

## TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COMPLETION REPORT

Division: PAHQ

<b>TA No. and Name</b> 4219-RMI: Preparing the Youth Social Services Project			<b>Amount Approved:</b> \$ 500,000 <b>Revised Amount:</b> \$500,000					
<b>Executing Agency:</b> ADB Ministry of Finance	<b>Source of Funding:</b> JSF		<b>TA Amount Undisbursed</b> \$44,492	<b>TA Amount Utilized</b> \$455,508				
<b>Approval</b>	<b>Date Signing</b>	<b>Fielding of Consultants</b>	<b>Completion Date</b>					
19 November 2003	5 April 2004	20 October 2004	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"><b>Original</b></td> <td style="padding: 5px;"><b>Actual</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">31 August 2004</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">31 October 2005</td> </tr> </table>		<b>Original</b>	<b>Actual</b>	31 August 2004	31 October 2005
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<p><b>Description</b></p> <p>In 2000, the Government of the RMI requested TA from the ADB to prepare the Youth Social Services Project targeting youth at risk. TA 4219-RMI was designed to address the priority social and economic problems of youth-at-risk in the RMI. With a young population (over 64% under the age of 24), an estimated two-thirds of the country's youth (young people aged from 12 to 24) unemployed, an excessive school dropout rate, and increasing incidences of youth suicide, teenage pregnancies, alcohol and drug abuse, other health problems, and increasing youth crime, the TA sought to help the Government to review key issues and options, policies and public programs with a view to preparing a project to help these youth. In collaboration with staff from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and 11 community facilitators recruited from the NGO community, over 1,300 people were consulted, approximately two-thirds of these were young people. The TA adopted participatory approaches to an examination and prioritization of both issues and the means to resolving issues. The TA also assisted the deliberations of the 4<sup>th</sup> National Youth Congress, the description of a national youth policy, and to help prepare the new Government-selected agency that would deal with the special needs of youth-at-risk.</p> <p><b>Expected Impact, Outcome, and Outputs</b></p> <p>The TA aimed to assist the Government in (i) strengthening and refocusing public sector policies, management, and public expenditure on priority issues affecting the youth, in a participatory manner; and (ii) assessing the feasibility of, and preparing a youth social services project to finance the assistance and investments required to address these priorities. The objective of the ensuing project would be to reduce poverty among the youth by encouraging the demand for and development of youth-specific services and facilities by nongovernment organizations and the Government, and by improving the relevance and effectiveness of the services. The TA was to focus on organizational, institutional concerns, and target employability, social skills, and a social support system for the youth.</p> <p>The TA design was most relevant, the objectives were appropriate, terms of reference including executing arrangements and implementation schedule were followed and worked well. Stakeholder participation was extensive and this led to ownership by all relevant participants.</p> <p><b>Evaluation of Inputs and Conduct of Activities</b></p> <p>Three Pacific-experienced consultants were recruited by the selected consultancy firm to conduct the TA. A Public Expenditure Management, Budgets Specialist/ Team Leader was recruited for a period of 6.67 person months to manage the TA and evaluate youth-focused public expenditures. A Social Development/ Community Participation Specialist was recruited to design and manage the youth participatory processes for a total period of 5.13 person months. Finally, a Youth Policy Specialist was hired for 6.2 person months to analyze youth issues and formulate youth policy and youth assistance needs. The Team Leader was changed during negotiations at the request of ADB and the Social Development/ Community Participation Specialist also had to be subsequently replaced because of health reasons. Both changes in personnel were made by the consultancy firm in an efficacious manner. All consultants performed very well and the client government was greatly satisfied with the inputs provided.</p> <p>Key youth concerns, causes and impacts were analyzed. These issues were taken to relevant stakeholders (youth, parents, youth counselors, welfare administrators, community leaders, and others) in a series of participatory workshops both on the main, urban islands of Majuro and Ebeye and outer islands of the RMI. The issues were prioritized and in response to these priorities, stakeholders identified a range of preventative and remedial interventions which were subsequently grouped into two main project components; a stream of directed project assistance; and a second stream consisting of proposals to develop an enabling environment, including institutional strengthening and capacity building.</p> <p>The analyses and participatory workshops created a great deal of attention and interest both in the country and in the Pacific region. The findings and recommendations were very well covered by the media, both in-country and internationally. All this media attention helped raise country ownership and helped influence the country's leadership to respond to the problems of youth-at-risk.</p>								

Although two of the three consultants were changed and some consultancy inputs were extended in time, they were largely completed on time and within budget. All inputs were most economic and productive.

The TA was very well managed by the consultancy firm. The TA received the full support of the government executing agency and all other relevant Government departments. ADB conducted TA inception and two further review missions in 2005. Both EA and ADB performance is rated as highly satisfactory.

#### **Evaluation of Outputs and Achievement of Outcome**

Key issues affecting the youth of the RMI, their causes and impacts were thoroughly analyzed and shared with the relevant, concerned community in a participatory manner. The participatory workshops were designed to, and they succeeded in, both confirming and prioritizing these issues and also in proposing and then prioritizing project responses to these issues. Institutional issues were also analyzed. The outputs were produced in a most efficient manner.

The outputs were highly effective and of good quality. The Government, most especially the Office of the Chief Secretary, fully embraced the findings and recommendations of the TA. So concerned was Government in response to TA findings that they determined the best course of action would be to forgo the proposed ADB loan and to use Government funds to immediately implement the proposed project activities. Given the failings of earlier Government programs, and, at the same time, the successes of a range of civil society organized programs, to assist youth-at-risk, Government decided that a special agency, reporting to the Chief Secretary's office, should be established to outsource government funds to civil society organizations (CSO) that will bid on project activities to help youth-at-risk in the RMI. Government funds were subsequently set aside in the 2005/06 fiscal year budget to implement these decisions and the National Training Council has been designated as the special agency responsible for coordinating CSO project assistance to youth at risk. ADB is expected to further assist in strengthening both policies and institutions in a follow-up TA to strengthen policy formulation and to support collaborative civil service reform.

The government provided key staff who assisted the conduct of the entire TA. The participatory manner in which the TA was conducted helped affirm country ownership for appropriate assistance. The client government was greatly satisfied with the outputs.

#### **Overall Assessment and Rating**

The TA exceeded its objectives. The TA succeeded in assisting the Government in strengthening and refocusing public sector policies, management, and public expenditure on priority issues affecting the youth, in a participatory manner. The TA also successfully assessed the feasibility of, and subsequently prepared a youth social services project to finance the assistance and investments required to address these priorities. Beyond these outcomes, the TA also succeeded in persuading the Government to provide its own scarce finances to fund the project. The TA is rated overall as highly successful.

#### **Major Lessons**

Well managed participatory planning processes, reinforced by media attention, with some support from Government leadership, stretched over a period of months can strengthen the leadership's commitment to and the general demand for improved public services.

#### **Recommendations and Follow-Up Actions**

The policy and institutional recommendations of the TA will be taken up by further specific, collaborative TA in support of civil service reform and policy formulation in the RMI. The latter TA is under design. The outcome of the TA has also set an example to the region. ADB will attempt to replicate this outcome in other PDMCs through a follow-up regional TA that is currently being designed to strengthen civil society participation in development.

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