportions reported among the youth population is highest in Male' (57%) followed by the Central North region (52.1%). The lowest proportions are reported in the Centre region where the figure is just 20%.

Among those who reported to be studying 39.9% were males and 45.8% were females. The highest proportion of females was located in Male' (56%) and the lowest was located in the South region.

82% of the youth that work live mainly on their own income (94.5% of them living in the Centre region), and are mainly in the 20-24 years age group (59.4% of which 66.3% are male). There is some gender difference with 88.6% of males living mainly from their income and 66 % of females doing so.

As for the youth who are not living mainly on their own income, their income is supplemented in terms of food and housing by parents/guardians (80%); in terms of

clothing by parents/guardians (66%) , spouse/in-laws (17%) and other family members (9%); and in the case of pocket money by parents/guardians (51%), other family members (19%) other sources (16%) and spouse/in-laws (12%).

The majority of employed youth believe they have the necessary opportunities for training advancement. Most youth believe that such opportunities are mainly in the form of short term training courses while a significant proportion of youth feel that they have opportunities for higher education. See **Table 8.**

**TABLE 8: VARIOUS TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES BY REGION**

| Both sex      |                             |                                  |                                |            |
|---------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| Region        | Short time courses/training | Opportunity for higher education | Office sponsorship/scholarship | Don't know |
|               | Percent                     | Percent                          | Percent                        | Percent    |
| All regions   | 57.7                        | 14.8                             | 5.5                            | 1.7        |
| Male'         | 61.6                        | 16.3                             | 6.8                            | 0.5        |
| North         | 69.2                        | 7.7                              | 0                              | 1.9        |
| Central North | 57.8                        | 8.4                              | 3.6                            | 0          |
| Centre        | 57.1                        | 14.3                             | 5.1                            | 2.9        |
| Central South | 54.8                        | 7.1                              | 9.5                            | 0          |
| South         | 47.7                        | 25.2                             | 3.7                            | 2.8        |

Considerable regional disparities exist in terms of opportunities for training advancement, with higher rates in the North (69.2%) and Male' (61.6%) and the lowest rate in the South with just 47.7%.

There are no major gender differences in these opportunities for training/education career growth. It is heartening to note that the majority of youth (63%) have career aspirations. Professional specialization appears to be gendered as is typical in many developed countries. The main career preferences given by the youth are, in order of importance: teaching (**19.2%** mainly stated by females); business (**14%** with no major gender difference); health (**12%** mainly opted by females), tourism & hospitality/travel (**9.9%** mainly preferred by males); and the police (**7%** mainly stated by males).

Decisions on education are mainly made for the youth by their families (56.9%) while decisions regarding their careers are mostly made by the youth themselves (63%).

In the North of the country, family influence on decisions regarding the education of youths appear to be stronger than in any other region.

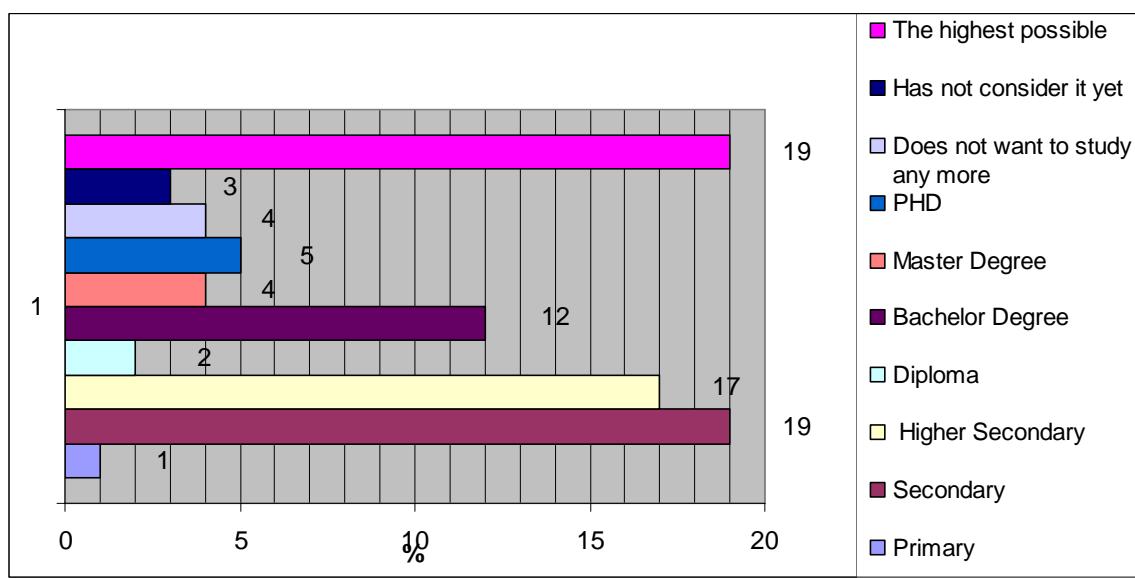
## YOUTH HAVING ACCESS TO HIGH AND QUALITY EDUCATION

43% of the youth who completed their studies did so at the following levels:

1. 91% O level;
2. 5% A level;
3. 2% university diploma, and
4. 1% no standard.

There is no major gender difference in the level of education completed.

**FIGURE 3: YOUTH ASPIRATIONS REGARDING HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION**



The highest level of education the youth in Maldives aspire to get is:

1. 19% the highest possible;
2. 19% Secondary;
3. 17% Higher Secondary;
4. 12% Bachelors Degree;
5. 4% Masters Degree and
6. 5% a PhD

There are no major gender differences in these aspirations.

TABLE 8: HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION ASPIRED TO, BY SEX AND REGION

| Male          |         | Primary | Secondary | Higher secondary | Tertiary | Short term diploma | Long term diploma | Bachelor's degree | Masters degree | PhD     |
|---------------|---------|---------|-----------|------------------|----------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------|---------|
| Region        | Percent | Percent | Percent   | Percent          | Percent  | Percent            | Percent           | Percent           | Percent        | Percent |
| All regions   | 1.1     | 18.4    | 14.3      | 0.4              | 1        | 1.6                | 13                | 4.3               | 6.2            |         |
| Male'         | 1.2     | 9.7     | 9.5       | 0.4              | 1.8      | 2.2                | 11.7              | 8.9               | 17.1           |         |
| North         | 0       | 23.9    | 27.4      | 0                | 0        | 0                  | 17.9              | 1.7               | 0              |         |
| Central North | 0.5     | 19.6    | 25.8      | 0.5              | 1.5      | 1                  | 12.4              | 7.2               | 3.1            |         |
| Centre        | 1       | 21.9    | 12.3      | 0.6              | 1        | 1.3                | 12.5              | 1.3               | 1.3            |         |
| Central South | 1.2     | 24.4    | 17.3      | 0.6              | 0        | 1.2                | 13.7              | 3.6               | 6              |         |
| South         | 1.4     | 18.7    | 14.1      | 0                | 0.4      | 1.8                | 16.3              | 1.8               | 4.9            |         |
| Female        |         | Primary | Secondary | Higher secondary | Tertiary | Short term diploma | Long term diploma | Bachelor's degree | Masters degree | PhD     |
| Region        | Percent | Percent | Percent   | Percent          | Percent  | Percent            | Percent           | Percent           | Percent        | Percent |
| All regions   | 1.3     | 19.4    | 19.5      | 0.5              | 0.5      | 2.6                | 10                | 3.5               | 3.4            |         |
| Male'         | 0.9     | 12.9    | 11.1      | 0.5              | 0.4      | 4.4                | 12.4              | 6.5               | 7.1            |         |
| North         | 4.6     | 37.3    | 21.2      | 0                | 0        | 0.9                | 7.4               | 0.9               | 1.8            |         |
| Central North | 0       | 21.9    | 24.1      | 0.7              | 0.7      | 1.8                | 8.8               | 4                 | 0.7            |         |
| Centre        | 0.5     | 18      | 15.9      | 0.5              | 0.5      | 2.6                | 9                 | 3.7               | 1.6            |         |
| Central South | 1.6     | 21.9    | 22.4      | 0                | 0        | 1.6                | 3.8               | 2.2               | 2.7            |         |
| South         | 0.8     | 19.5    | 25.9      | 0.8              | 0.3      | 1.8                | 13.5              | 1.3               | 1.6            |         |

In terms of differences in educational aspirations:

1. While a national average of 6.2% of the youth aspires to a PhD Degree, the figure is notably higher in Male' with a total percentage (males plus females) of 24.2%
2. Regional disparity is significant in PhD aspirations with the figure for Male' being 17.1% vs. 0% of youth in the North aspiring for a PhD.

Nevertheless, while the percentage of male Male' youth aspiring to higher secondary level is 9.5% the corresponding value is highest for the North with 27.4%, followed by the Central North region with 25.8%. Percentages of youth aspiring to a first degree are fairly consistent across the regions, ranging from 11.7% in Male' to 17.9% in the North.

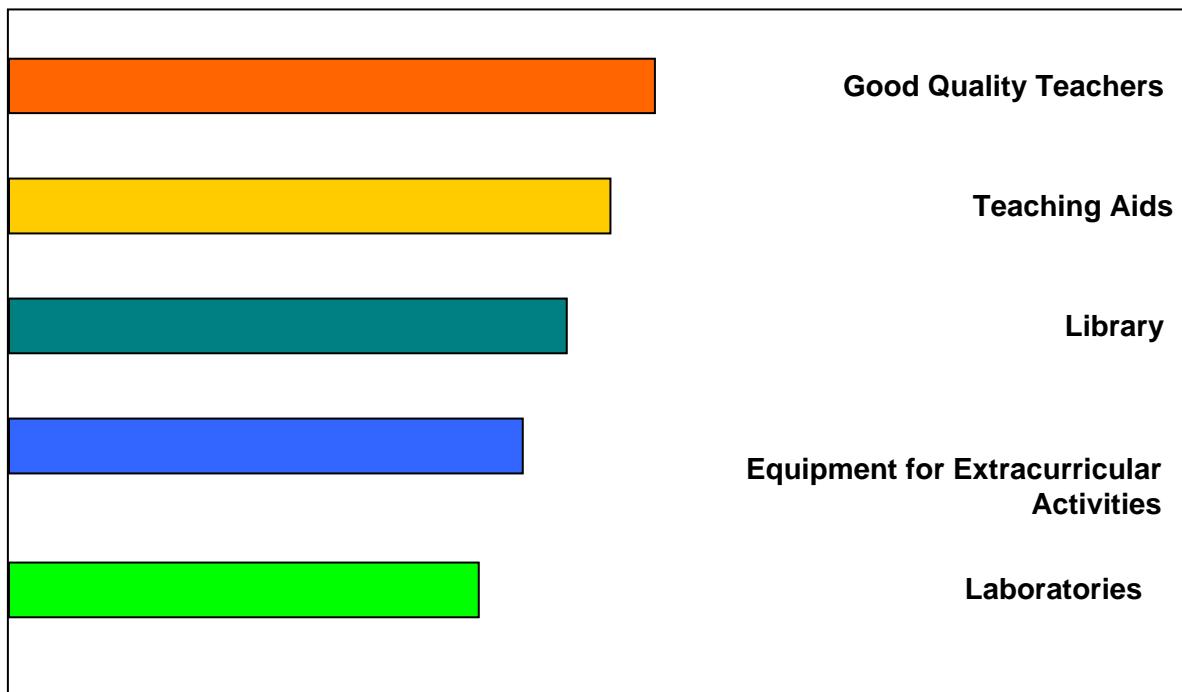
3. In the case of females, while the national average for secondary school aspiration is 19.4% it increases to 37.3% in the North while in Male' it is 12.9%.
4. Also in the higher secondary level, while the national average is 19.5% in the South Region it is 25.9% followed by the Central North region with 24.1%.
5. Another interesting finding is that females in Male' have higher aspirations in terms of Masters and PhD studies compared with the national media. Masters Degree national average in terms of aspirations for females is 3.5% while it is 6.5% for females in Male'. In the case of PhDs, the national media for females is 3.4% in contrast to the figure of 7.1% in Male'.
6. Graduate level aspirations are generally lower for females than males at both the regional and national levels.

The 56% of the youth that are not students stopped studying for the following reasons:

1. Finished school (23.4%);
2. Didn't feel interested anymore (23%)
3. Facilities for further education not available on the island (14%)
4. Financial constraints (8.3%)
5. Found work (7%)
6. Need to contribute economically to family and/or business (6%)
7. No family support/family problems (6.1%)
8. To find/found other educational opportunities (4.6%)
9. Didn't want to leave friends (2.5%).

When asked to rate how positive their schools and learning facilities, the youth responded as follows;

1. 76.1% said the quality of their teachers was highly positive (no gender or regional disparities)
2. 66% said the teaching aids were highly positive
3. 63% said the library was highly positive (no gender nor age disparities but a greater percentage in the South with 72%)
4. 59% said the equipment for extra-curricular was highly positive, 26% said medium and 12% said it was low
5. 42% rated the laboratories as highly positive, 21% said medium and 26% rated them as low

**FIGURE 4: RANKING OF HIGHLY POSITIVE LEARNING FACILITIES**

In terms of the learning environment, 80% of the youth feel that the school provides them with an environment that motivates them towards achievement and hard work; 87% feel that the school inculcates basic values (e.g.: punctuality, discipline, etc.); 83% believe that it nurtures moral/religious values and 71% said that it gives them opportunities to learn life skills. There is no great gender or regional disparities in the percentages mentioned.

With regard to their relationship with the teachers, 76% of the youth feel that they have a high quality teacher - the greatest level of satisfaction was in the Central North region with 87.7%; 76% of respondents said their teachers are caring and supporting; 64% said they look to their teachers as role models; and 51% of youth consider that the teachers are concerned about their personal problems.

56% of the youth are involved in extra curricular activities in school.

1. 23% in sports;
2. 12% in associations;
3. 9% in boy scouts/girl scouts/cadets/band
4. 12% in others.

A high percentage of youth mention that there are no opportunities for extra curricular activities:

- 5. Male' - 55.6%
- 6. South Region – 50.8%

There is no major gender difference in this category even though this statement is more common in the 15-19 years old age group (23.6%) than in the 20-24 years old group (16.4%).



89% of the youth students think they have the opportunity to pursue the education/training needed for their career.

- 1. 8% of the youth think they don't have the opportunity to pursue their education/training for their career due to:
  - a. No provisions of such opportunities (12.9%);
  - b. No standard (11.8%);
  - c. Due to the circumstances (16.4%);
  - d. Lack of courses/having to travel to Male (6.7%);
  - e. Lack of choice in opportunities (6%);
  - f. Underprivileged/ cannot afford (1%).

No gender differences are visible in this issue. The only important regional difference is regarding the percentage of youth who feel that “due to circumstances” is a factor that results in them not having the opportunity to pursue their education/training for their career. While the national media for this statistic is 16.4%, in the North it is much higher at 33.3% of the youth.

With regard to the school system in Maldives, 25% of the youth consider there are no major problems in the system and 11% don't know about this issue. The remaining 64% consider that there are major problems and they rank these problems in the following order: lack of qualified teachers; low standard of schools; discrimination among students; lack of discipline/conduct; lack of student/teacher/parent relations; school management problems; lack of local teachers and lack of opportunities for advanced studies.

**TABLE 10: LEVEL OF COMPUTER SKILLS BY AGE GROUP AND REGION**

| Region        | 15 - 19 |         |              |         | 20 - 24 |         |              |         |
|---------------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|
|               | None    | Basic   | Intermediate | Advance | None    | Basic   | Intermediate | Advance |
|               | Percent | Percent | Percent      | Percent | Percent | Percent | Percent      | Percent |
| All regions   | 14.3    | 36.2    | 2.7          | 5.7     | 12.4    | 18.9    | 2.4          | 6.3     |
| Male'         | 9       | 37.6    | 6.4          | 9.1     | 6.4     | 18.7    | 4.2          | 7.9     |
| North         | 20.7    | 41.9    | 0.3          | 1.5     | 19.8    | 12      | 1.2          | 2.4     |
| Central North | 17.5    | 44.9    | 1.7          | 4.5     | 10.7    | 15      | 0.2          | 3.4     |
| Centre        | 10.8    | 25      | 0.8          | 2.8     | 19.3    | 28.3    | 2.4          | 8.8     |
| Central South | 14.8    | 45      | 2.6          | 3.4     | 12.5    | 14      | 3.1          | 4.6     |
| South         | 22.1    | 35.2    | 1.1          | 8.5     | 10.7    | 15.7    | 1.2          | 4.5     |

Computer skills are becoming an integral part of any modern educational system. In a given population the proportion of youth that has access to computers and possess basic computer skills is an indication of the level of modernization of the education system and its accessibility. The gap between those who do have access and those without it is termed as ‘the digital divide’. The Digital divide can exist between countries and within countries.

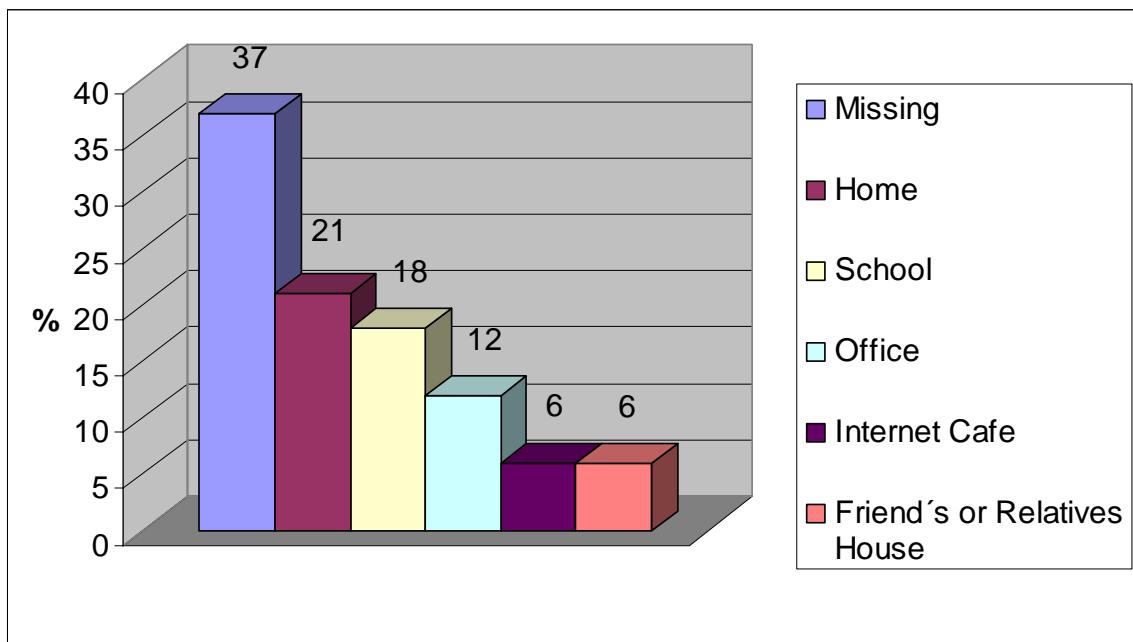
According to the present survey while 55% of Maldivian youth have basic computer skills, 27% do not possess any computer skills. The digital divide is particularly marked in the north region where 40.4% of the youth do not have computers skills and the south region where 32.8% of the youth don’t have these skills. As expected, only 15.6% of youth in Male' reported not having any computer skills.

A more revealing finding is perhaps the extent of computer usage among youth. The survey found that 40% of the youth do not use a computer at all while 26% use it on a daily basis and 23% do so on a weekly basis. Monthly usage is reported by 7% of the surveyed youth. As expected, those who reported that they have never used a computer is

lowest in Male' (26.7%) while it is highest in the South with 46.4%, the Central North with 45.5% and the Centre region with 44.5%.

Females appear to be more disadvantaged in terms of computer accessibility with 44.8% of females reporting in this category vs. 35.2% of males.

**FIGURE 5: ACCESS TO INTERNET**



Access to computers appears to be largely determined by the family's financial ability to own a computer. This is evident from the fact that for most youth who have access to a computer their place of access is reported to be their home (36.6%). Schools also play a vital role in providing computer accessibility to youth, with 31.7% of youth reporting that they use computers at school. This is followed by place of work (20.9%), internet café (12.5%) and friends or relatives homes (10.6%).

Home accessibility is highest in Male with 58.5% reporting in this category. The lowest rate is observed in the North.

Interestingly, females are less likely to have access to computers in school when compared to males. This is an important issue that needs closer attention.

## WAY FORWARD

According to youth, the challenges facing the youth in terms of economic opportunities can be successfully addressed by: increasing job opportunities; increasing awareness, advice and counseling; better coordination and support; increasing training and self employment opportunities; providing opportunities in society for rehabilitation; increasing educational opportunities; increasing government programs for youth; stopping drug smuggling; and phasing out the expatriate workforce.

It was also pointed out that the youth should have a role in meeting these challenges. Some of the actions that can be taken by the youth were identified as: increasing awareness/information/advice/knowledge on these issues; cooperate with/support youth; cooperate with the government/community; take an initiative in carrying out socially beneficial activities; improve discipline and become more responsible; utilize existing opportunities and actively seek employment; and establish a youth committee.

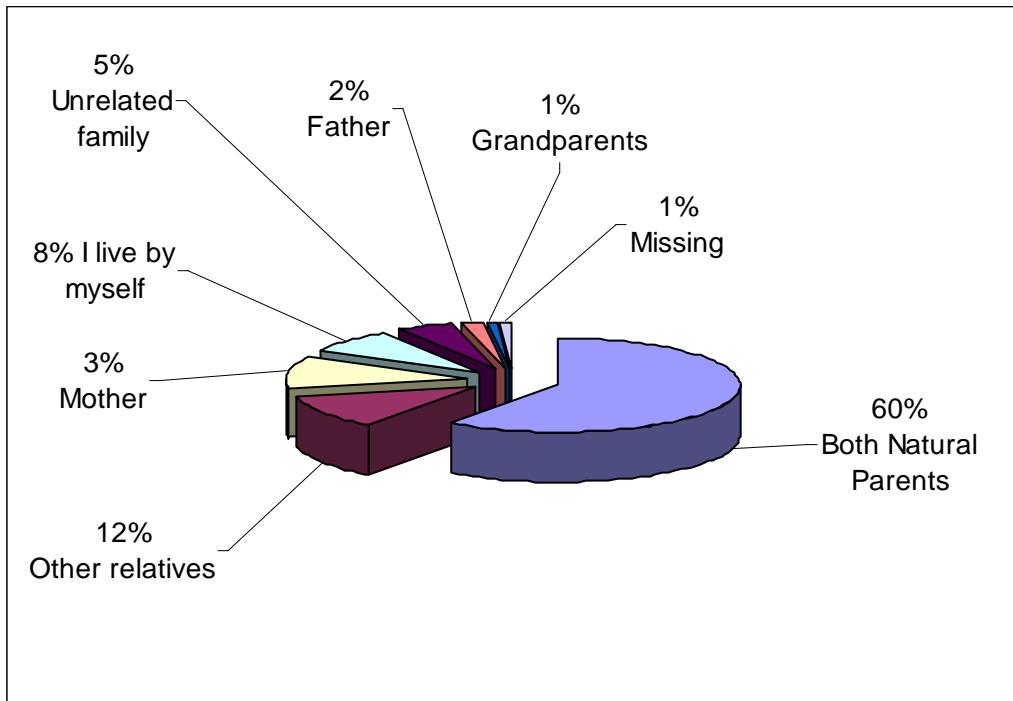


## CHAPTER FOUR: SOCIAL BONDING, SUPPORT, INTEGRATION AND YOUTH

### FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

For 86% of Maldivian young people living arrangements seems to be with their parents or relatives, of which 60% live with both parents. This percentage is highest in the Southern region where 78% of them were living with both parents and in the North where this percentage is 72.4. Even in Male', which has the lowest rate, 48.3% were living with both parents.

**FIGURE 2: YOUTH LIVING WITH ADULTS**



Gender disaggregated data shows that the proportion living with both parents is higher for females than males. In the case of males 56.6% live with both parents and in the case of females 63.9% of them live with both parents. There are several reasons, both socio-cultural as well as economic, for the high proportions of young people living with their parents. One reason is that the tradition of an extended family system encourages young people to live with their parents often even after marriage and having children of their own. The physical constraint of space is another key factor which discourages young people from moving away from the extended family environment even after they have married and started their own families.

The greater part of the small proportion of youth (8%) who reported to be living by themselves were concentrated in the Centre region. Closer examination shows that they are in fact those youth enumerated in tourist resorts in this region.

It is interesting to observe the tenancy status for the youth that do not live with their families. The survey shows that 54% live in accommodation provided by their employers and thus do not have to pay rent; 19% neither pay nor work for their stay; 9% pay in cash and 5% work around the house. The second category appears to be the most contentious. However, reporting in this category does not necessarily mean that the person is economically inactive. Rather, it probably means that no payment is made either in cash or in the form of labour to the household that hosts the individual.

### YOUTH WITH “POSITIVE” FAMILY LIFE

Strong family ties helps to create an environment of trust and togetherness at home. A loving and caring family where young people feel free to discuss the issues that affect them and have parents and family, who are willing and eager to listen to their problems, encourages trust and understanding. Strong family bonds can increase the self confidence that young people have.

For the purposes of this survey family bonds were assessed by asking questions about the frequency and quality of interaction with parents or guardians. Questions were asked about the nature of discussions young people have with their families and whether the youth feel free to bring problems to their attention. **Table 11** summarizes the results.

**TABLE 11: EMOTIONAL SUPPORT FROM FAMILIES BY SEX AND REGION**

| <b>Both sex</b>      |                       |                |                 |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Region</b>        | <b>Strongly agree</b> | <b>Agree</b>   | <b>Not sure</b> | <b>Disagree</b> |
|                      | <b>Percent</b>        | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Percent</b>  | <b>Percent</b>  |
| All regions          | 59.6                  | 37             | 0.7             | 1.8             |
| Male'                | 57                    | 38.6           | 1               | 2.8             |
| North                | 47.5                  | 51             | 0               | 0.9             |
| Central North        | 70.6                  | 27.4           | 0.6             | 0.6             |
| Centre               | 58.1                  | 38.1           | 0.6             | 2.4             |
| Central South        | 58.2                  | 37.9           | 0               | 1.1             |
| South                | 65.5                  | 31.6           | 1.1             | 1.1             |
| <b>Male</b>          |                       |                |                 |                 |
| <b>Region</b>        | <b>Strongly agree</b> | <b>Agree</b>   | <b>Not sure</b> | <b>Disagree</b> |
|                      | <b>Percent</b>        | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Percent</b>  | <b>Percent</b>  |
| All regions          | 58.6                  | 38             | 0.6             | 1.9             |
| Male'                | 56.9                  | 39.1           | 1.2             | 2.2             |
| North                | 53.8                  | 46.2           | 0               | 0               |
| Central North        | 63.8                  | 35.2           | 0.5             | 0.5             |
| Centre               | 59.2                  | 36.7           | 0.4             | 2.8             |
| Central South        | 55                    | 39.8           | 0               | 2.3             |
| South                | 63.4                  | 33.8           | 0.7             | 1.4             |
| <b>Female</b>        |                       |                |                 |                 |
| <b>Region/Island</b> | <b>Strongly agree</b> | <b>Agree</b>   | <b>Not sure</b> | <b>Disagree</b> |
|                      | <b>Percent</b>        | <b>Percent</b> | <b>Percent</b>  | <b>Percent</b>  |
| All regions          | 60.6                  | 36             | 0.7             | 1.6             |
| Male'                | 56.9                  | 38.3           | 0.9             | 3.4             |
| North                | 44.1                  | 53.6           | 0               | 1.4             |
| Central North        | 75.5                  | 21.9           | 0.7             | 0.7             |
| Centre               | 54.4                  | 42.6           | 1               | 1               |
| Central South        | 61.2                  | 36.1           | 0               | 0               |
| South                | 67.1                  | 30             | 1.3             | 0.8             |

A large majority of youth feel they receive the support and assistance of family members. Over 60% of youth live with both their parents, suggesting that the norms and values of the extended family are still strong in the Maldives. Over 90 % of youth believe that they receive from their families, the emotional help and support they need, with no major gender differences. The statement “strongly agree” gets especially high rates in the Central North region (70.6%) and in the South (65.5%). About 90% of the youth believe they have a fully supportive family and at least one adult for advice and support. Over half of them feel that their parents or guardians spend enough time with them in the family, while 37% feel parents don’t spend enough time.

The findings of the survey indicate a healthy relationship of trust and encouragement between parents and youth. They generally feel confident their parents ‘would be there for them’ in difficult times. About 93% of the youth consider that if they have a problem they can go to their parents or guardians. A large majority of youth (96%) report that parents regularly ask them about their lives and express an interest in their lives. And 94% say that parents seek their views, suggestions and opinions about things. Similarly 97% of the youth mainly in the 15 to 19 years age group (57.1% vs. 39.7% in the 20-24 years old group) believe their parents or guardians give them encouragement and support, with almost no gender based differences in opinion on this matter.

Communicating well with parents and guardians is often as important as it is difficult for most young people. Overcoming this communication problem becomes a crucial step in building closer bonds of trust and understanding between parents and young people. The survey found that 91% of the youth consider they communicate well with their parents or guardians, with little difference between male and female youth (89.6% among males and 92.4% among females). There are no major regional differences in responses.

Asked what they normally talked about, the following was reported by the youth: school performance and improvement in studies (85%); what they want to do in future (84%); their friends (83%) and their job or work (66%). They also spoke about personal and social issues, and issues facing today’s youth in general. Over 70% said they talked about relationships, smoking (76%); alcohol and drugs (66%); and puberty (65%).

While communication between parents and youth were generally good, parents often did not comfortable talking about issues relating to sex. This is generally consistent with most findings from other countries. According to the survey, 55% of parents did not talk about it with the youth. However, they do talk about sex more with the females (50.3%) than with males (38.6%).

In general there seems to be good interaction between youth and parents, helping to create strong social bonds. With trust and confidence comes obedience and ‘good behavior’. Young people are aware of rules and norms that define social standards at home and in the wider society. The survey found that 95% of youth believed that there are clear rules and consequences for conduct in their homes. They also believed that their parents generally accepted or appreciated their personal tastes and styles in clothing and music: 63% of the youth consider that their parents or adults appreciate their cultural tastes and choices (e.g. dressing, choice of music etc), while 19% find their parents are neutral and 14% think their parents are just tolerant about it.

While young people and parents generally have a good rapport, it is sometimes difficult for all members to meet frequently, as can be expected in today’s hectic and increasingly mobile work environment. In relation to how often did everybody in the family make an effort to be together at least once a week, the survey found, that 35% believed it

happened sometimes, and 34% said always, 15% said often and 15% said never. There is no major gender or regional difference in the answers.

Overall these are very positive indicators on youth development in the Maldives. It should be noted that the accuracy of such information could be further enhanced through qualitative methods and one on one contact between the enumerator or researchers and the respondents.

### YOUTH FEELING SOCIAILY ACCEPTED

Young people need to feel inclusive and a part of their community, in order to actively participate in and contribute to social and community development. Young people need to feel that their opinions are heard and their views are respected by adults. The survey found that 87% of the youth feel that people in their community respect their opinion. And 95% of them believe that they are generally treated with dignity.

### YOUTH TRUSTING PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

In order for the youth to become responsible members of the community it is important that they are able to build relationships and interact meaningfully with everyone. It is particularly important that the youth can trust community leaders and public officials and can make their voices heard, in order to actively participate in the social and economic development of their communities.. The results are summarized in **Table 12**.

**TABLE 12: GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS LISTEN AND SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF YOUTH**

| Both sex      |                |         |          |                   |         |
|---------------|----------------|---------|----------|-------------------|---------|
| Region/Island | Strongly agree | Agree   | Disagree | Strongly disagree |         |
|               | Percent        | Percent | Percent  | Percent           | Percent |
| All regions   | 15.2           | 50.5    | 9.3      |                   | 5.1     |
| Male'         | 12.4           | 48.4    | 9.8      |                   | 6       |
| North         | 8.6            | 66.8    | 8.9      |                   | 2.7     |
| Central North | 28.1           | 43.2    | 6.6      |                   | 5.5     |
| Centre        | 16.7           | 47.2    | 7        |                   | 3.1     |
| Central South | 17.5           | 50      | 7.9      |                   | 6.2     |
| South         | 11.3           | 58.4    | 13.6     |                   | 5.9     |

The survey found that 66% of the youth believe that if they approach government officials regarding a problem, the officials would listen to them and try to solve the problem; while 14.4% don't agree with this. There is no major gender difference on this issue. The main regional variances are as follows;

- a. The percentage of youth answering as "strongly agree" is much higher in the Central region (28.1%) than the national average which is 15.2%.
- b. 66.8% chose to say "agree" in the North as opposed to the national average which is only 50.5%
- c. In the "disagree" category the major variance is in the South where 13.6% of youth said they "disagree" against a national average of only 9.3%.
- d.

**TABLE 13: COMMUNITY LEADERS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT YOUTH**

| Both sex      |                |         |          |                   |         |
|---------------|----------------|---------|----------|-------------------|---------|
| Region/Island | Strongly agree | Agree   | Disagree | Strongly disagree |         |
|               | Percent        | Percent | Percent  | Percent           | Percent |
| All regions   | 9.3            | 29.6    | 43       |                   | 9.3     |
| Male'         | 10.7           | 27.9    | 41.8     |                   | 6.5     |
| North         | 2.1            | 36.5    | 49.9     |                   | 5.6     |
| Central North | 11.5           | 20.4    | 37.4     |                   | 24.3    |
| Centre        | 9.2            | 32.1    | 42.9     |                   | 8.9     |
| Central South | 12.1           | 23.4    | 42.1     |                   | 11.6    |
| South         | 6.5            | 36.4    | 45.9     |                   | 4.7     |

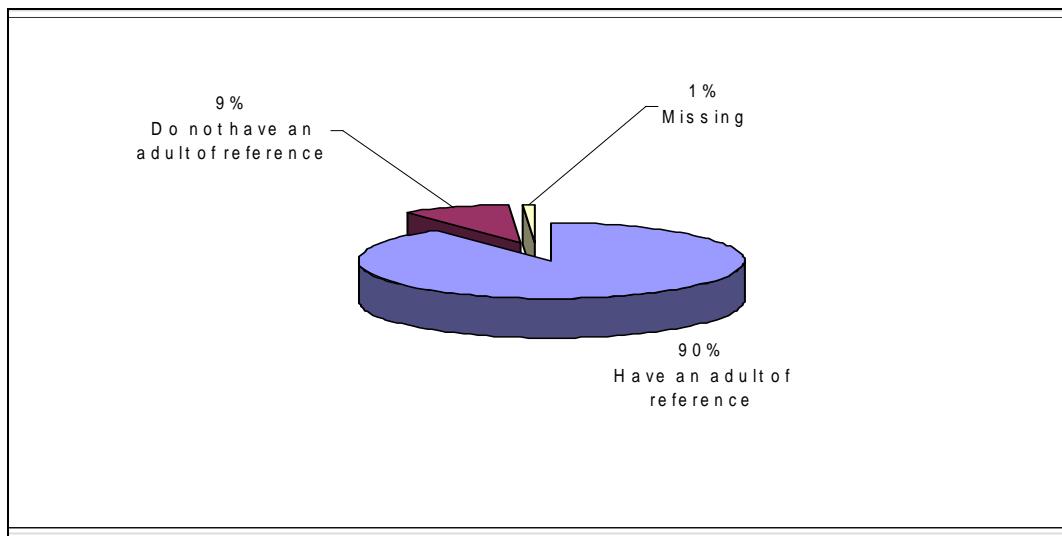
On the other hand, some young people (39%) feel that community leaders are not really concerned about the problems of youth while the majority (52%) believes they are. The “strongly agree” gets a higher rating in the Central South region with 12.1% vs. the 9.3% national average. The “agree” statement is higher in the North (36.5%) and the South (36.4%) when compared with the national average of 29.6%. In the case of the “strongly disagree” statement, 24% in the Central North region and 11.6% in the Central South Region are the highest percentages while the national average is 9.3%. No major gender differences are seen in these statements.

## YOUTH WITH CONSISTENT CARING ADULTS IN THEIR LIVES

In addition to having good relations with public officials and community leaders, the youth feel that they generally have access to adult advice when they need it. The survey found that 90% of the youth have access to at least one adult – family or non family - who they can go to when they need advice and support. There is no gender difference in these statements.

They feel that adults give them encouragement (96%); 95% of youth said they liked to spend time with them; 90 % feel they can talk openly about life with them; and 86% feel adults understand them.

**FIGURE 6: YOUTH WITH ADULT REFERENCE**



## YOUTH MAKING POSITIVE USE OF LEISURE TIME

Leisure is an important part of personal development. It helps to build social relationships and develop character. The survey found that 75% of the youth spend an average of 4 hours per week on hobbies. In addition, all youth spend an average of 8 hours per week doing the following:

- a. TV/video/cinema **45.4%**: males 44,7% / 45,9% females
- b. Talking with friends **32.3%**: 41,6% males/22,1% females
- c. Games/sports **23.7%**: 37,3% males/8,8% females
- d. Reading (novels/magazines) **23%**: 20,7% males/25,4% females
- e. Listening/playing music **21.6%**: 24,9% males/18% females
- f. On the streets with friends **13.3%**: 17,9% males/8,2% females
- g. Creative work (art, painting) **11.1%**: 12,6% males/9,4% females
- h. Social service/volunteering **4.4%**: 5,3% male/3,5% females<sup>3</sup>

While 50% of youth consider there is nothing else they would like to spend their leisure time on, 37% of them would like to spend it on the following if they had the opportunity:

- a. Computer/internet games (8% with a pick of 13% in the Central North and almost no gender difference);
- b. Sewing (8% with 0.4% in males and 6.8% females );
- c. Sports/exercise - 7% (in the Centre region it picks to 13.3% with 10.7% in males and 3.6% females)
- d. Visiting family/friends (4%);
- e. Entertainment (music, movies, coffee breaks) among others.

Some youth, however, feel they do not use their leisure time as productively as they would like to. They believe this is because of: no resources (26%); no reason (13%); no skills/talent (2%). 33% also feel that they do not have enough time for leisure activities.

Young people believe the most beneficial and constructive ways to spend leisure time are:

- f. Sports/games (21%);
- g. Working (10%);
- h. Don't know (8%);
- i. Helping community (5%)
- j. Building relationships with family and friends (4%).

However, not all communities and islands have all the facilities for leisure activities. Their availability of these facilities vary across the country. The youth list the following facilities and usual leisure activities in the islands:

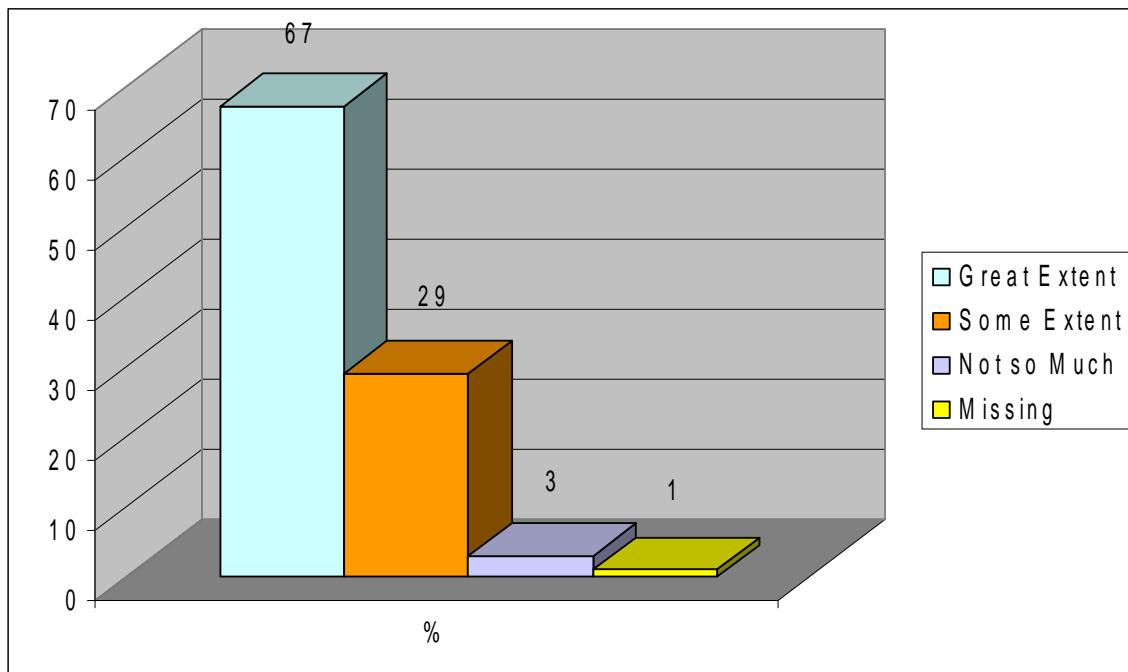
---

<sup>3</sup> These figures do not include 'no response' categories.

1. Games and Sports:
  - a. 54% stadiums/grounds/courts;
  - b. 11% TV;
  - c. 6% all resources available;
  - d. 5% computer-internet-games
2. Cultural Activities:
  - a. 29% none
  - b. 15% Boduberu Jehun;
  - c. 8% don't know;
  - d. 5% dance-stick dance;
  - e. 5% Eid games.
3. Youth Activities
  - a. 32% sports;
  - b. 10% none;
  - c. 8% don't know;
  - d. 8% carnival/music show;
  - e. 2% youth centre.

## YOUTH BENEFITING FROM RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Religion plays an important part in the life of all Maldivians. Socially, religion gives them a sense of common identity. Personally, it becomes a source of comfort, solace and guidance. They survey found that 96% of the youth consider religion to have an important influence on their day to day life and behavior (67%: a great extent, 29%: to some extent). There is no gender difference in the response. With regard to regional differences, youth in the North report a higher level of religious influence with 74.5%; the corresponding figure for the Central North is 72.3% and 72% for the Central South.

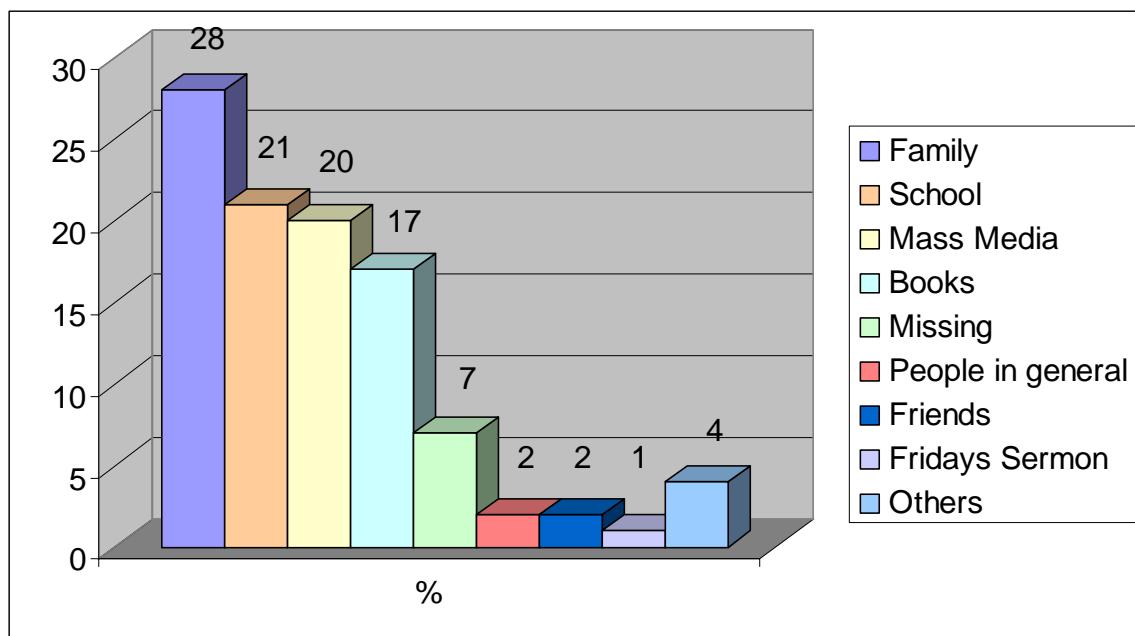
**FIGURE 7: INFLUENCE OF RELIGION IN YOUTH BEHAVIOUR**

Regarding the main source of religious information, 74% of youth say that they receive information and knowledge about religion mainly from the following.

- a. family (42.9%);
- b. school (31.4%);
- c. books (25.4%) among the most important ones
- d. media (20.4%);

There are no major variances either by gender or by region in the above statistics.

**FIGURE 8: WHERE YOUTH GET INFORMATION/ KNOWLEDGE ABOUT RELIGION**



However, about a quarter of the respondents feel that they need more information. In particular they would like to receive information about social and behavioral norms (9%), and over 35% would like to receive accurate theological information and 31 % just want all available information. A small number of youth (2%) would like to receive information on praying.

A large majority of youth (96%) believe that there are many benefits of taking part in religious activities. About 30% believe such activities increases their knowledge about religion, 16% believe it has spiritual benefits, a further 16% feel it improves discipline and behavior and broadens their world view, 6% said that it brings good life on earth and after death, 4% believe it teaches them to respect religion, 3% responded that it strengthens faith, and some believe that taking part in religious activities brings love and acceptance (3%).

From a religious point of view the youth rank in the following order the issues to avoid:

- Homosexuality
- Sex Outside Marriage
- Taking Drugs
- Drinking Alcohol
- Sexual Violence
- Stealing
- Lying/Cheating

h. Violence

Maldivian youth believe in the sanctity of religion and its influence on their daily lives. Over 90% of youth believe that religious values and principles are very relevant in today's world. There are neither gender nor major regional differences in this statement. But a higher percentage (53.9%) of youth in the 15 -19 years age group answered as 'relevant' in all regions, while a lesser percentage (37%) of respondents in the 20 - 24 years age group gave the same answer.

## CHAPTER FIVE: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND SUPPORT

### YOUTH VOLUNTEERING

While many youth may not be formally members of organizations, individual participation in community activities is part of life especially in the islands, where most people take part in cleaning the island, helping to beach dhonies, carrying out community development projects or planting trees. Given the nature of community participation it is not surprising that only 9% of youth were actually members of formal associations, organizations or civic bodies, where they spent an average of ½ hour per week.



The survey revealed that 68% of the youth have never volunteered in their community while only 30% have done so. This means that they had not done so as members of formal volunteer organizations. But they do contribute as individuals and as a part of the community. Consistent with this, the survey found that young people spend an average of 1 hour per week on social services and volunteering mainly in the areas of community work (30%); sand mining (15%) ; voluntary work (15%); constructing/ repairing homes (10%); helping the family (9%); in the nation's service (8%) and in the work of island development committees (6%).

The youth that do engage in formal volunteer work carry out the following activities: volunteer organizations' activities (36%); island development activities (30%); environmental protection activities (12%); literary association work (7%).

Most youth say that they don't volunteer because: there are no opportunities (60%); no time (26%) and no interest (11%). The results also show that 56% of the youth participate in extra-curricular activities at school, of which 51% have not participated in community services.

According to the survey, 28% of youth are engaged in charitable activities such as: helping the poor (45%); providing help when it is requested (17%), providing material or financial aid (13%), helping thalasseamia patients (9%) and donating gifts to fairs (6%).

## MEMBERSHIP IN YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS

The types of organizations and associations in which the youth are members include; youth associations and organizations (36%), Dhivehi literary associations (24%), volunteer organizations (10%), sports organizations (7%), women's organizations (5%), environmental organizations (5%) and 12% are members of various other organizations.

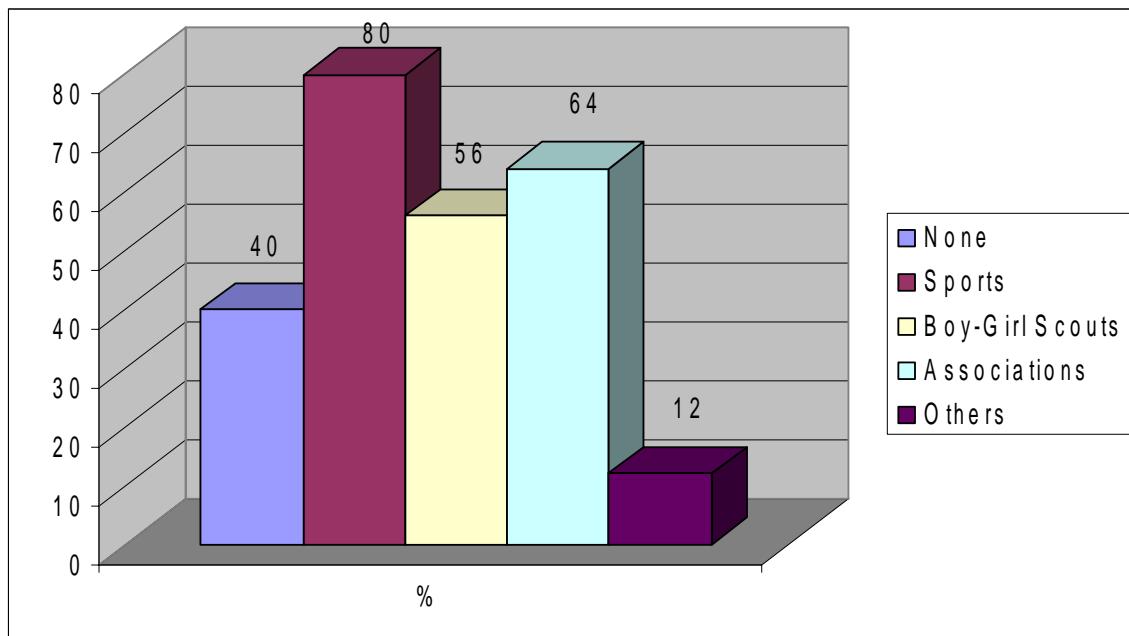
57% of the youths who are members of organizations are involved in all of the organization's activities, 17% are involved in community work, 7% in fund raising and 4% are engaged in the management of the organization.

## INVOLVEMENT IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Outside formal organizations, the youth do have many other opportunities for positive development. In terms of opportunities to participate in extra curricular activities, the youth mentioned the following as the main ones:

- a. Sports (80% where 83% were males and 77.8% were females. The Central South region is mentioned as the one with lowest level of sport facilities (69.2%) with no differences between age groups)
- b. Associations such as literary clubs (64%)
- c. Boy Scouts/Girl Guides/Cadets/Bands (56% with a greater percentage in the South (72.3%), and Male' (68%), with no significant gender differences).

**FIGURE 9: OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**



While the youth are active in their own communities, 38% of the youth say that they never have the opportunity to relate with youth in other islands and atolls. 30% say they sometimes have the opportunity. Those who meet with youth from other islands and atolls (31%), get such opportunities by traveling between islands; through the school; through various field trips and through their work.

### YOUTH “AT RISK” WITH ACCESS TO COUNSELLING SERVICES

Many young people in today’s open societies, exposed to the influences of television and the internet as well as through greater opportunities for travel and mobility, are vulnerable to negative social influences. The survey asked the youth about their own opinion regarding such influences. About 78% of the youth reported that they are not at ‘risk’ for ‘the major social issues facing youth today’ that they had listed, such as drugs, alcohol, unemployment and illegal sexual activities. However, 19% consider themselves at risk.

58% of the youth consider that if they are at risk they will have access to counseling and support facilities in his or her community; while 39% believe they don’t have access to adequate counseling and other services.

## CHAPTER SIX: YOUTH SOCIAL BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

### YOUTH FEELING CONFIDENT ABOUT IMPROVING THEIR LIFE'S CIRCUMSTANCES

The youth comprise the single largest group in the country's population. It is important that they have the necessary behavioral competencies to deal with life's challenges, in order to face the future with confidence. They need to be able to rely on themselves and achieve success through their own efforts, in order to emerge as confident and resourceful individuals later in life.

The survey found that 88% of the youth were positive that they can change their lives through their own efforts and that they can make their own plans for the future. The youth have a positive attitude towards life. According to the survey, 91% of the youth believe their life has sense and value.



### YOUTH ABLE TO RESIST NEGATIVE BEHAVIOURS

Being at the threshold of adulthood, it is important that the youth are able to resist negative peer pressure and the many other negative influences in society. They are typically at an age where they are curious and vulnerable to different social influences. With this in mind, the survey attempted to gauge the situation through their eyes by asking them if they believed they were vulnerable to negative social influences. In response, 19% of the youth said that they believe they had developed some bad habits under the influence of friends, while 76% didn't think so. A small percentage of youth (4%) were not sure.

The overwhelming majority (71%) of the youth say that they would stand by their principles even if their friends don't approve of them, while 21% didn't.

### KNOWLEDGE ABOUT UNSAFE SEX, DRUGS AND ALCOHOL

Being young and relatively inexperienced, the youth become easy targets for many social ills such as drugs, unsafe sex and alcohol. It is important that they have a good understanding of the effects and consequences of such activities. The survey thus attempted to find out how much they knew about them.

**UNSAFE SEX:** About 68% said they knew about unsafe sex; 5% didn't know about it and 18% had missing answers. As examples of consequences: 57% said it was dangerous to their health, 8% didn't know, 7% said it may lead to pregnancy, 7% believed it would lead to social isolation and loss of respect, 5% said that it would lead to a loss of the children's paternity or legacy and 19% had no answer.

**ALCOHOL:** The youth also showed good knowledge about alcohol: 74% knew what it was, only 5% did not know and 17% had missing answers. As examples of consequences: 24% said it would lead to loss of sanity; 21% said it was dangerous to their health, 10% said it would lead to isolation and/or loss of respect, 10% said it was a transgression of religious boundaries, 6% did not now know, 5% felt it destroys the community/family, 3% believe it leads to violence and 13% had missing answers.

**DRUGS:** With regard to drugs, 77% knew what it was; 2% didn't and 24% had missing answers. As for consequences of drugs; 25% said it would increase family problems; 14%, isolation/loss of respect; 12%, loose sanity; 8%, transgressing religious boundaries; 5% don't know; 5%, destroys communities; 5% destroys life and livelihood; 17% missing answers.

Most youth showed a good level of knowledge about such influences and their consequences.

## YOUTH ABLE TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN DECISIONS

As self-standing individuals, the youth need to be responsible for their own actions. This would be an important behavioral trait especially later in life when they usually have to face the consequences of their actions. So the survey attempted to see if the youth felt they were responsible for their future.

The large majority, 74%, said they are more responsible for their future than the society. Importantly, 95% said they take responsibility for their decisions even when they make mistakes. 82% of the youth said they would do what they believe is right even if others disagreed with them.

In order to take effective responsibility the youth must have the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their life. Consistent with earlier findings regarding strong family bonds and close relationship with parents, most of the youth believe that they have the opportunity to contribute to decisions that affect their lives. The results are as follows:

- At home: 59% always; 20% sometimes; 17% often and 4% never.
- At work place: 40% always; 23% never; 20% sometimes and 17% often.

## YOUTH ABLE TO VALUE AND MANAGE DIFFERENCES

The ability to value differences among people and knowing how to manage those differences amicably is an important behavioral skill that is essential for building harmonious relationships. It is often difficult for youths to obtain this skill.

Interestingly, a large majority, (91% of youth) believe they can work out differences with people without using abusive language or violence. 20% feel that they don't have any problem in dealing with differences. However, 71% consider that in general they have difficulty relating to people whose views are different from theirs.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: YOUTH – SELF IMAGE AND IDENTITY

### YOUTH WITH OPTIMISM AND HOPE

Youth is a time of optimism and hope. Generally young people feel enthusiastic about life and their future. They have plans and dreams. The day they lose those dreams, is when they lose the initiative for change and development. The survey attempted to assess their attitude, first by asking questions about their emotional health and then by asking them about their future expectations. The first set of questions was on whether they felt sad or depressed. About 33% of the youth said they often felt sad or depressed during the last month while 62% said they didn't. Regarding their future, 85% of the youth consider their future to be bright. Basically the youth do appear to be hopeful and optimistic.



For the youth the major challenges in their island/atoll are: drugs (33%), lack of jobs/poor salaries (31%), lack of educational opportunities (4%), lack of sports/recreational activities (3%) and poor conduct/behavior. 4% of respondents said their were no challenges while 9% said that they did not know of any challenges.

To successfully address the above mentioned challenges the youth recommend the following:

- a. Increase job/opportunities (16%);
- b. Increase awareness/advice/counseling (11%);
- c. Everybody working together/cooperation/support (9%);
- d. Increase training and self employment opportunities (7%);
- e. Provide opportunities in society for rehabilitation (7%);
- f. Punish criminals/ isolate from community (5%);
- g. Increase educational opportunities (5%);
- h. Increase government programs for youth (4%);
- i. Stop drug smuggling (4%);
- j. Reduce expatriates (3%);

7% of respondents did not know of any recommendations that they could give and 14% of respondents had missing answers.

The youth saw their role in meeting these challenges as the following:

- a. Increase awareness/information/advice/knowledge (22%);
- b. Cooperate with/support youth (10%);
- c. Youth should cooperate with government/community (7%);
- d. Youth initiatives/youth initiate socially beneficial activities (5%);
- e. Discipline/become responsible (5%);
- f. Utilize opportunities/seek jobs (4%);
- g. Establish a youth committee (2%)

11% responded that they did not know what the youth's role should be and 22% provided missing answers.

### **YOUTH HAVING SELF-ESTEEM**

Most of the youth were found to have high self esteem and self worth. This is a very positive finding. According to the survey, 81% of the youth are proud of their achievements in life while 13% are not proud.

### **YOUTH FEELING CONFIDENT ABOUT INFLUENCING COMMUNITY/PUBLIC DECISIONS**

The youth need to be pro-active and involved in community development and in shaping their future. The survey has shown that youth are generally self-confident and active in their communities. The survey further shows that they are also reasonably confident about their ability to influence the decisions of community leaders.

According to the survey, 77% of the youth said that when their community leaders make decisions that they feel are unjust to them, they make efforts to change it, while 14% say they don't.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND YOUTH

### YOUTH WITH A SENSE OF MORAL COMMITMENT

It is important that today's youth have a strong sense of morality and what is right for their communities and society. They must be people who think about their future and about how to make things better. As the survey has already shown, most youth have close family relations and a caring home environment. Consistent with this, the results further show that they learn about moral values in: their families (80.6%); schools (58.4%); media (28.2%), from friends (21.9%), and from religious institutions (9.4%). There is no major variation either by gender or by region.

The youth also have their own ideas about broader social issues such as poverty and development. Over 97% of the youth believe that young people should work to reduce hunger and poverty in society.



### YOUTH WITH VALUES OF PLURALISM

Embracing values of pluralism is an important part of learning to accept social differences. As earlier sections have shown, most youth are tolerant of differences and said they can sort out differences without resorting to violence, which is an important indicator of self-restraint and tolerance.

However, when it comes to people from other cultures, they do not seem to have the same sense of accommodation. According to the survey, 61% of the youth feel that it is not important to learn about other cultures (44% not important and 17% not important at all). There is no major variation either by gender, by region or by age group in the percentages presented.

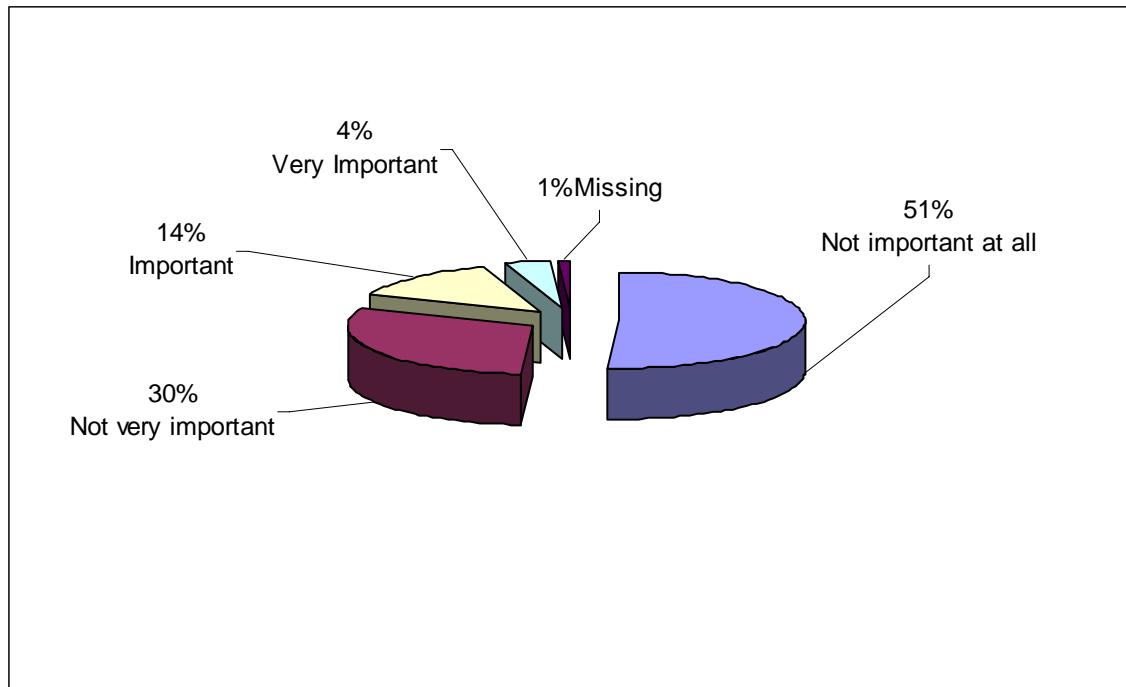
Further, 50.7% of the youth find it uncomfortable or unacceptable if people from other cultures live in their neighborhood (49.5% of males and 52.2% of the females). In the case of the male youths, the percentage is notably higher in the North with 64.1%.

Also, 81% of youth consider that it is not important to respect other religions (51% not important at all and 30% not important). The regions where the percentages of 'not

important at all' are highest are; the Central North (58.8%), Male' (56%), the South (52.7%) and the Central South region (52.1%). The only region where this percentage is relatively lower is the Central region with 44.1%. There is no major variation in the answers by gender or by age group. The results are summarized in **Fig. 10.**

Such an attitude of intolerance towards other religions and cultures may be related to their own background of cultural homogeneity. This aspect needs further study in order to make broad conclusions.

**FIGURE 10: IMPORTANCE OF RESPECTING OTHER RELIGIONS**

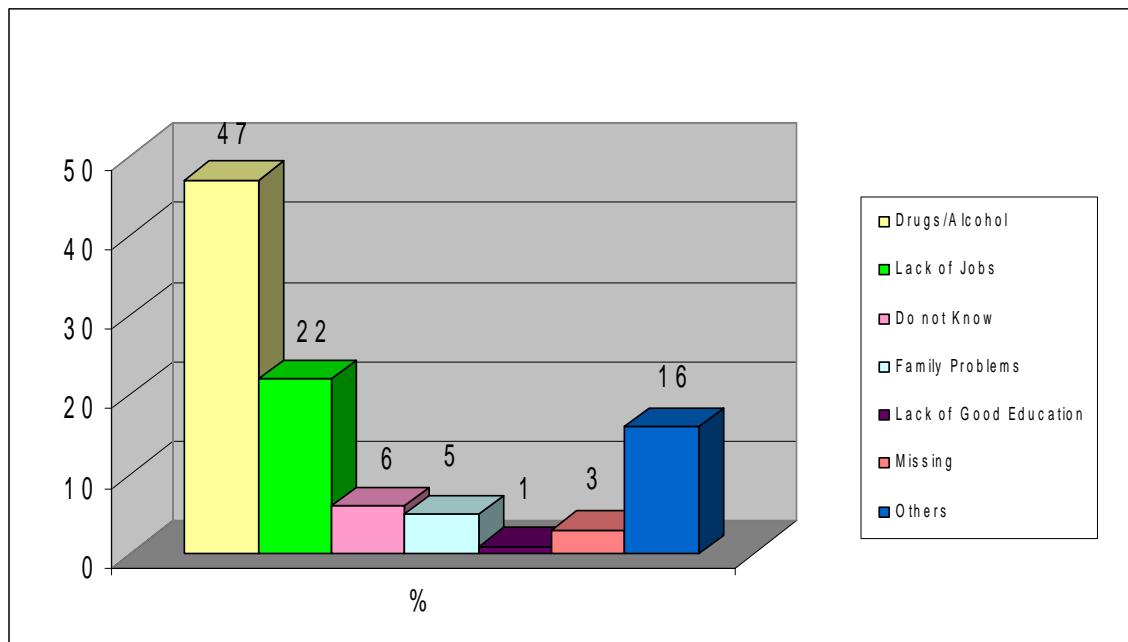


### YOUTH INTERESTED IN PUBLIC/ POLITICAL AFFAIRS

The survey showed that the youth were keenly aware of the main social problems facing their communities. According to them the following were the most urgent issues:

- Drugs/alcohol (47%);
- Job constraints (22%);
- Broken families/negligence (5%);
- Lack of good education (1%)

6% of respondents stated that they did not know what the most urgent issues were and 3% gave missing answers.

**FIGURE 11: MAJOR SOCIAL ISSUES THAT AFFECT COMMUNITY**

The youth are generally active and eager to participate in the social and political life of their communities. According to the survey 53% of the youth are interested in politics (29% had some interest and 24% showed great interest), while 46% are not interested in politics (26% had low interest and 20% were not interested).

### **YOUTH PARTICIPATING IN CIVIC ACTIVITIES, COMMUNITY EVENTS AND CAMPAIGNS**

An active youth population is important for social mobilization and conducting advocacy campaigns on important social issues such as the environment, peace and drugs.

The survey found that in their spare time, youth spend an average of 1 and half hours per week in community activities such as organizing the community, holding events or cultural activities, discussing development problems with neighbours, helping needy persons in the neighbourhood, etc.

Many youth showed an active interest in civic affairs, even though there is also a sizeable section that does not participate in such activities. According to the survey, 68% of the youth have never participated in any campaigns (e.g.: environment, peace, anti-drugs, etc.) while 30% have taken part.

A small but important group (7%) of youth usually take leadership roles or participate in community events. This can be divided into the following groups: those who participate in different activities in the community/island (50%); those who do volunteer work (39%) and those involved in recreational activities (10%).

## CHAPTER NINE: POST – TSUNAMI SITUATION OF YOUTH

### THE IMACT OF THE TSUNAMI ON THE MALDIVES

The South Asian tsunami struck Maldives on the morning of 26<sup>th</sup> December 2004. Waves measuring up to 4 metres in height washed over the tiny archipelago, taking lives and livelihoods and leaving devastation and destruction in its wake. This was the worst natural disaster in the history of the country and Maldives is still trying to come to terms with the tragedy.

The tsunami left 82 people dead and 26 people missing – mostly women and children. Around 12000 people or 7% of the entire population has been displaced. About half of the inhabited islands were fully or partially flooded, islands lost vital infrastructure, homes, agricultural lands and means of livelihoods. Despite a widespread recovery effort being underway, there is much to be done yet.

Perhaps the most significant effects are felt in the socioeconomic fabric of the country. Schools and health facilities were damaged and the two main industries of the country – tourism and fisheries - were severely impacted, causing loss of employment, particularly among the young.

Tourism contributes directly to 33% of GDP (MPND 2004). Indirectly, with its spill-over effects, it could be much higher. The tsunami forced 19 out of the 87 resorts to be shut down and it was estimated that, in the months following the disaster, occupancy rates were well below 40% (President's Office & Television Maldives 2005). Moreover, many fishing vessels, fish processing equipment, infrastructure such as jetties, harbours and coastal structures were washed away or destroyed. This meant that a large part of the rural workforce was left without the means to a livelihood. This situation was also seen in the agricultural sector as the sea water contaminated the fresh water base and caused damage to agricultural areas and vegetation. It could take several years to overcome this loss.



A dynamic and essential part of the Maldivian economy, the informal sector as well as small income generating businesses and activities, has had to face significant losses to its tools, equipment, infrastructure and market, forcing many out of employment and into a vulnerable situation. In many cases, people not only lost their means to a livelihood, but also an entire lifetime of savings, as a lot of people in the islands kept their savings in the form of cash at home.

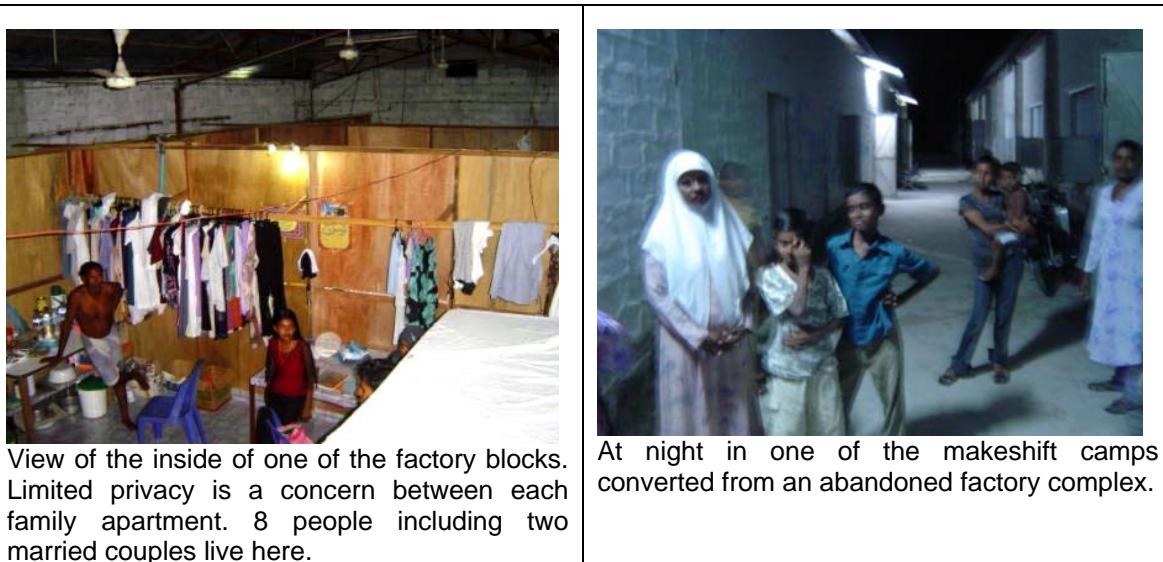
## IMPLICATIONS FOR THE YOUTH VOICES PROJECT

Inevitably, the tsunami and its aftermath had considerable implications for the Youth Voices project – both in terms of actual implementation as well as in terms of the relevance of the research findings to the new realities on the ground.

As mentioned earlier in the report, the implementing agencies decided to conduct some rapid assessments of the youth situation in the atolls most severely affected by the disaster. The following summary of the situation is based on numerous discussions in Laamu Atoll, Thaa Atoll, Dhaalu Atoll, Meemu Atoll and Raa Atoll with young people (internally displaced as well as others), adults, youth associations and administrative staff. The purpose of this exercise was to once again brainstorm issues that were facing young people in disaster affected areas in order to gauge the relevance of the previous research findings to the current situation.

## IMPACT OF THE TSUNAMI ON YOUTH

As can be expected due to the population age cohorts in the Maldives, the majority of the displaced persons are young people and children. These young people today have to cope with issues that no generation before them ever had to face. On some islands there is nothing left; no homes, infrastructure or any means to a livelihood. Many communities have been uprooted completely and forced to migrate to other islands. For communities who have spent generations building up means of livelihoods, the complete loss of savings, equipment and space seems to have created an almost insurmountable problem. For the first time ever, Maldivians have to deal with the issue of homeless and internally displaced persons.



*Photos: Mission report to Laamu Atoll June 2005*

In this context, the youth and the adults of the affected communities expressed the following as the main issues facing the tsunami affected youth;

- Lack of privacy for individual families living in temporary shelters, camps and tents.
- Lack of a study area for school-going aged children; most young people cannot find a properly lit, quiet area to do their homework or to study.
- The forced idleness due to the ‘waiting period’ for relocation as well as lack of recreational facilities and forced unemployment exaggerated existing problems among the youth such as drug abuse, an increasing state of dependency and a sense of marginalization.
- The issue of youth unemployment worsened, with several young people loosing their jobs in the tourist industry. Their lack of skills in alternative occupations such as farming or fishing further exacerbated this problem.
- Livelihoods opportunities decreased with many people losing tools and equipment previously used for earning an income e.g. fishing vessels, fish processing equipment, carpentry tools, and sewing machines. Furthermore, they lost their employment networks.
- Most young people feel that the current levels of training and skills which they possess are insufficient to attain employment or other means of livelihoods.
- In addition to losing recreational facilities and equipment, many young people lost their social spaces; a place to gather and socialize or organize recreational activities.
- They face difficulties in carrying out their religious duties due to a lack of space.
- With the increased vulnerability of the family’s financial status and increased instability, there is a loss of hope among young people about their ability to gain further education or travel outside the island for studies.
- Not being able to participate in the recovery effort, as much as they would have liked to, led to a greater sense of marginalization among the youth.
- Young people seem to be on the frontline in issues that some times arise between host families/ communities and the displaced families/communities.
- The psychosocial affects caused due to the tsunami include an increased feeling of despair and hopelessness.

## CONCLUSIONS

In light of this rapid assessment, it was apparent that the issues facing the youth in the post-tsunami situation are largely the same as those they listed as the main issues in the first phase of the Youth Voices project: issues relating to employment and livelihoods, issues relating to education, family issues and issues relating to a lack of recreational facilities/ space. These issues and concerns have been exacerbated by the tsunami.

The main difference seen according to these findings is that the fifth topic – religion – taken up in the first phase of research seems to only be brought up among tsunami affected communities as a lack of space. As can be expected, additional issues such as loss of privacy and social space, loss of communal networks, issues relating to homelessness and psychological problems are more recent concerns.

In this context, the results of the Youth Voices survey are relevant and useful in understanding youth issues and planning collaborative strategies to address these issues. Moreover, the large majority of the country – two thirds of the population – has not been directly or severely affected by the disaster. This indicates that the results of the survey could also be fairly generalised for the nation without losing its significance.

## REFERENCES

- Ministry of Planning and National Development, (2004), *Statistical Year Book 2004*, Male', Maldives  
The President's Office and Television Maldives, *The Tsunami Disaster Maldives*, DVD, Male', Maldives  
World Bank, Asian Development Bank, UN System, (2005), *The Impact of the Tsunami: Joint Needs Assessment*, Male', Maldives

## CHAPTER TEN: A SURVEY OF INTERNATIONALLY EFFECTIVE YOUTH PROGRAMMES AND POLICIES

### SUPPORTING YOUTH: AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

An examination of international policies and programs that contribute to the healthy development of young people makes clear that multiple factors influence the socio-economic status and overall well being of a country's youth population. Societies that enjoy high levels of education, literacy rates, healthcare, and employment are more likely to have high percentages of young people who are actively engaged, productive citizens experiencing healthy social, emotional, and professional development (United Nations, 2003). Such macro-level social structures play an integral part in determining whether a country's young people are more, or less at risk for specific challenges, and in turn, dictate what kinds of large and small scale prevention or intervention strategies are most appropriate. Moreover, because young people within any society don't always share the same characteristics (family backgrounds, geographic location, gender, race, socio-economic status, religious faith, education levels, personal interests or skills, etc...), nations that apply an "integrated" approach to supporting youth, utilizing multiple initiatives implemented through diverse sectors and institutions (government ministries, NGO's, schools, businesses, foundations, etc), are more likely to reach and positively impact larger numbers of their youth population.



Research also suggests that effective National Youth Policies play an important role in coordinating and facilitating successful youth-serving initiatives on a national scale. The goal of any National Youth Policy (NYP) is to create an "environment that enables young people to develop into the type of adult that society needs for their future well being." ([www.icnyp.org](http://www.icnyp.org)). Therefore, successful application of a NYP enables countries to support large percentages of their youth population across a wide range of social and economic spectra by linking and coordinating efforts from vested sectors. Sound policies appear to; be long-term and State-driven (so that a change in government won't derail successful implementation), consistent with national cultural patterns, support the underprivileged, involve youth and adults in decision-making and allow for continuous assessment and re-alignment.

While the Maldives currently has multiple public and private initiatives working to support it's young people, as well as a comprehensive National Youth Policy, this chapter aims to provide an overview of "best practices" for effective programming and policies and will help to inform and strengthen NGO's, government ministries, and the private sector in their youth-serving activities.

## REVIEW OF INTERNATIONALLY EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

### YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

Large and small-scale youth development initiatives that provide support, a range of activities and serve diverse youth populations have been shown to be a vital part of an effective national policy (2003). Providing healthy recreational, vocational and socially beneficial options for young people outside of the formal education and/or employment system contributes to young people's overall well-being and positive development.



Research suggests that all young people need to fulfil four basic human social needs:

- Security (Structure)
- Autonomy (Power and Influence)
- Achievement (Competence, Mastery)
- Affiliation (Belonging, Membership)

When youth aren't provided with the opportunity to satisfy these needs positively (through school, family-life, employment, membership in sports/recreational organizations or faith-based institutions), they often turn to negative or destructive avenues: For example, street-gang membership, drug culture and criminal affiliation can satisfy all four of these elements, placing young people at risk for a host of negative outcomes. Therefore, organizations, programs, and institutions that can provide a healthy and productive means of achieving these competencies are likely to prevent youth from engaging in risky or detrimental behaviour. (Ferguson, 1996).

A survey of effective youth development programming, whether it be organized sports and recreation (formal and informal teams affiliated with schools/clubs) arts-oriented programs, workforce/trade development programs, technology-based initiatives, etc..., suggests that structured, organized programming provides youth with a range of benefits critical for healthy social and emotional development. In addition to providing safe and productive ways to spend out-of-school or leisure time, such programs help young people learn instrumental skills (academic or professional skills) and develop social/emotional competencies that help them thrive within society (Brendtro, 1998, James, 1999).

A synthesis of youth development "best practices" suggests that initiatives which incorporate the following elements are most likely to succeed in helping young people achieve healthy development and long-term success:

- Creative Forms of Learning
- Utilizing Youth as Resources/Participatory approach
- Work-based Learning
- A holistic, or "wrap-around" approach to programming
- Supportive adults, structure, and high expectations

- Family support and involvement
- Long-term support and Follow-up (Brendtro, 1998 Ferguson, 1996, James, 1999, Murphy, 1997)

An examination of several widely implemented and effective youth development initiatives follows.

## MENTORING PROGRAMS



International research suggests that structured adult-youth mentoring programs can significantly increase resilient behaviour and reduce risk factors for young people's long term health and success (Grossman, 1999, Rhodes, 2002). Formal mentoring occurs through programming where a young person is matched with an adult who serves as an older "friend" to the youth, providing guidance and emotional support. Mentors can also be of great instrumental value, teaching youth academic and

professional skills that help them succeed in school and the professional world. Multiple studies have suggested that youth who have a caring, consistent, and supportive adult in their lives are less likely to initiate drug use, less likely to engage in criminal activity, less likely to solve problems violently, more likely to succeed academically and professionally (1999, 2002, Werner, 1990). Moreover, because of mentoring's inherent flexibility, programs can also be designed to address the unique needs of specific youth populations such as the children of prisoners, girls or boys, teenage mothers, recovering substance abusers, technologically illiterate children, etc. Mentoring programs can also be operated at relatively low cost particularly when external resources (such as public and private recreational space, corporate facilities, school-based resources, and NGO programming) are leveraged into program design and implementation. Provided that the relationship lasts at least six months, meeting times of only four hours per month (two hours every other week) have been shown to positively impact young people's social, emotional, and academic development (2002).

Additionally, mentoring programs raise public awareness and engagement with youth issues to the extent that they involve adults from sectors of society that don't ordinarily inter-act with young people on a regular basis (i.e. Corporate Work-based Programs). (2002),

**TYPES OF PROGRAMS:** Mentoring can be implemented through several different program models, depending upon the needs of the youth population and other stakeholders involved in the project.

- **COMMUNITY-BASED:** Mentors are recruited from within the local community to work with young people recruited either from one particular geographic area or social service organization, such as a youth centre, sports team, or from the population at large. Pairs focus primarily on building a friendship, and engage in “off-site activities,” such as visiting museums, parks, sports events, movies, etc.
- **WORK-BASED MENTORING** programs focus primarily on exposing young people to the world-of work, frequently through activities such as one-time job shadowing, or regular visits to mentors’ companies where mentees spend time at their mentors’ place of work, engaging in professional, academic, or social activities.
- **SCHOOL-BASED MENTORING** programs typically recruit mentors from the population at large to work with a cohort of students from one particular school and/or grade, and usually have an academic focus in addition to relationship development.
- **FAITH-BASED** programs are usually implemented through local religious institutions, and use a particular faith as the main focus of program implementation and as the basis of the relationship between pairs. Such programs typically use religious tenets to drive program activities and shape the way mentors and mentees interact.

## EFFECTIVE MENTORING PRACTICES

Regardless of the type of program or mentoring relationship, research and experience suggest that implementing programs in accordance with “effective practices” yields the best outcomes. These include:

- Designing the program to meet the needs of target youth populations,
- Incorporation of a screening and matching process,
- Training of mentors and mentees,
- Utilization of a trained and qualified program coordinator,
- Provision of ongoing support and supervision of participants,
- Implementation of structured match and large-group activities, and
- Program and participant evaluation (National Mentoring Working Group, 2000)

## DRUG PREVENTION

High levels of drug and alcohol use/addiction amongst youth remains a social challenge for many countries (United Nations, 2003). However, research suggests that certain social and instrumental factors help to mitigate the number of young people involved with substance abuse. On a macro-level, studies indicate that large-scale social policies that promote equitable human development amongst the population (i.e. quality employment opportunities, strong education rates, adequate housing, recreational opportunities, etc.) contribute to lower substance abuse amongst national youth populations. In addition, governments that apply a balanced approach to reducing drug use- (incorporating both “demand reduction” through educational programming, and “supply or availability reduction” in the form of government and policing efforts) appear more likely to succeed in positively impacting drug-use rates amongst youth. Lastly, when law-enforcement officials have discretion and options in drug sentencing and handling related offences, there appears to be greater ability for society to effectively treat and assist drug abusing or addicted youth (2003).

## DEMAND REDUCTION APPROACHES

A UN survey of national prevention strategies identified two forms of prevention that appear effective in reducing or preventing youth drug abuse:

### ***UNIVERSAL PREVENTION***

A universal approach targets all youth within national, local, or institutional populations, recognizing that drug awareness and education are an integral part of preventing or delaying initiation within the general population. Such approaches include awareness campaigns, school drug education programs and multi-component community initiatives. School-based or community-based programs in which young people attend sessions over a set period of time have been shown to be more effective than one-time, “drop-in” programs. Broader, life-skill approaches appear to have a higher impact than those that focus specifically on deficits or problems. Effective models appear to utilize multi-week sessions, with follow-up booster sessions to reinforce and sustain effects over the long-term. Successful curricula usually combine elements of knowledge-and skill-building, and emphasize interactive activities such as group process, role playing, service learning and cooperative projects (2003)

**SELECTIVE PREVENTION** programs specifically target youth who are at high risk for drug use. Studies suggest that young people with academic problems, social/emotional issues, family dysfunction, poverty and family history, are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol (2003). Prevention programs shown to be effective at reaching such youth typically incorporate curricula that focus on the development of coping strategies and basic life skills that help young people address challenges in constructive ways. Other successful components include: Motivational interventions that help to identify individual strengths, engage youth in positive activities, offer choices, and work collaboratively with youth to alleviate “here and now” problems as opposed to future ones. Unsurprisingly, the earlier a young person is engaged in such programming, the more likely it is that they’ll be able to resist or delay substance abuse. In addition, programs that successfully engage families, through therapy and other techniques seem to experience greater success than those that focus only on the youth themselves. Such programs can be implemented through a variety of conduits including health clinics, community centres and NGO’s. Involving youth in program design and implementation, and involving staff who are able to forge supportive, trusting relationships are much more likely to retain young people.

*Drug Prevention Case Study:* The “Young Advocates” program in the Philippines, comprising primarily of young people themselves, conducts outreach activities, street education, theatre activities and helps youth find employment or income generating opportunities as positive alternatives to substance abuse (2003).

## PRIVATE SECTOR INVOLVEMENT IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Forging partnerships between vested youth-serving entities and the private sector has proven to be an internationally effective practice towards achieving youth development goals. Pre-existing youth organizations such as schools, NGO’s, and Youth Centres often link with Faith-based institutions, businesses, and City or regional agencies to provide socially, educationally, and professionally valuable opportunities for youth.

Businesses in particular can help address one of the main challenges facing vulnerable youth populations: unemployment. By actually providing jobs and internship opportunities for young people, they can not only provide work opportunities, but help youth develop professional skills and experiences that will help them succeed over the long-term. Examples of additional ways in which businesses can support young people include the following:

- Financial and in-kind support to NGO’s operating youth-serving initiatives
- Job training programs

- Job-shadow programs
- Corporate Adopt-a-School initiatives
- Providing paid internships to high-school aged youth
- Providing full-time employment to out-of-school youth
- Corporate foundation grants to support national and community-based initiatives
- Corporate employee community service projects
- Corporate Mentoring Programs
- Invest in micro-loan plans/support youth entrepreneurship.

*Corporate Involvement Case Study:* In the 1990's Goldman Sachs Hong Kong, provided funding to local youth-serving NGO's for general operations, and coordinated mentoring, tutoring, and single and multi-day community service projects designed to meet the needs of low-income, immigrant youth. Volunteer-driven projects included in-school academic tutoring, social programs pairing youths with GS employees and year-long mentoring initiatives aimed at bolstering young people's academic and social development. (Steve Rice, former Director of Goldman Sachs, Hong Kong Charitable Services)

## NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE CORPS

Increasingly, more and more countries are recognizing the value of incorporating National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) into youth policy and programming ([ianys.org](http://ianys.org)). From Jordan to Ghana, NGO and government efforts to launch and sustain Youth Service initiatives have proven to be effective at engaging young people in socially and environmentally beneficial public projects. In addition to enjoying many of the developmental benefits that effective youth programs provide, youth corps members often receive paid stipends, school scholarships or financial rewards upon completion. Societal benefits include not only the direct value of the actual services being provided (environmental, educational, public works, etc.), but the broader value of expanding the number of young people engaged in productive activities.

A review of National Youth Service initiatives suggests that "The common feature of national youth service programs is the involvement of young people in service to others and to the environment, usually for a period of six months to two years." ([ianys.org](http://ianys.org)) Overall, service initiatives typically focus on socially-supportive activities such as education, environmental protection, and care for disabled or needy populations such as the young and elderly.

Examples of youth service programs in other countries include: the Chinese Young Volunteers Association in China, Zivildienst in Germany, Community Service Volunteers in the UK, AmeriCorps in the USA, Trabajo Comunal Universitario in Costa

Rica, Tirelo Setshaba in Botswana, the Green Corps in Australia, and the National Youth Service Corps in both Ghana and Nigeria ([ianys.org](http://ianys.org))

Reasons for launching service programs vary from country to country depending upon national circumstances and infrastructure. Such reasons include the need for social and environmental support, addressing youth unemployment, augmenting academic instruction within the school system and as a form of “nation-building” ([ianys.org](http://ianys.org)). As a result, outcomes of youth service programs vary depending upon the structure of initiatives, the youth population engaged, duration of the project and scope and sustainability of funding. Overall, cost-benefit assessments of youth service programs suggest that the larger social, environmental, and economic benefits are “equal to or greater than the cost of the program.” Moreover, the youth participants themselves appear to benefit from their experience in myriad ways: “Participants benefit from work experience, career exploration, increased self-esteem, and increased awareness of the needs of others. Many national youth service participants acquire new skills, good work habits, decision-making ability, social maturity and a new understanding between races and ages.” ([ianys.org](http://ianys.org))

To date, efforts towards launching youth service programs in the Maldives have been encouraging. Under the auspices of the Ministry of Youth, the program “Youth Spirit Volunteering” recruited more than 200 young people to help with Tsunami recovery efforts in the outer islands. Service members were organized and trained by ministry staff, and dispatched to affected areas to help with administration of basic aid (food, water, etc.) and the clearing of debris. The existing network of Youth NGO’s throughout the country appears to be a valuable asset in creating and implementing these kinds of initiatives, as local organizations can play a vital role in identifying specific community needs, recruiting local volunteers, and coordinating project implementation.

*Case study of National Youth Service Corps:* Sherubtse Nature Club, Bhutan. Founded in 1989 the group of young people helps the local community by monitoring and cleaning drinking water systems and surrounding environments, contributing to the overall health and well-being of the local population (Global Youth Action Network Report, 2005)

*Additional Service Corps Case Studies* “AmeriCorps in the United States is a network of local, state, and national service programs that connects more than 70,000 Americans each year in intensive service to meet the country’s critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment.

AmeriCorps members serve with more than 3,000 non-profit public agencies, faith-based organizations and community organizations. Since 1994, more than 400,000 men and women have provided needed assistance to millions of Americans across the nation through their AmeriCorps service.

AmeriCorps opens the door for citizens to serve in a variety of ways. Through their direct service and the volunteers they mobilize, AmeriCorps members address critical needs in communities throughout America, including

- Tutoring and mentoring disadvantaged youth
- Fighting illiteracy
- Improving health services
- Building affordable housing
- Teaching computer skills
- Cleaning parks and streams
- Managing or operating after-school programs
- Helping communities respond to disasters
- Building organizational capacity” ([americorps.org](http://americorps.org))

## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

### GOVERNMENT YOUTH EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

A recent UN survey of youth employment suggests that specific governmental policies and strategies may be effective at improving national youth employment rates in countries where job opportunities are few. Research indicates that national investment in youth job-training and vocational programming alone, while providing a means to constructively engage youth in the short-term, won't solve the larger problem of scarce job opportunities (United Nations, 2003). As a result, it's likely that creating opportunities for actual work experience is more cost-effective than investing time and resources in training young people for jobs that ultimately might not be available. In fact, too much education and training falsely creates the impression of low unemployment rates when in reality such sectors end up serving as “holding centres” (United Nations 2003). A review of effective policies indicates that governments with limited resources should therefore invest in “employment intensive” sectors in order to stimulate national job growth instead of large-scale training initiatives (of course such sectors vary country to country depending upon specific economic and industry patterns). Additional policies recommended for generating youth employment opportunities include:

- Support youth entrepreneurship/ small businesses development through micro-lending schemes and by providing special tax breaks and incentives.
- Enact or improve regulations and working conditions for sectors with high youth employment potential (studies show that this actually improves productivity and higher levels of competitiveness).
- Launch public works projects for which young people could be hired, as these have been very effective at creating new jobs for youth. This also helps the larger population as such projects can improve infrastructure and help in national disaster or crisis situations. In addition, they can have a large, positive impact on national economies.

- Create tax incentives for corporations to provide internships to young people, wage subsidies, and loosen regulations that restrict the hiring of youth for available jobs.
- Lastly, governments should recognize that investment in youth and workforce development initiatives are cost effective. Typically, the cost of funding programmes that strengthens youth's ability to achieve educational, social, and educational goals is a small percentage of the long-term financial burden incurred on societies that must support large populations of unemployed, incarcerated, or socially mal-adjusted adults (2003).

## YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Governments and regional or locally-based businesses can support youth employment through policies that encourage creation and sustainability of youth-owned small businesses. Such initiatives have been shown to be an integral part of an integrated national strategy for improving youth employment (2003, Global Youth Action Network Report, 2005)

*Case Studies in Youth Entrepreneurship Initiatives:* The Commonwealth Youth Credit Initiative offered small-scale lending, or micro-credit, training, and enterprise development to youth-owned small businesses in India. The program provided low cost, easily accessible credit, created partnerships with NGO's, developed a support network of young people and facilitated ongoing training and monitoring of enterprises. The project provided over 1000 loans with a recovery rate of 85%. More than 800 enterprises were set up, half of which were women-owned businesses. The project was spearheaded by the India-based International Centre for Career and Entrepreneurship Development.

The National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship in the United States has also been effective at helping young people start their own businesses. "Through entrepreneurship education, NFTE, which is also referred to as Network for Teaching Entrepreneurship, helps young people from low-income communities build skills and unlock their entrepreneurial creativity. Since 1987, NFTE has reached over 100,000 young people from impoverished communities, trained more than 3,200 Certified Entrepreneurship Teachers and continuously improved its innovative entrepreneurship curriculum. In a follow-up survey of alumni:

- 70% were in post-secondary education
- 43% had part-time jobs
- 33% were still running a business" ([www.nfte.com](http://www.nfte.com))

## NATIONAL YOUTH POLICIES

While many countries have created policies to address the challenges facing their youth, most lack specific structures or national strategies for mainstreaming youth concerns into legislation, or for involving youth directly in decision-making. Moreover, many governments that actually have youth-supporting legislation in place fail to provide comprehensive, wrap-around solutions that research has shown to be effective in addressing national youth issues. Increasingly, national governments recognize the need for designing and implementing policies that require “traditional decision-makers” to work with young people who can shape successful national strategies and services.

The International Centre for National Youth Policy, (icnyp.org) founded in 1998, works “with UN-member nations to analyze to encourage and enable all stakeholders, and most particularly youth, to participate in all aspects of formulating, implementing and evaluating national youth policy.” (ICNYP) It’s main objectives are based on the mandates of the United Nations General Assembly and the experiences of other Member States of the United Nations. The Centre has conducted comparisons of the national youth polices of dozens of countries, and identified a set of benchmarks, or “basic indicators” for effective national youth policies. While the Centre stresses that there is no one replicable model for sound policy, as factors such as cultural heritage, political and economic environment, and other myriad variables differ from country to country, it suggest that the following elements contribute to effective policy development:

### **BASIC INDICATORS OF NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY:**

**(QUOTED FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY)**

- 1) “VISION OF, BY, AND FOR YOUTH OF THE PRESENT FUTURE SOCIETY:** and concerns all Stakeholders (Governmental youth-related ministries, youth and youth-related organizations, private sector, UN and bilateral development agencies etc), linked directly to both formal and non-formal education, and stressing that the vision of youth should be seen as a vibrant resource and indeed a solution and not only as a problem for Society;
- 2) DEFINITION OF THE YOUTH AGE GROUP AND ITS SUB-GROUPS:** The United Nations General Assembly recommended in 1985 for International Youth Year and again in 1995 for the World Programme of Action on Youth that ”Youth” were those persons aged 15 to 24 years,

but that was done for statistical purposes, while recognizing that many Member States have other definitions, and the Assembly noted such sub-groups as: urban youth, rural youth, girls and young women, students, young workers, disabled youth, refugee and migrant youth etc;

**3) YOUTH DATA BASE, INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION:** providing base-line data and profiles of youth throughout the country and the NYP, presenting a communication strategy for positive media images of young people as both individuals and as an age group and an important type of civil society organization, promoting more youth access to the Internet and developing an ICT strategy for youth development and for civic engagement;

**4) RESEARCH, HEARINGS AND ATTITUDE SURVEYS ON THE SITUATION:** to serve as a basis of a national youth policy and updated on a regular and cross-sectoral basis, to identify a set of priority issues (youth education, employment, health, poverty, hunger, environment, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency etc.), establishing targets, and formulating strategies for improving the situation of youth in specific and measurable ways;

**5) YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN DEMOCRATIC REFORM AND GOVERNANCE,** including youth in decision-making processes and institutions, advisory bodies and promotion of responsible citizenship for young people, including: freedom of association, speech, assembly and related human rights such as election of officers by youth to student councils at schools and universities as well as to executive committees of youth NGOs, and civic engagement roles for youth and their youth organizations to directly contribute to the democratic reform and governance of Society;

**6) YOUTH AS AGENTS FOR INNOVATION AND CHANGE IN SOCIETY** including support of the creative and innovative work of young people in cultural, social, economic, political and legal processes and institutions, as well as the promotion of young people as consumers and creators of cultural heritage;

**7) YOUTH TRAINING AND CAPACITY-BUILDING OF YOUTH** in youth NGOs and in Governments to strengthen their leadership abilities and skills, as well as enhance their impact on youth opportunities and problems and to cultivate ways of supporting the development of the NYP and its implementation;

**8) YOUTH AND NATIONAL SERVICE (NYS):** on a voluntary and/or mandatory basis for: economic contributions to Society, for responsible citizenship, good governance and development, for integration of young people into society and for the promotion of full employment by enhancing the employability of unemployed youth;

**9) YOUTH POLICY AWARDS FOR RECOGNITION OF NYP/ NYS ACHEIVEMENTS** given by the Head of State or other appropriate persons or body of the Government to young people who have made outstanding national youth service contributions to society. The Government could also further recognize such youth service by accrediting volunteering by youth in the educational system and providing service-learning courses in schools and universities as well as in vocational training centres;

**10) YOUTH POLICY AND PROGRAMME COORDINATION** establishment of coordinating bodies, to better promote and implement the NYP by Governmental ministries and departments (inter-ministerial coordinating committee), youth and youth-related organizations (national youth NGO coordinating council), private sector (business council on youth ), UN programmes and agencies as well as bilateral development agencies (UN Development Assistance Framework: UNDAF, Youth Theme Group) etc and bring them together in some kind of a joint body.

**11) YOUTH LEGISLATION FOR ENTACEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP:** from the Executive body as a Cabinet or Ministerial Council submiting the draft NYP bill with a specific programme budget and operational plan for enactment in the Parliament with the establishment of a Parliamentary body (as a Committee or Sub-Committee) to oversee its implementation, review and ammendments or new bills to supplement the NYP process.

**12) YOUTH BUDGET AND YOUTH FUND:** to finance the promotion, implementation, evaluation and re-direction of a NYP as part of the NYP bill of Parliament in the form of a biennial programme budget, medium-term plan for four year period, and with programme performance indicators, review of costs/benefits of investing in youth compared with other priorities, phased time-frames, regular audit , and encourage youth philanthropy (whereby young people participate in the management of budget allocations, fundraising and selection of awardees);

- 13) YOUTH POLICY OUTREACH ACTION PLAN:** all of the action elements of a NYP Action Plan should be included in the project document containing the NYP and should outline the multi-level programme of action planned at national, provincial and local levels to implement the NYP in phased steps and with specific time frames by, for and with youth and their organizations;
- 14) YOUTH POLICY EVALUATION AND RE-DIRECTION:** a regular meeting of the stakeholders (such as a National Youth Commission) should undertake a short, medium and long-term evaluation of the impact of the NYP, performance indicators should be developed for each output of the NYP, an annual youth audit made on the progress achieved and obstacles encountered, and a re-direction made of the NYP based on the results of the evaluation;
- 15) SHARING EXPERIENCES AND BEST PRACTICES ON NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY:** The Government should share experiences on NYP with other Governments at the sub-regional, regional and world levels, participating in the respective meetings of ministers responsible for youth and expert group meetings related to NYPs, and should include youth NGO representatives in their delegations to such meetings, and the NYP should likewise promote international cooperation among youth as well as among youth organizations on a sub-regional, regional and global basis to share experiences and encourage understanding, mutual respect and peace.” ([icnyp.org](http://icnyp.org))

## OVERVIEW OF NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY IN THE MALDIVES

Encouragingly, the existing National Youth Policy (MYS 2003) for the Maldives includes many of the recommended Basic Indicators (BI) for National Youth Policy listed above. The following is a summary of these indicators and how current Maldives policies/programmes are meeting (or partly meeting) the benchmarks:

**BI 1 “VISION OF, BY AND FOR YOUTH OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE SOCIETY:** The goals and recommendations below were excerpted from the existing National Youth Policy, and provide an overview of the government’s present and future vision for the Society’s youth:

**NATIONAL YOUTH POLICY:** Create the necessary environment and capacity for all young men and women to achieve full participation in the economic and social development of the nation.

*Issues faced and objectives:*

## **EMPLOYMENT**

Young men and women need to be encouraged to consider a wider variety of employment options and to develop the skills and experiences that will help them obtain and keep these jobs. Goal: Create better linkages between the employment sector and providers of education, skills and training programmes and also within employment sectors.

## **EDUCATION**

The curriculum should be broadened to reflect the vocational and economic needs of the country. Concerted efforts need to be made to promote the value and importance of education and training for all young men and women.

## **YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Goal: Development of young people and their engagement in national development. Promote a more holistic and concerted approach to the development of youth affairs.

Create the necessary environment and capacity for all young men and women to achieve full participation in the economic and social development of the nation.

Create a greater awareness in society of the needs, rights and aspirations of young men and women.

## COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Increase the participation of young women and men in society by promoting values and good practices among young people – including national pride and citizenship, mutual respect and tolerance, youth participation, respect for the environment and other global issues (excerpted and paraphrased from the Maldives National Youth Policy)

**BI 2: DEFINITION OF THE YOUTH AGE GROUPS AND ITS SUB-GROUPS:** for Maldives it is 18 – 35

**BI 4: YOUTH RESEARCH, HEARINGS AND ATTITUDE SURVEYS ON THE SITUATION OF YOUTH:** The Youth Voices Research project and this report are clear examples of this indicator.

**BI 6: YOUTH AS AGENTS FOR INNOVATION AND CHANGE IN SOCIETY:** For many current initiatives (including the Youth Voices project) and proposed multi-stakeholder programs, the goal has been, and continues to be, including young people in community service efforts, public works, education and employment reform and in the ongoing shaping of national and local policy.

**BI 7: YOUTH TRAINING AND CAPACITY- BUILDING OF YOUTH WORKERS:** Coupled with private sector and government programs, the network of over 200 youth-serving NGO's currently conducts a wide-array of youth training and professional development to support initiatives nation-wide.

**BI 8: YOUTH AND NATIONAL YOUTH SERVICE:** The pilot “Youth Spirit Volunteering” program was successful in engaging several hundred young people in national service coordinated through Tsunami relief efforts. Building on the program’s success would likely increase both the number of youth participants’ benefiting from the experience, as well as the broader social and economic impact on the country’s infrastructure and population.

**BI 9: YOUTH POLICY AWARDS FOR THE RECOGNITION OF NYP/ NYS ACHEIVEMENTS:** Large and small-scale programs have been incorporating awards/recognition elements into programming for many years.

**BI 10: YOUTH POLICY AND PROGRAMME COORDINATION:** It’s clear that the Youth Voices project has served as a catalyst for unification amongst private, public, and government sectors, as well as led to unprecedented collaboration towards solutions. However, to date, a specific, diverse policy team that could serve as a coordinating body is yet to be established.

While the country’s stakeholders should meet to examine the best ways to expand the existing Maldives National Youth Policy, it’s clear that many of the recommended benchmarks are currently in place, providing a strong foundation from which to move forward.

## PROPOSED “BEST PRACTICES” FOR MALDIVIAN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:

Successful youth initiatives that generate positive educational, social, emotional and economic outcomes share common characteristics (Ferguson, 1996, James 1999). The following list, based on these elements, is proposed as a “framework” for the YVP Coordinator to use when identifying and/or providing support to youth development programs and organizations. In essence, the list can be used as both a “filter,” through which program viability can be measured, and as a “guide” for organizations to follow when designing and implementing programming.

Effective Youth Development Programs that contribute to positive adolescent development should include the following elements:

**CREATIVE FORMS OF LEARNING** Providing youth with innovative and engaging activities/curriculum helps with retention, and may keep otherwise “marginalized” youth populations involved in developmentally healthy programming. Creative activity can also contribute to overall education and skill development

**UTILIZING YOUTH AS RESOURCES** Young people who are actively involved in leadership roles or in supporting their community are more likely to develop into caring and responsible adults.

**WORKED-BASED LEARNING** Because employment is such a critical problem for young people in the Maldives, programs that incorporate some form of professional skill development and exposure to the work-world would bolster the immediate and long-term employability of youth participants, and address a major social problem.

**A HOLISTIC OR INTEGRATED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT** Research has shown that providing “wrap-around” services and support to adolescents yields more positive outcomes than deficit-based programming. By providing young people with opportunities designed to build multiple assets across a wide spectrum (i.e. education, life skills, professional skills, community service, leadership), organizations will likely experience greater success in helping young people overcome adversity.

**ADULT SUPPORT, STRUCTURE, AND HIGH EXPECTATIONS** Trained, screened, and supportive staff and/or volunteers (mentors, instructors, etc.) are integral to successful programming. Without strong adult relationships that offer proper guidance

and boundaries, young people can easily fall back into risky behaviours that counteract benefits they may be receiving from activities.

**CURRICULUM CONNECTED TO YOUTH DEVELOPMENT INDICES:**

Designing initiatives so that they address the deficits outlined in the Youth Voices findings will ensure that programs are helping Maldivian youth overcome key social challenges, build resiliency and develop into healthy and successful adults.

**SUPPORT AND FOLLOW-UP SERVICES** Research suggests that short-term interventions yield short-term gains. Once young people have completed programming cycles, keeping them involved in positive youth development activities and ensuring that their overall needs are being met is vital for long-term success.

In addition to incorporating the above developmental approaches, programs operating with the following structural components in place are more likely to achieve long-term success:

**A BOARD/ BODY FOR ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT** consisting of multiple stakeholders from diverse sectors will help to ensure successful program implementation and expansion.

**A STRATEGIC PLAN** that includes multiple funding streams, budgeting for staff and resources and a road map for growth and sustainability.

**SCREENING AND RECRUITING PROCEDURES** for youth participants and staff. Integrating specific participant/staff recruitment criteria into program operations will help to ensure that the “right” young people become involved (high-risk or high-need youth, youth from marginalized demographics, youth from affected islands, etc...). Moreover, it is vital that direct service staff be screened, experienced, trained and possess the necessary certifications.

**SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS** are especially important for adventure sports and work-based learning programs where youth participants may be exposed to above normal risks. Staff and participants alike should have the necessary training and certification to take on specific projects and activities safely.

**AN EVALUATION SYSTEM** to track participation, retention, program operation and positive youth outcomes is invaluable to service providers in gauging program impact and for program administrators who need to demonstrate success to donors and management.

## REFERENCES

- Ad Hoc Working Group for Youth and the MDG's (2005) Youth and the Millennium Development Goals, Challenge and Opportunities for Implementation, New York, NY, Global Youth Action Network
- Brendtro, L. & Brokenleg, M. (1998). Reclaiming Youth at Risk. Indiana: National Educational Service.
- The Conservation Company, (2001). Goldman, Sachs & Co. Evaluation of The Metropolitan Corporate Academy. New York, NY. The Conservation Company.
- Ferguson, R. & Clay, P, (1996) *YouthBuild in developmental perspective: A formative evaluation of the YouthBuild program*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Department of Urban Studies and Planning.
- Grossman, Jean Baldwin. (1999). Contemporary Issues in Mentoring. Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.
- James, D.W. (1999). More Things That Do Make a Difference for Youth. Washington D.C. American Youth Policy Forum.
- Masten, A. (1994). Resilience in individual development: Successful adaptation despite risk and adversity. In M. Wang and E. Gordon (Eds.) *Educational Resilience in Inner-City America: Challenges and Prospects*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum Assoc.
- Mastrommauro, L., Powell, A. (2005) New York City Mentoring Program, Annual Survey Report, 2003-2004 School Year. New York City, New York City Department of Education, Office of Strategic Partnerships.
- Murphy, J.& Duncan, L. (1997). Brief Intervention for School Problems. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Noam, G.G. (1998, September 22-November 3). Risk and Resiliency [ Class Lectures for H330: Children and Adolescents at Risk, A Developmental Perspective.] Cambridge, MA.
- National Mentoring Working Group (2000). Mentoring: Elements of effective practice.

Washington, DC: National Mentoring Partnership.

- Rhodes, J. (2002). Stand By Me: The Risks and Rewards of Mentoring Today's Youth. Cambridge, MA. Harvard University Press.
- United Nations, 2003, World Youth Report. New York, United Nations Publications
- Werner, E. (1990). Protective factors and individual resilience. In S. Meisels & J.S. Shonkoff (Eds.), *Handbook of early childhood intervention*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN: RECOMMENDATIONS – NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE 2006-2008

### **BACKGROUND**

As is evident from the name, the aims of the project is threefold: finding ‘facts’, understanding ‘opinions’ and identifying ‘solutions’. Subsequently, as the final stage of the Youth Voices – Facts, Opinions and Solutions project, two day workshop was held in Male’ at the national level. The National Consultation 2005 was conducted under the broad theme “Understanding youth issues and planning collaborative strategies”

The participants of the workshop included youth and adults from different regions, the regional representatives, the Research Committee from the first national meeting, representatives and decision making level personnel from government ministries and offices, NGOs, youth organisations, sports clubs and the media.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE CONSULTATION**

The main objectives of the National Consultation were:

- To share the findings of the Youth Voices research with youth, adults, stakeholders and policymakers
- To provide a forum for recommendations and solutions for issues identified in the survey
- To compile a draft of the “National Strategic Plan for Young People 2006 – 2007”

### **WORKING GROUPS AND THEMES**

The discussions in the consultation took place in six theme groups. The six themes were based on the six categories of the Youth Development Index (YDI). The groups comprised of youths, adults and resource people from relevant ministries, offices and professions. The working groups were briefed on the project background and objectives, presented with the survey findings and a draft of the National Strategic Plan for Young People which included proposed goals and objectives to address youth issues. The groups were asked to discuss the findings and the proposed goals and objectives and come up with strategic solutions and recommendations to achieve these objectives within the framework of the YDI.

The working groups included resource personnel from the relevant Ministries and offices. These resource people were identified and contacted prior to the meeting to discuss the workshop and their roles. Resource papers on the youth’s status in Maldives with regard to particular issues such as education, health and religion were also submitted in the workshop by relevant Ministries and offices. The groups were facilitated by the youth personnel trained during the initial phase of the project.

In their discussions, the working groups focused mainly on the following aspects under the YDI themes:

**THEME 1:** Economic opportunities,

Youth employment and job opportunities,  
Education and training,  
Job satisfaction and career aspirations  
Income

**THEME 2:** Social Bonding, Support, and Integration

Family life  
Social acceptance and integration of youth  
Leisure time  
Relationship between community leaders/ public officials and youth  
Relationship between adults and youth  
Religion and its role in youth well being

**THEME 3:** Youth Development Opportunities/Support

Counselling (institutional and community) services  
Youth organisations/ associations  
Youth development opportunities such as youth programmes (sport, cultural, religious, civic etc)

**THEME 4:** Social and Behavioural Competencies

Self confidence and self esteem  
Ability to resist peer pressure  
Knowledge of risk behaviours and risk factors  
Decision making capabilities  
Valuing and managing differences – cultural, social, religious, political

**THEME 5:** Self-Image and Identity

Youth and self esteem/ self confidence  
Youth and their perception of their value in community  
Youth and their perception of their role in public/ community decisions  
Youth and their general outlook on life (optimism and hope)

**THEME 6:** Civic Engagement

Youth and the issue of moral and ethical commitment  
Youth with values of pluralism  
Youth and volunteering  
Youth's understanding of and involvement in politics/ public affairs  
Youth's participation in civic/community events/campaigns

## NATIONAL CONSULTATION OF POLICYMAKERS

The strategic solutions, recommendations and achievement targets set by the working groups in the framework of the National Strategic Plan were presented to a national consultation meeting of policymakers the following day. This consultation was attended by the President, Ministers, representatives of UN agencies, senior government officials, TF members and representatives of NGOs and other organisations.

### COMPILING THE NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE 2006-2008

The draft of the National Strategic Plan for Young People 2006 - 2008 has been compiled following the main principles adhered to throughout the project:

- It is based on six categories.
- It is compiled using a consultative process
- Its main aim is to embody the youths perspective, give a space for the youth to voice their opinions regarding issues and engage the youth at the policy level

Compiling the Plan's draft was a three stage process; firstly, the findings of the survey were carefully considered in formulating overarching goals to address the youth issues identified therein under the six themes of the YDI. Secondly, existing national policies, strategies, and plans<sup>4</sup> and were reviewed in order to align the NSP for Young People to other national level policy documents and objectives were outlined in order to realize the above mentioned goals. Lastly, the goals and objectives were presented to the participants of the two day workshop to identify strategies to achieve these objectives.

The resulting Plan, which is presented in the next few pages of this report, is a draft document and requires strengthening and refining. However, it must be noted that this 'national strategic plan' is as much a documentation of the recommendations, aspirations and visions of today's youth as it is the draft of a policy document.

---

<sup>4</sup> List of National Plans, Policies and Strategies reviewed in compiling objectives for the NSP for Young People

1. Vision 2020 (The President 2000)
2. Achieving Millennium Development Goals – Maldives Country Report 2005 – Ministry of Planning and National Development, UNDP 2005)
3. Strategic Economic Plan (Ministry of Planning and National Development 2005)
4. National Development Plan 2000 – 2005 (Ministry of Planning and National Development 2000)
5. National Youth Policy (Ministry of Youth and Sports 2003)
6. Education Strategic Plan 2004 – 2006 (Ministry of Education 2003)
7. Education Master Plan (Ministry of Education 2004)
8. Population Policy of Maldives (Working Document July 2004 – Ministry of Planning and National Development)
9. National RH Strategy – Maldives 2005 – 2007 (Ministry of Health 2004)

UN Recovery Strategy (working document June 2005)

# **National Strategic Plan for Young People**

**Maldives**

**2006 – 2008**

**Ministry of Youth and Sports**

## THEME 1: ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

Goal: All young people will have equal access to quality formal education, training and employment opportunities.

|   | <b>Objectives</b>   | <b>Strategies</b>   | <b>Actors</b>   |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Increase opportunities for formal secondary education   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Increase the number of secondary schools</li> <li>◆ Update/ upgrade facilities and resources used in schools for management and teaching</li> <li>◆ Improve supervision of schools</li> <li>◆ Improve quality of teachers</li> </ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Education</li> <li>◆ Ministry of Higher Education</li> </ul>                   |
| 2 | Expand, diversify and improve the quality of secondary education  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Align school curriculum to practical life</li> <li>◆ Expand career guidance streams</li> <li>◆ Include vocation, technical ‘streams’ in the syllabus</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Education</li> </ul>   |
| 3 | Improve youth academic performance with particular focus on decreasing gender disparities   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Give students the option of choosing which subjects to study</li> <li>◆ Include all subjects in grade 8</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Education</li> <li>◆ Ministry of Gender and family</li> </ul>                  |
| 4 | Expand career guidance and counselling to all secondary schools   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Career counselling in every school</li> <li>◆ Include career guidance in the curriculum</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Education</li> <li>◆ Ministry of Youth</li> </ul>                              |
| 5 | Increase and expand employment and training opportunities   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Introduce micro credit schemes</li> <li>◆ Establish at least one vocational training centre in each atoll</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Education</li> <li>◆ Min of Youth</li> </ul>                                   |
| 6 | Increase information and awareness about employment opportunities (focusing on changing behaviours and attitudes that hinder youth from pursuing various kinds of work) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Enhance the work culture</li> <li>◆ Increase awareness in order to create the attitude that all income generating employment/ jobs are valuable and respectable</li> <li>◆ Make available knowledge about the job market by the</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Education</li> <li>◆ Ministry of Youth</li> <li>◆ Ministry of Trade</li> </ul> |

|    |  |  |  |
|----|--|--|--|
|    |  | <p>time schooling is complete</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Increase avenues to market products</li> <li>◆ Train people for the jobs that are available</li> </ul>  |  |
| 7  | Expand and promote Information Communication Technology in education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Include ICT as a school subject</li> <li>◆ Increase computer literacy</li> <li>◆ Improve computer labs in schools</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Education</li> </ul>  |
| 8  | Improve and sustain young people's interest in pursuing education    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Teach in a way that interests the youth</li> <li>◆ Enlighten students about the purpose of studying</li> <li>◆ Strengthen E.M.I.S of schools</li> <li>◆ Identify/ understand needs of young people</li> <li>◆ Train Maldivian teachers</li> <li>◆ Have a policy of equality among students</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Education</li> <li>◆ Ministry of Gender and Family</li> </ul> |
| 9  | Increase access to funding options to pursue education and training  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ More representation of Finance Ministry in national level planning workshops</li> <li>◆ Make available resources for work/ education</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Education</li> <li>◆ Ministry of Finance</li> </ul>           |
| 10 | Increase relevance of the school curriculum to practical life        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Change school curriculum</li> <li>◆ Introduce subjects related to industry</li> </ul>   | Ministry of Education  |

## **THEME 2: SOCIAL BONDING, SUPPORT AND INTEGRATION**

Goal 1: Achieve youth empowerment with full participation of young people in all spheres of society

Goal 2: Strengthen relationship between adults, community leaders and youth

Goal 3: Prioritize recreational and leisure activities as a tool for social development

|   | Objectives  | Strategies  | Actors  |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Enhance relationship between young people and adults in community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Collaborations between youth and adults in development work</li> <li>◆ Find opportunities for youth and adults to be involved in community work</li> <li>◆ Establish volunteer organizations</li> <li>◆ Conduct activities where people of all ages can meet/ participate and ensure equal participation</li> <li>◆ Distribute information about the relationship between young people and adults via leaflets etc</li> <li>◆ Consult both youth and adults equally when making decisions regarding development activities.</li> <li>◆ Adults should be more involved in activities organized by youth</li> <li>◆ Youth and adults should not label each other and must respect each other</li> <li>◆ Organize and implement community work</li> <li>◆ Increase youth leadership</li> <li>◆ Those who are in responsible positions should assume responsibility/ be accountable</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Government</li> <li>◆ Community</li> <li>◆ Island office</li> <li>◆ Associations/ organizations</li> </ul> |

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
|   |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Conduct “conflict resolution’ training programmes for adults and youth</li> </ul>   |   |
| 2 | Increase and expand avenues for young people to take part in decision-making     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Find opportunities for youth to exchange ideas about development</li> <li>◆ Increase interactions between government officials and youth</li> <li>◆ Give opportunity for youth to participate in the island development committee</li> <li>◆ Youth should be able to directly present their decisions to relevant authorities</li> <li>◆ Increase opportunities for youth in community activities/ matters</li> <li>◆ Establish youth committees (like the IDCs and WDCs)</li> <li>◆ Increase awareness: obtaining relevant information, obtaining guidance and advice</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Government</li> <li>◆ Community</li> <li>◆ Island office</li> <li>◆ Associations/ organizations</li> </ul>   |
| 3 | Promote equal access to all activities and services for both young men and women | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Conduct programmes for young men and women</li> <li>◆ Disseminate information via the media</li> <li>◆ Believing that both genders have equal rights and increase awareness about this issue</li> <li>◆ Identify and implement programmes that both genders can participate in equally</li> <li>◆ Increase opportunities according to capabilities</li> <li>◆ Eliminate obstacles to</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Government</li> <li>◆ Education Ministry</li> <li>◆ Community</li> <li>◆ Island office</li> <li>◆ Associations/ organizations</li> <li>◆ Youth ministry</li> <li>◆ NGOs</li> </ul> |

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
|   |   | <p>women's advancement perpetuated by traditional norms and beliefs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Facilitate avenues for earning an income and improving the economic situation</li> </ul>   |  |
| 4 | Increase, diversify and improve quality of leisure and recreational facilities and activities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Acquire diverse resources to develop sports and games and ensure that these resources are sustainable</li> <li>◆ Increase public awareness about the games/ sports being played in the islands</li> <li>◆ Make available the appropriate facilities</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Government</li> <li>◆ Community</li> <li>◆ Associations/ organizations/ NGOs</li> </ul> |

### THEME 3: YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Goal: Facilitate youth participation and leadership in all social, economic and cultural spheres of the community whilst providing guidance and support

|   | <b>Objectives</b>   | <b>Strategies</b>   | <b>Actors</b>  |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | Increase and expand youth programmes  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Youth and adult participation in development work</li> <li>◆ Make an annual calendar for activities aimed at youth and make this available for school leavers and other youth</li> <li>◆ Support efforts to find donors to fund / support the establishment of a centre on each island which will conduct activities that would interest the youth</li> <li>◆ Increase opportunities for education and training for young people in their own island or on close by islands</li> <li>◆ Create opportunities for youth from different parts of the country to show their skills/ talents</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Min. of Youth</li> <li>◆ Min. of Education</li> <li>◆ College</li> <li>◆ Ministry of Information</li> <li>◆ </li> </ul> |
| 2 | Increase and facilitate opportunities to institutionalise and strengthen youth organisations/ associations/ clubs etc | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Revise the current regulations/ laws governing establishment and creation of clubs/ associations</li> <li>◆ Youth Ministry should supervise the management of youth clubs/ associations</li> <li>◆ Encourage/ support youth associations that are being managed well within the rules and regulations</li> <li>◆ Appoint capable responsible people to manage clubs/ associations</li> <li>◆ Include opinions and ideas of the island level clubs/</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Home Affairs</li> <li>◆ Ministry of Youth</li> <li>◆ Government</li> <li>◆ Clubs/ associations</li> </ul>   |

|   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
|   |   | <p>associations when conducting programmes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Clubs/ associations should consult the offices for assistance and island offices should be more supportive</li> </ul>           |  |
| 3 | Increase, expand and improve the quality of formal and informal counselling available to young people | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Increase avenues for counselling to be available in all islands</li> <li>◆ Appoint people to supervise the counsellors and guide them</li> <li>◆ Increase awareness</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Health</li> <li>◆ Ministry of Education</li> <li>◆ Ministry of Youth</li> <li>◆ </li> </ul> |

## THEME 4: SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL COMPENTENCIES

Goal: Ensure every young person is equipped with the personal and social tools to make responsible choices whilst valuing and managing differences

|   | <b>Objectives</b>                                      | <b>Strategies</b>  | <b>Actors</b>   |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1 | Strengthen and expand life-skills programmes for youth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Monitoring and Evaluating current life skills programmes</li> <li>◆ Training life skills personnel in each atoll</li> <li>◆ Using the media to conduct programmes and publicise issues regarding life skills</li> <li>◆ Give information that is relevant to religion and culture and disseminate this information in Dhivehi language in an easily comprehensible manner</li> <li>◆ Introduce ‘life skills’ programmes as an extra curricular activity in schools</li> <li>◆ Conduct such programmes in collaboration with associations such as girl guides and scouts</li> <li>◆ Carry out a ‘needs assessment’ before implementing these programmes</li> <li>◆ Different sectors of the government to work together and make a common ‘life skills package’</li> <li>◆ Increase awareness among top officials/ community leaders</li> <li>◆ Establish a specialised youth NGO</li> <li>◆ Conduct ‘life skills’ programmes in schools every term</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Youth</li> </ul> |

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| 2 | <p>Increase knowledge and appreciation of local and global cultures, ideologies and people</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Increase posters, leaflets, audio, video etc (addressing this issue) and make it available to all</li> <li>◆ Tourism to be expanded to all atolls and conduct programmes to revive the culture</li> <li>◆ Include information about other cultures in Social Studies syllabus</li> <li>◆ Teachers should be knowledgeable about different cultures</li> <li>◆ Cultural items to be included in shows and concerts</li> <li>◆ The media should not depict people from particular countries/ islands in a derogatory manner</li> <li>◆ Conduct exchange programmes</li> <li>◆ Increase information about Maldivian history and culture, the culture/ history of different atolls, islands their language and dialects etc in the national curriculum</li> <li>◆ Make active the school literary associations</li> <li>◆ School children could do projects that would give them information about different cultures</li> <li>◆ Young people to be taught to understand the positive qualities of foreign cultures and also be taught to respect them</li> <li>◆ Young people to be made aware of the different local dialects (For example, give the opportunity for young people from different islands to interact via the media)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Youth</li> <li>◆ Ministry of Foreign affairs</li> </ul> |
|---|--|---|--|

|   |  |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|
| 3 | Increase awareness and knowledge of risky behaviours and risk factors          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Expand counselling services and conduct such programmes in schools</li> <li>◆ Educate parents on parenting skills</li> <li>◆ Train mentors</li> <li>◆ Carry out programmes which teach good manners/ behaviour</li> <li>◆ Conduct ‘risk behaviour’ programmes</li> <li>◆ Increase awareness via the media</li> </ul>                           | Ministry of Youth<br>Ministry of Education  |
| 4 | Improve behavioural responses to knowledge of risk factors                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Conduct programmes to advance awareness</li> <li>◆ Conduct programmes to increase religious awareness</li> <li>◆ Teach parenting skills</li> <li>◆ Conduct community awareness programmes</li> <li>◆ Give guidance on choosing friends</li> <li>◆ Media to carry out awareness programmes</li> <li>◆ Conduct life skills programmes</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Youth</li> <li>◆ Islamic Council</li> </ul>    |
| 5 | Increase and expand choices available to young people when making life-choices | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Give information in all islands about ‘gender and career’</li> <li>◆ Conduct ‘Youth Challenge’ in all zones of the country</li> <li>◆ Increase opportunities to gain sports scholarships</li> <li>◆ People to be trained by nearby resorts and private companies</li> <li>◆ Facilitate educational opportunities</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Youth</li> <li>◆ Ministry of Gender</li> </ul> |

## THEME 5: POSITIVE SELF IMAGE AND IDENTITY

Goal: Create greater awareness in society of the role, needs, rights and aspirations of young people and ensure that these are valued by the community

|   | <b>Objectives</b>  | <b>Strategies</b>  | <b>Actors</b>   |
|---|--|--|---|
| 1 | Promote awareness about the positive role of youth in society                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Avoid discriminating against youth</li> <li>◆ Media to conduct awareness programmes</li> <li>◆ Educate school leavers about the important role of youth</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Ministry of Youth</li> <li>◆ Ministry of information</li> <li>◆ Ministry of education</li> </ul>   |
| 2 | Increase opportunities for youth participation in social, economic and political spheres | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Establish vocational units on islands</li> <li>◆ Increase employment opportunities</li> <li>◆ Promote job security</li> <li>◆ Appoint youth to IDCs, WDCs and other organisations</li> <li>◆ Conduct career guidance programmes</li> <li>◆ Create opportunities for youth to take part in political activities</li> <li>◆ Introduce a micro credit scheme</li> <li>◆ Job opportunities for those who drop out of school due to poor standards.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ College</li> <li>◆ Ministry of employment</li> <li>◆ Ministry of atolls</li> <li>◆ private sector</li> <li>◆ ministry of youth</li> <li>◆ ministry of gender</li> <li>◆ Ministry of finance</li> </ul> |
| 3 | Increase and expand the mediums of expression available to the youth                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Increase consultations/ workshops concerning youth issues</li> <li>◆ Establish a hotline (for youth issues)</li> <li>◆ Live programmes on TV and radio to express opinions</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Youth centre</li> <li>◆ Ministry of youth</li> <li>◆ Ministry of information</li> </ul>  |

## THEME 6: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Goal: Promote and ensure full participation of youth in civil society and community

|   | <b>Objectives</b>  | <b>Strategies</b>   | <b>Actors</b>  |
|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | Increase youth awareness and participation in political and public affairs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Establish a Youth Development Committee on each island</li> <li>◆ Introduce political science as a subject in schools</li> <li>◆ Increase awareness in the society in order to eliminate obstacles to women's political participation</li> <li>◆ Eliminate various problems facing youth</li> <li>◆ Increase national level participation of youth in order to increase political awareness</li> <li>◆ Increase role of youth in efforts made to increase political awareness</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Min of Youth</li> <li>◆ Min of Atolls</li> <li>◆ Min of Education</li> <li>◆ Min of Gender</li> <li>◆ Min of information</li> <li>◆ Government</li> <li>◆ Clubs/ associations/ organisations</li> <li>◆ Political parties</li> <li>◆ Individuals and community</li> </ul> |
| 2 | Enhance values of pluralism  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Conduct programmes to revive the spirit of national unity and togetherness</li> <li>◆ Increase opportunities to learn about other cultures, religions and countries</li> <li>◆ Facilitate freedom of expression in a way that does not compromise peace and harmony</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Government</li> <li>◆ Ministry of education</li> <li>◆ Min of information</li> <li>◆ Islamic Council</li> <li>◆ Political parties</li> </ul>  |
| 3 | Promote the spirit of volunteering   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Establish an easier mechanism/ procedure to register volunteer clubs/ associations</li> <li>◆ Conduct research to find out what avenues are open for volunteer work in Maldives</li> <li>◆ Increase awareness about the importance and benefits of</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ ministry of youth</li> <li>◆ clubs/ associations</li> <li>◆ min of home affairs</li> <li>◆ Min of Finance</li> <li>◆ Min of education</li> <li>◆ government</li> </ul>  |

|   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
|   |  | <p>volunteering</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Establish charities in the Maldives and encourage the corporate sector to support these charities</li> <li>◆ Get students to volunteer in schools</li> <li>◆ Increase national level volunteer efforts</li> <li>◆ Appreciate and value volunteer work</li> </ul>  |   |
| 4 | Encourage ethical, social and cultural values in adolescents and youth | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Make efforts among youth to promote individual, community, religious and cultural identity as well as promoting the Dhivehi language</li> <li>◆ Give more importance to the Dhivehi language in the government's activities</li> <li>◆ Increase parenting skills</li> <li>◆ Parents and teachers to be role models for young people and children</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Government</li> <li>◆ National centre</li> <li>◆ Ministry of gender</li> <li>◆ Ministry of education</li> <li>◆ community</li> </ul> |

**ANNEX 1****TECHNICAL NOTE ON SAMPLE DESIGN****THE FRAME**

In the sample, the target population was aged between 15-24 years. The country was divided into 6 strata. Strata's consist of 20 administrative atolls, which represented 199 inhabited islands with clearly marked census enumeration blocks. Stratification was based on development regions and Male'.

The country is divided into 6 strata (table 14) representing the development regions of the country and Male'. The youth population from 2000 census is taken as a basis for drawing the sample with some adjustments.

**TABLE 14**

| <b>Stratum 1</b>    | <b>Stratum 2</b>     | <b>Stratum 3</b> | <b>Stratum 4</b>     | <b>Stratum 5</b>        | <b>Stratum 6</b> |
|---------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| <b>North</b>        | <b>Central North</b> | <b>Central</b>   | <b>Central South</b> | <b>South</b>            | <b>Male'</b>     |
| Ha.<br>Hoarafushi   | N. Holhudhoo         | Aa.<br>Rasdho    | M. Mulah             | Ga. Viligili            | Henveiru         |
| Hdh.<br>Nolhivaramu | R. Maakurathu        | Adh.<br>Dhagethi | Dh.<br>Kudahuvadhoo  | Gdh. Gadhdhoo           | Galolhu          |
| Sh. Maroshi         | B.<br>Dharavandhoo   | F.<br>Nilandhoo  | L. Fonadhoo          | Gn. Foammulah           | Machchangolhi    |
|                     | Lh. Hinnavaru        |                  |                      | S. Maradhoo-<br>Feydhoo | Maafannu         |
|                     |                      |                  |                      |                         | Villigili        |

In the first stage, islands were selected from each region based on youth population. It was ensured that islands in each region had an equal chance of inclusion in the sample.

In the second stage, islands were selected from among the islands selected in the first stage. Household selection was done using the method of systematic sampling.

The youth population of the 2000 census which amounted to 52,969 was adjusted in order to include persons enumerated as 12 to 14 years and exclude those enumerated as 21 to 24 years old, as they would have moved from their initial age groupings.

The sample point of the survey was youth (between 15 - 24 years) and it was intended to survey 4% of the youth population, with enumerators visiting 2118 households with the assumption that there would be at least one youth in each household.

**TABLE 15**

|           |               | <b>Number of</b>    | <b>Total</b>   | <b>pop</b>    | <b>pop</b>     | <b>Total</b>  | <b>5%base</b> | <b>4%base</b> | <b>No:islands</b> |
|-----------|---------------|---------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
|           |               | <b>islands/Ward</b> | <b>pop</b>     | <b>15-24</b>  | <b>15-60</b>   | <b>Hhs</b>    |               |               | <b>sample</b>     |
| Stratum 1 | North         | 48                  | 43,345         | 7,089         | 19,174         | 7,438         | 483           | 386           | 3                 |
| Stratum 2 | Central North | 46                  | 42,654         | 7,264         | 19,702         | 7,021         | 456           | 364           | 4                 |
| Stratum 3 | Central       | 37                  | 26,326         | 4,842         | 13,153         | 3,907         | 254           | 203           | 3                 |
| Stratum 4 | Central South | 42                  | 30,746         | 5,252         | 14,689         | 5,051         | 328           | 262           | 3                 |
| Stratum 5 | South         | 27                  | 45,996         | 7,444         | 20,945         | 7,818         | 507           | 406           | 4                 |
| Stratum 6 | Male'         | 5                   | 72,230         | 21,078        | 47,127         | 9,578         | 622           | 497           |                   |
|           |               |                     |                |               |                |               |               |               |                   |
|           |               |                     | <b>261,297</b> | <b>52,969</b> | <b>134,790</b> | <b>40,813</b> | <b>2,648</b>  | <b>2,118</b>  | <b>17</b>         |

The sample was modified in order to accommodate adult views on youth issues as this may bring out some important features in the society concerning youth. With this modification, the enumerated total of the survey was = 2118+X, where “2118” represents the youth and “X” represents adults. These are two different target groups with different characteristics, and hence were treated differently.

### **STRATIFICATION AND ALLOCATION SAMPLE**

The purpose of the stratification was to divide the population into relatively homogeneous groups and thereby reduce the total variation by the margin of inter-group variation. Stratification allows proper allocation of samples in different groups and makes it more representative.

First, it was essential to treat Male' separately in the whole sampling procedure. It was also necessary to produce separate estimates for Male' similar to what is done in all other national surveys in Maldives. So, there are two domains of the survey, namely: Male' and Atolls. Stratification in Male' was done by wards to make the sample spread over different urban areas. Male' has 5 wards.

Allocation of samples in domains was intended to make the strata proportional to the number of households. However, this was not possible due to resource constraints. Further allocation was made in all strata.

**TABLE 16: ALLOCATION OF SAMPLE IN DOMAINS**

| <b>STRATA</b> | <b>NUMBER<br/>OF<br/>ISLANDS<br/>/ WARDS</b> | <b>POPULATION</b> | <b>POPULATION<br/>(15-24)</b> | <b>TOTAL<br/>HOUSEHOLDS</b> | <b>4%<br/>BASE</b> | <b>SAMPLE<br/>NUMBER<br/>OF<br/>ISLANDS</b> |
|---------------|--|-------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|---|
| North         | 48   | 43345             | 7089                          | 7438                        | 386                | 3   |
| Central North | 46   | 42654             | 4264                          | 7021                        | 364                | 4   |
| Central       | 37   | 26326             | 4842                          | 3907                        | 203                | 3   |
| Central South | 42   | 30746             | 5252                          | 5051                        | 262                | 3   |
| South         | 27   | 45996             | 7444                          | 7818                        | 406                | 4   |
| Male'         | 5  | 72230             | 21078                         | 9578                        | 497                |   |
| Total         |  |                   |                               |                             | 2118               | 17  |

Allocation of samples in Male' strata were made on the same principle.

According to the statistical book 2004 with data from the census of 2000, 21% of the population of Maldives is in the group of 15-24 years, which for the total amount of population for that year (270101) would be 56780 young people.

It was assumed originally that each household will have at least one youth and taking that as a base, the sample of 2118 identified households would represent about 4% of the youth population.

Finally, approximately 2 persons were enumerated from each of these 2118 households. Also, since there was a lack of male youths in the islands and in order to get the desired gender balance in the sample, it was decided to include more youths working in the resorts. So, 17 resorts were included randomly in the sample. Due to these reasons the sample was doubled to 8% of the youth population.

**TABLE 17: COMPARISON OF PROPORTIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF SAMPLE POPULATION AND CENSUS POPULATION BY REGION**

| Region        | Sample Population |         | Census Population |         |
|---------------|-------------------|---------|-------------------|---------|
|               | Number            | Percent | Number            | Percent |
| All Regions   | 3778              | 100     | 242,230           | 100     |
| Male          | 1068              | 28      | 74,069            | 31      |
| North         | 337               | 9       | 42,523            | 18      |
| Central North | 470               | 12      | 43,912            | 18      |
| Centre        | 885               | 23      | 17,148            | 7       |
| Central South | 354               | 9       | 18,400            | 8       |
| South         | 664               | 18      | 46,178            | 19      |

It can be seen from table 17 that for most regions the sample population corresponds fairly closely with the actual census population, except for the North region where the sample is under-representative and the Centre regions where the sample is over-representative. The survey results are likely to be affected by these distortions.