LEARNING CIRCLE
FACILITATOR'S MANUAL

Population & Environment for Sustainable Livelihoods - Making the Links

Acknowledgements

LIVE&LEARN
Environmental Education

Contents

Overview

Environmental themes for community and school education awareness programs for the past years has been very much focused on issues of unsustainable logging practices, managing water scarcity and advocacy skills. However, they put little emphasis on helping communities realise the links that increasing population has on the sustainability of the environment and the human race. This missing link, if not addressed, will affect the social, health, environmental and economic stability of countries with a high birth rate, such as the Solomon Islands.

This module was developed to support NGOs, Community Based Centres, and schools promote environmental and human sustainability. The broad objectives of the module are to enable communities and schools to explore the links between environmental and population issues, their social and economic impacts and to support community learning centres and rural training centres implement outreach activities on population, environmental and livelihood themes and topics.

The module provides general background information, suggestions and a step by step approach on how to facilitate the sessions. It is divided into three sections:

Section 1: Facilitation Information

Section 2: Core Sessions, which includes background information, activities and handouts

Section 3: Taking Action.

For more specific and detailed information on the topics and themes, please refer to the list of websites for a range of useful resources.

Section 1

Facilitation Information

- Discussion of current issues
- Adult literacy and ESL
- Community planning, problem solving and decision making
- Public information and education

Characteristics and Strengths of Learning Circles:

- Are based on the idea that an informed community is essential to genuine participation and that ordinary people have the right and the ability to contribute to decision making
- Value and build from people's life experiences and knowledge
- Enable people to participate as equals, with everyone learning from each other
- Are fun and empowering
- Build a wide range of skills
- Are dynamic, flexible, inclusive and highly participatory
- Require little infrastructure, so they work in rural, remote and community contexts
- Are self directed – participants determine their own objectives and set their own pace
- Put participants in control of their learning
- Encourage people to identify and utilize local information and resources
- Encourage community involvement and action by showing people that change is possible
- Help build self-esteem and self-confidence by affirming people's existing knowledge and skills and providing a safe environment in which to test and extend these
- Allow people to learn at a rate that fits their context and skills
- Are a cost-effective way of reaching people who are isolated or face other barriers to participation
- Learning Circles can be conducted where they live and are not dependent on presenters or subject experts

What is a Learning Circle?

A Learning Circle is a group of people who meet regularly to discuss, explore and learn about issues that concern them, their communities or the wider society.

Groups are usually small (5-15 people) and meet once or twice a week for a number of weeks, often for around 2 hours at a time. They are easy to set up and run, requiring only a meeting place and a way to note key points and outcomes.

The aim of a Learning Circle is not necessarily to learn a lot of facts or for everyone to reach an agreement. Rather, it should provide each person with the chance to increase their understanding of the issues and the tools and confidence to act on their beliefs.

Learning Circles have been used by a range of organisations, for a range of purposes:

- Formal training and professional development
- Extension of expert-delivered programs

- Learning Circles can work for all literacy levels because they are discussion-based, draw on life experiences, and don't have to involve detailed written material

- Can address feelings of alienation and resentment by enabling people to have input and a say and providing a pathway to wider involvement

- Help people to clarify their views and interests on complex issues

Process Matters

- Participants learn from the process, not just the subject matter discussed

  - Learning Circles encourage people to develop their own ideas and express these to others

  - Through discussion and debate, participants grow in confidence – confidence in their skills, knowledge and capacity to communicate

Learning Circles, Problem Solving and Decision-Making

- None of us has all the information needed to decide what is the best thing to do about issues that are more than just personal. Individually, we can't know what is best for us as a community

- By thinking and talking together, we may be able to work towards a shared judgement about the most acceptable thing to do, given all the circumstances

Learning Circles and Adult Education Principles

- Learning Circles are built on fundamental principles of adult learning. They include:

  - Value and build on life experiences

  - Put learners in control of their learning

  - Encourage and support critical reflection

  - Provide a relaxed and informal environment

  - Cater for different learning styles

Activities to divide people into small groups

Sinking Boat

Learning Outcomes

To energise the group, form groups for small group work activities and to promote team building.

Time: 5 – 10 minutes

Activity:

1. Ask the group to gather in the middle of the room and to start walking in all directions.

2. While the group is in motion you start to tell the people a story. All of them should imagine being on a big ship in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. This ship becomes stranded at sea. Everyone wants to be saved and has to find a place in the lifeboat, but these lifeboats only carry a number of people.

3. Call out the number of people the lifeboats can carry, for example "Five!" The participants have to gather in groups of this particular size, embracing each other's shoulder.

4. Repeat the exercise several times and change the number of people the lifeboats can carry.

5. In the last turn the number(s) you call out equals the number of persons you need for the following small group work activity (e.g. two boats with five and two boats with six people, if there are 22 participants).

The Numbers Game

Learning Outcomes

Illustrate the power of non-verbal communication and to form new groups.

Time: 10 – 15 minutes

Activity

1. Count the number of participants in advance and calculate the various combinations for sorting the participants into different size groups (e.g. for a group of 50, 10 groups of five people).

2. Clear the centre of the room or find an open space outside.

3. Ask all the participants to stand together and not to speak.

4. Ask them to form 'X' groups of 'Y' people as fast as possible. You may add a sense of urgency to the mixing and forming by shouting encouragement and telling them to move quickly. Then ask them to form another combination of people. Continue to call combinations according to your prepared list.

5. Conclude with the pre-planned number of groups required for the next workshop activity.

First Name Introductions

Learning Outcomes

Participants learn each other's names quickly and create a relaxed atmosphere

Time: 16- 20 minutes

Activity:

1. Ask everyone to stand in a circle facing each other.

2. Introduce yourself by saying your first name and add a descriptive word to your name, which starts with the same letter, e.g. "My name is Anna, amazing Anna".

3. Then ask the person standing next to you to introduce you to other participants before introducing themselves, adding a descriptive word to their name as well, e.g. this is Amazing Anna, my name is Sam, sensational Sam".

4. Everyone introduces the person who was introduced before.

5. Continue until everyone has a turn.

Symbolic Introductions

Learning Outcomes

Introduce participants to each other, get participants talking to each other in small groups and create a sense of belonging.

Time: 20-30 minutes

Resources/Preparation: Environmental objects lying in or near the room that can be used as symbols which do not need preparation.

Activity

1. Ask participants to form groups of three and find an object, which may be outside, that they feel symbolises their community.

2. Ask them to bring the object back in 10 minutes and put it on the table.

3. Ask them to introduce themselves and to explain why they chose this object as their symbol.

Facilitator notes: This activity can be useful for encouraging participants to open up and share feelings early in the workshop. Introductions are made while searching for and agreeing on a symbol.

Expectations

Learning Outcomes

- Discover the expectations that participants have of the workshop
- Exploring participant expectations helps to evaluate the workshop at the end.
- Assist participants to relax at the beginning of the workshop

Time: 40 minutes

Resources/Preparation: Poster paper and Marker pens

Activity

1. Ask the participants to divide into pairs. To avoid participants interviewing each other's friend sitting next to them, ask them to interview the person sitting opposite them. Ask each other: Why are you attending the workshop? What are your expectations from the workshop?

2. Ask the participants to interview each other briefly, to find out each other's expectations of the workshop.

3. After 10 minutes, call all the pairs together and ask them to report briefly about their interview partner, summarising the main information in one minute.

4. The facilitator writes down all the participants' expectations onto a piece of poster paper. Hang the paper with expectations on the wall.

5. At the end of the workshop reflect back to see whether the participants' expectations were met.

Ground Rules

Before you start it is important to set up some basic ground rules for participation.

- Explain the importance of ground rules: such as, ground rules make working together easier, it also makes things run smoothly and more enjoyable
- Ask for contributions of ground rules from participants
- Write ground rules onto poster paper
- Add you own contributions, for example, taking turns speaking, respect each other's views, etc.
- Summarise the ground rules at the end
- Ask for which penalty to use if someone breaks the ground rules. For example, dancing or singing a song

Section 2

Core Sessions

Background Information
Activities
Handouts

Activities

The Past, Present and Future

1

Introduction:

We can learn a great deal from older people and elders in our communities about what things used to be like in communities and how things have changed over time.

It can also help us to see where we are headed in the future.

Learning Outcomes:

- Explore the gradual and constant changes within communities over time.
- Understand what life used to be like in the village in the past.
- Historical Profile

Time:

40 minutes for group work, 15 minutes for presentation and discussion

Resources/Preparation:

Poster paper and coloured marker pens

Essential Activity:

1. Bring the elders and older people of the community together to attend.

2. Divide everyone into 3 groups.

   One group will include all the elders and older people - both men and women; another group will include those who are middle aged - both men and women; and the last group will include all the young men and women from the village.

3. Distribute poster paper and marker pens to each group.

4. Ask each group to draw a map of what the village used to look like.

   - Ask the elders to draw what the village used to like during **1960**;
   - Ask those who are middle aged to draw the village during **1980**; and
   - Ask the youth to draw the village as it is today in **2009**.

   Pick one moment in time for your map. For example, do not draw a map that is from 1960 to 1970. Just draw the village as it was in 1960.

   Provide/show/draw an example of how the map could look.

5. When drawing the map of the village consider such things as:
   - Infrastructure (roads, houses, buildings)
   - Water sites and sources
   - Agricultural land (crop variety and location)

- Forest land
- Shops, markets
- Health clinics, schools,

(Distribute a handout outlining the list above or write it onto poster paper and hang it up on wall for all to see).

6. When complete, present your maps to the groups (put them all up on the wall so everyone can see). Put up another piece of poster paper to record peoples' comments. Make a list of issues raised from the discussions about each of the maps. Discuss if things have changed for women and men.

7. Discuss the changes, in your village, to the **population, environment, health and education** during these times.

   Ask questions to the group, such as:

   - What has changed over time? Why?
   - Has population increased or decreased? Why?
   - Has it caused problems? Why?
   - Have things changed for women and men?

Optional Follow up activity:

Ask the participants whether the changes to natural resources, population, education and economic opportunities are getting better or worse.

Draw two columns on a piece of poster paper. One column is headed: Better. The other column is headed: Worse. Ask whether each of the things that they have been discussing could go into the Better column or the Worse column.

- What is getting better? What is getting worse?
- What is the most significant environmental change?
- What other changes are important to you?
- What are the linkages between these changes?

8. Now consider the future. Ask the young people some questions and ask for their comments. The older and middle-aged people should listen to them first, as the future belongs to the young people, then provide their comments.

   - What about the future? How do you feel about the future of your village?
   - When the youth are 40 years old, what will the village look like? In 2020, 2040?
   - Are you concerned about the future?
   - How can a village grow but protect the environment?
   - How can you plan for growth?

Facilitator notes:

Encourage participants to do the map quickly. The map does not need to be perfect as the discussion about the maps is the most important part of the session.

Encourage positive comments about change as well. Encourage a discussion on the reasons for the changes that have emerged. This will help learning about key problems. Discuss what solutions have been tried in the past and how effective they were. Ask the participants to show what they would like the future to look like for each issue. Discuss what changes would be necessary to achieve them.

Handouts for Participants

The Past, Present and Future

Draw a map of what the village used to look like.

• The elders to draw what the village used to like in **1960**;

• Those who are middle aged to draw the village in **1980**; and

• The youth to draw the village as it is today **2009**.

When drawing the map of the village, consider such things as:

• Infrastructure (roads, houses, buildings)

• Water sites and sources

• Agricultural land (crop variety and location)

• Forest land

• Shops, markets

• Health clinics, schools, churches

Background Information

Population Growth in the Pacific

Population in Pacific

	1975	2004	2015
Solomon Islands	200,000	500,000	684,000
Papua New Guinea	2,900,000	5,800,000	7,900,000
Timor Leste	700,000	900,000	1,500,000

(Reference: UNICEF).

Timor Leste

Its population growth rate is among the highest in the world, and youth face a high unemployment rate. At the current fertility rate of 7.8 (births per woman)– the highest in the world - the population will double in 18 years given a population growth rate of 3.9 percent.

(Reference: World Bank).

Solomon Islands: Population Reaches Nearly Half A Million

Solomon Island's population has reached nearly half a million in 2005. The National Economic Recovery, Reform and Development Plan 2003 to 2006 report says at a population growth rate of three percent, the country's population is expected to surpass half a million by 2010, Solomon Broadcasting News reports.

Based on three percent growth, the country's population would have grown by 60-thousand people more by 2005 from the total population established in the 1999 National population census.

The report says while another population census is due in 2009, it is estimated the population will increase by a further 60,000 within the next five years.

Based on the 1999 national census, more than half of the population is made up of children and young people aged less than 15 years.

More than 80 percent of the population lives in rural areas of the nine provinces.

The report warns that given the increasing population growth, production of goods and services must be maintained to maintain the current living standards.

(Reference: Pacific Business Magazine, 28th December 2005).

Session 2: Background Information

PNG Population

According to the 2000 Census, between 1980 and 2000 PNG's population grew by an annual average rate of 2.7% to 5.19 million.

The Southern Highlands Province, followed by Western New Britain, recorded the highest population growth of 4.2% and 3.8% respectively.

Approximately half of PNG's total population is under 19 years old.

Most of the population live in rural communities based on the traditional village structure and dependent on subsistence farming supplemented by cash cropping. Only 15-20% of Papua New Guineans live in the main urban areas of Port Moresby, Lae, Madang, Mt Hagan and Goroka.

(Reference: AusAID).

Somare highlights PNG population problem

Papua New Guinea's Prime Minister says the country's rapid population growth must be constrained. Sir Michael Somare raised the issue in his address to mark the 29th anniversary of PNG's independence from Australia.

Sir Michael said while the country had built many new roads, hospitals, aid posts and schools since 1975, government services have been stretched to the limit by population growth.

Sir Michael says the Government is striving to reduce its debt, to ease the pressure.

"At the moment, our GDP, or the income that we generate, just covers the rate at which our population is growing," he said.

"In other words, our economy is growing but we must seriously address our population growth."

(Reference: ABC News Online, 16th September 2004).

2

Activities

Population Growth in Solomon Islands

Introduction:

The Solomon Islands is experiencing a rapid population growth rate. Use this session to ensure that people understand what you mean when you are talking about 'high population growth' as it will help people to understand the graphs.

Learning Outcomes:

Compare the population growth rate of the Solomon Islands with our regional neighbours. Consider the consequences to national governments when the population grows quickly.

Time: 30 minutes

Resources/Preparation:

Copies of handout with the figures of population growth and also gross national income.

Activity:

1. Ask people to work in groups of 3 or 4 and look at the handout.

2. Explain what the graphs are about. One shows the population growth rate each year of countries in the Pacific, while the other graph shows the average of what people earn each year in Pacific Island countries.

3. Ask the participants:
   • What can these graphs tell us about the population levels in these countries?
   • What does it mean for the Solomon Islands when the growth rate is so high?
     E.g. more teachers, more schools, jobs, what about the role of the government?

4. Form a large group and compare ideas. The facilitator may also want to make the link between who are the richest countries in the Pacific? E.g. Fiji, Samoa. Who are the poorest countries? E.g. Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea.

5. Make the link between low population growth rates and economic prosperity.

Activity: Population Age and Economic Growth

You might also want to make the link between population age and economic growth.

1. Ask for 10 volunteers for an activity. Ask 4 youth to come forward, along with 2 old people, two women and two men. Ask them all to stand at the front of the room.

2. Explain that these 10 people represent 100% of the Solomon Islands population.
   • Explain that 40% of Solomon Islands population is under the age of 15 years of age.

Show that those 4 people represent 40% of the Solomon Islands population;

- The 2 old people represent the 20% of people over the age of 50 years;

3. 4 men and women represent the 40% of working population
   - 40% = Under 15 years of age
   - 40% = working men & women of the Solomon Islands.
   - 20% = Over 50 years of age

4. Ask the participants who in this group pay taxes to the government, so that the government can provide basic services such as health and education?
   - Are the youth under the age of 15 paying tax? No. Then ask the four youth to sit down where they are.
   - Ask whether the old people pay tax? No. Ask the two old people to sit down.
   - Ask another person to sit down as he/she has many children and stays at home looking after the family.
   - The other person is also looking after his/her family and has time to sell some produce at the local market. He/she doesn't pay tax. Ask the person to sit down.
   - Ask whether every person in the Solomon Islands is working? No. Ask the next person to sit down and one person to continue standing.
   - Who is left standing? One person. This person represents the 10% of the population who pay taxes to the government. But the government needs to provide services for every one of these people.

How old are the people who pay taxes and how old are the people who build a nation? If you have 42% of your population under the age of 15, they are not contributing to paying taxes and they are also the group most in need of health and education services.

High population growth does not mean you will have a rich country.

Poverty Alleviation

No country, with the exception of a few oil rich states, has risen from poverty whilst still having high fertility rates.

UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health (June 2007)
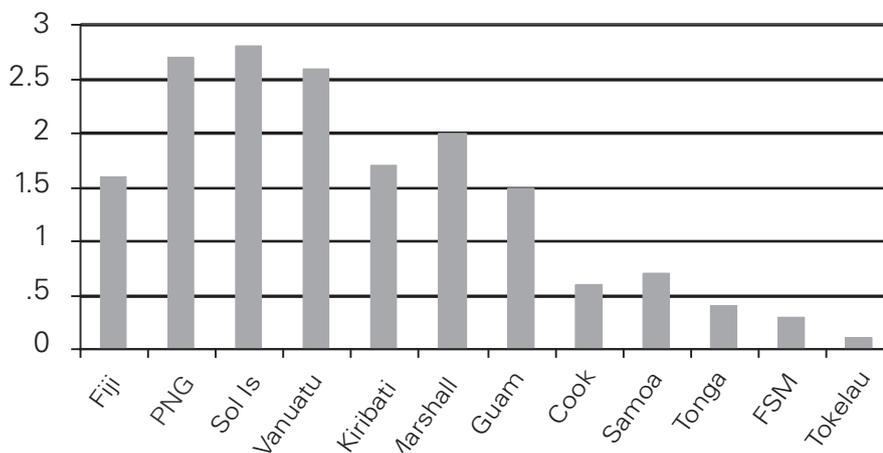
2

Handouts for Participants

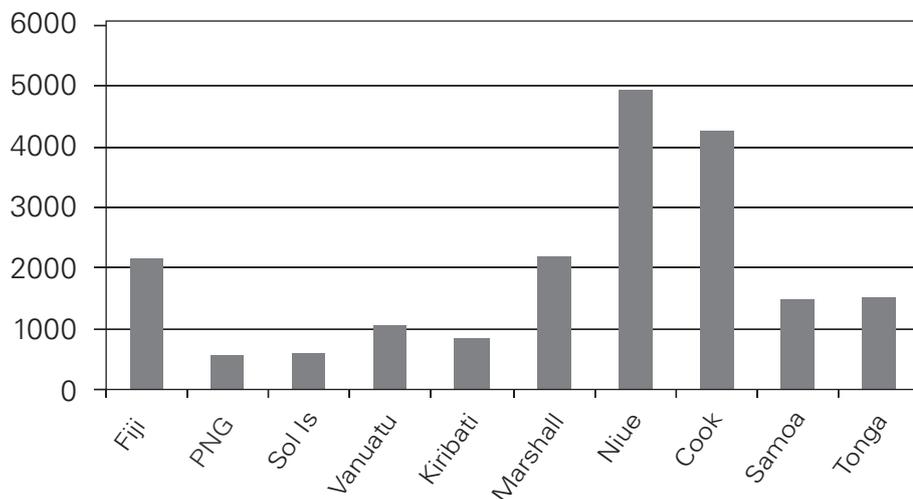## Population Growth in the Solomon Islands

Population growth rates in the Pacific (The percentage growth of a country's population each year)

Growth rate

GNI or average earnings of each person

Gross National Income per country (GNI) - average $ earnings of each person

References: www.undp.org

3

Background Information

Population and Natural Resources

70% of the world's poor rely on the natural environment to sustain them.

Meeting the needs of a growing population is dependent upon a clean environment.

Communities place heavy pressure on natural resources due to high population density within the land that is available.

With 75% of the population dependent on subsistence agriculture, Timor-Leste's environment is the lifeline of the country.

Forests and Logging

- Land degradation and soil erosion
- Water pollution and destruction of water catchments
- Loss of biodiversity and habitats
- Land clearing for food gardens
- Threats of rapid exploitation of useful medicinal plants and animals
- Destruction of carbon sinks
- In 1995 the 'sustainable' annual cut was estimated at 286,000m3.
- In 2005, the Solomon Islands extracted 1.1 million cubic metres of logs, the highest ever for the country.

(Reference: SH&FPA).

Unsustainable Logging in the Solomon Islands

The government in Solomon Islands is being urged to act against illegal logging.

According to some estimates loggers are taking almost one million cubic meters of round logs - which is five times more than what environmentalists regard as sustainable.

Director of the Solomon Islands Development Trust, Abraham Baenisia says the islanders will be hit by problems caused by the loss of the trees and the food and medicines they provide.

Because there are many logging companies around, each one of them is trying to get as many logs as they can for their own profit. None cared about what happens afterward as a result of de-forestation because that's exactly what they are doing and in the absence of people knowing what they are doing, they think it's the money that matters the most.

(Reference: ABC Radio Australia, 24th January 2004).

Villagers turn to fruit trees for timber

Resource owners have started harvesting fruit trees for timber because the natural forests have been logged. A resource owner in Western Province confirmed this early this week following the Central Bank's Governor's warning that the country's dependence on logging is leading to an economic disaster.

"It may sounds incredible but it does happen in my community, and I guess, other communities whose forest have be logged," said the resource owner, Balaigo Aleke.

He said prior to the logging operation in his area the resource owners enjoyed the benefits from the natural forest.

Before bush materials were readily available to build houses. Timber and fruit trees were plentiful. And villagers only have to walk short distance to their gardens.

"Life was easy back then before a logging operation started on our land. Now the people are suffering in their own land.

"The loggers have harvested timber trees and left behind strings of problems such as over-harvested forest, muddy rivers and streams, soil erosion and land disputes," he said.

Aleke said life is not the same today. The people are walking long distance to cut timber or extract bush materials to build houses.

Others, he said, have no choice but to cut their own ngali nut and coconut for timber.

"We are experiencing economic, social and environment problem. We are struggling to

Dynamite and chlorine causes scarcity in marine resources

Dynamite and chlorine have been identified as the main cause of fish and marine resources scarcity in Ngella, Central Islands Province.

Koilovala villagers revealed this during the first community-based fisheries management workshop held at the village last week.

The management workshop was an initiative of the Ministry of Fisheries supported by the South Pacific Commission (SPC).

Speaking to Solomon Star yesterday SPC technical advisor Etuati Ropeti said villagers only realised the effects of dynamite and chlorine on their marine resources after comparing the resources they have now to what they used to have.

Mr. Ropeti said there are other contributing factors such as population growth and pollution.

… Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources permanent secretary Ethel Sigimanu said people have turned to such fishing methods because of commercial gain.

"The pressure from school fees and other needs could be one of the pressures that gave rise to such unsustainable harvesting," Mrs. Sigimanu said.

(Reference: Solomon Star, 21st February 2007).

make ends meet including how best to sustain our families and meeting our children's school fees.

"The logging problems outweigh the little benefits derived from such activities," he said.

(Reference: Solomon Star, 14th July 2006).

Environmental pollution

- High population can lead to increased waste production – which can lead to an increase in related diseases, such as diarrhoea and respiratory infections. Sickness causes increased medical expenses and loss of work production.

- Environmental pollution of a toxic nature requires special disposal methods, with increased waste production leading to increase waste management costs.

- Increased environmental pollution disturbs the natural ecosystem and can lead to loss of biodiversity and global warming.

Fish Resources

- With an increased population there is a higher demand for over harvesting and consumption of fish resources.

- There will be increasing pressure on fishing grounds with less fish.

- Increasing poverty may cause people to start using poor fishing techniques, such as poisoning the water with dynamite.

- People may start taking smaller fish or a higher quantity.

- There may be destruction of habitats and feeding grounds.

- Conflicts of fish resources by communities.

- This will then affect the national economy especially fishing and the marine resources sector.

- There will be loss of sources of income for fishermen in rural and urban areas.

Environment: Population a danger to islands environment, says UNFPA

Rapid population growth is threatening the natural environment that sustains life, a Port Moresby seminar has been told.

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) representative Birat Simha said while human survival relied heavily on natural resources, rising populations placed a huge stress on the environment and its resources.

Mr. Simha said the impact of population growth threatening the islands' environment was not a new thing. PNG has come face to face with rising sea levels, food scarcity and other real examples related to increased population, he said.

"Because the natural environment is irreversible the chances of the next generation enjoying a rich and quality environment is a challenge for the world, a demanding task to take heed of," he said.

"In the past decade environment conditions have either failed to improve or are worsening, public health of people is a problem, stresses on food and water resources are becoming worse in many developing countries and forest cover and marine life are lost."

He said now was the time to act.

People have to be responsible for their actions if they want the environment to continue supporting the world's population expansion. The seminar, under the theme "Population, Environment and Development", was held to commemorate World Population Day.

It was sponsored by the UNFPA and heard from many organisations and departments whose presentations were broadcast live on the National Broadcasting Corporation's Karai Service.

(Reference: Pacific Business Magazine, 12th July 2001).

Session

3

Activities

Population and Natural Resources

Introduction:

The number of people in communities, where they live, and how they live all affect the health of the natural environment. People can change the environment through their use of natural resources and the production of waste. The higher the number of people the greater the impact on the environment. Changes in the environmental conditions, in turn, can affect human health and well being.

Learning Outcomes:

Identify how population growth and environment issues are connected.

Time: 1.5 hours

Resources/Preparation:

- Poster paper and marker pens
- Distribute Participant Handouts
- Copies of photos

Essential Activity: Cycle of population growth and its impact

Start a discussion about the link between high population growth and the environment with this activity.

1. Distribute the handout depicting the cycle of population growth and its impact on natural resources. Explain the concept of the cycle.

2. Participants will then come up with their own diagram depicting the cycle of high population growth and other natural resource issues.

3. Distribute poster paper and divide into small groups.

4. Put the diagram on poster paper to present to group and discuss.

Essential Activity:

Link between High Population Growth and Natural Resources

a. Cut out words cards – Resources for Session 3.

b. Divide into pairs or threes.

c. Choose one 'High Population Growth' card and another card highlighting one issue.

Session 3: Activities

d. Discuss in your small groups, 'How are the two issues connected?' and 'How does high population growth relate to the issue identified in the other cards?'

e. When ready, hold the cards up to show the whole group and explain to the group how and why the two cards are connected.

f. Bring the two cards to the front and pin them onto a sheet. Bring it all together so that it creates a web of inter-connectedness.

Optional Activity:

Display a variety of photos and pictures of people and environments in the Solomon Islands to the group.

Facilitator prompt questions in relation to photos:

- *How many mouths do families here need to feed?*
- *How many fish do they need to catch?*
- *How much land do they have?*
- *What about the opportunity for all children to go to school?*
- *Is there enough food to eat and also to sell at the market?*
- *Do you think families have enough time?*
- *Why would parents feel the need to pull their daughters out of school?*

3

Handouts for Participants

Population and Natural Resources

Cycle of population growth and environmental destruction

Health problems → High population growth

↗ ↘

Loss soil and water   New villages developed

↑ ↓

Need money to buy food   Forests cleared

↖ ↙

Need for cash crops ← Loss of edible plants & natural medicine
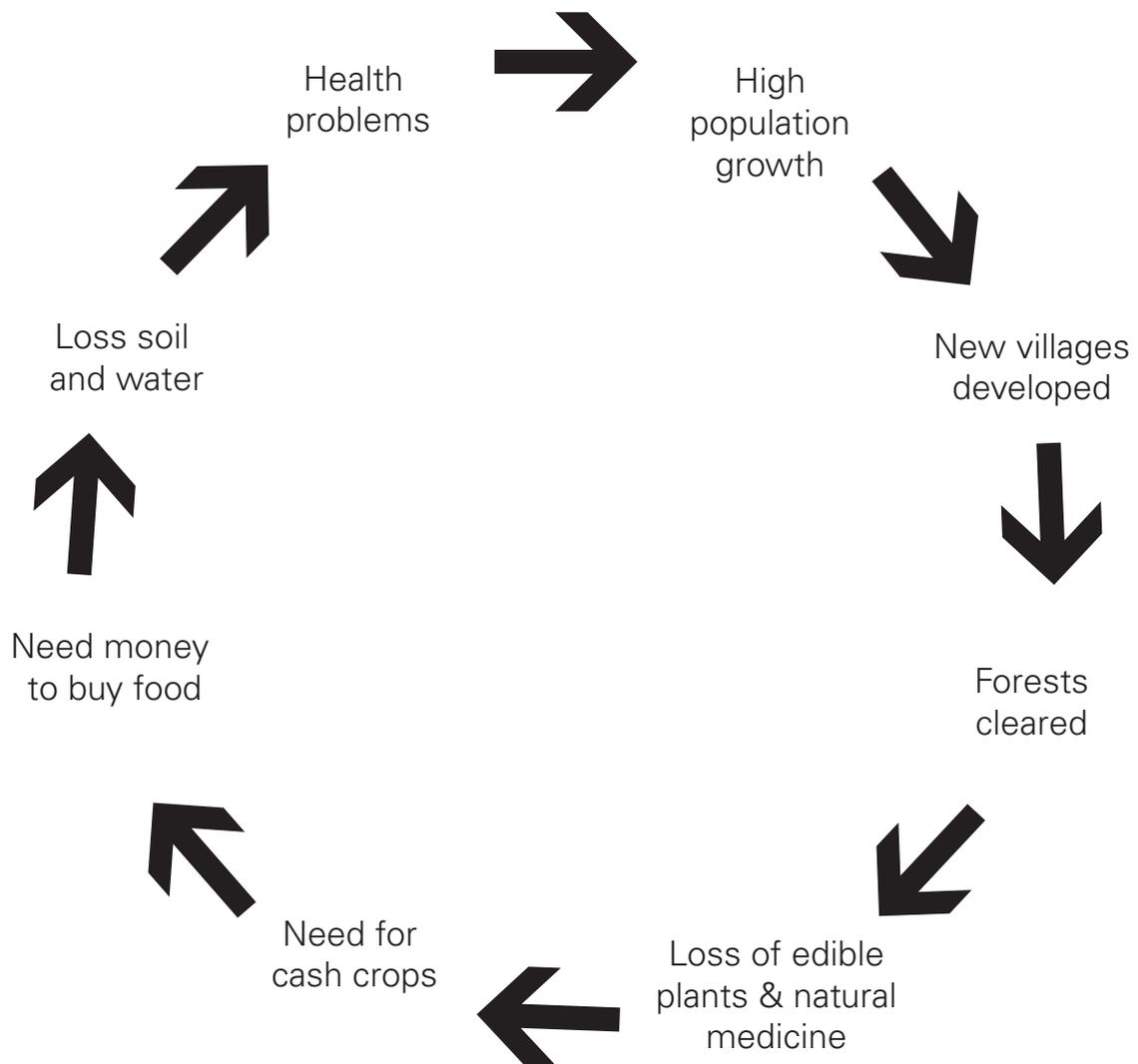
Handouts for Participants

Population Growth and Natural Resources

Dynamite fishing	High Population Growth
Logging	High Population Growth
Polluted drinking water	High Population Growth
Poor sanitation	High Population Growth
High production of waste	High Population Growth
Expansion of community	High Population Growth
Unsustainable harvesting of Natural resources	High Population Growth
Land Dispute	High Population Growth
Mangroves	High Population Growth
Income-generation	High Population Growth

4

Background Information

Education, Environment and Population

Connection between growing populations and education

- Not enough education resources (schools, teachers, land, finance, facilities) leading to poor quality of education.
- High numbers of 'push outs' as the system cannot deal with high population growth.
- Lack of infrastructure and financial resources to cope with growing population.
- Limited opportunities for further studies.
- Girls taken out of school to look after younger siblings.

(Reference: SH&FPA).

Many kids and not enough schools

- Globally, an extra 15-35 million more teachers will be required to achieve primary education for every child by 2015.
- PNG needs 3 new schools every day to maintain education needs for increasing population.
- In PNG only 49% of males and 35% of female students completed primary school in 2003.
- In the Solomon Islands, slightly over 1/3 of the total population falls into the age group of less than 15 years of age.
- There are approximately 30 babies born each day in the Solomon Islands. This means that the government needs to build a new classroom every day to accommodate them all.
- In the Solomon Islands, the percentage of population 15 years & over is the potentially economically active population but close to half (47 per cent) of this age group has attained primary level education only.

(Reference: Common Ground, SH&FPA and HIES Solomon Islands).

Girls and education

- Girls have less chance to continuing primary school as they are needed at home to care for younger siblings. Girls have less chance to attend high school.
- Uneducated girls have less chance of employment and often marry earlier or have teenage pregnancies

(Reference: SH&FPA).

PNG: High Fees Forcing Children Out Of School

Investing in education is the main task Papua New Guinea (PNG) should adopt to develop its human resource and to overcome the social, economical and political problems.

An educated population will know their rights and fight for it, know where to find information, make informed decisions, feel responsible for their actions and be literate.

UNICEF education officer Gabriel Andandi presented some of his findings during the PNG Education Advocacy Network (PEAN) workshop in Port Moresby.

Mr. Andandi said the government should make it possible for children and people in PNG to attend school and become literate if it wanted to go forward.

"The government's urge for compulsory education for all should be accompanied by free education for all or low-cost in education fees," Mr. Andandi said.

He said high school fees was a major hindrance that was forcing children out of schools as a majority of the parents could not meet these fees.

"Look at K5000 to K6000 (US$1,662 to US$1,995) in school fees including learning materials and pocket allowance each year. Research indicates that many parents cannot afford this and this is forcing children out of schools," Mr. Andandi said.

He said non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and donor agencies were doing a great job in providing education to children, especially in rural areas where the Government couldn't reach the people.

Education officials from other NGOs who were at the workshop raised similar concerns and urged the government to provide educational avenues for every Papua New Guinean to learn to read and write at low or no cost.

(Reference: Pacific Business Magazine, 15th February 2006).

Education and East Timor

By the end of 2005 the combined total for primary and secondary education enrolment was 66 per cent, with 86 per cent for primary school attendance. Adult literacy is estimated at 50%.

In 2001, it was estimated that 43 per cent of Timorese aged between 15–24 years were unemployed, and the majority of these unemployed youth lived in Dili.

Forty six percent (46%) of Timor Leste's population aged 11 years and older has never attended school and cannot read or write (WHO).

The instability in Timor-Leste has impacted on the youngest population, with approximately 27 per cent of its youth self-reporting as illiterate.

(Reference: UNDP).

PNG: 70,000 Student Graduates Cannot Find Jobs

Up to 70,000 school-leavers in Papua New Guinea (PNG) will not be able to find places to further their education or to seek vocational training, and their chances of finding employment are also poor, The National reports.

Education Minister Michael Laimo has urged all sectors of the economy, both formal and informal, to help address the problem.

"It is not just a problem for education to solve on its own," Mr. Laimo said. "The education system is doing its best to provide education and training for the children and youth while they are in school.

"One of the important aims of the curriculum reform that is ongoing, is to increase the emphasis on self-reliance and practical skills to help young people make the most of opportunities when they leave school," he said in a statement.

Inevitably, he said, there would also be higher number of school-leavers.

"All children who start school become school-leavers one day. The question is, is it better for them to leave formal education with six years of learning or eight, 10 or more?" he said.

He pointed out that the country's population was growing at a rate of 2.7 percent each year, which meant more children were entering school.

(Reference: Pacific Business Magazine, 16th December 2005).

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Activities

Education, Environment and Population

Introduction:

The significant increase in the number of young people in communities demands an increase in education services to meet the needs of a young and growing population. Unfortunately, many countries cannot provide the schools and teachers necessary for every young person, which means many miss out on an education.

Learning Outcomes:

Understand the impact that high population growth has on the opportunity and chance for children to go to school and get an education.

Understand that when people are educated and empowered they are more likely to have the skills and knowledge to protect their natural environment.

Time: 1.5 hours

Resources/Preparation:

Handout, Poster paper and marker pens

Activity: Value Walk

Explain that you will give them some statements. Participants will need to decide whether they agree, disagree or are not sure. Then they will need to stand in a line with, strongly agree at one end, and strongly disagree at the other end. Put five pieces of blank paper on the ground – labeled 1 to 5.

| 1 = Strongly Disagree | 3 = Neutral | 5 = Strongly Agree |
| 2 = Disagree | 4 = Agree | |

Now ask people to move to a space along the line that best decribes how they feel about the statement they hear. These statements are:

- *High population growth stops people from getting an education.*
- *A good education results in confidence that leads to people being able to protect their environment.*
- *High population growth leads to environmental destruction, social and economic problems.*

When people are standing in their position in the line, ask them why they have chosen to stand where they are. Ask them to explain their views. Be sure to ask people throughout the line for their views.

> ### Facilitator prompt questions:
>
> *Ask the group in a general discussion after the activity:*
>
> - Does high population growth stop people getting an education? Why?
> - What happens when young people do not get an education?
> - When there is high population growth, how does this impact on education opportunities for young people?
> - Why is education important for young people?
> - What are the benefits when children go to school?

Focus the discussion on why you need an education to counter con men. It is important to know our human rights, which will make you less likely to be exploited by others who have a higher level of education.

Empowered and educated men and women will question decisions made by others. Traditional knowledge about environmental management is just as important.

Activity: What is the situation like in the Solomon Islands?

Distribute the handout for this session. Read out the information together.

Discuss the impact this has for the community and for the environment?

Activity: Problem Tree

a. Draw an outline of a tree on a piece of poster paper. Make sure that the tree has roots drawn under the ground as well as the trunk and leaves on top.

b. Take one priority problem (e.g. children miss out on the opportunity to go to school) and put it in the middle of the tree.

c. Ask for the root causes of the problem. Participants make suggestions that are then written into the roots of the tree.

d. Next, consider the fruits, results or effects of the problem of children not going to school. Write participants' suggestions into the branches of the tree.

Activity: Solution Tree

a. Draw an outline of a tree on a piece of poster paper.

b. Take one priority solution (e.g. children are getting a good education) and put it in the middle of the tree.

c. Ask for the root causes of this solution (positive situation). Participants make suggestions that are then written into the roots of the tree.

d. Next, consider the fruits, results or effects of the solution of children getting a good education. Write participant suggestions into the branches of the tree.

Compare the two trees. This will help to summarise the session.

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Handouts for Participants

Education, Environment and Population

- A Solomon Island community of 1000 people would include 400 children under the age of 15 years old.

- There would be 240 children of primary school age.

- There would have to be a school with 6 classes with 40 children in each.

- The school would need 7 teachers and 6 rooms.

- In 20 years time, the community size has doubled and now you need 12 classrooms and 15 teachers.

Do you think this is happening now in the Solomon Islands?

Will this happen in the future of the Solomon Islands?

AusAID – Investments in women's and girls' education yield some of the highest impacts of all development investments, including reduced rates of maternal mortality, better educated and healthier children and increased household incomes.

UNFPA – Providing the girl-child better access to education is key to the efforts to eliminate discrimination. Substantial evidence shows that educated girls, especially those who have completed secondary education, were less likely to marry young, to have an unwanted pregnancy and to engage in high-risk behaviour such as drug taking and unsafe sex.

5

Background Information

Women, Development and Population

Women and Development

Women's place in society is crucial for every aspect of development, from quality of life to economic growth and sustainability. Where women enjoy equal rights, their children – female and male – are healthier and better educated. Fertility rates are slower and economic growth is usually faster. But where women are oppressed and undervalued, they suffer, their children suffer, economic growth is slower and fertility rates are higher'.

(Reference: Australian Reproductive Health Association).

'When women and families have access to reproductive health services, they often choose to have a smaller family, which improves the health of both families and the environment'.

(Reference: National Wildlife Federation).

Lost time for education and economic activities

The role of gathering water and caring for the sick falls mainly on women and girls. In Africa, women and girls spend 40 billion hours per year carrying water, which means lost educational and economic opportunities. When girls miss school, progress towards development slows. A girl's educational level is the most important sign of the size, health and economic well being of her family.

(Reference: National Wildlife Fund).

Benefits of spacing your children

- Increasing the birth interval from 2 to 3 years will reduce child mortality by 50%.

- High fertility is directly related to maternal mortality rates.

(Reference: SH&FPA).

5

Activities

Women, Development and Population

Introduction:

Men and women have significant roles in environmental management, responsibility in looking after their families, involvement in income generation and reproductive health and family planning responsibilities.

Women and their education, empowerment and development are critical to the well-being and development of themselves, their families and communities.

Learning Outcomes:

Demonstrate the importance of family planning and spacing children.

Understand the important role of men and women in decisions related to family planning and the impact having many children has on their income earning capacity, health, and well being.

Time: 1 hour

Resources/Preparation:

Something to represent kumara (like a shoe), copies of the Role-play Handout

Activity: Kumara Gardening/Family Planning Not Family Planting

Read through the dialogue below and then act it out with participants.

• Suppose you wanted to plant a garden of kumara. If I want to plant one kumara plant here – indicate to the ground – where would I space the next kumara? (Put the next shoe very close to the first shoe).

• Participants respond that the kumara is to close. Move the shoe 1 metre apart. Ask participants to explain why they leave such a big space when planting kumara (i.e. it needs good soil, water and space for the roots to grow).

• Ask them if you could plant an extra row of kumara where there is a small space between rows, (participants will say, "No, that is not possible").

• Ask the participants why don't they space their kids, like they space their kumara?

• Just like kumara, kids need lots of space, love and attention (like good soil and water) in order to grow properly.

Brainstorm: 15 minutes

Divide the blackboard into two halves and put 'mother' and 'child' as the two headings. Ask the group to call out answers to the following questions.

- Why is it healthier for a woman to have a space of 3 years between her pregnancies?
- Why is it healthier for a child if the next baby is born 3 years later instead of 18 months later?

Possible answers

Mother	Child
Mother has time to get strong again and especially improve her health. When she is breastfeeding, she cannot get strong and so needs a gap between when the baby stops full time breast feeding (12 – 24 months) and when she gets pregnant again.	Baby has a long time to breast feed. This makes them stronger and able to fight infections. Baby has more of mother's time and so if they do get sick they get adequate attention.

Simply by increasing the space between children from 2 to 3 years will decrease the chance of the child dying by 50%.

Having a high population growth does not necessarily mean a stronger nation.

Spacing children, an education and then finding work = healthy nation.

Activity: Role-play

- During the lunch break, ask two women to volunteer to participate in a role-play.
- Ask them to read through the story in the Participant Handout and chose one character to play. The facilitator can play the role of the Women's Development Office. The Women's Development Officer is offering a range of activities, training and income-generation grants to these two women. How do they each respond? Sarah says yes, but Anna cannot. (Refer to session 5 hand outs for participants)
- Prepare and rehearse your role-play for 20 minutes.
- When ready, perform your role-play in front of the others.
- After the role-play reflect upon the opportunities and chances of each family.
  - Do both women have time to attend the training on offer?
  - What benefit would the training provide to these women?

Then ask:

  - What is the role of women in protecting the environment?

Brainstorm in small groups and share with larger group in general discussion.

5

Handouts for Participants

Women, Development and Population

Role-play: Two different stories and opportunities

Anna grew up in a large family. While her brothers went to school, she helped her mum with cooking, gardening and doing chores. She completed her Standard 2 education. When she grew up she married a man and went to stay with his family. Then, over time she had 7 children (one died). She had no time to earn an income of her own, as all her food she grew from the garden went to feeding her children and there was none left over to sell at the market. She is struggling to feed her children. She didn't have enough money to pay for school fees, so some of the children stayed at home and helped out around the house. Some of her children, who did not go to school, started getting into trouble, stealing, fighting and drinking.

Sarah was one of 3 children and went to school with her two brothers. When she finished school she went to work and got married. She sells her produce at the market and works as a teacher's aide at the local school. She has access to family planning and she had 2 children, who both went to school, as she was working and had enough money to pay for school fees.

Tina works for the National Council of Women/Women in Development Office and has a range of projects, training and opportunities available for women to develop their life skills. Tina is offering a range of activities such as:

- organic gardening workshops
- poultry workshops
- sewing and cooking classes
- small business training

Tina also has funding available for women who want to start their own small business. These grants are start up funds to begin a new business.

In the Role Play, **Tina** keeps trying to get the two women to come to her workshops and classes. Every time she suggests something, **Anna** turns to the audience and says – I'd love to go but I can't because I have to spend everyday working in the garden and looking after my children – How can I get away for a week to do this course?

Sarah however may make comments like – Well the kids are in school so I'm pretty free most of the day and I could go and do this.

6

Background Information

Population and Urban Settlements

Urban Population as percentage (%) of total population

	1975	2004	2015
Solomon Islands	9.1%	16.7%	20.5%
Papua New Guinea	11.9%	13.3%	15.0%
Timor Leste	14.6%	26.1%	31.2%

(Reference: UNDP).

Urban environmental issues in Timor Leste

In urban centres, pollution is a key environmental issue. There are no effective waste-management systems in place, which could become a major problem in the highly populated areas, and in several coastal areas visited by tourists. Dili has a basic sewerage system and limited collection and disposal of solid waste. However, large piles of rubbish accumulate due to illegal dumping, which further pollutes the groundwater used for drinking by many people.

(Reference: World Bank).

Local planning scheme to be set up

"Honiara is experiencing rapid growth and there is a need to plan for the future."

The mayor, Mr Maetia said according to the 2005/2006 Household Income and Expenditure Survey, the population of Honiara is now estimated to be nearly 70,000 people. "At the current rate of growth the population of the city will be more than 100,000 by 2015 and over 150,000 by year 2025. Therefore, to accommodate this increasing population good physical planning must happen".

(Reference: Solomon Star, 22nd February 2007).

PNG: Urban Drift Figures Alarming: Committee

Key infrastructure in Papua New Guinea (PNG) will be severely constrained with an estimated urban population expected to reach the 2 million mark by 2020, according to figures released by the newly established National Consultation Committee on Urbanisation.

Chairman of the Committee Max Kep told the National Housing Corporation's Seminar Workshop in Port Moresby that the pressure exerted by the huge influx of people into the urban centres would put pressure on the existing services and infrastructure.

Mr. Kep said currently, the number of people living in the urban centres is close to a million and the number of people expected to drift into towns and cities is expected to double in 14 years time.

"People have been coming, people are still coming and people will continue to come to town," Mr. Kep said.

According to data collected over the years, over 100 people were living in the urban centres in 1966 but the population has drastically increased through urban migration as people look for jobs and better opportunity and services provided by the government.

(Reference: Pacific Business Magazine, 2nd September 2005).

Illegal settlers in city rise sharply

Illegal settlement on public land in Honiara City is growing at an alarming rate, according to a recent field inventory carried out on all existing households residing on public land in Honiara City. "Findings indicate that unauthorised settlement is growing at an unacceptable rate of 26 per cent per annum. "This translates into a population doubling time of two to three years," Harry Waitara, Director of Physical Planning of Department of Land and Surveys told Government Communications Unit.

(Reference: Solomon Star, 14th July 2006).

High population growth and the economy

- Rapid population growth has a negative impact on economic growth.

- High population growth requires increased health and education services, which cause a drain on economic growth.

- High population growth leads to high unemployment and can cause people to accept cheap labour and poor working conditions.

- On the other hand, an increased population will increase the available workforce and can lead to economic growth.

- High population growth can lead to an increase in use of natural resources that can decrease livelihoods leading to decreased economic growth.

(Reference: SH&FPA).

High population growth and poverty

- People trapped in poverty with little education and employment often takes high health risks – poor nutrition, higher infectious diseases, higher fertility, unprotected sex or prostitution.

- Rapid population growth puts a huge strain on national economies.

- Governments may be forced to sell their natural resources to sustain economy.

- Large families means higher family costs for food, health and education.

- With many children, women are unable to enter the workforce or manage income-generating projects due to the burden of child care.

(Reference: SH&FPA).

PNG: Population Explosion Worrisome

Papua New Guinea (PNG) will encounter serious social and economic problems if it does not curb the growth of its population, Morobe Governor Luther Wenge has warned.

Mr. Wenge said the country's current population growth rate of 2.8 percent, which is almost twice the current economic growth rate, needed to be brought down.

The governor was speaking during the launching of the five-year Morobe Population Action Plan in Lae earlier in the week.

He noted that the population of PNG has increased from three million during the last 20 years to five million, and this has seriously affected the budgetary and planning processes.

"The government does not have enough resources to provide adequate socio-economic services like health, education and employment," Mr. Wenge said.

He said this has also resulted in the increasing law and order problems in the country.

"If this trend continues, there will be no arable land for gardening and sustenance in 10 years. With booming population, Papua New Guinea is at a cross road right now," the governor said.

He urged leaders in all levels of government and private sector not to turn a blind eye on this issue.

Mr. Wenge said the Morobe provincial government has recognized the importance of the national population policy to address and counteract the population issues.

"In consultation and collaboration with the Department of National Planning and Rural Development, the Morobe provincial administration has developed this comprehensive population action plan document to address population issues in the province," he said.

He challenged the people not to think of population action plan in terms of government policy to control private lives and the privacy of the citizens - like family planning, policy to control family size, limiting number of children, limiting a number of wives a man should marry.

"That would be intrusion into the private lives of the citizens by the government," Mr. Wenge said.

He added: "All developmental activities should be focused and centred around people, for without the people, we do not need all these development sectors like economic, infrastructures and many others."

(Reference: Pacific Business Magazine, 3rd March 2005).

6

Activities

Population and Urban Settlements

Introduction:

There is a growing trend worldwide for people to move to urban centres. How does this affect people living in urban areas? What is the environmental impact of increasing numbers of people moving to urban centres?

Learning Outcomes:

Understand that the link between population and environment is not only in the village but also affects those living in urban areas.

Time: 45 minutes

Resources/Preparation:

Poster paper and marker pens

Distribute the list of questions

Facilitator note:

Use this session for people living in urban places.

Activity:

Draw a picture of what your local urban centre looks like and at the same time discuss in small groups the following questions:

Describe the living conditions for people living in urban settlements in your own cities? Consider water, sanitation, housing, agriculture, employment, waste, pollution, etc.

When finished, summarise your discussion and present your picture back to the group.

Follow up questions:

• What are some of the urban environmental issues in the Solomon Islands?

• What would happen to the urban centres as the population grows?

• What is the connection between population growth in the provinces and the growth in the urban environment?

• Honiara has a current population of approximately 60,000 people. With a high growth rate and migration of people into Honiara, this could double in 10 years. Can you imagine what this would look like? More settlements, less water available, more traffic etc.

Background Information

Population and Conflict

Population and Domestic Violence

- High population growth (too many children) leads to an increase in family pressure on money, land, food, clothing, shelter, which can lead to violence.
- With too many children, there may be a possibility that they are not cared for properly, which can lead to bad behaviour and violence within a family.
- High population growth / unemployment / struggle to survive - some family members can enter into alternative means of survival such as sex work, which can lead to violence.
- High population growth in a village can lead to jealousy or conflict with outsiders coming in or out when there is not one people or one family. This can lead to jealousy and domestic violence.
- Lack of privacy due to too many people at home to feed can cause stress, which can cause violence.
- Higher population density causes increased tension – land disputes.
- Food gardens need to be located further away increasing incidence of gender violence.
- Tendency for migration – dispersed families with less support.

(Reference: SH&FPA).

Environmental degradation, scarcity and conflict

'Environmental degradation and scarcity, especially declines in available cropland and fresh water, generate various social impacts, such as population movement, economic decline, weakened government structures and poverty which can be major sources of vulnerability to civil conflict and general insecurity.

Environmental scarcity is generally caused through the degradation and depletion of renewable resources, increase demand through population or economic growth, and/or unequal distribution.

It has been found that countries with high levels of scarcity in cropland or renewable fresh water were about 1.5 times as likely to experience civil conflict in the 1990s as countries that did not fall into these categories'

(Reference: Common Ground).

Cycle of poverty and violence

Poverty → High population

High population → Large families

Large families → Inability to meet family

Inability to meet family → Arguments and violence

Arguments and violence → Family breakdown

Family breakdown → Burden on other family

Burden on other family → Loss of support

Loss of support → Poverty

7
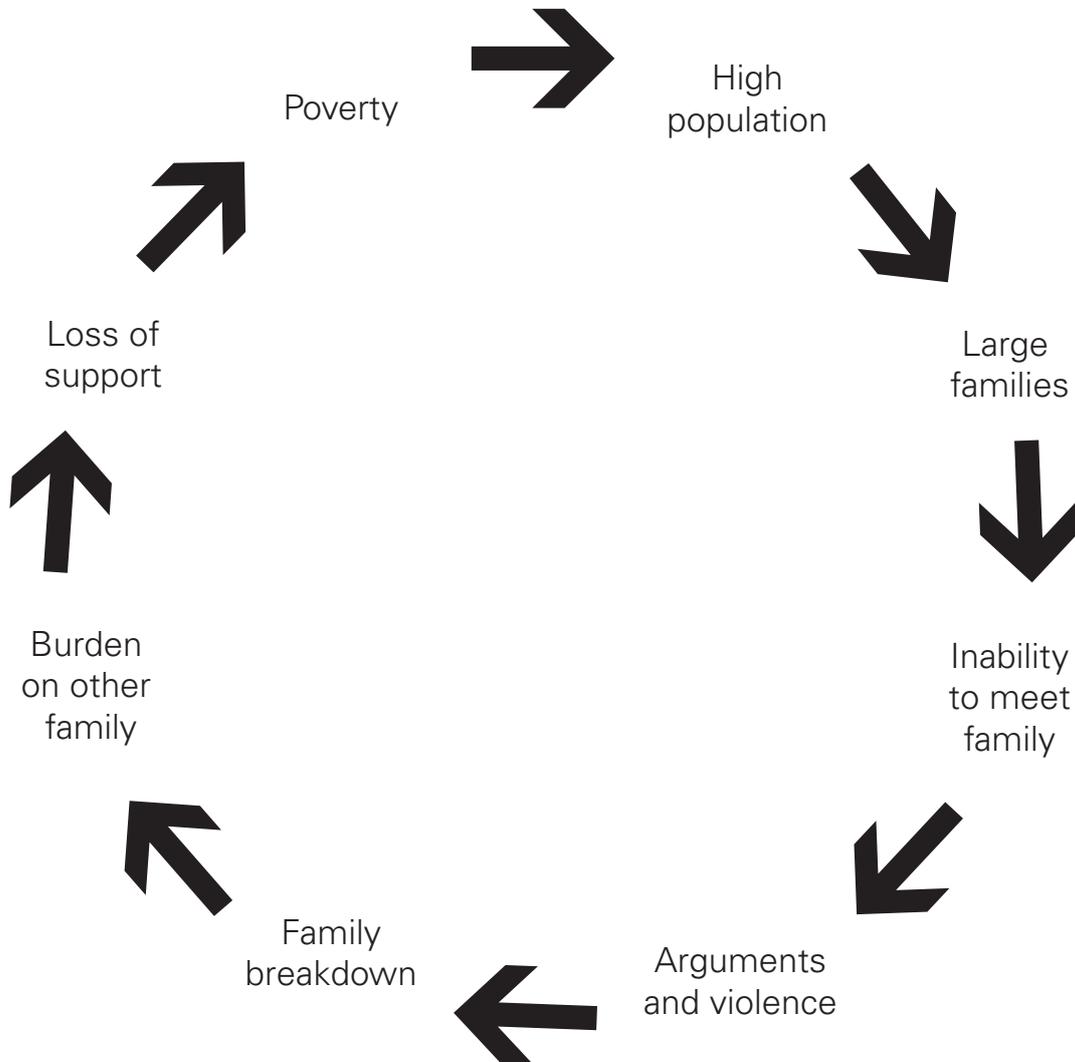
Activities

Population and Conflict

Introduction:

The Pacific Region has seen a rise in conflict and violence over the last few years. What does this have to do with population growth?

Learning Outcomes:

Explore the linkages between population increase, resource scarcity and the increased risk of civil conflict and violence.

Time: 45 minutes

Resources/Preparation:

Some blank pieces of paper, Handouts, poster paper and marker pens

Activity: A Piece of Land

Read through instructions below and play this game.

a. Take two pieces of paper. Each piece of paper represents a piece of land.

b. Ask two volunteers to take one piece of paper each. This means these two brothers now own a piece of land each.

c. These two brothers each have a family. One brother has two children while the other has 6 children. Now the brothers must divide their piece of land (paper) equally amongst their children. Ask for 2 volunteers on one side and then 6 on the other side.

d. These children over time then have children of their own. The 2 siblings each have 2 children. Ask 4 participants to come up and share the piece of land (paper) equally between them.

e. The 6 siblings each have 5 children of their own. Ask 30 participants to come up…..!

After everyone sits down, ask people how they felt about the game. How did they feel when the piece of land was getting smaller and smaller and when everyone had to share their land with more and more people?

Does high population growth have an impact on the issue of land and conflict, shortage of resources?

Discuss what happens in real life when families get bigger and their land needs to be shared. High population growth can make this more difficult.

Session 7: Activities

Read out the information in the handout and then discuss the questions together as one group.

Questions:

- Are there conflicts in the Solomon Islands that involve young people? Why?
- Are the youth educated at school? Do they have good jobs? What do the youth do?
- Can you see the connection between lots of youth with not much to do and the recent conflict?
- When communities are growing, how does this impact on the levels of conflict and domestic violence in the community/area?
- Why would a high percentage of youth in the general population increase the risk for civil conflict?
- What are the links we can make between large families, a high youth population, high unemployment and conflict?

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Handouts for Participants

Population and Conflict

A high proportion (over 40%) of young adults (15-29 yrs) is one of the main demographic stress factors associated with civil conflict and the breakdown in security.

In the 1990s, countries where youth made up 40% or more of the adult population were more than twice as likely to experience an outbreak of civil conflict as those below this benchmark.

There is a significant 'youth bulge' in a number of Pacific countries, notably Solomon Islands and East Timor. In these countries, around 41% of the population is under the age of 15, with a average age of the population around 19yrs, compared with the Australian median age of 26.6yrs. This 'youth bulge' increase unemployment and greater levels of crime and civil unrest.

Approximately half of PNG's total population is under 19 years old.

East Timor's age structure is young, with up to 49% of the total population below 15 years of age.

(Reference: Common Ground, AusAID).

Youth Unrest: PNG, Solomon Islands, And East Timor: Sounds familiar?

- Largest youth population in history

- Under educated, under employed

- Urban migration

- Willing workforce for urban gangs or militia.

East Timor: Unemployment

The country's young population means a large number of youth enter the job market every year. Unemployment in rural areas is at least 20% and it reaches 43% among urban youth.

(Reference: World Bank).

8

Activities

Population Growth and Natural Disasters

Introduction:

Not only can a large and growing population impact on natural resources, sometimes the risk of natural disasters can be significantly increased.

Natural disasters can occur in places where communities are already marginalised.

Learning Outcomes:

Explore the connection between population growth and natural disasters.

Time: 45 minutes

Resources/Preparation:

Copies of the handout

Poster paper and marker pens

Activity:

Read the handout to the participants and then answer the following questions:

- How would the large population in East Timor increase the risk to deforestation and flooding in steep mountainous environments?
- What happens when people move their houses and gardens to the side of a steep hill?
- Why do you think they had to move there?
- Do you think families are forced to move into unsafe and unstable areas due to pressure on land and growth of population?
- Can you give an example of people doing this?

Spend time with the participants to discuss the questions. Encourage them to reflect to their own situation.

8

Handouts for Participants

Population Growth and Natural Disasters

Environment and poverty in Timor Leste

Much of the terrain in Timor-Leste is steep with only a thin covering of productive soil. Approximately 44% of the country has a slope of 40% or greater, which is not suitable for sustainable cultivation and may require reforestation or crops providing plant cover. To complicate this difficult situation, rainfall is infrequent and torrential, often washing away topsoil in flash floods.

Food insecurity is increased by natural hazards. The country is prone to drought, floods and landslides and the islands are vulnerable to earthquakes and tropical cyclones.

The forests, home to 25 rare and endangered bird species is fast disappearing with an estimated 31% of its land area seriously degraded.

To deal with this ongoing problem, some farming communities have developed indigenous forms of soil conservation. However, many farmers, with poor land management techniques, have adopted 'slash and burn' agriculture, which combined with free grazing, seasonal bush burning and uncontrolled fire wood collection, have contributed to deforestation, erosion, diminishing ground water and steady loss of soil cover over time.

(Reference: UNDP).

Session

9

Activities

Population and Culture

Introduction:

Culture can play a large part in influencing our values, attitudes and actions on family planning and reproductive health.

Learning Outcomes:

Explore the cultural assumptions in regard to talking about family planning and reproductive health.

Time: 1 to 1.5 hours

Resources/Preparation:

Copies of questions

Poster paper and marker pens

Activity:

Divide into 4 small groups of men and women, to discuss the following questions:

Group 1 question:

- Is it culturally important to have large families? Why?
- What are the reasons people give to have big families and many children?

Group 2 questions:

- What happens to young women and men who do not know about sexual health, reproductive health and family planning?

Group 3 questions:

- What happens when we do not make informed decisions about our actions?
- What happens when we are not aware of the consequences of our actions?

Group 4 questions:

- Why are young girls/boys not allowed to talk about sex with their parents, or in any group discussion?
- Why are parents not wanting to discuss these issues with their children?
- Is there pressure on young couples who get married to have a family straight away?

The small groups are given 30 minutes to discuss, after which a spokesperson summarises their discussion to the group.

Together reflect and discuss:

- How is culture a contributing factor to high population growth?

Section 3

Taking Action

Taking Action

Introduction:

Taking action on the issues we have learnt about is just as important as increasing our awareness and knowledge through this workshop. If we do not take action and do something, then all the problems will remain the same.

Learning Outcomes:

Develop a plan of action and things that can be done to address population and environment issues in communities.

Time: 1 - 1.5 hours

Resources/Preparation:

• Distribute copies of the action plan format

• Poster paper and marker pens

Activity:

1. Draw a picture of what you would like your community to look like. What is your vision of the future? What are the ways we can work towards this vision?

2. Divide into small groups and discuss the following questions and write your answers down on poster paper and then present them to the group.

- What are the best ways to achieve a sustainable population?

- What can we do to ensure we look after both our families and the environment properly?

- Write a list of things we can do in our own communities.

- What can we do in our own families to talk about family size?

> *The last question is very important as people need to recognize that keeping family size small is one of the main things that they can do. It's no use pointing to government to take action when it is really a family decision.*

3. Collect all the answers and develop a **community action plan**. Draw up this diagram onto poster paper.

What	When	Where	How	Who

What:

What do you want to do? What is the action you will take to address the issue?

When:

When will you take the action? When is the event, meeting, or discussion going to occur?

Where:

Where is it going to take place?

How:

How is it going to happen? What do you need to organise to get ready?

Who:

Who is involved? Who is it for?

Websites

For some background reading on these issues, visit the following websites:

Asia Pacific Alliance	www.asiapacificalliance.org
Australian Reproductive Health Alliance	www.arha.org.au
Climate Action Network Australia	www.cana.net.au
International Conservation Union	www.iucn.org
National Wildlife Federation	www.nwf.org
PLANetWire,	www.planetwire.org
Population Action International	www.populationaction.org
Population and Sustainability	www.populationandsustainability.org
Population Environment Research	www.populationenvironmentresearch.org
Population Reference Bureau	www.prb.org
Program of Action from the International Conference on Population and Development Cairo, 1994	www.unfpa.org/icpd.htm
Sexual Health & Family Planning Australia	www.shfpa.org.au
The Population Institute	www.populationinstitute.org
UNAIDS	www.unaids.org
UNESCO	www.unesco.org
United Nations Development Program (UNDP)	www.undp.org
United Nations Population Fund	www.unfpa.org
UN School Resources	www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/index.asp
WHO: World Health Organisation	www.who.int/mdg
World Watch	www.worldwatch.org