

Additional measures, facilitation of policy dialogue, development of legislative instruments for a truly empowered process, technical capacity development, organisational development have not been fully articulated since these were not prioritised in the YEP implementation due to emphasis on activities downstream, that is, at micro project level.

2.6 Gender equality and women empowerment

The key components and sub-components of the YEP, namely, the E-Youth Hub, the special youth internship training and decent job placement, PSET, the farm to table value chain initiative with Women in Business Development Incorporated (WIBDI), and the design of the SBI all demonstrate a fair degree of measures to tackle gender equality issues and women empowerment. There is always room for improvement to enable implementation and development of a monitoring and evaluation system that is truly results based, with a view to setting in motion a mechanism that is pro-active on gender equality, giving guidance in dealing more effectively with gender issues. This point is emphasized to reinforce the positive outcomes on gender equality already being realised on some of the YEP components such as the youth internship training and decent job placement, which shows a greater level of participation of young women than men, PSET which also demonstrates a significant level of participation of young women to young men, and the farm to table initiative, which still shows a predominance of young men to young women, as is also the case for culinary training. For the E-Youth Hub and the SBI, gender equality accomplishments are yet to be recorded because of the limited progress in the implementation of those components.

2.7 Innovation

The youth employment programme has various components, from the E-Youth Hub, which requires substantial skills and capacity development of the youth on ICT; the internship programme, targeting PSET and out-of-school youth, organic farming, culinary training and arts and crafts. The internship programme involves 10 weeks of on-the-job attachment in different work environments and sectors, as well as the small business incubator support initiative.

The YEP has a solid innovative thrust, with a high potential to influence the creation of sustainable jobs for the youth in both the formal and non-formal sector. What the innovative thrust requires are approaches to scaling up opportunities to implement job-rich strategies, especially involving public private partnerships. The public sector must focus on creating an enabling environment for decent job strategies to be implemented through policy dialogue and establishment of implementation and coordination structures capable of sustaining strengthening of youth employment measures beyond the YEP. In this regard, the private sector and youth beneficiaries must take a stronger lead at all the stages, from design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of existing youth employment schemes and the overall youth employment programme. Efforts to foster learning, networking and innovation from development best practices also need to be strengthened. This has been the case with the small business incubator initiative, which is a step in the right direction for Samoa.

2.8 Lessons Learned

- i. Programme planning and design must be more realistic and ensure **matching of the available financial resource envelope**; with more realistic timeframes, in particular, for programmes that require longer duration planning, implementation and results-based monitoring, to achieve desired results. In most cases, the results are achievable only in the long term, not in the short or medium term. For example, it is not feasible or realistic to achieve the outcomes in short 'programme period', for instance, within 2 years, as dictated by institutional financial resource constraints. This is the case for the 1-UN YEP, a priority programme, which nevertheless started off constrained by severe under-funding of key components such as the SBI and micro enterprise development initiative. The absence of funding through the agreed mechanism of the CSSP is a major lesson, which point to the need for programmes to follow up with action, strategic decisions made at the planning stage of major interventions such as the YEP.
- ii. There is need for the YEP design to prioritise the key issue of **financial inclusion**, micro finance and access to finance, on a sustained basis for youth oriented enterprises. The existing financial services support system for the youth is ad hoc, under-developed and incapable of enabling substantial and sustained capacity development to facilitate substantial generation of youth employment in Samoa.
- iii. In the absence of capacity to engage, in any substantial manner, in **policy advocacy** activities sequenced on the basis of carefully assessed priorities and thematic areas, the existing absence of substantial project-policy level interactions, is a notable gap. For example, the absence of engagement with the Executive, Legislature and other arms of the state, means that the YEP may not receive the attention and priority that this key programme ought to secure to pay sustainable pathways to progress. The MWCD needs to take the lead in this area at the macro level, with capacity built in-house to carry forward different prioritized policy work.
- iv. Implementation, coordination, management structures must have effective and well capacitated human resources, **(both in terms of quantity and quality)** with functional project steering committees, implementation partners with capacity to make rapid decisions on key issues; to provide policy, strategic guidance and leadership.
- v. An effective results based M & E system, that provides early warning signals, where necessary to enable early corrective action to deal with sticky issues is necessary to facilitate rapid programme implementation progress, in the short to medium term.

3. Summary of Key Recommendations

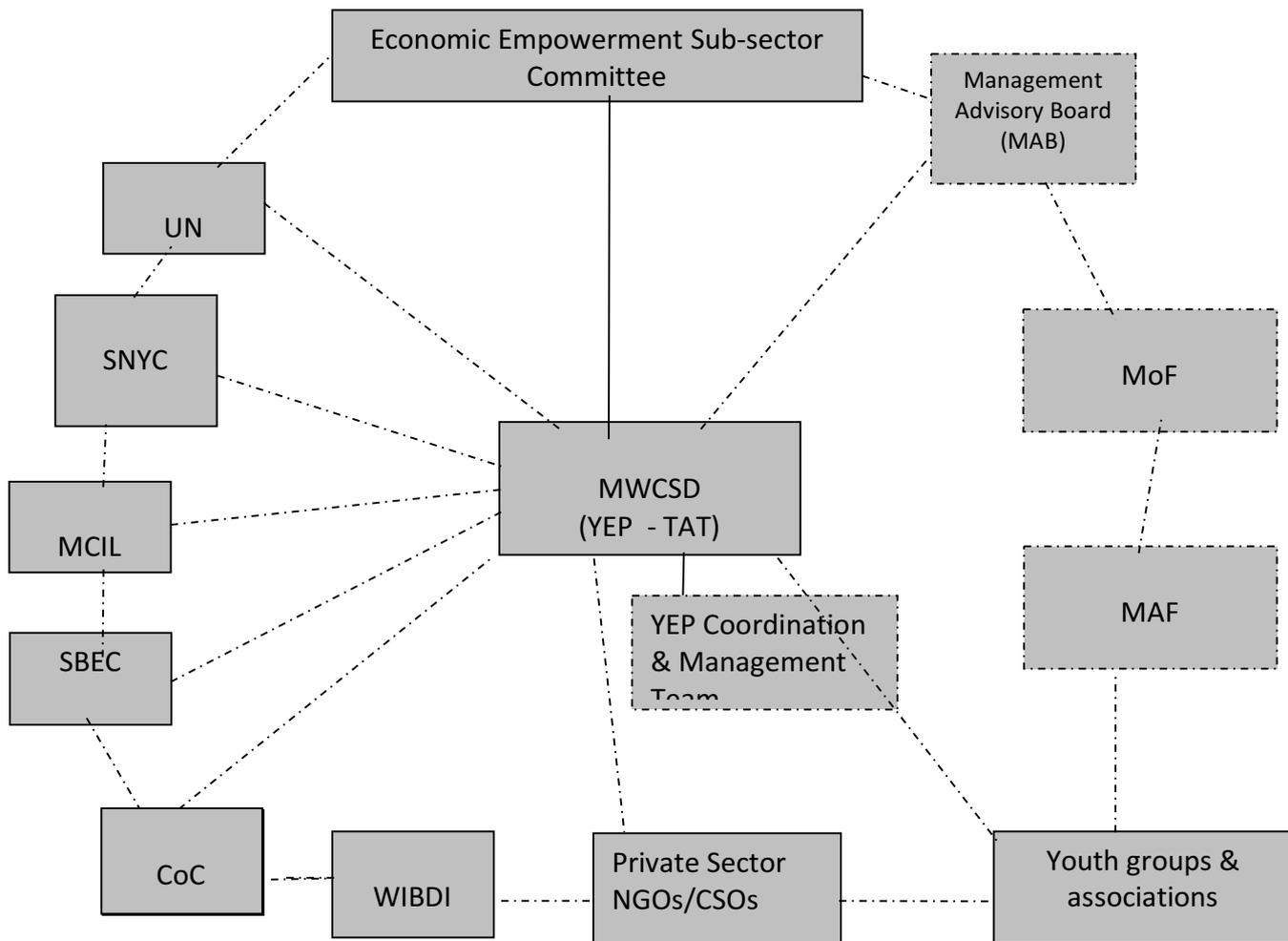
The Midterm Evaluation recommends a number of actions, as outlined:-

- i. Extension of YEP by minimum one year to enable the proper winding down of current programme phase;
- ii. Capacitate YEP PMU, ensuring all staffing gaps are filled, in particular, a senior economic empowerment officer;
- iii. Review YEP design so it fits into the current scheme of things, linking up with the national policy development processes, especially the current National Youth Policy (2016 – 2020), refocusing the actions, more upstream, use of downstream effort to feed into scaled up engagement up-stream. The future YEP design must also be planned on the basis of more realistic financial resource planning, ensuring correlation between the actions and available financial resource envelope.
- iv. Policy advocacy and key issues of financial inclusion also needs to be prioritised in the design and institutional implementation arrangements, with clearer targets and indicators defined in the logframe. There is also need for capacitating the monitoring and evaluation component of the YEP, at the MWCS D. There is need to ensure a results based M & E system is developed and implemented, with an improved logframe, indicators and targets, which link in a more logical manner in the results chain. Where appropriate, short-term external expertise may need to be recruited to capacitate existing in-house resources.
- v. There are opportunities for the UN to provide more substantial technical assistance (TA), in the medium and long term. The MTE recommends that the UN and cooperating partners adopt more robust financing strategies for the YEP, innovative and sustainable approaches that should feed into the next YEP design. Such mechanisms must necessarily incorporate the PPPs which the YEP had already begun to explore in many of its components and sub-components;
- vi. The National Youth Volunteer Service Scheme – UN/PMU ought to ensure current effort feed into a sustainable youth employment and empowerment mechanism, nationally owned, beyond the YEP funded phase.
- vii. Both technical and financial support to the Small Business Incubator/Micro and Small Business Development need to be scaled up. There is a need to firm up the institutional and organisational structure of the SBI and small business development initiative, bearing in mind that the MWCS D has as its mandate, a focus on social development;
- viii. Overall, there is need for clearer implementation, coordination and monitoring and evaluation arrangements, systems, with improved accountability. Similarly, there is need to clarify roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders, MWCS D, MCIL, SBEC, CoC, SNYC, the UN and others;
- ix. Savaii Cocoa – Climate Change and Disaster Resilience – There is need for more synergised approach between YEP stakeholders, namely, UNDP and FAO inputs to the value chain development, both hardware and software skills, technical and marketing capacity development, drawing upon lessons learnt in the current development phase; involvement of local

private sector champions and promoters, other key partners such as SBEC, CoC and MCIL.

- x. Farm to Table Value Chain Approach to Organic Farming: There is a need for this WIBDI implemented component to be more closely supervised and monitored by the MWCSD under the framework for the YEP. A tracking system can also be established as part of a bigger 1-UN wide effort for monitoring achievement of outputs for specialised projects, for example, on gender equality and women empowerment.

Diagram 1: Samoa Youth Employment Promotion Organigramme (initial observations, with suggested improvements)



Boxes 1 – 3 point to some additional key recommendations emanating from the Evaluation.

Box 1

Establishment of a YEP management advisory board or team, with at least its chairperson sitting in the Economic Empowerment Sub-committee is recommended. The MTE suggests that the current PMU be turned into a Technical Assistance Team (TAT), but with improved human resources capacity than has been the case in the current YEP implementation phase. There is need to have visible representation in the Economic Empowerment Sub-sector of other groups such as women and the disabled incorporated. The Economic Development Sub-sector needs to be empowered to tackle in a substantial manner, issues of inclusive growth, (for example, key drivers such as micro and small enterprise development, private sector development, financial inclusion, policy dialogue, including issues of appropriate legislation (review of existing ones whilst developing new legislation, if appropriate; economic empowerment for the youth, women and the disabled, adopting an inclusive approach to development.

Farm to Table Value Chain Approach: Closer supervision and monitoring is required for this WIBDI implemented component, with the MWCSO taking a more visible role in providing through YEP, more technical and organisational support, mobilising the support of all key stakeholders, UN, government, private sector, civil society organisations, and others.