

NAURU



A SITUATION ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN, WOMEN & YOUTH

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August 2005

Nauru. A Situation Analysis of Children, Women and Youth.
UNICEF Pacific Office, Fiji. 2005

Copies of this publication are available from
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3rd & 5th Floors, FDB Building
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is the result of collaboration between the Government of Nauru and UNICEF. It draws heavily on many one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions with various officials and groups in Nauru. The Government of Nauru and UNICEF would like to thank all the people who so willingly and cheerfully gave their time to participate in these discussions and who volunteered copious information and insights on various topics.

Special thanks are due to Mr Ludwig Keke for facilitating the visit to Nauru of the UNICEF Program Officer and the consultant who prepared this report, and to Ms Camilla Solomon, Acting Chief Secretary and Mr Alf Itsimaera, Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs, who coordinated the visit and arranged meetings with officials. A major contributor to this report was the Acting Assistant Statistician, Mr Ipia Gadabu, who provided most of the statistics and helped draft some of the sections.

Also many thanks to the departmental officers who attended the liaison meeting, subsequently provided one-on-one interviews and then reviewed the sections of the first draft relevant to their department.

The final draft was prepared by a consultant, and reviewed by the Government of Nauru before publication. The involvement of all these people means that this is a report about the situation and issues as perceived by Nauruans. It is intended as a guide for preparing strategies to address issues and to improve the situation of children, youth and women, which in turn will improve the situation of everyone in Nauru.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The issues of concern for children, youth and women in Nauru are determined largely by factors that affect the whole nation. Although relatively safe from natural hazards other than periodic drought, Nauru depends largely on trade, so is highly vulnerable to economic fluctuations and the interruption of essential services.

Most of Nauru's current challenges have arisen from recent declines in revenue from phosphate mining that have reduced Government's capacity to fund basic services and increased reliance on development assistance. There has been no increase in employment opportunities in the public and private sector, while household incomes have declined because phosphate royalties have dwindled to almost nothing. Households that were once wealthy by world standards are now having difficulty providing for their day-to-day needs.

Nauru's population increased only slightly between 1992 and 2002 because repatriation of former phosphate workers largely offset natural population increase. The 2002 total of 10,065 comprised 75% Nauruans and 25% non-Nauruans. Nauruan fertility appears to have declined to just below four children per woman, adult life expectancy remains low at less than 60 years overall, and infant mortality appears to have increased to around 40 per thousand live births.

The rights of children, youth and women are protected by Nauruan law and represented by the Department of Youth and Community Affairs and the Department of Women's Affairs as well as a number of community non-government organizations. However the decline in economic conditions has brought a need for further research to explore family health and safety issues, including domestic violence and causes of infant mortality.

The main issues affecting children, women and youth are the unreliability of basic services, environmental health and safety, inadequate resources in the education and health sectors and a scarcity of opportunities for youth. Priority concerns include high discontinuation rates in secondary education and shortages of jobs for school leavers. There is also an urgent need to establish specialised health services for women and for youth. Some of these issues are being addressed with donor assistance, but much more assistance is needed, especially technical assistance and development partnerships.

Although short of financial resources and having only limited experience in tackling economic and social problems, the Nauruan community is well informed and ready to take action. High levels of awareness and willingness to discuss problems suggest that the Nauruan community is ready to make good use of assistance. Especially needed is technical assistance to build capacity in life skills, subsistence activities and skills for employment, and to develop new economic activities for youth and women. There is also a need for research, both quantitative and participatory, to further prioritise and specify needs and guide strategies to address them.

INTRODUCTION

The issues of concern for children, youth and women in Nauru are determined largely by factors that affect the whole nation. Although relatively safe from natural hazards other than periodic drought, Nauru depends on trade, so is highly vulnerable to economic fluctuations and the interruption of essential services. Most of Nauru's current challenges have arisen from recent declines in national incomes that have dramatically reduced capacity to maintain essential services and reduced household security. In order to fully appreciate the impact of these economic trends it is necessary to understand the recent history of Nauru.

Although only a single small island, Nauru was richly endowed with phosphate rock. Phosphate was discovered just after 1900 and the Pacific Phosphate Company, a German/British consortium, commenced commercial mining in 1907. In the early years most labour was drawn from Asia, with gradually increasing numbers of other Pacific Islanders, mainly from neighbouring Gilbert Islands (now Kiribati and Tuvalu). The British Phosphate Company took over the company in 1920, and the bulk of profits were shared between Australia, Britain and New Zealand, while the Nauruans received only a few pennies per ton (Viviani, 1970).

Japan took control of the island and mining operations during the World War II and deported most Nauruans to Chuuk. Those who survived were returned after the Japanese defeat. In the post war years Nauru was administered by Australia. A high quality urban infrastructure was built throughout the island, including modern schools and hospitals and paved roads and footpaths. Spacious houses were built of modern materials and connected to electricity, piped water and sewage systems (Viviani, 1970; <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/nauru>).

Nauru became independent in 1968, and took control of mining operations in 1970. From that time onwards all profits were retained by Nauru, and until the early 1990s Nauruans derived one of the highest average per capita incomes in the world from the export of phosphate rock. Mining extended across a large part of the island, so the royalties received as payment for mining rights were shared among many families in proportion to the amount of land they owned. During the peak years of phosphate mining virtually all Nauruans enjoyed a high standard of living and had plenty of opportunities for education and personal development. Virtually all household needs, including food and drinking water, were imported from overseas and distributed through local retail outlets (<http://www.state.gov>).

Large-scale commercial mining of phosphate ceased in 2000, and, although residual mining continues, both government revenue and average household income have been reduced dramatically. Insufficient revenue now limits capacity to maintain public and private buildings, and sometimes, even capacity to pay public service salaries. Slow growth in the public and private sectors means few opportunities for young people entering the labour market. Some Nauruan families that were once highly privileged in comparison with much of the world's population are now finding it difficult to provide for their day-to-day needs.

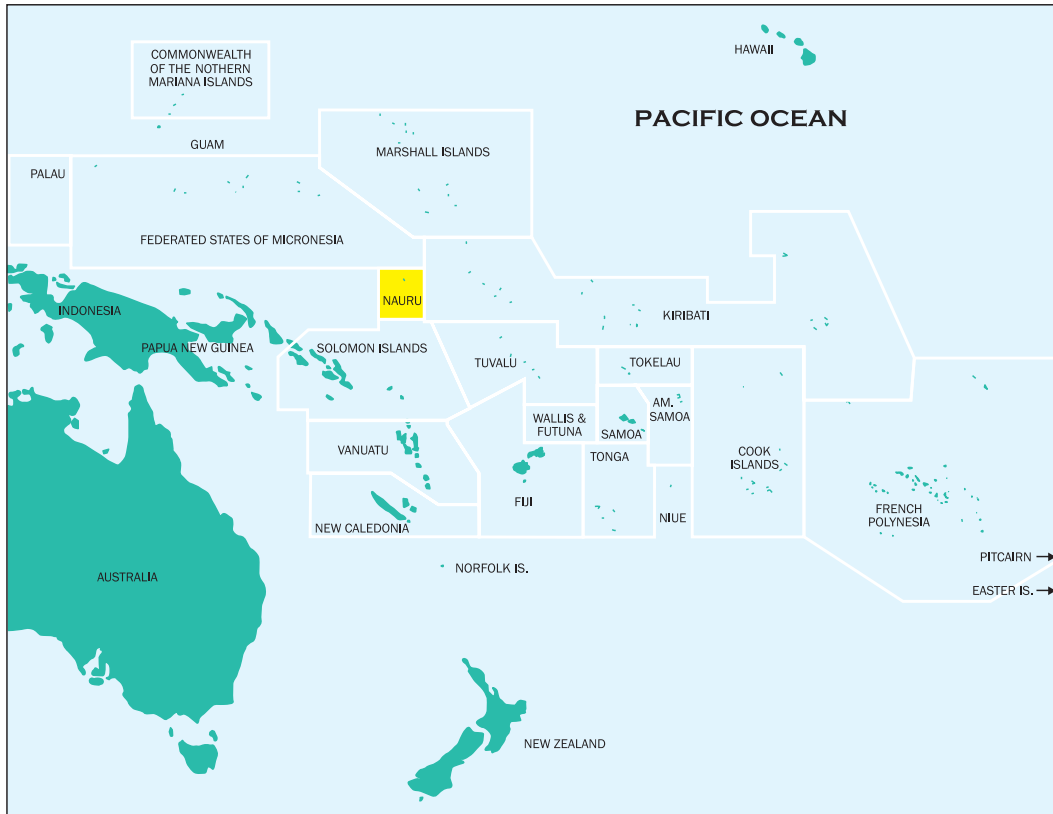
Since all people in Nauru are affected by the changed economic circumstances, it is important that the issues that affect children, youth and women are considered in context. Strategies to address the concerns of these groups should not be developed in isolation but should be formulated in terms of what is feasible, appropriate and likely to succeed in Nauru.

In the past, bi-lateral and multi-lateral donors and international non-government organizations were not active in Nauru because of its privileged economic position. It was therefore not subjected to the continuing evaluation and monitoring of economic and social trends received by most of its Pacific neighbours. This has contributed to a paucity of documentation and under-utilisation of statistical data. Other than the literature concerned with Nauru's high prevalence of non-communicable diseases, the main source of socio-economic data are the censuses that have been conducted at ten year intervals, most recently in 2002.

In the absence of a substantial body of published material, this report relies largely on census data and on the observations and perceptions of informants, along with a few recent donor reports. It begins with a general review of economic, social and environmental factors that shape the lives of all Nauruans. Part Two focuses on issues of particular importance to children, youth and women. Part Three concludes the report with a discussion of national strengths and opportunities, and suggests some strategic approaches and priority issues.



PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES



NAURU



P A R T

1

THE SETTING

1.1 Geography

The Republic of Nauru comprises a single, remote raised coral island 40 kilometres south of the Equator, to the north west of the Gilbert group of islands (west Kiribati) (AusAID, 2004). In terms of distance from major commercial centres, it is about four and half hours flying time from Brisbane, Australia, and about three and a half hours from Nadi, Fiji.

The total area of Nauru is only 21 sq km (AusAID, 2004). Most settlement is on the narrow coastal strip that surrounds a central plateau rising to about 30 metres above sea level. It takes less than half an hour to drive the 19 kilometres of road that encircles the island. The interior plateau of ancient coral is porous, so there are no rivers or streams on the island, but fresh or brackish water can be pumped from underground 'lenses' at sea level.

A shallow coral shelf surrounds Nauru, extending only about 100m from the high water mark, then descending quickly to depths of a thousand metres or more. Although the reef prevents large ships from approaching the shore, the deep water just beyond the reef enables them to come close enough to load phosphate by means of giant cantilevered conveyors. Supply ships moor in deepwater and offload freight onto smaller boats (lighters) capable of navigating the shallow channels that lead to the two man-made harbours.

Deep-water fisheries are easily accessible by small boats and canoes, and it is possible to catch large pelagic fish such as tuna just a few hundred metres from the shore. There has been an increase in fishing for household consumption as household incomes from phosphate mining have declined. Shellfish and reef fish are harvested from the shallow waters of the encircling coral shelf.



1.2 Land Use

At present there is only limited use of land for cultivation. Since almost all settlement is located in the ribbon of housing and small businesses on the outer edge of the island, all of Nauru is officially designated 'urban'. About 60 per cent of the total surface of the island comprises jagged coral pinnacles that became in-filled with phosphate-bearing deposits over many thousands of years. Mining these deposits brought great wealth to Nauru in the 1960s-1990s, but left a desolate 'moonscape' of pinnacles that is unsuitable for habitation or cultivation.



Hardy native vegetation rapidly covers the rocky landscape whenever there have been good rains, and the island can appear lush and green, but when rains fail it becomes harsh and desolate. Food crops are generally confined to kitchen gardens on the coastal fringe and around the small inland lake, Buada Lagoon. They include coconut, breadfruit, bananas, pineapple, papaya and a few vegetables. Milkfish are raised in Buada Lagoon, originally as bait for tuna fisheries but increasingly for household consumption. Only 2% of households reported being involved in some form of farming or agricultural activity in 2002, while 17% had kitchen gardens (Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002).

In 1989, Nauru filed a suit in the International Court of Justice in The Hague for damages caused by mining when the island was under Australian jurisdiction. The suit was successful and in 1993 Nauru received a one-off payment of \$AUD 57 million with a further \$2.5 million per year for the next 20 years to assist with environmental rehabilitation (AusAID, 2004). This money is preserved in a rehabilitation trust fund. As yet there has been no agreement on the best way of restoring the mined lands, and major rehabilitation activities have been delayed because residual mining is still being

carried out in some areas. Much of the original topsoil that was removed is stockpiled and could be replaced if the jagged surface was levelled in some way. The Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation was created to evaluate and trial various approaches and eventually take charge of rehabilitation operations with a view to creating arable land.

1.3 Climate and Natural Disasters

Nauru's climate is tropical with typical daytime temperatures of 30 degrees or more. Situated to the north of the South Pacific cyclone belt, it is generally safe from devastating cyclonic weather. It also appears to be in a relatively stable part of the Earth's surface that has little risk of earthquake.

The major natural hazard is irregular rainfall, and long periods without rain. Annual rainfall ranges from less than 300 mm to more than 4500 mm per year (AusAID, 2004), and it is not unusual for Nauru to experience a year or more without worthwhile rains. As discussed in the vulnerability section below, this can bring considerable hardship, especially in times of economic crisis.

1.4 Population size

For most of the period 1947 to 1992 the average rate of population increase was substantial, averaging between 3 and 4 per cent per annum. This was due to both immigration of non-Nauruans and high fertility of indigenous Nauruans (SPC, 1999: 21). On the basis of this it was expected that the total population in 2000 would be around 11,500 (SPC, 2000a), but as shown in Table 1, the 2002 census found a smaller total than expected. This pattern was evident across all districts of Nauru.

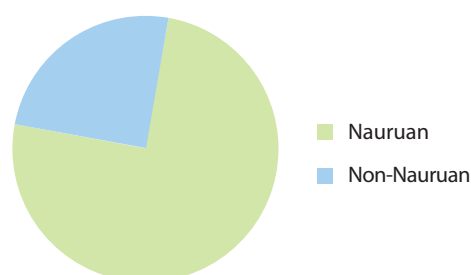
Table 1. Population change, 1992-2002

	1992		2002	
	Number	%	Number	%
Nauruans	6,831	69.0	7,572	75.0
Non-Nauruans	3,088	31.0	2,491	25.0
Total	9,919	100.0	10,065	100.0

Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002

Nauru's resident population is multi-cultural, comprising indigenous Nauruans and a non-indigenous community, mainly from Kiribati, Philippines, Tuvalu and People's Republic of China. The non-indigenous community is referred to collectively as non-Nauruans in this report. The majority of non-Nauruans were formerly affiliated with the phosphate industry, or were employed in small businesses and services.

Figure 1. Nauruans and non-Nauruans in Nauru, 2002 (per cent)



Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002

As shown in Table 1, there was only a small increase in the total population between 1992 and 2002. This seems to be largely because of repatriation of many non-Nauruan contract workers and their families, who had been associated with the mining industry. Repatriation of phosphate workers, especially of I-Kiribati and Tuvaluans, is continuing, although most have already sent their families home.

In 2002, a quarter of Nauru's population were non-Nauruan, as shown in Figure One. Although this percentage can be presumed to have declined since then, substantial numbers of non-Nauruans still reside in Nauru, and some, especially Chinese, are likely to remain in Nauru to work in retailing and services.

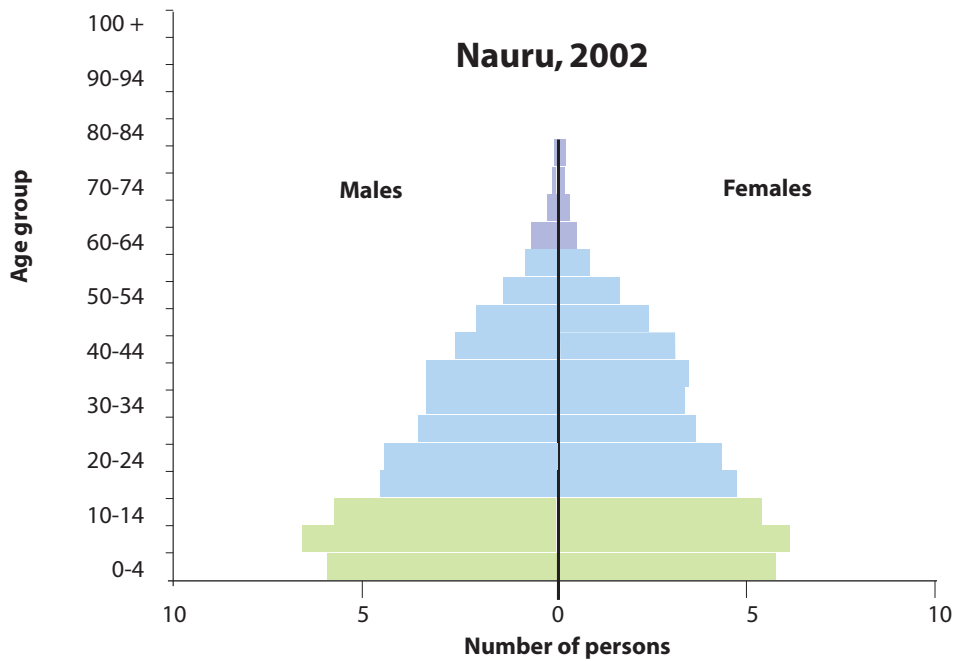
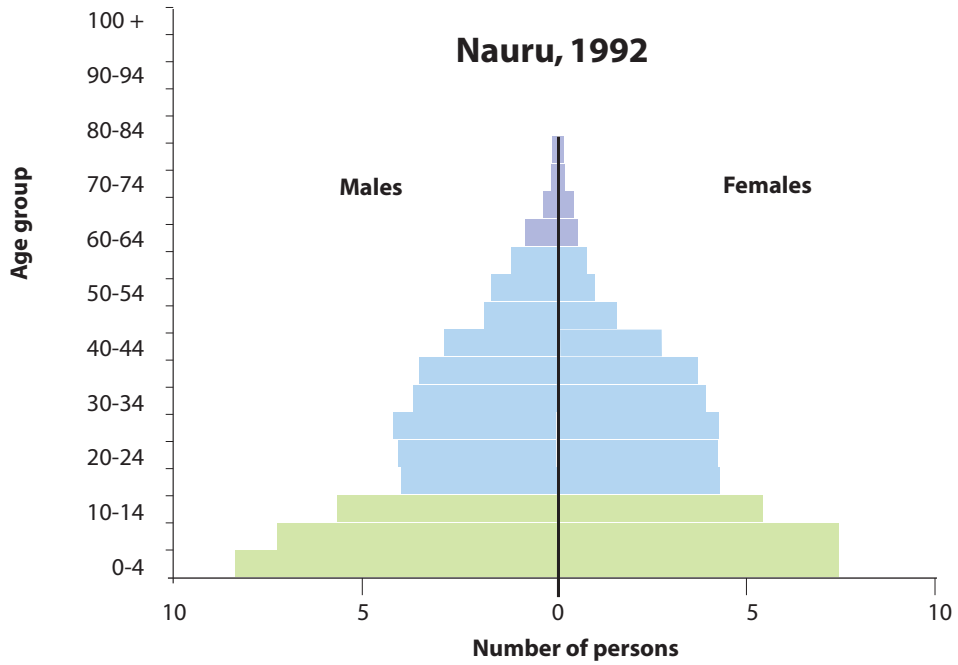
Table 2. Age structure of the total population

Age group	1992	2002
	%	%
0-14	48.1	41.2
15-64	50.3	57.1
65+	2.1	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0
Number	9,919	10,065

Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002

Table 2 shows that the percentage of the population aged less than 15 years declined substantially between 1992 and 2002. This is also reflected in the population pyramid for 2002 (Figure 2), which shows a distinct narrowing of its base compared with the pyramid for 1992. This appears to have resulted from two factors, a combination of repatriation of non-Nauruan phosphate workers' families, and declining Nauruan fertility.

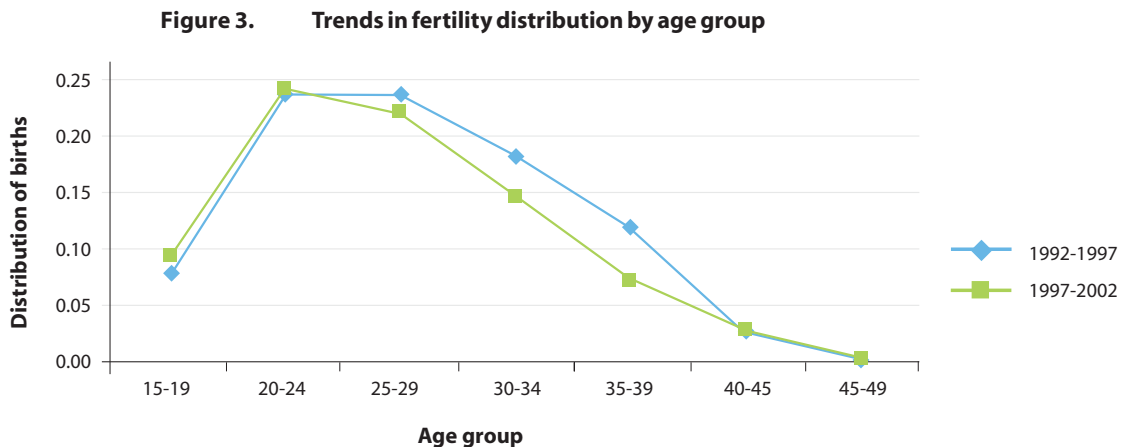
Figure 2. Population pyramid, all Nauru, 1992 and 2002



Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002

1.5 Fertility

The Total Fertility Rate¹ for the indigenous Nauruan population was 4.4 children per woman in 1997 (SPC, 1999: 25). It was not estimated for non-Nauruans. Nauruan fertility now appears to have declined to just below four children per woman (Nauru Bureau of Statistics and SPC, 2004). At the same time there has been a change in the age pattern of fertility.



Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002

Figure 3 shows an increase in the proportion of births that were teenage births, and declines in the proportion that were births to women aged over 20 years, especially women aged 30-39. In 2002 one woman in every six aged less than 20 years had already borne a child, while the average completed family size was 4.6 children per woman (Nauru Bureau of Statistics and SPC, 2004).

Detailed analysis of the 2002 census was still on-going at the time of writing, but some population trends were evident from registration data. Between 1992 and 2002 the annual total number of births ranged from 304 to 371, of which around 80 per cent were births to Nauruans. The average for both Nauruans and non-Nauruans tended to increase in the late 1990s, but has since decreased below the early 1990s levels. This is reflected in the narrow base of the 2002 population pyramid as compared with 1992 (Figure Two).

As the future of non-Nauruans in Nauru is uncertain, and many will certainly be repatriated in the near future, the main focus of this study is the indigenous Nauruan population. Moreover, since both the 1992 and 2002 censuses collected only minimal information on non-Nauruans, the remaining statistics and tables in this report refer only to the Nauruan population, except where stated.

¹ The average number of children that each woman would have if the current fertility level applied throughout her lifetime.

1.6 Mortality

In the early 1990s average life expectancy was only 54.4 years for male Nauruans and 61.2 for females. This rate was low by Pacific standards and indicated very high adult mortality. It was in sharp contrast with the very low Nauruan infant mortality rate (IMR) of only 12.5 deaths per 1000 live births, which was one of the lowest in the Pacific.

Since then both adult and infant mortality have increased, suggesting a major deterioration in health and living conditions. Average life expectancy for Nauruans has declined to 49 years for males, and 56.9 years (Nauru Bureau of Statistics and SPC, 2004). Bureau of Statistics and SPC (2004) estimates the infant mortality rate (IMR) as 36.6 per 1000 live Nauruan births in the period 1997-2002. AusAID and Nauru Department of Health (2003:7) estimated the IMR for Nauruans at 44 per thousand live births, although the data source and the time period to which this estimate relates are not stated.

1.7 Society and Culture

Traditional Nauruan society was divided into 12 tribes, with the land shared between them and passed down through the female line (matrilineal). Land ownership remains very important to Nauruans, and no activities can take place on any piece of land without the consent of the traditional owners.

Family affiliations have now largely superseded tribal affiliations, and two tribes have disappeared completely while others have dwindled to only a few members (<http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/nauru>). Traditionally Nauruans lived as extended families, but nuclear families are now common. Adoptions may occur, usually among close relatives, and most commonly by childless couples or when a mother is unable to care for her child. Adoptions of Nauruans by non-Nauruans, and vice versa, are not permitted under Nauruan law.

Nauruan is the first language and widely spoken, but most Nauruans are also fluent in English. Written Nauruan is rare except in Protestant religious texts and the odd word on signboards. Continuous close contact has resulted in partial assimilation of some aspects of other cultures into the Nauruan culture, especially aspects of European, I-Kiribati and Tuvaluan culture.

Table 3. Religious affiliations of Nauruan Residents

Denomination	%
Nauru Congregational	36.0
Roman Catholic	33.5
Nauru Independent	10.6
Other	13.6
No religion or not stated	6.3
Total	100.0
Number	9872

Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002

The majority of Nauruan residents attend church and look to the church for spiritual guidance. The distribution of religious affiliations of Nauruan residents, including non-Nauruans, is shown in Table 3.

1.8 Social Communication and Information

Nauru is a small country, and news of interest to the community generally travels quickly by word of mouth. There are also some formal channels for social communication. In 2002, 88% of households had working TV sets, but 48% did not own a working radio (Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002). The local radio station broadcasts music, advertising, news and other information, but as radio tends to be 'in the background' as well as less popular than TV, radio messages cannot be guaranteed to reach everyone. Moreover, both radio and TV reception is available only in the southern half of the island.

A number of overseas TV channels can be received in Nauru, including ABC Asia Pacific, China TV and BBC World Service. These channels are interrupted from time to time for broadcasts from local Nauru TV. Parliamentary sittings are televised and broadcast live, and Nauru TV also produces and broadcasts short information slots and advertising, including selected job vacancies and community messages. In the past there was a daily newspaper but this is no longer published.

Limited coverage of radio and TV means that community messages are sometimes not well disseminated. For example, when a local school was reopened after two weeks of closure because of water problems, some parents were unaware that classes had resumed, and it was several days before all children returned to class.

Nauru had two Internet cafe's in mid 2004. Computer time costs from \$2.50 to \$5.00 per hour for a service that compares well with neighbouring Pacific countries. The cafes are popular among adults and youth, and busy most of the time until they close in the late evening.

1.9 Governance

Nauru is governed by a parliament of 18 members elected by the 18 constituencies. The President is the leader of whichever party currently holds the majority, and is effectively also Prime Minister. At the time of writing the governing party held only half of the seats (nine out of 18) and there were no women in Parliament. Women sometimes contest elections but as of mid 2004 only one woman had ever been elected to Parliament.

Law and order is maintained by a substantial police force that numbered 87 regular and 15 reserve police when this report was prepared. There is only one police station on Nauru, but distances are short. Police regularly patrol the island and are perceived by the community as responding promptly to calls.

1.10 Economy

Nauru is heavily dependent on foreign trade, especially with Australia. In 2002, 59.2% of Nauru's imports came from Australia and 10.1% from the United States, with less than 10% each from Ireland, Malaysia, the United Kingdom and other countries.

In the last few years the winding down of phosphate mining has meant that both exports to and imports from Australia have declined. In 2003 the principal imports from Australia were refined petroleum (valued at \$AUD 6 million), printed matter and meat (each \$AUD 2 million) and manufactured tobacco (\$AUD 1 million). The balance of trade in favour of Australia in 2003 was \$AUD 27 million (<http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/nauru>). As a large proportion of petroleum imports are now provided as part of development assistance, other sources using a different basis for estimation report that food represented 60% of all imports from 2000 to 2004 (Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2004).

Public sector funding also has been affected by the decline in revenues from phosphate mining. Actual expenditure in the public sector in the year 2000-2001 is shown in Table 4 below.

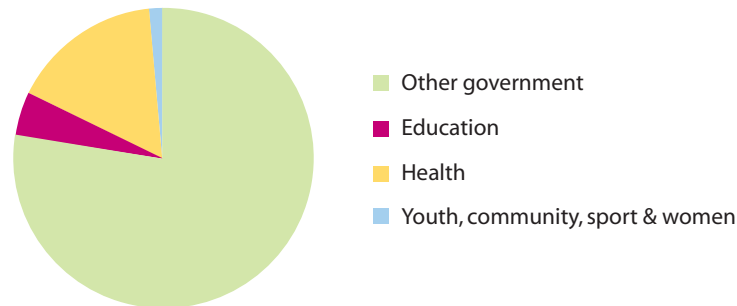
Table 4. Public Sector Expenditure, 2000-2001

Sector	\$AUD million
Administration	4.91
Finance	11.54
Justice	1.06
Parliament	0.61
Judiciary	0.16
Audit	0.14
Women's Affairs	0.04
UN Permanent Mission	0.02
Foreign Affairs	1.25
Education	3.88
Health	5.62
Youth Affairs	0.10
Sports	0.19
Economic Services	5.65
Total	35.18

Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002

The 2002 draft budget indicated a total expenditure of close to \$AUD 75 million and a deficit of \$AUD 49 million (<http://www.adb.org/nauru>). Although health and education are major items in Nauru's budget, these services are generally under funded (see Sections 2.4 and 2.5), although they may appear substantial when viewed as a proportion of total expenditure (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Allocation of revenue to Education, Health and Youth, Community, Sport and Women's Affairs, 2000-2001 (per cent)



Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002

It seems likely that for the immediate future at least, Nauru will be largely dependent on development assistance to maintain basic services and improve health and education services.

1.11 Development Assistance

Development assistance has made a substantial contribution to Nauru's budget in recent years, with Australia the major donor. Since 2001, when the Government of Nauru allowed Australia to establish a facility for around 1000 asylum seekers on the island, this assistance has been substantial.

Australian bilateral assistance totalled \$AUD 3.5 million in 2002-2003 and \$AUD 3.9 million in 2003-2004. In addition Australia gave a further consideration of \$AUD 41.5 million to Nauru 2001-2003 under a Memorandum of Understanding, in return for Nauru temporarily accommodating refugees seeking asylum in Australia. A further package of \$AUD 13.5 million was allocated for 2004-2005 (AusAID, 2004). Of the assistance received in 2002-2003, most was spent on maintaining basic services, including the power station and water supply. The health sector received \$AUD 1.8 million and the education sector received \$AUD 1.3 million. In 2004 AusAID provided additional assistance of \$800,000 for renovation of school buildings (AusAID Desk Officer, personal communication, 10 June 2004).

By mid 2004 the number of asylum seekers housed in Nauru had declined to around 260, and Australia was in the process of making other arrangements to house future asylum seekers. The last of the asylum seekers left Nauru in mid 2005. Australia has pledged to continue to assist Nauru after the closure of the asylum camp, and is continuing to support basic services and the placement of expert administrators, including in Nauru's Departments of Education and Finance. Among other types of assistance being considered are favoured status for Nauruan immigration and fixed term employment for Nauruans in Australia (ABC Asia Pacific, 23rd May, 2004).

At the time of writing, Nauru was also seeking development assistance from several other countries, including a package of assistance from the People's Republic of China. This country had already contributed some funding for the refurbishment of Nauru's schools, and could potentially become a substantial donor. Nauru is also negotiating with the Government of Japan. During its years of prosperity Nauru did not maintain agreements with most of the major multilateral organizations. In the mid 1990s UNESCO provided some assistance in the past and in 1998 Nauru received a program loan of \$US 5 million from the Asian Development Bank for a Fiscal and Financial Reform Program, but both of these programs were discontinued (<http://www.adb.org/Nauru>). Nauru has now commenced a new phase of working with donors. In addition to the substantial collaboration with AusAID discussed above, in mid 2004 Nauru signed an agreement with UNICEF, and a new Asian Development Bank technical assistance project to build capacity in financial and economic management commenced in mid 2005.

1.12 Employment

As activity in the phosphate industry declined the royalties paid to Nauruans dwindled to little or nothing. This has greatly increased dependence on wage earnings and generated a strong demand for employment at a time when there is little or no expansion of employment opportunities. Table 5 shows the employment status of Nauruans aged 16 years and over. Information on employment status is not available for non-Nauruans.

Table 5. Employment Status of Nauruans aged 16 years and over, 2002²

	Total %	Male %	Female %
Working	58.0	69.8	46.7
Not working	38.4	26.7	49.7
Not Stated or not applicable	3.6	3.5	3.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	4276	2099	2177

Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002

Table 5 shows that less than three-quarters of male workers and less than half of female workers were employed in 2002. This, coupled with the reduction in phosphate royalty payments, means that some households now lack a secure source of income. While Nauruan society continues to provide a safety net for those who lack the means to support themselves, the loss of secure household incomes means reduced capacity to give children and youth the best opportunities and a good start in life. In addition, as discussed in Section 2.6, the shortage of employment opportunities means that rates of

² As only a few details of the characteristics of non-Nauruans were collected in the 2000 census, this table and all subsequent tables in this report relate only to indigenous Nauruans except where stated.

unemployment are substantially higher for those in the youngest working age group (16-24 years) than for the working age population as a whole.

A number of respondents remarked that one consequence of the economic deterioration is that both men and women are tending to delay retirement and remain in the labour force for longer than was customary in the past. Some perceived this as a factor contributing to the scarcity of employment opportunities for new entrants to the labour force, including mature age workers who did not choose to work in the past but now are in need of wage employment. At the same time these respondents also recognised that long-term employees tend to have superior skills and experience, so are among the most valuable workers that the country cannot afford to lose.

1.13 Occupation

Table 6. Occupational classification of currently employed Nauruans aged 16-55 years, 2002

Occupation	Males %	Females %
Legislators, senior officials and managers	3.6	0.9
Professionals	4.2	15.5
Technicians and associate professionals	8.1	6.3
Clerks and office workers	7.1	36.8
Service, shop and market sales workers	17.7	15.9
Agriculture and related workers	1.1	0.3
Craft and related workers	26.6	3.1
Plant, machine operators and assemblers	11.2	1.8
Elementary occupations	19.1	16.9
Not stated	1.4	2.5
Total	100.0	100.00
Number	1467	1041

Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002

Table 6 shows the occupational patterns of male and female Nauruans who were working in 2002. While a higher percentage of males were legislators, senior officials and managers, a higher percentage of females were categorised as professionals. This reflects the predominance of females in the teaching and nursing professions. Females were also more likely to be clerks and office workers, filling most of the clerical positions in the public service. Male and female Nauruans were equally likely to be service, shop and market sales workers or employed in elementary (unskilled) occupations, while males were more likely than females to be tradesmen employed in craft industries. It must be noted that this table excludes non-Nauruans, who tend to have high participation rates in retailing and services for both males and females.

The occupational pattern suggests that, although fewer women are employed overall, there seems not to be gender-based discrimination among Nauruans in the labour market. At the time of writing a number of senior posts in the public service were filled by women, including departmental heads and the post of Chief Secretary.

1.14 Opportunities for expansion of employment

Providing employment for increasing numbers of Nauruans who wish to obtain full-time employment is one of the major challenges confronting the Government of Nauru. In the past the Government and the Nauru Phosphate Corporation (NPC) together provided 8 out of every 10 jobs on Nauru (SPC, 1999: 19). NPC operations are now contracting, and the number of unfilled vacancies in the public service has increased, while there is little growth in the private sector.

Australia's "Pacific Solution" scheme for housing asylum seekers provided up to 60 part-time, full-time, unskilled or semi-skilled positions filled by local residents, both Nauruans and non-Nauruans. Relocation of the asylum seekers has left these people without work and further increase the demand for employment.

An important potential source of employment in Nauru is rehabilitation of the interior. As discussed in Section 1.3, rehabilitation strategies are still being developed, and some highly capital-intensive methods of land preparation may be necessary, such as crushing the pinnacles. If the land can be rehabilitated, however, there is potential for intensive cultivation of food crops and trees, and a substantial amount of employment could be generated. This could be a particularly important source of employment for youth.



1.15 Children's Legal Rights

Nauru signed the Convention to the Rights of the Child (CRC) in July 1994 but at the time of writing had not yet commenced regular reporting to monitor progress. The rights of children are protected by Nauru's legal system, but enforcement of some laws affecting children is incomplete.

School is compulsory from age six until age 16 years and it is illegal to employ anyone under age 16. As there are no truant officers to enforce school attendance, many teenagers leave school before the statutory age, as discussed further in Section 2.6. It is possible that there is some exploitation of child labour, perhaps by undocumented non-Nauruans, but employment of other minors is considered to be very rare. The only case mentioned by informants involved a young girl who misrepresented her age so she could join a work experience program that subsequently led to her employment.

The minimum legal age for drinking alcohol and smoking is 21 years, and it is an offence to sell cigarettes and alcohol to anyone under these ages. The penalty is loss of license to retail these products for one month. While these regulations are observed strictly by the largest retail outlets, they are difficult to enforce in small shops, especially as it is common for parents to send children to make purchases for them, while most young people do not carry identification. The fine for under-age drinking is only \$4.00.

Police have the power to enforce prosecutions for child abuse, and it is evident that they regard child protection as an integral and important part of their policing duties. One embarrassed mother described how a police officer quickly intervened when she lost her temper with one of her children who disobeyed her in a public place.

1.16 Representation of Women

Women's Affairs has existed as a separate government department since 1997. Prior to that the Department of Foreign Affairs dealt with issues concerning women, and their only formal source of representation was the Nauru National Council of Women, an NGO.

The Department of Women's Affairs works in conjunction with the Department of Culture and NGOs to promote craft activities, employment opportunities for women and youth and to make representations on women's needs. The Nauru National Council of Women is active in the community, and women are also prominent in the district organizations, some of which are registered as NGOs. The Department awards two scholarships each year to send participants to the CETC training course for women held at SPC in Suva. This course comprises seven-months of training in home economics and life skills.

Nauru had not signed CEDAW when this report was prepared, but according to the Department of Justice, was likely to do so in the near future. There do not seem to be any legal or attitudinal impediments to acceptance of the conditions of CEDAW by Nauru's government or society, although human resource constraints could affect capacity to comply with CEDAW's regular reporting requirements.

PART **2**
THE ISSUES

This part of the report looks at the issues that impact most on children, women and youth. As discussed in the introduction, the underlying cause of most of these issues is the recent decline in national and household income, so most are also concerns of the whole population in Nauru. This makes it important to consider each issue in context when formulating strategies to improve the situation of children, women and youth.

2.1 Living conditions and essential services

Compared with some other Pacific countries, the statistical picture of Nauru's housing appears favourable. These statistics belie the reality, however. Although virtually all housing in Nauru is constructed of modern materials and most is connected to modern services, many houses are overcrowded and in need of major repairs and renovation, while water and electricity services are unreliable.

Table 7. Household characteristics, all households, Nauru 2002

	% with characteristic
Privately owned	59.0
Three or more bedrooms	66.2
Electric lighting	97.0
Electric or gas cooking	95.4
Household drinking water	83.8
Flush toilet	89.7
Sewage or septic tank	92.5
Number of households = 1677	

Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002

Table 7 shows ownership, size and access to services of the total of 1677 households in Nauru in 2002. Nauru's main electricity supply is derived from diesel-powered generators, but in mid 2004 the power station was experiencing frequent breakdowns and power outages and was widely perceived by respondents as inefficient and having insufficient capacity to cope with the demand. Around two thirds of AusAID assistance in the preceding few years had been devoted to maintaining the power station and the water supply, including providing fuel and maintenance staff and skills transfer (AusAID Desk Officer, personal communication, 10 June 2004). Use of renewable energy is negligible.

Much of Nauru's fresh water is produced by a desalination plant and delivered by tanker truck to those households that have storage tanks. Some household tanks also collect rainwater, but this is not universal because of the poor condition of many roofs and gutters. Deliveries of water from the desalination plant are often delayed because the desalination process makes heavy demands on the country's power supply so the plant cannot operate all the time. When desalinated water is not available, households resort to brackish water from subterranean 'lenses', or purchase bottled drinking water.

Schools and public buildings sometimes lack both potable water and the brackish water that is used for flushing toilets. Lack of potable water forced the closure of one school while this report was being prepared, but teaching staff said the school had actually been without potable water for three years. Another frequently mentioned problem that interrupts water services to schools and public buildings is theft of pressure pumps or pressure pump failure.

Although it could be argued that many households elsewhere in the Pacific do not have access to electricity or treated water at all but survive quite well, it is important to take full account of the Nauruan context. Modern houses, such as those in Nauru, are designed to be connected to these services. When services fail, living conditions can quickly deteriorate, and flush toilets without a water supply can be more of a health hazard than pit latrines. The lack of rivers and streams in Nauru leaves the community very reliant on treated water for drinking, and when electricity supplies are interrupted, Nauruan households may be left without any way of cooking food or boiling water. This increases the risk of infectious diseases, including various strains of diarrhoeal diseases that can present a very serious health hazard, especially to young children.

2.2 Household size

Average household size has declined from 7.1 in 1992 to 6.0 in 2002 (Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002). This was partly because some new houses have been constructed, but also because there is a trend for some Nauruan couples to move out of extended family homes and occupy NPC apartments at the NPC housing complex, 'The Location', as they are vacated by repatriated phosphate workers.

While these apartments are well situated close to the sea and provided attractive and comfortable accommodation when first constructed, the whole Location area is now severely run-down and some of the blocks have become roofless ruins. Uncertainty about who is responsible for servicing The Location now that its residents are no longer exclusively NPC contract workers has contributed to environmental problems. Roads within the complex are all but impassable, especially in wet weather, and piles of garbage accumulate. Sometimes children can be observed playing in puddles contaminated with seepage from piles of garbage. This environmental contamination in The Location area is a major threat to the health of residents, especially children.

2.3 Environmental health and safety

The severe degradation of Nauru's land by phosphate mining is well known throughout the world as an example of major environmental destruction. In fact these lands were virtually unused prior to 1907, so, although commercial mining disfigured the landscape, it did not result in a significant land use opportunity cost. Other, less well-publicised environmental issues are likely to be a much greater concern in Nauru in the immediate future.

Many buildings constructed during the mining boom are now dilapidated and in need of repair or demolition. Abandoned buildings contain many hazards, including crumbling concrete, protruding and rusty reinforcing rods and loose metal sheeting, but almost none are fenced to prevent public access to them. Similar hazards can also be found in some ageing occupied buildings, including some schools.



A particular problem of the built environment is the widespread use of corrugated asbestos sheeting on roofs. Before the dangers of asbestos dust were well known, this material was widely used on many of Nauru's houses, NPC buildings, schools and other public buildings. While corrugated asbestos sheeting is not a serious danger to health if kept painted and undisturbed, much of that in Nauru is unpainted and now so old and weathered that it is beginning to shed asbestos fibres, presenting a very serious environmental health risk. Although this matter has been raised in Parliament on several occasions, as of the time of writing no steps had been taken to remove this serious health hazard.

Other problems associated with ageing building stocks are exposed electrical cables and worn cabling, ruptured and leaking plumbing, damaged walls and rotting joists and beams. All these problems were evident in some of Nauru's school classrooms when this report was being researched.

Another environmental danger is the many pieces of discarded and rusting metal littering the shores. Some pieces are very large, and partially concealed by sand or tides, posing a serious hazard to children and swimmers. There are also large numbers of abandoned and wrecked cars dotted around the island, most beside houses and partially concealed by vegetation, risking injury to the young children who play in them.

Provision for household garbage disposal is good, with a public garbage tip for household refuse located well away from any housing, and a twice-weekly garbage collection service, operated by the Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation. This service is available free of charge to those who can afford to purchase a 'wheelie bin' container, costing from \$60-\$120. In 2002 34.9 per cent of all households reported using the public garbage collection service, while the remainder made their own arrangements for disposal of household waste.

A general safety issue that seems to have received little attention is the lack of precautions against injury caused by motor vehicles. Nauruans commonly ride around on small motorbikes, often with pillion passengers, and frequently can be seen riding with one hand while holding very small children in front of them. Despite the high risk associated with riding motorbikes, even at low speed, crash helmets are

virtually unknown in Nauru. Similarly, safety belts are almost never used in cars. Although speed limits are low, motor vehicle accidents are a major cause of injury and death, as shown in Table 8 below. The majority of motor vehicle accidents are alcohol related.

2.4 Health

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have become a major issue in Nauru, especially Type II diabetes (formerly known as non-insulin-dependent diabetes). Type II diabetes has increased dramatically in Nauru since the widespread adoption of modern diets and sedentary lifestyles. It was not mentioned as a health problem in a 1933 survey, and was found in only 1 per cent of the population in 1962, but by 1975 an estimated 34 per cent of Nauruans over 15 years had Type II diabetes, which was one of the highest prevalences ever recorded (SPC, 2000b: 148). Nauru also recorded a very high prevalence of obesity, estimated as around 75 per cent overall in the 1970s and 1980s, with evidence of an increase in obesity between 1975 and 1982 (SPC, 2000b: 196). Diabetes and obesity continue to be national concerns. Updated details of the national prevalence will be available when the results of a 2004 survey are released. Widespread smoking - among men, women and young people - high levels of alcohol consumption, and a tendency towards sedentary lifestyles also contribute to Nauru's elevated risk of NCDs.

Table 8. Leading causes of morbidity and mortality, Nauru 2003

Morbidity	Rate per 10,000
Symptoms, signs and abnormalities not elsewhere classified (R00-R99)	250
Post partum causes (Z39)	155
Newborn conditions (Z38)	144
Diabetes (I0-E14)	72
Hypertension (I10-I15)	72
Abscess (cutaneous)	60
Genito-urinary diseases (N00-N99)	48
Anaemia (D64.9)	36
Asthma (J45)	36
Carbuncle (L02)	24
Mortality	Rate per 10,000
Diabetes (E10-E14)	16
Respiratory diseases (J00-J99)	15
Diseases of circulatory system, excluding hypertension (I16-I99)	12
Neoplasm (C00-C97)	8
Transport accident and drowning (V01-V99, W69)	8
Hypertension (I00-I15)	7
Septicaemia unspecified (A49)	4
Fibrosis and cirrhosis of the liver (K74)	4
Renal failure (N17-N19)	2
Perinatal conditions (P00-P96)	2

Source: WHO, 2004.

Table 8 shows the 10 principal causes of morbidity and mortality in 2003. The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) codes are also shown. The rates are reported as rates per 10,000 rather than the more usual rate per 100,000, because the rate per 10,000 is approximately equal to the total number of cases per year.

The high prevalence of NCDs is evident, in particular diabetes, which is the fourth most common cause of morbidity and the leading cause of death. The high ranking of 'post-partum causes' and 'newborn conditions' reflect the fact that virtually all Nauruan births take place in hospital, and can thus be interpreted as a positive rather than a negative feature. A matter of concern, however, is that more than a quarter of the causes of morbidity are classified in the catch-all category of 'symptoms, signs and abnormalities not elsewhere classified'. This reflects deficiencies in testing, laboratory facilities and diagnostic capacity that almost certainly impair the quality of health services.

Nauru had an excellent standard of health care in the past when it was served by two hospitals, one operated by the NPC and the other by the Department of Health. Now that NPC operations have contracted, the two hospitals have been amalgamated to form the Republic of Nauru Hospital. The former NPC hospital is utilised for in-patients and sophisticated procedures such as dialysis, while most public health activities and some laboratory services are conducted nearby at the former Nauru General Hospital premises. Healthcare is thus roughly separated into curative (medical) and preventive services (public health or primary healthcare). In mid 2004 five doctors were providing free consultations at the hospital, and some also practiced privately. In order to cope with shortages of medical staff in recent years it has sometimes been necessary to employ formerly retired health professionals on short-term contracts.

2.4.1 Issues in health care

Despite the current economic difficulties, the Nauruan Department of Health has managed to continue to provide curative and preventive services free of charge to Nauruans, and on a fee-for-service basis to non-Nauruans. A major issue, however, is the imbalance in expenditure resulting from the need to cater for patients seriously affected by NCDs. It is estimated that 10 per cent of the annual total budget is spent on the 30 or so patients dependent on dialysis, and another 36 per cent on overseas referrals for around 170 patients each year, a high proportion of whom are suffering from NCDs. After allowing for these and other costs, only 42 per cent of the total budget remains for services for the bulk of the population (AusAID and Nauru Department of Health, 2003: 8). While dialysis costs around \$24,000 per patient per year and each overseas referral costs an average of \$19,650, the amount available for the rest of the population, for both curative and preventive services, averages only around \$300 per head (figure estimated from AusAID and Nauru Department of Health, 2003; and Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002).

A 2003 AusAID review, carried out as part of a plan to assist Nauru with improvements to the health sector, identified numerous specific issues, deficiencies and developmental needs, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Issues and needs in the health sector

Issues and deficiencies in curative services:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Major workforce deficiencies with previous reliance on expatriate staff• Low staffing levels and lack of qualifications/training• Fluctuating and inadequate supplies of essential drugs and medical consumables• Limited diagnostic capability• Problems in every service area, with gross deficiencies in treatment of Eyes, ENT (ear, nose and throat), Orthopaedics, Nutrition, Mental Health, Disabled Services, Prosthetics, Rehabilitation, Gynaecology, Dental services and Chemotherapy• Poor organization and inadequate management• Little or no controllable revenue for the Department
Developmental needs for Public Health Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A national strategy for health• Comprehensive legislation to support an effective health system including public health• A secure and quality water supply for the health service• Outreach health services into the community• Community consultation in health promotion programs• A healthy eating food program• Public education in relation to waste disposal• A proactive programme to link preventive and curative services at clinical level• Reduction of lifestyle diseases, including obesity, hypertension and poorly controlled diabetes

Source: AusAID and Nauru Department of Health, 2003: (p v)

In addition to the list in Table 9, both curative and preventive services were in need of hospital building renovations, secure water and electricity services, more equipment, more drugs and consumables, additional staff and improved transport (AusAID and Nauru Department of Health, 2003: 6).

These issues, along with lifestyle and dietary practices, affect all Nauruans, including children, youth and women. The following sections look in more detail at the health issues of these three groups.

2.4.2 Infant and Child Health

Around 300 to 370 infants are born in Nauru each year, an average of around six or seven per week. Clinic sisters report that low birth weights are uncommon except in premature babies. Until recently, Nauruan infant mortality rates were low by Pacific standards, but, as discussed in Section 1.6 above, there now appears to have been a more-than-threefold increase in infant mortality as compared with the early 1990s. Since infant mortality is widely recognised as a sensitive indicator of living conditions, this is almost certainly a reflection of the economic deterioration.



Ante-natal care and infant health services are readily available. Both ante-natal and Well-Baby Clinics operate at the hospital twice a week, and a mobile Well-Baby Clinic visits each district once a week. These clinics provide advice, monitor infant and child growth and implement a program of infant immunisation. Exclusive breastfeeding is practiced in the Nauru Hospital and the Well-Baby Clinics encourage women to continue breastfeeding.

Despite the availability of these services and the efforts made by health workers to follow up and contact those who have not returned for immunisation, coverage is not 100 per cent. Table 10 shows the number of immunizations delivered in 2003 to an estimated target of 300 infants. The Health Department follows up on immunization when children enter school, so eventually coverage increases, but ideally all these immunisations should be received during the first year of life.

Table 10. Infant immunisation coverage, Nauru 2003

Vaccine	Number
BCG (TB)	249
DPT 1 (Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus)	229
DPT 3	240
HB Vax B (hepatitis)	205
HB Vax 3	253
Measles 1	289
Measles 2	319
OPV (polio) for Jan-August only	160

Source: Department of Health Statistics

Note: The higher number of doses for Measles 2 includes catching up on children who did not receive it in the previous year.

Although many infant and child health problems can be managed by the Well-Baby Clinics, some children are disadvantaged by the limitations of curative health services. An example of the impact of these limitations on infant health and survival is depicted in the story below:

Koko (not her real name) gave birth to an infant that displayed symptoms of major problems immediately after birth. The condition was diagnosed as 'FTT' – failure to thrive. When the baby did not improve, a further diagnosis of Downes syndrome was made. This surprised Koko, as she was only 24, so she asked what tests had formed the basis of this diagnosis. She was informed that testing facilities were not available and the diagnosis had been made on the basis of the medical practitioner's experience. She was unable to obtain a second opinion, as she was told that hospital patients are permitted to consult only one doctor. After six months of no improvement, a further diagnosis was made - macrocephaly caused by a faulty heart valve impairing circulation of blood to the head. By this time Koko's baby was suffering a number of additional complications. Although the heart valve was repaired, the baby died at age 14 months. Koko believes that had the resources and personnel been available to make a timely diagnosis or even for her to obtain a second opinion, her child would be alive today.

2.4.3 School Health Services

In the past all primary schools kept a register of pupils' health details. Visiting health personnel checked growth attainment and general health, and a school dental service was available. Schools are still visited by health promotion teams who provide education in basic hygiene, dental care, first aid and environmental issues, but these services are no longer comprehensive and tend to be perceived by both teachers and health personnel as insufficient and uncoordinated.

Health promotion activities are hampered by lack of reliable transport, periodic staff shortages and limited resources. Children's eyesight and hearing are not checked unless specific learning difficulties are identified, and only curative, not preventive, dental services are available (AusAID and Nauru Department of Health, 2003: 22).

Health inspectors visit schools to check water quality, sanitation and other safety issues, and are empowered to close schools. School closure does not necessarily mean that problems are rectified before the children return, however. Insufficiency of budgets for maintenance and the difficulty of procuring expensive items like pressure pumps mean that schools may be obliged to reopen while health requirement still have not been met.

2.4.4 Women's Health

There are currently no specific health services for women in Nauru other than the Ante-Natal Clinic. Nauru has no agreement with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) or other body promoting reproductive health and sexual health, and no NGO is active in these areas in Nauru.

Reproductive health matters are the province of general practitioners or occasional visiting specialists in obstetrics and gynaecology.

Condoms are promoted as part of programs to protect against HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). They are available free of charge from the hospital and over the counter in some shops. Contraception for family planning, however, is effectively available only to married couples. There are no comprehensive statistics on family planning acceptance. It seems that the most popular method is tubal ligation, for which consent of both husband and wife is required, although there is increasing use of condoms to protect against STIs. Hormonal contraception appears not to be widely used because of the high prevalence of diabetes and hypertension among women of reproductive age increase the risk of side-effects.

Some commentators believe there is a growing demand for family planning services:

'Conservative attitudes towards the role of women are beginning to change. Family planning is becoming easier to access and more acceptable, if not widely adopted. Many women's groups are active in the Nauruan community' (Galea, 1997: 5).

This view was shared by some of the people consulted for this report, especially by women's groups and those concerned about the balance between population and resources. Other informants said that Nauru still needs to 'populate or perish', however, a view fostered during the war years when less than 1,000 Nauruans survived the Japanese invasion and subsequent deportation of Nauruans to Chuuk.

Other reproductive and sexual health services are limited. PAP smears are collected from some women, but the numbers requesting this service tend to be small, increasing only when cervical cancer testing is the subject of health promotion campaigns. One possible reason discouraging use of this service is that samples cannot be tested locally so feedback is sometimes delayed or not received at all. Treatment for menstrual disorders and hormonal conditions is available only when obstetrics and gynaecology specialists visit, and when samples are sent overseas for analysis there are long delays before results are received.

Data collected in the past indicate that women and men are equally affected by NCDs in Nauru. Up-to-date estimates of the prevalence of diabetes are not currently available, but an innovative survey that combined data collection with health assessment was being implemented in mid 2004 while this report was being researched. This survey included collection of height, weight, blood pressure, blood and urine from a sample of around half the population aged 15-64, followed by feedback to respondents on their health status. It provides an excellent model for future public health initiatives in Nauru.

2.4.5 Youth health

There are currently no special health services for young people in Nauru, so they depend on the same hospital-based health services and private practitioners as other citizens. This almost certainly results in neglect of some youth health problems, especially problems associated with reproductive and sexual health, substance abuse and psycho-social problems.

Information about HIV/AIDS and other STIs is available from youth workers and a peer educator in the Department of Youth and Community Affairs. Otherwise young people have very limited access to information on reproductive and sexual health (RH and SH) as the majority of Nauruan parents tend not to discuss sexual matters with their children. Some sex education is provided in secondary schools as part of the science curriculum, but this is still controversial and opposed by some parents and teachers. Although most concede that children should be informed about HIV/AIDS and STIs, there seems to be no general agreement among either parents or teachers as to the age at which education in these matters should be provided, or about the acceptability and timing of the introduction of other RH and SH information.

Nauru's teenage pregnancy rate increased from 63 per thousand women in 1992 to 93 in the period 1997-2002, and in 2002 almost one in every six girls aged 15-19 had already born a child. Although most couples marry when they discover that the girl is pregnant, the high rate of teenage pregnancy is a concern, since most of these pregnancies are unintentional and burden young people with the responsibilities of parenthood before they have themselves become adults.

2.4.6 HIV/AIDS

At the time of writing, Nauru had identified one HIV/AIDS positive case, while there had been one AIDS death, of a sailor on a visiting foreign ship who died shortly after arriving in Nauru. Given that HIV/AIDS positive numbers are increasing in neighbouring Pacific countries, however, the possibility of an HIV/AIDS epidemic must be considered a serious threat.

This has been recognised by the Department of Health and the risks of HIV/AIDS have been publicised. This appears to have led to more use of condoms by both young people and adults, but there are no data on whether this has reduced the incidence of STIs, which was previously regarded as high. The Catholic Church in Nauru is said not to oppose the use of condoms to protect against STIs.

2.4.7 Nutrition

Nutrition of both children and adults has been a major concern in Nauru since phosphate mining brought enormous wealth to the island. Traditional Nauruan diets mainly comprised fish, coconut and the few fruit, vegetables and edible native plants and herbs that could be gathered on the island. There seems never to have been a strong tradition of gardening.

When incomes surged, Nauruans switched to a diet of imported food. In the absence of advice and information on sound nutritional practices, a preference soon developed for foods that are high in sugar, salt and fat, but low in natural fibre, vitamins and minerals. Small restaurants proliferated, along with takeaway outlets serving high-fat fast foods and many Nauruans obtained most of their meals at these food outlets. In mid 2004 there were around 50 small restaurants on the island, virtually all run by Asians and serving Chinese-style food, but continuing economic difficulties since then are said to be gradually reducing their numbers. Other popular foods are fat-laden canned corned beef and 'Spam', and ready-cooked packaged frozen meals (also notoriously high in fat), and fatty cuts of imported meat for frying or barbeques.

The inevitable result was that nutrition-related diseases became the principal health issue on the island (SPC, 2002), and most children were raised with poor dietary habits. During the 1980s and 1990s a number of studies in Nauru demonstrated the connection between diet and non-communicable disease, especially diabetes (see SPC, 2002).

The recent economic crisis has reduced household capacity to purchase imported food. It has also promoted a return to fishing for household consumption among some Nauruan households, which was uncommon in the past. Even so, this has not necessarily brought an improvement in diets. Nauru is one of only a few Pacific countries that do not have a local produce market or roadside stalls selling locally grown foods. White bread and polished white rice continue to be staple foods, and fried foods and sugary soft drinks are still widely consumed. Fresh vegetables and fruit are hard to find and expensive. Small stocks of air freighted apples, oranges, bananas and tomatoes sell out quickly, and are beyond the means of many households, retailing at \$AUD 6.00-7.00 per kilo at the time of writing.

As the school day ends by 1.30 pm at latest, school pupils do not normally eat lunch at school. Some schools have tuck shops that sell snack foods and soft drinks at recess. A recent initiative has discouraged these outlets from selling those snacks thought to be of least nutritional benefit, but 'nutritious' snacks still seem to be in short supply. Teachers observed that in the past schools issued children with milk and juices rich in Vitamin C, but this has been discontinued. They felt that the community is very much in need of basic nutritional education, saying that most people have very little knowledge of the nutritional value of foods and little experience in home cooking.

Most studies have found that although examples of extreme obesity can be found amongst both men and women, higher percentages of Nauruan women than men tend to be obese (SPC, 2002). Women are particularly susceptible to obesity because they tend to be less physically active than men and because it is customary to encourage them to eat more during pregnancy and while breastfeeding. This contributes to a gradual increase in weight over successive pregnancies rather than a return to normal weight after each pregnancy. One strategy to help prevent this are public health initiatives to introduce aerobics classes each weekday afternoon for any adult who cares to participate.

Observation of the population suggests that there may be fewer obese and overweight children and adults than in 1994, when it was claimed that 'well-over 90 per cent of the population was overweight' (cited in AusAID and Nauru Department of Health, 2003:7:). In particular, there appear to be fewer overweight children than in the past. Whether this indicates real health benefits or simply the exchange of one form of poor nutrition for another needs to be investigated. The health survey being implemented as this report was being prepared will provide information on the prevalence of overweight and obesity. A nutrition survey also is needed to assess household nutrition levels, especially nutrition of young children and the adequacy of vitamin and micronutrient intakes.

2.5 Education

During the phosphate boom Nauru invested substantial resources in education, providing multiple schools at all levels as well as teacher and vocational training institutions. In addition, many Nauruan families could afford to send their children overseas for secondary and post-secondary education. Most adults are fluent in both Nauruan and English, and literate in English.

Nauru is still amply supplied with schools from early childhood through to secondary level, and education is compulsory for ages 6 through to 16 years. Government schools provide free education and free transport by school bus, while parents meet costs such as uniforms, excursions and stationery.

Official statistics suggest that enrolments and literacy levels still compare well with other Pacific countries. The statistics belie the reality, however, as the quality of education services has deteriorated. Some school buildings at all levels are in need of urgent maintenance and major renovations, and all schools need more resources. The availability of appropriately trained staff and educational opportunities appears to decline as children progress through the grades.



2.5.1 Education participation rates

Despite the availability of schools and legal requirements that children attend school until age 16 years, the 2002 census found no age at which all children were enrolled in school, along with evidence of high rates of discontinuation at all ages after 14 years.

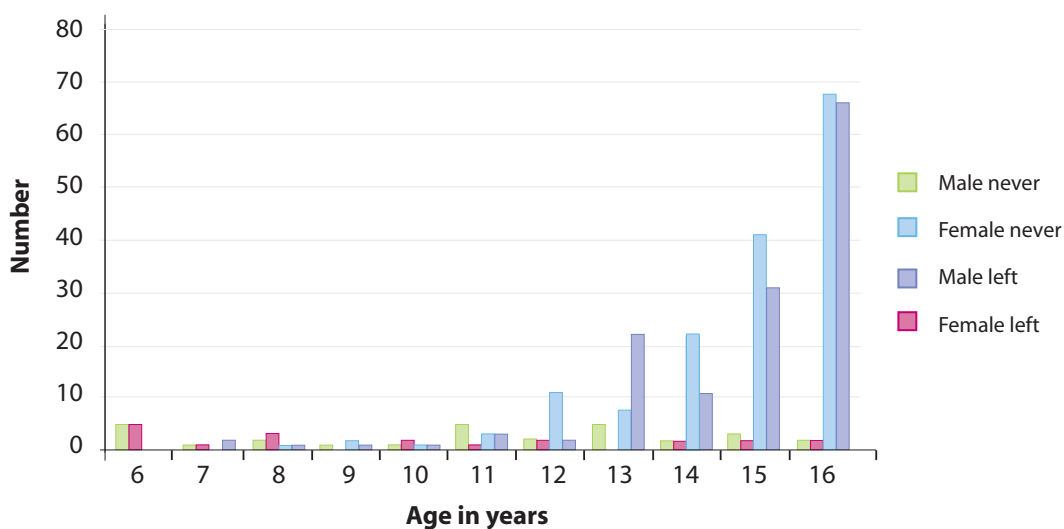
Table 11. Participation in full-time education by age group, Nauruans, 2002

Age	Males %	Females %
5-9	95.6	95.3
10-14	86.6	89.8
15-19	22.3	26.1

Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002

Table 11 shows high participation in full-time education at ages 5-9, but a marked reduction at ages 10-14 when, according to Nauruan law, every child should be attending school. The decline in participation is even more marked at upper secondary level, with less than a quarter of 15-19 year olds in full-time education.

Figure 5. Never attended and left school early, Nauruans, 2002



Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002

Figure 5 shows the number of children at each age who had never attended school or left school by that age. It can be seen that some do not commence school at age six, while the numbers leaving become substantial from age 13 years onward. From ages 14 years onward a greater number of males than females leave school. The following sections examine these patterns and their causes as well as other issues affecting different levels of education.

2.5.2 Early Childhood Education

There are four government infant schools offering three levels (years) of early childhood education: play centre (age 3+), pre-school (age 4+) and preparatory (age 5+). These schools also offered Grade 1 (age 6+) until 2000, when that grade was moved to primary schools. Play centre classes are conducted from 9.00 am until 12.00 noon, and pre-school and preparatory classes take place from 8.00 am until 12.30.

Table 12 shows the number of early childhood enrolments in 1996 and 2002, and provides a rough estimate of the percentage of the target population enrolled.

Table 12. Early Childhood Education Enrolments, Nauru, 1996 and 2002

1996

Age	Male	Female	Total	% of target age
3+	129	129	258	83.0
4+	109	99	208	63.6
5+	107	90	197	n.a.

2002

Age	Male	Female	Total	% of target age
3+	88	86	174	59.0
4+	127	118	245	71.2
5+	119	96	215	58.9

Source: Bureau of Statistics, Department of Education

Note: The target was estimated, by deducting infant deaths from births in the appropriate year for each age group. It is only an approximation since it excludes child deaths and emigration, while some pupils are younger or older than the target age for their level.

The table shows little difference in enrolment by gender in either 1996 or 2002, but the percentage of the target population enrolled may be declining. This observation is borne out by the comments of teachers in these schools, who say that because of current economic difficulties, parents are less willing to send children for early childhood education, which is not compulsory. As the early childhood curriculum includes preparation for reading, writing and mathematics, children who do not attend are disadvantaged when they commence primary school.

2.5.3 Primary school education

Four government primary schools offer grades 1-6 to a target population aged from 6-7 to 12-13 years. A fifth school, the Catholic-run Kayser College (described as 'private' but actually deriving 80 per cent of its funding from the public sector) offers all levels of education: pre-school, primary Grades 1-6 and secondary Forms 1-6. School hours for primary and above are from 8.00 am to 1.30 pm.

In 2000, two of the four government primary schools – Aiwo and Yaren – were rearranged so that each school offered only two grades rather than all six. A third primary school, Denig, was allocated Grades 5 and 6 plus Form 1 (Year 7) and renamed Nauru College School. The additional secondary year was included because most students compete for national scholarships in Form 1. This response to staff shortages has made it easier for teachers to assist each other and to supervise extra classes when other teachers are absent, but there has been no evaluation of the impact of this initiative on the social development of pupils. The fourth school, in The Location, (where most non-Nauruans reside) continues to offer Grades 1 – 6.

Table 13. Primary school enrolment and gender ratios, Nauru, 2002

	Boys	Girls	Total	Ratio girls:boys
Grade 1	143	124	267	1:1.15
Grade 2	132	112	244	1:1.18
Grade 3	141	118	259	1:1.19
Grade 4	144	122	266	1:1.18
Grade 5	147	132	279	1:1.11
Grade 6	147	116	263	1:1.27
Total	854	724	1578	1:1.18

Source: Department of Education.

Note: the higher the ratio, the more girls are disadvantaged compared to boys

Table 13 shows fairly consistent numbers enrolled at all primary grades, but boys outnumber girls at each level. Even allowing for the natural tendency for males to outnumber females at younger ages, a bias towards boys in primary education is evident. This tendency can be observed among both Nauruans and non-Nauruans, but is greater among non-Nauruans (calculated from Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002).

2.5.4 Secondary school education

Nauru has two secondary schools offering Forms 1-6; the government-run Nauru Secondary School, and the private school, Kayser College. As indicated above, Nauru College School is actually a primary school that offers one secondary class, Form 1 (Year 7).

Form One is a crucial year in the Nauruan education system, because the Republic of Nauru Scholarship examination is taken at this level. The scholarship is for secondary schooling overseas, formerly in Australia but now in Fiji. There is fierce competition for these scholarships, with 275 students taking the exam in 2002. From this field only 11 students were awarded scholarships, six boys and five girls (Nauru Department of Education, 2004).

Much of the education system up to Form 1 is geared towards successful examination performances, and that is certainly uppermost in the minds of most parents. This competition for scholarships seems to have contributed to a perception among some parents and students that those who do not win a scholarship for study overseas are doomed to a second-rate education. This perception is reinforced by the fact that secondary schools are under-resourced and the Nauru Secondary School in particular is urgently in need of major repair and refurbishment.

Table 14. Secondary school enrolment and gender ratios, Nauru, 2002

	Boys	Girls	Total	Ratio girls: boys
Form 1	136	139	275	1:0.98
Form 2	83	82	165	1.1.01
Form 3	47	53	100	1:0.89
Form 4	34	37	71	1:0.92
Form 5	9	13	22	1:0.69
Form 6	7	6	13	1.1.17
Total	316	330	646	1:0.96

Source: Nauru Department of Education 2004

Note: the higher the ratio, the more girls are disadvantaged compared to boys

Table 14 shows a dramatic decline in enrolments in Form 2, and further declines in subsequent grades. In 2002 only thirteen 18-year-olds reached the highest level of secondary education. An interesting feature of the table is that the gender imbalance is much less at secondary level compared with primary, with girls generally more likely than boys to participate in secondary education. Perhaps boys are more easily discouraged by failure and see even less value in continuing their education than do girls.

The consequences of this high discontinuation rate are very considerable for Nauru. The existence of a growing pool of demoralised high school students who have not completed their education is a waste of potential human resources. Such groups are also at great risk of engaging in problem behaviour, as discussed in Section 2.6.3 below.

Some informants suggested that it would be more efficient to devote the scholarship money to improving secondary schools, while others suggested that scholarships should be offered only for post-secondary education. It is clear, however, that the problem is not the opportunities offered by the scholarship scheme, but the quality of secondary education in Nauru. The money that would be saved by abolishing scholarships would be far too little to renovate and maintain existing buildings and increase classroom resources to a desirable level. More far-reaching strategies are needed to address the critical national issue of secondary school students who lose interest and fail to complete their education.

2.5.6 Teacher training

Another concern in the education sector is teacher training and development. In the past, teachers could train in Nauru and obtain the Nauru Trained Teacher Certificate after a year of study and a year of practical experience. In addition, some obtained teacher training overseas. After teacher training in Nauru was discontinued, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) offered a series of in-service courses in Nauru during the 1990s. This training, which led to an Advanced Certificate in Education, took place during school breaks. Most teachers who completed an RMIT certificate already had a Nauru Trained Teacher Certificate or a Pacific Pre-School Teacher Certificate from the University of the South Pacific Centre (USP), but for some it remains their only qualification (Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002).

In recent years the only on-going source of in-country teacher training in Nauru has been the Pacific Pre-School Teachers' Certificate, offered by the USP Centre, undertaken as distance-learning courses with assistance from local tutors.

This has led to an unusual situation, with most of the younger teachers qualified only in Early Childhood Education. A surfeit of teachers qualified in early childhood and primary education and the shortage of qualified teachers at higher levels has fostered a practice of moving the most experienced teachers up to higher levels, regardless of their qualifications. The resulting instability and disruption affects both teachers and pupils at all levels of the school system. As shown in Table 15, some teachers are currently upgrading their skills by enrolling in additional courses of study. Nonetheless, some classes, including secondary school subjects, are taught by teachers with no relevant qualifications.

Table 15. Qualifications of the teaching establishment, Nauru 2002

School level	Certificate	Diploma or higher	Still studying	Unqualified assistant
Pre-primary	36	4	5	2
Primary	49	14	6	-
Secondary	11	12	2	9

Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2004, Department of Education, 2004

Understaffing is another important issue in secondary schools. Since the economic difficulties, posts that fall vacant tend not to be filled, especially posts in specialised subjects. Vacancies are most evident in subjects such as computer studies, art, physical education and library. Understaffing places additional burdens on the remaining teachers and makes it necessary to rearrange classes. It also restricts learning opportunities and introduces the risk that some of the time some pupils will be 'supervised' rather than 'taught'. Another consequence of staff shortages is that schools tend to focus on core subjects, thus offering fewer opportunities to students who are not academically inclined.

The combined effect of these factors undermines the morale of both continuing students and their teachers, and contributes to the high discontinuation rate from Form Two onwards. All secondary

schools are insufficiently staffed to offer a full range of courses and all need additional qualified, experienced teachers.

2.5.7 Vocational education

The Nauru Vocational Training College offered trade education until it was severely damaged by fire in 2002. In 2002 its staff included instructors in secretarial studies, carpentry and joinery, electrical trades, fitting and machinery, welding and auto mechanics (Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2004). Since the fire, secretarial studies has moved to the Nauru Secondary School, but some courses are still taught in what is left of the original premises. The general community perception, however, is that there is effectively no coordinated vocational and technical training for post-secondary students. At the same time there seems to be a growing awareness among parents, teachers and youth workers that Nauru needs much more vocational and technical education at all levels, and many informants suggested that this should be a priority area for development.

2.5.8 University of the South Pacific

The USP Centre in Nauru was established in 1987, although distance-learning courses have been available since the early 1970s (USP 2003a: 25). In 2002 the assessed contribution from the Nauru Government to USP for this service was \$(Fijian) 115,000 (USP, 2003b: 10.1). Courses are transmitted by satellite from USP in Fiji, and local tutors in Nauru provide guidance and tutorials. Most tutorials are held after working hours. In 2003 the Centre had six full-time staff and a number of part-time tutors, including secondary school teachers and public servants. The Centre also has a library with several thousand books. Members of the public can access this library on payment of fees.

Many of those studying at USP are currently employed people who wish to upgrade their qualifications. Some of those undertaking training in skills relevant to their work were supported or subsidised by their employers, but many others have to pay their own fees (USP: 2003c: 359).

Table 16. USP Nauru Campus enrolments, 2003

Semester One	Enrolled	Withdrew	Passed	Females	Males
Preliminary	13	8	4	4	9
Foundation	33	17	11	17	16
Vocational	26	12	14	9	17
Degree	33	24	9	23	10
Continuing Education	16	3	13	16	-
Semester Two	Enrolled	Withdrew	Passed	Females	Males
Preliminary	11	3	7	8	3
Foundation	38	8	15	25	13
Vocational	16	10	5	12	4
Degree	22	6	14	18	4
Continuing Education*	27	9	18	26	1
Total	235	100	110	158	77

Source: USP (2003c: 359-360)

*= mostly Early Childhood Certificate

Table 16 shows that in 2003 there were initially 235 enrolments, in preliminary, foundation, vocational, degree and continuing education courses. Sixty-seven per cent of students enrolled in 2003 were women. The table also shows that in Semester One, more than half of the 121 students enrolled withdrew from their courses. There were fewer withdrawals in second semester. Reasons for withdrawal included financial difficulties, physical problems such as power failures affecting ability to study, and petrol shortages preventing students from attending. Fees are quite substantial by local standards, ranging up to \$300-400 per course for degree courses, with some courses requiring a substantial additional outlay on textbooks (USP Centre Director, personal communication).

The most popular courses were foundation level LLF11: Communication and Study Skills (18 students); preliminary level LLP13: Pre-tertiary English (13) and MAP11: Elementary Mathematics (7); MGD01: Vocational Basic Management (6) and LL114: Degree level English for Academic Purposes (5). Also, as discussed above, USP makes a major contribution to teacher training in Nauru. Pass rates are high among those who are able to complete their courses (USP: 2003c).

2.5.9 Schooling for the disabled

The Able Disabled School caters for around a dozen disabled children, although only six were attending regularly at the time of writing because the others lacked suitable transport to take them to the school each day. The school's three teachers are employed by the Department of Education, but when this report was prepared the school had no dedicated premises and daily activities took place in the private home of one of the teachers.

Classes are held from 9.00 until 12 noon each school day. The pupils range from pre-schoolers up to age 19 years, and they exhibit a range of physical and sensory disabilities, from mild to severe. Only one of the teachers has teaching qualifications (in early childhood education). Insufficient training of staff and a shortage of classroom resources mean that teachers tend to provide 'day care' rather than 'special education', although they arrange excursions and special activities whenever they can. The teachers are very conscious of this limitation and said they would like to have more in-service training and technical assistance. They also said that there is a pressing need for expert advice to mothers of the disabled on how to manage and develop their children.

Anna (not her real name) is the mother of nine children, and now divorced. Her eldest son is aged 19 and completely paralysed down one side. He is confined to a wheelchair and does not communicate readily. He needs constant attention and assistance with daily activities. When the Department of Education was no longer able to provide premises for the Able Disabled School, Anna offered her home. Now the sessions are held there each day and she is employed as one of the three salaried teachers.

2.6 Situation of Youth

The situation of youth in Nauru is shaped largely by problems in the education sector and by the difficulties associated with finding employment, building self-esteem and establishing an independent identity in Nauruan society. In a small economy with limited employment opportunities it is difficult for youth to make a good start in life, and finding ways of ensuring that they do is one of the most important challenges facing Nauru today.

Nauru defines youth as from ages 16 right up to 34 years and has created a government department to serve people in this broad age group. The majority of clients, however, are aged 16-24. The Department of Youth and Community Affairs has a core staff of three men and three women, and an extensive network of contacts with youth and community associations in the various districts. One of the Department's employees has been trained as a peer educator in HIV/AIDS prevention. Community members assist by coordinating sport and cultural activities. Youth Affairs staff also sometimes work in conjunction with the Department of Justice and serve as probation officers.

Youth aged 16 to 24 years comprise 19.6 per cent of Nauru's total population, that is, almost one person in every five. Recent years have seen a marked increase in organised activities for youth, in the Departments of Youth and Community Affairs and the newly created Department of Sports, and in youth associations in the various districts. The main activities of youth associations tend to be sporting events, although they also focus to a lesser extent in most other aspects of the lives of young people.

2.6.1 Opportunities for youth

As discussed in Section 2.5.4 above, there are high rates of discontinuation in secondary schools. Employment opportunities for young people who do not complete their schooling, however, are limited.

Table 17. Employment status of youth aged 16-24 years

	Male %	Female %	Total %
Working (economically active)	51.9	34.4	43.3
Looking for work	23.7	28.4	26.0
Student/ at school	4.9	6.3	5.6
Do not want to work	1.5	7.0	4.2
Other*	18.1	23.9	20.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	879	855	1734

Source: Bureau of Statistics 2002

Note: * 'Other' includes unable to work, disabled, engaged in housework, not stated.

This table excludes 32 who were in regular employment but sick or on leave at the time of the census.

Table 17 shows the employment status of young Nauruans aged 16-24 years in 2002. It can be seen that only about one in three females and a little more than half of males were employed. Around a quarter stated that they are looking for work. This table compares unfavourably with Table 5 for all Nauruans aged 16-64 years, which shows that 72 % of males and 49% of females were working.

A common perception is that the main cause of unemployment among Nauruan youth is lack of qualifications. Table 18 shows that many of those who were not working at the time of the last census did have qualifications.

Table 18. Highest qualifications of 16-24 year old Nauruans by employment status, 2002

	Working		Not working	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
Secondary certificate	24.2	30.8	11.0	16.4
Matriculation Cert.	0.9	1.4	1.3	0.9
Diploma/Cert.	0.7	1.4	0.3	0.6
Degree (undergrad.)	0.0	0.4	0.3	0.0
Post-grad. degree	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0
Other qualification	1.1	1.1	0.6	1.5
None	66.0	59.1	64.6	62.5
Not stated/ not applicable	7.2	5.4	21.8	18.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	176	169	189	184

Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics 2002

Note: * 'Not stated/ not applicable' includes unable to work, disabled, engaged in housework, not stated

Although higher percentages of those with secondary certificate were employed, the percentages without qualifications in the working and not working categories were roughly the same. These patterns, evident for both males and females, run counter to the commonly expressed view that most of the young people who are not working have no qualifications. It also suggests that one reason why some young people choose to discontinue their education could be that they do not perceive education as greatly enhancing their prospects of employment since there are few jobs available. Another concern raised by Table 18 is the overall low levels of qualification of the young workforce, with more than 60 per cent of girls and boys not having even a secondary school leavers' certificate.

2.6.2 Training for school leavers

A major activity of the Department of Youth and Community Affairs is conducting semester-long youth development courses to help young people who have left school to obtain employment. Since the contraction of the activities of the Nauru Vocational Training Centre these courses, along with study at the USP, are virtually the only post-secondary educational opportunities for youth.

The Department of Youth and Community Affairs courses are limited to about 25 participants per course, both male and female. Usually there are many more girls than boys. Courses commence with six weeks of basic training in life skills. Classes take place in an old classroom block behind the Nauru Secondary School that is in urgent need of refurbishment. As shown in the timetable (Table 19) this training covers a range of subjects, including RH and SH. The morning devotion is multi-denominational. Instructors in specialised subjects are drawn from various government departments and NGOs to support regular staff of the Department of Youth and Community Affairs.

Table 19. Timetable for the Youth Development Course, 2004

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9.00-9.15	Morning Devotion	Morning Devotion	Morning Devotion	Morning Devotion	Morning Devotion
9.15-10.00	Nauruan Studies	Reproductive and sexual health	Environment	Small Business	Social Activities
10.00-10.30	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess	Recess
10.30-11.30	National Youth Policy	Health & Welfare	Law & order, Constitution	Literacy	Sport and Physical Activities
11.30-12.30	Work Ethics	Food & Nutrition	Fire safety awareness	Field trip	Sport and Physical Activities
12.30-2.00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
2.00-5.00	Floral and Fabric art	Media	Fishing techniques and sea safety	Community project	Cultural Activities

Source: Department of Youth and Community Affairs

After six weeks of classroom training, participants are placed with employers to undertake unpaid work experience for a further three months. The Department organises job placements with government and private employers, and provides participants with an allowance of \$50 per fortnight. Two or three youths per semester are able to obtain on-going employment as a result of this training.

Discontinuation rates in the first few weeks tend to be high. For example, by June 2004 only nine girls and three boys were still enrolled out of an initial intake of 25. Youth workers suggested that this is because a substantial proportion of those who enrol did not do well at secondary school and have low levels of literacy. They are therefore deterred by the formality of the first part of the course, even though it does not depend on literacy skills. Significantly, some who discontinue later reapply and complete the training on their second attempt.

The Department of Youth and Community Affairs also collaborates with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's (SPC) Pacific Youth Bureau, which has assisted with training in income generation and small business skills. So far these activities have been conducted only on a small scale because of limited resources. Staff of the Department of Youth and Community Affairs believed that much more of this type of assistance is needed.

The Department of Sport and the various community youth associations promote sport for youth. Sports include Australian Rules football, soccer, volleyball and basketball. The lack of a grass-covered sports field or well-equipped public gymnasium in Nauru restricts sporting activities.

Overall, boys in Nauru have more sporting opportunities than do girls. Youth workers said this is largely because of a perception that sport for girls can only be organised during daylight hours. The hot climate thus limits them to a few games of softball and volleyball. In fact girls played in the basketball finals held after dark while this report was being prepared, while unsupervised groups of girls wandering around at night are a common sight. Perhaps if transport could be provided and parents could be assured of proper supervision, Nauru's girls could be given more opportunity to participate in sports.

2.6.3 Youth concerns

The staff of the Department of Youth and Community Affairs and other youth group organisers consulted are well aware that unless there is expansion of employment and other opportunities for youth, their activities can bring only limited benefits to young people. 'It's as if the youth drop into a big hole when they reach the end of high school' they said. 'There's very little for them'. This view was echoed time and again by many people consulted for this report. 'I am very concerned that the future for my children is so bleak' was a common theme among informants. At the heart of this problem is the scarcity of employment opportunities.

Unsurprisingly, lack of opportunity manifests as various socially unacceptable behaviours among youth. In Nauru, as elsewhere, some unemployed young people, both boys and girls, express their boredom and frustration by engaging in substance abuse and unsafe sex, and in extreme cases, vandalism, violence and petty crime. Some of these cases result in prosecutions, but it appears that many more go unreported. Sometimes residents themselves deal with the perpetrators. 'Gangs', which can be an important source of peer support, are widely perceived as associated with delinquent behaviour.

There are no reliable statistics to indicate whether problem behaviours among youth are more common in Nauru than elsewhere, but there is a perception in the community that they are increasing. More goods are being stolen, especially electronics and motorcycles. Some say that non-Nauruan shopkeepers are being coerced into purchasing stolen goods, but this is undocumented. Informants speculate that youths, and even children, account for four out of every five petty crimes. Perhaps more importantly, since they see little prospect of increasing opportunities for youth, most informants expect youth crime to continue or escalate.

2.6.4 Parent-child communication

Like parents everywhere, Nauru's parents are finding that modernisation brings many new challenges and issues in child-raising. Teenagers, especially, need substantial guidance and emotional support from their parents if they are to make a safe transition to adulthood. In a modern setting, young people tend to be very mobile and to spend considerable time without supervision. Those who have

left school but have not yet found employment may have few activities to fill in their time, and this leaves them vulnerable to temptations to engage in high risk and/or illicit behaviours. Even those attending secondary school may have much free time on their hands, as there are no classes in the afternoon.

One former head teacher suggested that because most of the new challenges in child rearing arrived with modernisation, parents tend to believe it is the responsibility of state-employed teachers and youth workers to deal with them, at least when the children are away from home. This may explain why some parents appear not to involve themselves too closely with adolescent issues. Whether or not this is universal, there is clearly a need for information and support services to help parents acquire skills in how to teach their adolescent children to handle the challenges of modern society. Many studies in other countries have shown that young people need guidance from both parents and teachers, and their likelihood of engaging in unacceptable behaviour increases if they lack guidance from either source.

As discussed in the final section of this report, providing more opportunities for youth is clearly a priority for Nauru. The situation is well summed up by the following comment below from a youth worker:

"The good thing is that Nauru's youth population is increasing and is a vibrant source of human potential to contribute to the nation; the bad thing is that Nauru is deficient in the infrastructure and resources to develop this potential"

2.7 Situation of Women and Children

There has been little research on the situation of women and children in Nauru, and not much statistical documentation. As indicated earlier in this report, at the time of writing Nauru has not reported on progress in CRC. In view of the limited evidence, and since the situation of women is one of the major determinants of the situation of children, these groups are discussed together in this section.

As traditional Nauruan society was matrilineal, women had an important voice in the family and the community. Although land is still inherited through the maternal side, most informants felt that nowadays the voice of women tends to be ignored, and the status of women has been eroded. They describe Nauruan society as dominated by men, and said the social expectation is that women will defer to their husbands and be submissive and supportive. Although large numbers of women are now engaged in wage employment, as discussed in Section 1.12 above, most women still consider their primary role to be wife and homemaker.

In fact there do not seem to be any legal impediments to prevent equal treatment of men and women. There are a number of women heading government departments and holding other senior posts, and

women occasionally contest parliamentary elections, although so far only one woman has ever been elected to Nauru's parliament. She served two terms, from the late 1980s to early 1990s, most of the time in opposition.

Women participating in a focus group discussion expressed concern that women themselves tend to perpetuate their subordinate role, because of their own reluctance to challenge it. Women tend to feel that conformity is safety, while speaking out exposes them to criticism, scandal-mongering and character assassination, whether or not it is deserved. Reluctance to draw attention to themselves seems to have inhibited many women from being pro-active in community issues in the past.

Nonetheless it is evident that the challenge of deteriorating economic conditions is encouraging women to be more resourceful and to take more initiative. Increasing numbers are looking for new ways of generating income. Roadside food and craft stalls are appearing at weekends, something that was seldom seen in Nauru in the past, and there is enthusiasm among women to acquire skills in gardening, sewing and cooking, among other things. Support and technical assistance to facilitate this could make a major contribution to the future of Nauru.

2.7.1 Domestic violence

There is little documentation of domestic violence against women or children, and published crime statistics are not disaggregated by gender of victim. Assaults, including severe assaults (victims unspecified) accounted for 20.4 per cent of all crime reports between July 2002 and June 2003, but record keepers said that many of these incidents were brawls among men. Indecent assault (females and males under age 17) and rape together accounted for only 1.1 percent of all crime reports in the same period (Nauru Police Department, 2004).

Rape, incest, severe assault and sex with a minor are criminal offences in Nauru. The Department of Justice statistics for 2003 mention three prosecutions for rape and there are said to have been two prosecutions for incest in recent years (Department of Justice, 2004). The statutory penalty for incest or having sex with any person under age 14 years is jail for life, and the penalty for rape is 14 years imprisonment. The community perception seems to be that penalties of such severity are never imposed for these crimes.

Corporal punishment is not permitted in schools, but some incidents of teachers beating children have been reported. Most reported incidents of violence against children are beatings inflicted by older children. Hospitals are not obliged to report domestic violence when any patient, either child or adult, presents with injuries consistent with domestic violence. The Nauru Family Court deals with family and domestic matters, including divorce and custody issues.

Some informants suggested that child abuse, both violence and sexual abuse, is not uncommon, but goes unreported most of the time. The general community perception is that the incidence of domestic violence against both women and children is increasing as the economic situation deteriorates.

Although highly probable, this is undocumented. Before the issue of domestic violence can be addressed effectively, research is needed to obtain more information, especially estimates of the prevalence, type, causes and outcomes of domestic violence.

What can be done immediately, even without data, is to ensure that victims of violence are aware of their rights and have access to a source of assistance. Children as well as women need to be properly informed of their rights and taught how to recognise unacceptable behaviour. They also need ready access to trustworthy and confidential support and counselling services so they can obtain assistance if these rights are being infringed.

2.7.2 Commercial and transactional sex

The term 'commercial sex' is used here to refer to sexual favours sold for an agreed price, whereas 'transactional sex' refers to situations where the main motive of the person offering sexual favours is to obtain some kind of economic benefit, such as food, clothing or other type of reward. Whereas transactional sex is more difficult to identify and the definition is more subjective, it generally tends to be more common than commercial sex.

Commercial sex is illegal in Nauru, and no arrests or prosecutions in connection with commercial sex were recorded in recent years. There was also no evidence of involvement of minors in commercial sex (Nauru Police Department, 2004). Some informants said that one or two female commercial sex workers were believed to be active in one district, but they are not perceived as having a large clientele. Although transactional sex almost certainly occurs it is not perceived as a major issue at this time.

It is widely recognised that not only women, but also children and youth - male as well as female - are more likely to become involved in commercial or transactional sex as a survival strategy when there are few opportunities for employment. Although commercial and transactional sex activities are perceived to be uncommon in Nauru, it should be recognised that the deteriorating economic situation and lack of growth in employment opportunities suggest they could become issues in the future.

Strategies that increase educational and employment opportunities, provide education in reproductive and sexual health and contribute to improved parent-child communication will also help to prevent the involvement of vulnerable groups in exploitive sexual activities.

2.7.3 Female-headed households

Female-headed households everywhere tend to have a greater risk of being disadvantaged because they are likely to have less income security. In the past, Nauru's traditional matrilineal society protected women from disadvantage. Land ownership brought wealth to women as well as to men during the peak of the phosphate boom. Now that royalties have declined, some women who have no other source of income may be disadvantaged, especially those who have become household heads because of marital breakdown and who have no other wage earner in the household.

Table 20. Marital status of men and women aged 15 years and over, Nauru, 2002

	Males %	Females %
Never married	34.3	31.8
Married or de facto	60.9	58.2
Divorced	0.9	1.1
Separated	1.2	2.0
Widowed	2.1	6.1
Not Stated	0.6	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0
Total Number	3112	3097

Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002

Table 20 shows that in 2002 women were only slightly more likely to be currently divorced or separated than were men, although considerably more likely to be widowed because of their longer average life expectancy than men. Nonetheless, in 2002 just over one household in every four in Nauru was headed by a female. Table 21 compares the housing characteristics of male and female-headed households.³

Table 21. Characteristics of male and female headed households, Nauru, 2002

	Male headed (%)	Female headed (%)
Walls of wood, tin or iron	28.1	40.2
Own house	52.4	79.9
Employer's or govt. provided house	29.2	8.6
Ten or more people	13.7	24.6
More than one family sharing	16.3	19.2
Access to safe drinking water	85.7	75.3
Shared water source	37.2	38.7
Water supply never dries up	15.9	23.5
No toilet	2.0	0.9
Septic tank	47.0	74.4
Kitchen garden	16.6	19.5
Catch fish	48.7	49.7
Sell fish	1.3	0.2
Total number of households	1205	442

Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002

Table 21 indicates that, compared with households headed by males, female-headed households are more likely to occupy houses with wooden or tin walls than brick or concrete walls, more likely to be privately owned (and rarely provided by employers), more likely to house at least 10 or more people and more likely to occupy buildings shared by more than one family.

³ Other household characteristics where percentages were similar have been excluded from this table.

Nauru's female-headed households are less likely to have access to safe drinking water and more likely to share a water source with another household, but also more likely to have a water source that never dries up. They are less likely to have no toilet at all, but more likely to be connected to a stand-alone septic tank rather than a sewerage system. They are more likely to have a kitchen garden, and, while a slightly higher percentage of female households catch fish, they are less likely to sell the fish they catch.



The picture presented by these statistics does not suggest that female-headed households are noticeably disadvantaged in terms of their physical environment. Compared with male-headed households, more female heads seem to be living on their own land, and more seem to be in large extended family households that are likely to provide them with economic and social support. This is probably a reflection of the matrilineal nature of Nauruan society. Female headed households also seem to have comparatively good access to services, and to be equally likely to produce some of their own food. Statistics on employment suggest a less favourable picture, however.

Table 22. Employment status of male and female household heads, Nauruans only, 2002

	Male %	Female %
Employed	44.9	46.6
Unemployed	12.3	39.8
Looking for work	3.4	10.2
Not applicable	39.4	3.4
Total	100.0	100.0
Number	1205	442

Source: Nauru Bureau of Statistics, 2002.

Table 22 shows that while a slightly higher percentage of Nauruan female household heads were employed compared to male household heads, the unemployment rate for female-headed households was more than three times that for male-headed households. Three times as many female household heads said they were looking for work, while only a few had alternative sources of income so that they did not need to be in the labour force (the 'not applicable' category).

Clearly, children and adolescents living in female-headed households where the head is looking for work are likely to be at risk of disadvantage. This risk is likely to increase if there is further deterioration in economic conditions in the future.

2.8 Vulnerability

Vulnerability in the sense of dwindling or fluctuating capacity to sustain day-to-day living standards is a major current concern in Nauru that affects everyone, including children, youth and women. The fall in phosphate production levels and foreign demand during the late 1980s signified the beginning of the downturn in the country's economy. Since the late 1990s, residents have developed an acute awareness that the availability of the basic necessities of water, electricity and fuel for transport can no longer be assumed. Intense temperatures and high humidity make it impractical to walk far in Nauru during the day, so there is heavy reliance on motorised transport, mostly cars and small motorcycles, to convey adults to their workplace and children to school. Despite this, the island often runs out of petrol, and in the second half of 2003 was without petrol for more than two months.



Although shortages are not continuous, they are common. During the preparation of this report the desalination plant did not operate some of the time, leaving many households and public buildings short of water, and supplies of petrol ran out, immobilising many of the island's vehicles. There were also several widespread power outages. Since 2003 the impact on the community of intermittent shortages has been exacerbated by the irregular payment of wages to workers in the public sector.

Nauru is so remote that virtually all international passengers travel by air. Nauru established its own airline when national income was high, and still operates the only link between Nauru and the rest of the world. This is now reduced to a single aircraft that flies between Brisbane and Nadi via Honiara, Nauru Island, Tarawa and Majuro four times weekly. Whenever this aircraft is grounded for any reason, Nauruans are effectively isolated. Discontinuities in air transport are not only an inconvenience to travellers but can endanger the lives of seriously ill patients needing evacuation and delay shipments of essential drugs and vaccines.

Another source of vulnerability is dependence on imports of food. Shipments of food and other imports are normally scheduled each month, but financial and other difficulties sometimes delay shipments, leaving the island short of food. When shipments do arrive, unloading may be delayed for several days if seas are rough.

Since some of these commodity shortages result from dwindling national capacity to pay for imports, there is a growing concern among residents that they will face further shortages in the near future. In addition, the small size of Nauru's economy limits its capacity to negotiate on the world market, and the country is therefore vulnerable to fluctuating prices as a result of international market changes.

Another factor contributing to vulnerability is a continuing international perception that per capita incomes in Nauru are still high. For example, at the time of writing most websites still gave the Nauruan GDP per capita as around \$US 5000, which would make it one of the highest in the region (e.g. <http://www.factover.com/economy/Nauru>). Although it is stated that this is an estimate for 2001, it contributes to a common view that Nauru does not really require donor assistance.

In 2000 the United Nations promulgated its Millennium Development Goals and encouraged all member countries to undertake realistic measurement of social conditions and poverty, as part of the process of assessing and improving the situation of children, youth and women. Since then there has been much discussion about how to measure living conditions in the Pacific. Some Pacific countries have rejected the concept of poverty as being inappropriate for the region, especially the usual UN measure of \$US1.00 per capita per day. It is argued that the capacity for subsistence lifestyles outside the cash economy, traditional coping mechanisms and social safety nets make such a concept irrelevant. As yet no assessment of the relevance of these measures has been made for Nauru, although it is likely to take place in the near future. Such an assessment will need to be done with great care, since ownership of land represents the bulk of individual wealth, but there is also a high dependence on regular cash incomes to purchase imports.

It is generally expected that, in the short term at least, there will be further erosion of Nauru's national income. Awareness of this possibility has focused community attention on the need to identify alternative sources of revenue to protect living standards. Particularly vulnerable are the groups who are the focus of this report, children, youth and women.

PART **3**
STRATEGIES

3.1 Strengths and Opportunities

Although it is evident that Nauru is confronting a number of major economic and social challenges, it is also evident that it has the potential to address them. In particular it has three major strengths. First is the high level of awareness and community concern. It used to be said that Nauruans tend to live for the present and don't worry about the future (AusAID and Nauru Department of Health, 2003). Even if this once was true, it certainly is not true today. A special area of widespread community concern is the future of young people. The importance and urgency of expanding opportunities for youth were mentioned by almost everyone who provided information for this report.

This awareness and concern about the future is a great strength. It signifies that the Nauruan community is ready to take action to address priority issues. What is needed is technical assistance to build local capacity and so that this community awareness and concern can be translated into strategies and action.

Another strength is that there is a good foundation in Nauru upon which to build capacity. Virtually all Nauruans are fluent in the English language, and many are well travelled, educated overseas and experienced in the modern world. While some who did not complete their education have limited reading and writing skills, most Nauruans of working age are literate in English. This means that the country is able to make use of technical assistance from overseas to develop human resources and Nauruan workers would be employable in Pacific Rim countries.

A third strength is that Nauru still has the opportunity to preserve a sustainable balance between population and available resources. Optimum population size is a relative concept that depends on the availability and utilisation of resources. Nauru would quickly become 'over-populated' if it were to remain heavily dependent on imports while capacity to purchase them dwindled.

Fertility levels were high in the 1980s and 1990s, but they now appear to be declining, while repatriation of non-Nauruans is freeing up some housing and making space for local entrepreneurial opportunities. Increased production of local foods and greater use of renewable energy could reduce the demand for imports, while skill-based, agricultural and marine-based industries could provide employment and increase capacity to import essential goods. Opportunities for short-term employment in neighbouring countries such as Australia and New Zealand also could assist Nauru. If these strategies are implemented in conjunction with further fertility decline, Nauru should be able to avoid a situation where living standards are continually eroded by rapid population growth.

These strengths offer a good foundation for improving the situation of children, youth and women. There seems to be general agreement in the community that the issues affecting youth should be the first priority. Clearly, strategies to benefit youth will also benefit children in the future, as well as ensuring the future of the whole community. It is also evident that a priority for women should be health services that address their special needs.

3.2 Approaches

3.2.1 Capacity building

One of the most critical shortages in Nauru is the shortage of capacity in the key areas that would improve the situation of children, youth and women. Nauruans are well aware of the need to develop local capacity in both social and community services and economic development, and are enthusiastic to acquire assistance to build this capacity.

Although many Nauruans obtained qualifications in the past when study overseas was affordable, in many cases these qualifications are under-utilised. Sometimes jobs and qualifications are mismatched, in other cases skills have been lost because of lack of practice, or sometimes skills have simply dated. Upgrading or refreshing and increasing utilisation of these skills would be a cost-effective strategy that could bring substantial economic benefits.

Capacity can be built by means of technical assistance, training-of-trainers and/or training of specialists. Areas in which capacity development could benefit target groups and also the wider community include social support services (social work, counselling and psychology); life-skills education; domestic science (nutrition, cooking, family health) horticultural and agriculture; income generation; small business, and vocational and technical skills. There are also many other areas where development of capacity could have far reaching benefits.

3.2.2 Developing partnerships

A common reason for failing to utilise skills and/or failing to achieve worthwhile results is working in isolation. Small countries like Nauru are especially at risk of under-utilising capacity because the people who receive training may not find, or recognise, the opportunity to use newly acquired skills. Forming partnerships with technical assistance agencies, donors and NGOs would enable follow-up and mentoring to ensure training is applied and fully utilised. Regional agencies and NGOs are especially valuable as partner organizations because of their experience in providing on-going support.

Another form of partnering that could bring great benefits to Nauru is increased community involvement with schools, health facilities and social services. Already there are a number of community associations and parents associations in Nauru. Fostering and supporting these organizations and the formation of others as appropriate, such as school boards, hospital boards and family health associations, could enhance the quality and efficiency of services and provide valuable support.

An example of the effectiveness of this strategy occurred while this report was in preparation. The parents' association at one of Nauru's infant schools agreed to carry out improvements at the school, and parents contributed labour and materials so that repairs could be carried out and essential services restored. This type of partnering not only improved the school directly but also can contribute to development of parenting skills by increasing parental involvement and interest in school activities.

3.2.3 Research

Research is required to improve targeting of some assistance to youth, including in-depth research on youth perceptions of issues and their needs. This is important to increase the efficacy of technical assistance, and to build capacity in life skills training and employment preparation. It could also help to reduce problems associated with disaffection of youth. Participatory research methods would be particularly beneficial because they not only provide insights as to how to tackle issues, but can also help respondents clarify issues and work with peers to identify solutions and strategies (Feuerstein, 1986: 2).

Research also is required to explore further the situation and needs of children and women. Research priorities include studies of the causes of increased infant mortality, an assessment of child nutrition and studies on the health and safety of both women and children. Where possible, research should be quantitative supported by qualitative (in-depth), and should include participatory research because of the spin-off benefits of this community involvement in research and self-analysis.

3.3 Suggested priorities

In Nauru, as in every country, there are many issues concerning children, youth and women that could be prioritised. Some of Nauru's most important needs are already being addressed with donor assistance, or are likely to receive funding in the near future. This includes substantial funding towards upgrading education and health. It is too early to say to what extent donor assistance will alleviate the problems in these sectors, but it appears likely that it will take many years and considerable investment to rectify them. Other national priorities, including rehabilitation of mined lands and development of alternative sources of national income, involve massive investment and are on-going items on the government agenda. The degree of success in these areas will be a major force shaping the future of the whole community.

Regardless of the level of investment and progress in these major development activities, a few achievable strategies to improve the situation of children, youth and women should be prioritised. They include both discreet and complementary activities that could be implemented quite cheaply, are likely to be cost effective and have the potential to achieve considerable synergy with other development activities.

This report concludes with a list of these low cost priorities that could be addressed by government, community and donor partnerships using the approaches described above. It is suggested that the first priority should be youth, followed by women and children.

3.3.1 Priorities for youth

- **Provide more resources and technical assistance with training for employment, and to build training capacity in educating youth in life skills and preparation for employment**
This could include strengthening and augmenting the training provided by Department of Youth and Community Affairs; providing careers advice and life skills training in schools; and promoting technical and vocational education. Technical assistance is also needed to provide skills in income generation.
- **Technical assistance in employment generation for youth**
This could include technical assistance and cooperation with Department of Island Development and Industry and Nauru Rehabilitation Corporation to identify and create employment opportunities for young people as part of the rehabilitation of mined areas.
- **Establish a youth health centre to provide specific health services for youth, including reproductive and sexual health services and counselling**
This activity could be carried out in conjunction with the national health strategy and could also involve collaboration with the Department of Youth and Community Affairs and Department of Sport. Services should address all aspects of adolescent health including reproductive and sexual health and psychosocial needs. To ensure high levels of usage, a key feature of any youth health service should be confidentiality. One strategy for promoting confidentiality is to locate the service at a youth centre that also provides recreational and sporting activities. Services should be available to both young men and young women.
- **Provide social workers, counsellors and community liaison officers to work with teachers and parents**
Trained social workers, counsellors and community liaison officers could be appointed to provide direct assistance with youth problems and also to train counterparts in advisory and liaison strategies. Technical assistance could provide support and advisory services to help parents improve parenting skills.
- **Promote involvement of parents in secondary school activities as members of parents' associations and school advisory boards**
This could be facilitated by collaboration with the Department of Education and by other community organizations. Greater involvement of parents and community in secondary school issues would raise awareness of educational issues and promote a self-help approach to the improvement of facilities in secondary schools. This would be cost effective and also have many spin-off benefits, including promoting parental interest in school activities and increasing monitoring of educational standards by parents. The objective should be to involve both men and women in school activities.

- **Promote channels for youth to speak out about their concerns**
This could include activities such as organising a Youth Parliament, conducting youth workshops and organising participatory evaluation activities to help to build interest and team spirit and encourage a pro-active attitude among young people towards solving their problems. These activities should involve both young men and young women, and should include effective channels for reporting views to relevant adults in government and community.
- **Carry out in-depth research on the views, perceptions and needs of youth to enable better targeting of strategies to assist them**
Research could be carried out with technical assistance and should involve participatory methods where possible. Participatory research is particularly valuable in raising awareness and promoting a pro-active approach to problem solving among subjects while also providing information to guide interventions.

3.3.2 Priorities for women

- **Provide a women's health centre or similar facility to give special attention to women's health issues, including reproductive and sexual health**
This facility could be planned in collaboration with both the Department of Health and the Department of Women's Affairs. A women's health centre could address all women's health needs including reproductive and psycho-social needs. It could also provide health and nutrition education and promote child spacing to improve the health of both infants and their mothers. Confidentiality of consultations should be a key feature. Such a centre could also extend services to younger women to help prevent unplanned teenage pregnancy.
- **Provide technical assistance to promote women's employment**
Appropriate technical assistance in this area could be developed in collaboration with the Department of Women's Affairs, the National Council of Women, community associations and the private sector. Assistance could include training in income generation, craft and artisan skills, small business management and special skills required by potential employers.
- **Provide domestic science education for adult women**
In this area also, needs should be identified and prioritised in collaboration with the Department of Women's Affairs, the National Council of Women and with women in the community associations. Topics that could be addressed with technical assistance include methods of cultivating and cooking home grown food, nutrition education, sewing classes and other skills. Special education for women could also include health education and advice to parents (male and female) of children and adolescents.

- **Increased education in women's rights**

Technical assistance could provide workshops and promotional materials on women's rights. These activities should include disseminating information on the unacceptability of any type of domestic abuse perpetrated on any family member, and advice on where to obtain assistance if violence occurs.

- **In-depth research to explore women's status in the family, domestic violence and any other women's issues that might need to be addressed**

Technical assistance could support research on these key issues. Workshops and participatory methods should be used where possible to help to raise awareness of issues and promote a proactive approach to tackling any problems identified.

3.3.3 Priorities for Children

- **Increased awareness of children's rights**

Community-wide education is needed to inform both children and adults about children's rights. This could take various forms, including workshops; community meetings; visits to schools by police officers to provide information on children's rights; media presentations; posters; and leaflets.

- **Increased involvement of parents in pre-school and primary school activities by strengthened parent associations and similar organizations**

As in the case of involvement with secondary schools, described above, this could be facilitated by collaboration with the Department of Education and by other community organizations. Greater involvement of parents and community in school issues would raise awareness of educational issues and promote a self-help approach to the improvement of school facilities. This would be cost effective and also have many spin-off benefits, including promoting parental interest in school activities and increasing monitoring of educational standards by parents. The objective should be to involve both men and women in school activities.

- **Improved school health services and early identification of disabilities**

Improvements to the school health service should be included as part of the strengthening of public health. Technical assistance and collaboration with Department of Education and Department of Health could facilitate an improved service that includes annual monitoring of children's physical and dental health and also health education. Teachers should be trained to consider visual or aural impairment as a possible cause of learning difficulties and other problems, and to refer children for examination where relevant.

- **More teacher training, including for teachers of disabled**

There is substantial scope for augmentation of teacher training in most areas, including specialised subjects and teaching the disabled. Various partners, including major donors and the Department of Education, could work together on a coordinated program of teacher skills development to enable a greater range of educational needs to be met. A priority is upgrading the skills of the three teachers currently employed at the Able Disabled School.



- **Investigation of the causes of the recent increase in infant mortality**

There is an urgent need to investigate the causes of an apparent increase in the infant mortality rate, and this could be facilitated by technical assistance. The number of cases is small, so careful research is needed to assess trends in a topic that is very sensitive in the Nauruan community. Research should include an assessment of the underlying causes of recent deaths and a comparison of risk factors in families and households that have and have not experienced infant deaths.

- **Research on child nutrition**

Technical assistance is needed to support research on child nutrition. This should include statistical research on growth attainment, diary methods of research on children's daily food intake and assessments of household food security.

- **Research on children's needs within the family and domestic violence**

Technical assistance could support research on these key topics. A survey of family health and safety such as that undertaken by UNFPA, SPC and WHO in collaboration in Samoa could provide much needed information on safety issues for all household members to inform policy and interventions. Both a quantitative survey and qualitative studies of domestic violence are needed to provide a complete picture of prevalence, manifestations and causes.



"The challenge facing us in this new era is not so much one of building consensus, because we all know what needs to be done, but rather one of implementation. Achieving our goals requires action and cooperation at all levels, from local to global."

His Excellency Rene R. Harris, former President of Nauru,
addressing the United Nations General Assembly, 12 September, 2002.

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LIST OF PEOPLE CONSULTED IN NAURU, July 2004.

Ms Camilla Solomon	Chief Secretary
Mr Alf Itsamaera	Acting Secretary of Foreign Affairs
Mr Lionel Aingimea	Secretary of Justice Dept
Ms Joy Heine	Director, Women's Affairs
Ms Krystalmaine Dick	Project Officer, Women's Affairs
Ms Yuri Buraman	Culture Department, Women's Affairs
Ms Peta Gadabu	President, Nauru National Women's Council
Mr Ryke Solomon	Director of Administration, Chief Secretary's Department
Mr Ipia Gadabu	Statistician, Statistics Office, Ministry of Finance
Ms Charmaine Scotty	Secretary of Health
Dr Godfrey Waidubu	Director of Public Health
Sr Eva Gadabu	Well Baby Clinic
Ms Ruby Toma	Health Coordinator
Ms Lyn Teleni	Secretary of Education
Ms Pearl Detanamo	Yaren Primary School
Ms Miranda Edward	Yaren Primary School
Ms Lydia Beaden	Yarren Primary School
Ms Lise Kun	Early Childhood Education Coordinator, Department of Education
Ms Madona Dongolair	Ag Teacher in Charge, Anetan Infant School
Ms Clarice Gadabu	Ag Teacher in Charge Boe Infant School
Ms Laura Kabokia	Ag teacher in Charge, Meneng Infant School
Ms Tammy Garabwan	Ag teacher in Charge, Nibok Infant School
Ms Corinne Joram	Playcentre Teacher, Boe Infant School
Ms Pristina Demauna	Playcentre Supervisor, Kayser College
Ms Alemanda Lauti	Ag Director, USP Centre

Ms Ellarmaine Detenamo	Secretary, Able-Disable Parents and Friends (Children with Special Needs)
Jean	Teacher, Able Disabled Centre
Enza	Teacher, Able Disabled Centre
Margaret	Teacher, Able Disabled Centre
Ms Iemme Hubert	Anabar Youth Representative
Ms Deborah Dowouw	Buada Community
Ms Joan Hiram	Denig Community
Ms Sue-Chen Apadinuwe	Ijuw Community
Ms Sylvania Angbate	Ijuw Community
Ms Bermona Obeta	Ijuw Community
Ms Kathleen Moses	Aiwo Community
Ms Rosalie Fritz	Buada Community
Ms Suzie Scotty	Boe Pre-School (CETC graduate)
Mr Nelson Tamakin	Director of Youth Affairs
Mr Preston Ikai	Deputy Director of Youth Affairs
Mr Livingston Hiram	Project Officer, Youth Affairs and HIV/AIDs Peer Educator
Mr Vaiuli Amoe	Aiwo Youth Council
Ms Mizuli Apadinuwe	Ijuw Youth Council
Mr John Tannang	Vice President, Nauru Youth Council
Ms Delphy Scotty	Youth Affairs
Ms Philomena Gadraoa	Youth Affairs
Mr David Dowiyowo	President National Youth Council
Ms Gemma Adam	Secretary to National Youth Council
Mr Darien Whippy	Self-employed draftsman and nurseryman
Various youths and women who participated in focus groups and one on one discussions	

