

EDUCATION FOR ALL

2000

REPORT

Cook Islands

by

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Cook Islands Ministry of Education**

September 1999



Government of the Cook Islands
Minister of Education's Office

Minister of Education; Cultural Development; and Public Service Commission

13th September 1999

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Subject: COOK ISLANDS EDUCATION FOR ALL ASSESSMENT 2000 REPORT

I am pleased to enclose the above-mentioned report, which has been compiled by Ken Matheson, EFA Coordinator for the Cook Islands.

The report was prepared through the collation and analysis of data from the Ministry of Education, other sectoral Ministries and Non-Government Organisations. It highlights the achievements, constraints and future challenges in meeting the EFA aligned goals that were established by the Government during the past decade.

I have much pleasure in submitting this report with my full endorsement and look forward to our continuing collaboration in further strengthening the education system in the Cook Islands.

Yours sincerely,


 (Hon. Jim Marurai)
MINISTER OF EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

Kia orana,

This report on Education for All in the Cook Islands is a comprehensive documentation of general and specific information about the development of the education system as provided by the various agencies at the local, national, regional and international levels.

The portrayal of educational programmes and activities is presented in different perspectives as Parts I – III and as reflected in the Table of Contents.

Acknowledgements are hereby conveyed, on behalf of the Ministry of Education, to those who have contributed to this report. Firstly I would like to acknowledge Mr Ken Matheson, Director of Planning and Finance, for accepting the responsibility as the National Coordinator and for his diligence in the compilation of this report. I also acknowledge all the writers of papers, reports and documents as indicated in the Bibliography, and the “focal persons” in Government Ministries, Non-Government organisations and the Private and Business Sectors who also provided information for this report.

I would like to express my appreciation to the local communities, businesses, Government and overseas funding agencies that have supported education developments in the Cook Islands.

Kia Manuia.

Eric Ponia

Secretary of Education

9 September 1999

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EFA 2000 ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

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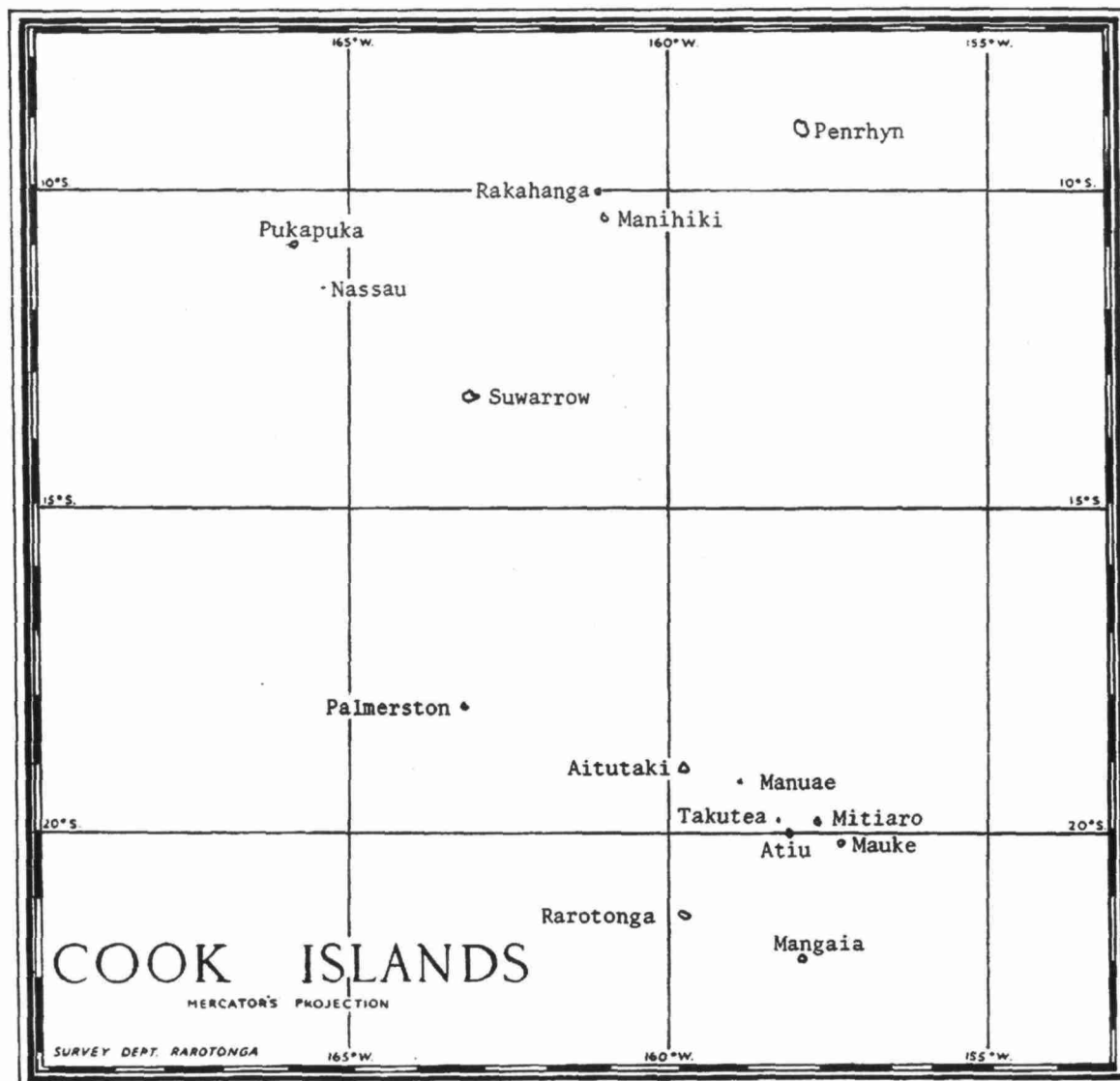
Review Process

In 1990 the World Conference on Education For All (EFA) in Jomtiem established 6 broad target dimensions for education development in all countries from 1990 to 2000. These target dimensions can be summarised as improving : Early Childhood Care and Development; Access to Primary Education; Learning Achievement and Outcomes; Adult Literacy; Training in Essential Skills; and Education for Better Living. This report is a critical review of the progress made in the Cook Islands in regard to the 6 target dimensions.

The review process was initiated in April 1999 by the Ministry of Education's Director of Planning and Finance volunteering to collate statistical data for the EFA 2000 Assessment. In May, the Director was requested to expand his role to produce the first draft of the country report. The draft was completed in June and analysed at a UNESCO sponsored EFA workshop in Fiji. In July, the Director was appointed as the National EFA Coordinator. Other government ministries and non-government organisations were requested to provide information on their basic education programmes and the information received was edited and incorporated into a revised draft report. The revised draft was analysed at a second UNESCO organised EFA workshop held in Fiji. At both workshops advice was provided by members of the Regional Technical Advisory Group.

THE COOK ISLANDS

The Cook Islands consists of 15 islands located in the South Pacific Ocean from 156 to 167 degrees west and from 8 to 23 degrees south. Its nearest neighbours are Samoa and Niue to the west and French Polynesia to the east. The total land area of the Cook Islands is only 236.7 square kilometres but its exclusive economic zone covers a substantial area of approximately 2 million square kilometres.



The Cook Islands can be divided into 3 regions; Rarotonga, the Southern Group and the Northern Group. The island of Rarotonga is treated separately because of its dominance in terms of population size, economic activity and government administration. Rarotonga is located in the southern part of the country. The Southern Group comprises 7 islands which are all located within 200 to 300 km from Rarotonga. The Northern Group consists of Palmerston island, located about 500 km from Rarotonga, and 6 other islands located between 1,000 to 1,400 km to the north of Rarotonga.

The Cook Islands is a self-governing country in free association with New Zealand. The resident population in 1998 was estimated at 16, 800 with the majority (about 95 %) being of Cook Islands Maori (Polynesian) descent. Cook Islanders have automatic rights to New Zealand citizenship. In 1996, 47, 019 New Zealand residents claimed to be Cook Islanders. In the same year, the Cook Islands faced an economic crisis that resulted in net out-migrations and population decreases in 1997 and 1998. Cook Islands Maori is the first language for most Cook Islanders but English is also frequently used, especially in secondary schools, businesses, and government administration.

The policy of free and compulsory basic education has long been endorsed and implemented by successive government administrations. The concept was first proposed over 100 years ago with free secular schools being opened in 1896. The public school system on Rarotonga and the outer islands began to expand from 1915 onwards and by 1928, 80 % of all 6 – 14 year old children were attending school. By 1936 this had improved to 90 – 95 % (“Polynesia Way”, 1989). In the 1996 Census, 99% of Cook Islanders aged 15 years or older reported that they had attended school and 90% reported that they had completed primary school education.

There are 36 schools in the Cook Islands with, at least, one school on every permanently inhabited island. The total enrolment of 4,950 in 1998 is the lowest on record for more than 12 years and represents an 11% decrease since 1996. Rarotonga has 56 % of the total student population, the Southern Group 33% and the Northern Group 11%. The majority of students (85 %) attend Government schools.

The Education Act 1986-87 defines a pre-school child as “ a child between the ages of three and a half years and five years attending a pre-school institute”. Preschool attendance is not compulsory. In 1998 there were 460 pupils enrolled in preschools.

The primary school level is defined in the Education Act as being Grades 1 to 6 inclusive. In 1998 there were 2,711 primary level students. Education in the Cook Islands is compulsory from the age of 5 to the end of the year in which a child turns 15. By this age, a student is expected to have completed Grade 10 (Form 4) level. Therefore basic education refers to Grades 1 to 10 (Form 4) inclusive.

PART 1 DESCRIPTIVE SECTIONS

1. EFA GOALS AND TARGETS

The first initiative towards determining the direction for education in the Cook Islands for the 1990s was the review of Cook Islands education by a Ministerial Taskforce which culminated in the publication of "Polynesia Way" in July 1989. The "Polynesia Way" proposals were regarded "as a guide – not a blue print" for education development.

In 1990, the Minister of Education and the Assistant Minister of Education represented the Cook Islands at the Jomtiem World Conference on Education For All.

The Government then commissioned consultants from New Zealand to conduct a study of the Education and Training Sector in the Cook Islands and to produce a report for Cabinet. The "Education and Training Sector Study – Final Report" was accepted in principle by Cabinet in June 1992 and published in August 1992.

The Sector Study did not deliberately set out to determine the Cook Islands response to EFA goals. However many of the aims of the Education Sector Action Plan proposed in the "Education and Training Sector Study – Final Report" do address EFA target dimensions. The objectives and indicators of achievement for the six dimension targets in this report are derived from this Education Sector Action Plan.

1.1 Early Childhood Care and Development

Objective

To improve the efficiency , effectiveness, management, monitoring and sustainability of early childhood education in the Cook Islands.

Indicators of Achievement

- 90% early childhood education enrolment by 1996 and 100% by 2001
- early childhood education curriculum framework by 1993
- 100 % of early childhood education teachers trained by 1996

1.2 Primary and Basic Education

Objective

The Education Act 1986-87 makes it compulsory for all children to attend school from the age of five to the end of the year in which the child turns fifteen. Therefore, there is

the expectation that all children in the Cook Islands have access to, and complete, at least ten years of basic education. The Education Sector Action Plan (1992) aimed to reduce repetition and dropout rates and to improve funding, resources, syllabuses and teacher performance.

Indicators of Achievement

- Minimum primary school repetition rates from 1993 onwards
- Reduced secondary school repetition and drop-out rates from 1994
- Increased secondary enrolment ratios from 1994
- 200 teachers in-serviced by 1995 and improved teacher performance
- 20 Principals/Managers in-serviced by 1994
- 45% of the education budget to be allocated to early childhood and primary school education by 1996 and 50% by 2001
- National curriculum policy and syllabuses by 1994
- 12, 500 new books in primary schools, 1,100 new books in secondary schools and improved school library stocks by end of 1994
- Special needs provision/units from 1993 onwards

1.3 Learning Achievement and Outcomes

Objective

To improve the quality of primary school graduates for entry into secondary schools in the Cook Islands and to improve the scale and quality of secondary school grade output appropriate for further education, locally and overseas, and the local labour market in the Cook Islands.

Indicators of Achievement

- Higher primary school literacy and numeracy rates
- Improved national primary school educational standards and improved secondary school student performance.
- An improved testing and measurement system by end of 1994

1.4 Adult Literacy

No objectives were specifically set for adult literacy.

1.5 Training in Essential Skills

Objective

To improve the scale, quality and equity of output from the local and overseas training system appropriate for projected labour market requirements in the Cook Islands.

Indicators of Achievement

- increased numbers of technical professionals and information technology qualified personnel from 1993
- increased numbers of craft level graduates and hotel and tourism trained staff from 1993
- increased numbers of small business trained staff and trained managers from 1993
- coordination of human resource policy and planning across all sectors

1.6 Education for Better Living

The Education Sector Action Plan proposed a feasibility study on distance education. This report is discussed in Part 2.

2. EFA STRATEGY

2.1 Adjustment, Revitalisation and Selective Expansion

The Education Sector Action Plan, published in the "Education and Training Sector Study – Final Report" in August 1992, recommended three main strategies entitled Adjustment, Revitalisation and Selective Expansion.

Adjustment Strategies :

- increased decentralisation of education system management to island councils, school committees and community groups
- mobilising additional resources for education through user charges, cost sharing and encouragement of selective private training operations
- containing unit costs through improved use of teachers, school reorganisation and increased distance education and part-time programmes

Revitalisation Strategies :

- improving the quality and availability of textbooks and library books

- improving teacher performance and morale through staff development opportunities and the provision of the basic resources necessary to do the job
- strong commitment to maintaining and improving academic standards through strengthening examination systems
- focusing schools on revitalisation through management training for principals and school committees
- increased investment for maintenance and general operating costs through block grants and community financing

Selective Expansion Strategies :

- increased access to secondary education up to NZSC level in the outer islands through correspondence courses
- expansion of tertiary education, especially in labour market shortage areas, through increased traineeship programmes, on the job training, incentives for part-time university studies and professional development programmes
- increased on the job training for professional and technical staff, especially teachers, focussing on management development
- diversification of the secondary curriculum, including for adults wishing to upgrade numeracy, literacy and technical skills, through careful utilisation of existing school plant and that of major employers via work-experience programs

2.2 Programmes of Action

The Education Sector Action Plan (1992) proposed 5 programmes of action :

1. Ministry of Education Restructuring and Decentralisation Project (MERDP)
2. Early Childhood and Primary Education Improvement Project (ECPEIP)
3. Secondary Education Quality Revitalisation Project (SEQRP)
4. National Employment and Training Authority Project (NETAP)
5. Tertiary Education and Skills Training Project (TESTP)

2.2.1 Ministry of Education Restructuring and Decentralisation Project (MERDP)

The aim of MERDP was to improve the responsiveness of the education system through greater participation of the community. The programme planned to restructure the Ministry of Education to strengthen policy and planning, information gathering,

quality assurance processes, central and community level management, and overall system monitoring.

2.2.2 Early Childhood and Primary Education Improvement Project (ECPEIP)

The aim of ECPEIP was to improve the quality of the output from primary schools through revitalising early childhood and primary education quality. This was to involve increased availability of textbooks, development of a national curriculum framework, teacher training, examinations development and principal's management training. Related policy measures included containment of unit cost through regulation of staffing ratios, reorganisation of schools into larger more cost effective units, expansion of correspondence programs and the phased introduction of user fees.

2.2.3 Secondary Education Quality Revitalisation Project (SEQRP)

The aim of SEQRP was to improve the scale and quality of the output from the secondary schools, consistent with further education requirements and local labour market needs. This was to involve increased availability of textbooks, teacher and principal training, examinations development, reducing the secondary cycle from 6 to 5 years and the phased introduction of user fees.

2.2.4 National Employment and Training Authority Project (NETAP)

The aim of NETAP was to make the human resource development system more responsive to local employment and labour requirements through the formation of a National Employment and Training Authority, initially within the Ministry of Education but eventually as a statutory body. NETA would coordinate employment/labour market information, determine overall training priorities, manage training finance and monitor training quality.

2.2.5 Tertiary Education and Skills Training Project (TESTP)

The aim of TESTP was to improve access, equity, scale and quality of tertiary level training, both locally and overseas. The main thrust would be to expand on-the-job traineeship and the breadth of university foundation programmes.

2.3 Implementation of the Education Sector Action Plan

The Education Sector Action Plan was planned to be implemented by the Ministry of Education through an ADB funded Technical Assistance Project and substantive Education Development Project with support from existing projects such as the Basic Education and Life Skills (BELS) programme and the Teacher Development and Support (TESP) project.

2.3.1 Institutional Strengthening of the Ministry of Education

The proposed Ministry of Education Restructuring and Decentralisation Project (MERDP) was implemented through an ADB funded Technical Assistance

programme. The "Institutional Strengthening of the Ministry of Education" programme (TA No. 2165-COO) was implemented from mid-April 1995 to mid-August 1995.

2.3.2 The Education Development Project

The Memorandum of Understanding for the Education Development Project was signed in 1992 and implementation initiated in 1995. The project is still in progress and is on target to be completed in mid 2000. Funding is provided through a loan from the Asian Development Bank. The total cost is estimated at \$US 3.37 million of which \$US 2.27 million is the foreign exchange cost (loan) and \$US 1.10 million the local currency cost.

The project combines most of the aspects of The Early Childhood and Primary Education Improvement Project (ECPEIP) and the Secondary Education Quality Revitalisation Project (SEQRP). However the project does not involve any aspects of either the proposed National Employment and Training Authority Project (NETAP) nor the proposed Tertiary Education and Skills Training Project (TESTP). This is because the responsibility for human resource development, in country training and tertiary scholarships was transferred from the Ministry of Education to the Public Service Commission in 1995.

The 9 components of the project are :

1. Teacher Upgrading and Supervision
2. Testing and Measurement
3. Curriculum Materials Writing and Production
4. Instructional Materials
5. Language of Education Policy
6. Distance Education
7. Special Education
8. School Rehabilitation
9. Early Childhood Education Planning

3. EFA DECISION-MAKING AND MANAGEMENT

No formal structure or committee was established specifically for EFA policy and management. However there is a formal system for overall education policy and implementation based on the Education Act 1986-87 and on performance agreements between the Minister and Secretary of Education.

The Education Act assigns responsibility for education policy in the Cook Islands to the Minister of Education. Policy advice is provided to the Minister by the Secretary of Education, the quantity and quality of which, is specified in a performance agreement and in the annual government budget. The Secretary is assisted in preparing policy advice by the Ministry's Senior Management Team and the Directorate of Planning and Finance. Policy development involves consultation with major stakeholders which include the Cook Islands Teachers Institute, School Committees, the Ministry of Outer Islands Development and the core government agencies.

Policies and plans involving the Education Development Project are decided by the Project Coordinating Committee that consists of members from the Ministry of Education, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Ministry of Outer Islands Development.

4. CO-OPERATION

The Ministry of Education provides policy advice, curriculum development, teacher development and quality audits for all schools in the Cook Islands. The Ministry also manages the government schools on Rarotonga which account for 44% of the total student enrolment (1998). These schools are government funded. School fees are requested but are not compulsory.

The Ministry of Outer Islands Development manages the government schools in the outer islands which account for 42% of the total student enrolment (1998). These schools are government funded. School fees are requested but are not compulsory. The intent is that Outer Island Councils (local governments) will gradually assume management of outer island schools. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Outer Islands Development cooperate closely in defining and implementing national education strategies and plans. The two Ministries have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding to further strengthen their cooperation. Government, church and private school Principals and School Committees are consulted in regard to policy and planning issues.

The Catholic Church, Seventh Day Adventist Church and Assembly of God Church manage schools on Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Atiu and Mauke accounting for 12% of the 1998 student enrolment. There are 2 private (non-religious) schools on Rarotonga accounting for 3% of the 1998 student enrolment. Government provides approximately 25% of the operating costs of non-government schools on Rarotonga.

Post secondary and nonformal education programs are planned and implemented by a wide range of government and non-government agencies. The Public Service Commission is responsible for human resource development, the management of overseas tertiary scholarships, apprenticeships / trade training, and the provision of training opportunities to meet the needs of government agencies, the private sector and the community. Most ministries, and in particular Health, Marine Resources,

Agriculture, Police, Culture, Tourism, and Internal Affairs, conduct training courses and public awareness programs related to their areas of responsibility. Ministries often work together and with community groups in coordinated efforts to promote various issues. Cooperation and coordination between Non-Government Organisations is promoted and facilitated by the Cook Island Association of Non-Government Organisations (CIANGO). NGOs have been established for a wide range of interests including the environment, health, sports, culture, arts, children, women's issues and community service. Private businesses frequently donate resources and funds to schools and some businesses have programs for ongoing staff education and training.

Other agencies that co-operate with Government in respect to education development in the Cook Islands include NZODA, AusAID, UNESCO and the ADB. The ADB has been a major partner in advancing education in the Cook Islands through its funding of the Institutional Strengthening of the Ministry of Education Programme and the Education Development Project. NZODA funds the long running Teacher Development and Support Project (TESP). TESP is the major project for strengthening senior secondary school education. It also contributes indirectly towards developments in primary and junior secondary school curricula, resources, teachers, assessment and management. NZODA funds the Inclusive Education Programme which is upgrading teachers' skills and qualifications in classroom teaching techniques. Both NZODA and AusAID provide scholarships for Cook Islanders to study at overseas tertiary institutions.

The Basic Education and Life Skills (BELS) programme is funded by UNDP, UNICEF and AusAID. The Education Systems Planning and Management (ESPAM) module complemented the ADB Technical Assistance initiatives for institutional strengthening. The Primary and Literacy Education (PALE) module and the Curriculum Innovations for Life Skills (CILS) module complemented the Education Development Project initiatives to improve Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary education.

5. INVESTMENT SINCE 1990

5.1 Public Funding

Financial Year (1)	Total Govt expenditure \$ NZ 000	Education expenditure \$ NZ 000	Education expenditure as % of total Govt expenditure	GDP at current market prices (4) \$ NZ 000	Education expenditure as a % of GDP
1990/91	61,686 (2)	7,732 (2)	12.5% (3)	107,117	5.8% (3)
1991/92	58,380	7,419	12.7%	120,781	6.1%
1992/93	56,062	8,372	14.9%	134,069	6.2%
1993/94	85,761	10,666	12.4%	148,999	7.2%
1994/95	65,401	8,249	12.6%	161,206	5.1%
1995/96	60,519	6,331	10.5%	155,056	4.1%
1996/97	43,116	4,727	11.0%	149,069	3.2%
1997/98	44,181	5,517	12.5%	144,239	3.8%

(1) Year ended 31 March up to 1990 and year ended 30 June after 1990

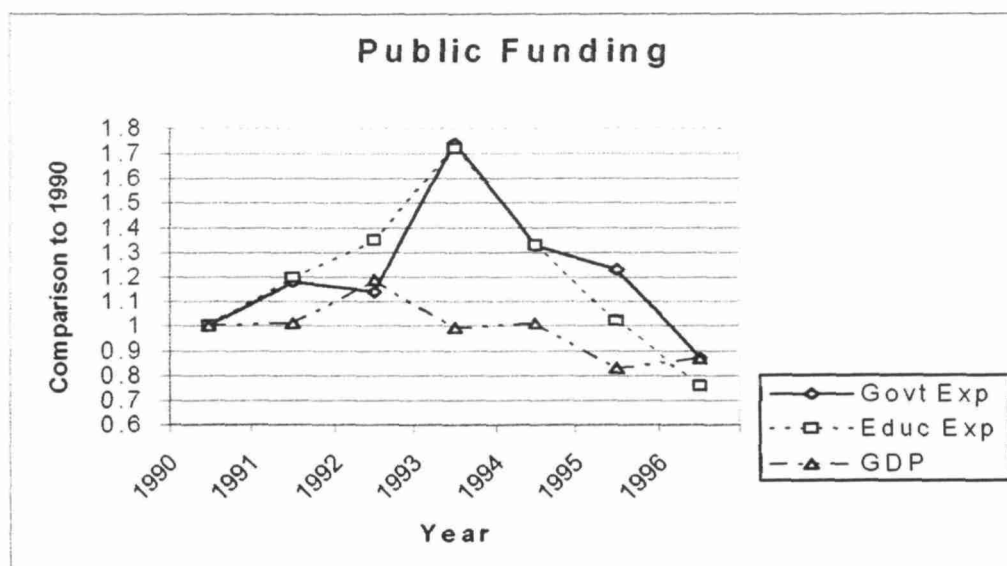
(2) 15 month period

(3) Data corrected from 15 months to 12 months

(4) Year ending 31 December i.e. ending halfway through the stated financial year

Base Year 1990 Comparisons

Year	Total govt exp	Govt exp on educ	GDP
1990	1.00	1.00	1.00
1991	1.18	1.20	1.01
1992	1.14	1.35	1.19
1993	1.74	1.72	0.99
1994	1.33	1.33	1.01
1995	1.23	1.02	0.83
1996	0.87	0.76	0.87
1997	0.90	0.89	1.00



Source : "Cook Islands Annual Statistical Bulletin June 1999", Cook Islands Statistics Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management

Both GDP and public expenditure on education increased during the earlier years of the decade. In 1995 GDP began to decline and the following year the Cook Islands faced an economic crisis. An economic reform program was initiated which included significantly decreased expenditure by the government.

From 1990 to 1997 the average annual allocation to education was \$7, 377, 000 or 12.4 % of total public expenditure. Expenditure on education reached its peak in 1993/94 in terms of both actual expenditure and percentage of GDP, the latter having increased from 5.8% in 1990/91 to 7.2%. The lowest point was in 1996/97 when education expenditure was only 3.2% of GDP and 10.5% of total public expenditure.

It is unclear as to whether the data on education expenditure has been determined by the same method each year or whether the method used, consistently captures expenditure on post secondary education that was transferred from the Ministry of Education in 1995.

5.2 Private Funding

No reliable data is available on the total private funding of education in the Cook Islands.

Fundraising data from 1997 was received from 14 schools representing just over half of the total school population. If the data from this sample is representative of fundraising throughout all schools a total of \$ 285, 392 would have been raised.

1997	Survey Data			Extrapolation	
	<i>Funds</i>	<i>Pupils</i>	<i>\$/pupil</i>	<i>Pupils</i>	<i>\$</i>
Raro	131,106	1580	83	2801	232,423
South	11,085	680	16	1731	28,218
North	7,864	503	16	703	10,991
Govt	114,455	2489	46	4480	206,010
Private	35,600	274	130	775	100,693
Total	150,055	2,763	54	5,255	285,392

Source : 1998 Education Management Information System, Ministry of Education

Private schools educate 15% of the students in the Cook Islands with Government funding approximately 25% of the estimated costs of these schools. The Ministry of Education tentatively estimates that the additional cost to Government, if it were to totally fund all private schools, could approach \$NZ 500, 000 per annum.

The Ministry also tentatively estimates the private costs of uniforms, stationery, study aids, voluntary fees/donations and transport at between \$NZ 100 to \$NZ 500 per state primary or secondary student per annum. The average cost is estimated to be around \$NZ 200 which would approximate to \$NZ 800, 000 private costs per annum for parents of state school students.

5.3 Foreign Aid

The "Cook Islands Government Budget Policy Statement 1999/2000" reports that the actual total foreign aid for the Cook Islands in 1998/99 was \$NZ 10,950,000. This equates to an average of \$NZ 652 per person. The major donors were New Zealand (\$NZ 5,989,000) , the Asian Development Bank (\$NZ 2,549,000) and Australia (\$NZ 1,500,000).

The estimated approved aid funding for the Ministry of Education in 1998/99 was \$NZ 1,027,762 with the main sources being New Zealand (NZODA) and the ADB. In the 1999/2000 financial year the Ministry of Education predicts that aid assistance will total \$NZ 2, 194, 356. This comprises predictions of \$ 600, 000 for the NZODA TESP project, \$ 1, 574, 356 for the ADB (loan) Education Development Project and \$20, 000 for the BELS programme (UNDP/UNICEF/AusAID). This equates to \$ NZ 460 per enrolled student (preschool, primary and secondary).

5.4 New Investments

The Education Development Project is funded both locally and by a loan from the ADB in the ratio of 1 : 2 . From 1995 to 2000 the project is expected to result in \$US 983, 000 being invested in preschool, primary and secondary school resources, furniture and building renovations. This represents an investment of about \$US 200 per student. The breakdown of the investment is : \$US 686,000 for school rehabilitation; \$US 717,000 for new textbooks, library books and resources; and \$US 225, 300 for school furniture and equipment.

5.5 Recurrent Expenditure

Recurrent expenditure on education decreased significantly as a result of the economic crisis in 1996. The Ministry of Education was forced to make cost savings and in 1996/1997 these included :

- phasing out of the Rarotonga school bus service
- closing the Teachers Training College
- reducing expenditure on school resources
- reducing school ancillary staff by 54 % and Ministry administration staff by 29 %
- reducing the number of teachers by 17 % and reducing teachers' salaries by 15 %

There have been increases in recurrent expenditure in each year since 1996. Teachers' salaries were increased by 15% in July 1997. In February 1998, Phase 1 of a new teachers salary scale was implemented resulting in the minimum salary of teachers being increased by up to 100% and the average salary of teachers being increased by over 8 %. The Teachers Training College was reopened in February 1999 and increased expenditure on school resources is planned for 1999/2000.

PART II ANALYTIC SECTIONS

6. PROGRESS TOWARDS GOALS AND TARGETS

6.0 Conventions and Declarations

During the past decade the Government has signed a number of international conventions and declarations that formalise the Cook Islands commitment to equitable access to relevant, quality education for all its citizens.

6.0.1 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

The Cook Islands ratified the CRC on 6 June 1997, thereby making a commitment to the child's right to education. Article 28 of CRC establishes that right. Education is recognised to be essential for all children. The article stresses the right must be achieved on the basis of equal opportunity". This in summary includes:

- Making primary education compulsory and available free to all;
- Promoting the different forms of secondary education and vocational education;
- Making higher education accessible to all;
- Making educational and vocational information readily available; and
- Taking measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and reducing dropout rates.

6.0.2 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)

The Cook Islands endorsed the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in September 1994. As such, the Government pledged:

- To achieve universal access to quality education, with particular priority being given to primary and technical education and job training, to combat illiteracy and to eliminate gender disparities in access to, retention in, and support for, education;
- To promote non-formal education for young people, guaranteeing equal access for women and men to literacy centres; and
- To introduce and improve the content of the curriculum so as to promote greater responsibility and awareness on the interrelationships between population and sustainable development; health issues, including reproductive health; and gender equity.

6.0.3 Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

The Cook Islands acceded to the CEDAW in 1984. By doing so, the Government acknowledges the strategic objectives contained within CEDAW relating to the elimination of gender discrimination against girls and women. These include:

- Ensuring equal access to education;
- Eradicating illiteracy among women;
- Improving women's access to vocational training, science and technology and continuing education;
- Developing non-discriminatory education and training;
- Allocating sufficient resources to monitor the implementation of educational reforms.

6.0.4 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development

The Cook Islands was a signatory to 1995 Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and thereby, pledged their commitment to the rights and goals relating to education that are contained in this declaration. In summary these are:

- The right of all children to education;
- That school discipline will be administered in a manner consistent with the child's dignity;
- To encourage the international cooperation in education especially to eliminate ignorance and illiteracy;
- That the education of the child should be directed to developing the personality of the child, their talents and mental and physical abilities: developing respect for the child's parents, cultural identity, language and values; preparing the child for responsible life in a free society and developing respect for the natural environment.

6.1 EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

In 1998, 26 of the 36 schools in the Cook Islands catered for pre-school students. These comprised 20 government schools and 6 private schools. Two schools (both private) catered solely for pre-school students, 10 catered for pre-school and primary students, and 14 catered for pre-school, primary and secondary students. In 1998, 74 % of pre-school students were enrolled in Government schools. The majority of the students (57 %) lived on Rarotonga. Other than official schools, the only recognised early childhood programme is conducted at the Ngaei Tou Memorial Centre on Rarotonga. The centre is operated by the Disabled Persons Society and catered for 12 special needs pre-school students in 1996. A number of private Child Care centres operate on Rarotonga but no information is available on their programs or the number of children they cater for.

6.1.1 Early Childhood Gross Enrolment

The Education Sector Action Plan aimed to achieve enrolment ratios of 90 % by 1996 and 100 % by 2001. However there is no indication of any progress towards achieving these goals. The 1997 gross enrolment ratio was 64.2 %. This is 7.8 % less than the 1991 gross enrolment ratio of 69.6 %. Total enrolment also decreased by 16% between 1996 and 1997 and no significant improvement has been recorded in subsequent years.

		1997 Enrolment			3.5 - 4 year Population (1)	GER %	Gender Parity Index
		Total	Pre-schools	Others			
NATIONAL	TOTAL	447	447	...	697	64.2	1.2
	Male	214	214	...	360	59.4	
	Female	233	233	...	337	69.2	
Northern Group	TOTAL	70	70	...	96	72.9	1.2
	Male	38	38	...	57	66.7	
	Female	32	32	...	39	82.1	
Southern Group	TOTAL	126	126	...	212	59.4	1.0
	Male	61	61	...	105	58.1	
	Female	65	65	...	107	60.7	
Rarotonga	TOTAL	251	251	...	389	64.5	1.2
	Male	115	115	...	198	58.1	
	Female	136	136	...	191	71.2	

(1) Calculated by summing the 4 year old population and half the 3 year old population.

... = data not available

Note : GER = Preschool enrolment / 3.5 - 4 year population x 100 %

Source : Education Management Information System, Ministry of Education, March 1997
Census of Population and Dwellings 1996, Statistics Office, December 1996

The significantly higher enrolment ratio of females (69.2) compared to males (59.4) is reflected in the Gender Parity Index of 1.2. In all regions the gross enrolment ratio for females exceeds the ratio for males with only the Southern Group approaching parity.

However the Southern Group parity is due to low ratios for both males and females rather than higher male enrolments.

The Northern Group, not only has the highest overall gross enrolment ratio (72.9), but also has the highest ratio for both females (82.1) and males (66.7). The Southern Group has the lowest ratios for males, females and overall.

The reasons for differences in regional and gender enrolment ratios are not known and will need to be investigated in order to restore parity for males and to increase the overall national enrolment ratios.

Early Childhood Enrolments 1993 - 1999

Year	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Preschool roll	530	527	529	530	447	460	422

Source : Ministry of Education's Directorate of Planning and Finance, August 1999



Preschool enrolment in the Cook Islands from 1993 to 1996 remained relatively constant at about 530 students. In 1996, the Cook Islands began to feel the impact of the economic crisis. One year later, the preschool enrolment had decreased by 83 students or 16%. The total decrease in the Cook Islands population during the same period is estimated at 8 %.

6.1.2 Early Childhood Attendance by New Entrants

No reliable data is available on early childhood attendance by new entrants to primary Grade 1. In July 1999, the Ministry of Education sent a survey form to all schools in the Cook Islands requesting information on the number of Grade 1 new entrants, who had attended at least 200 hours of some form of organised early childhood development programme. At the time of writing, insufficient responses had been received to present any indicative figures.

6.1.3 Early Childhood Education Policy and Curriculum

The 1992 Education Sector Action Plan recommended the development of a new early childhood curriculum framework by 1993. This was achieved in 1998 with the publication of the “Draft Policy Framework for Early Childhood Education in the Cook Islands”. This document established the new curriculum elements (subjects) for early childhood education in the Cook Islands and also established specific objectives and strategies to develop a more effective and efficient early childhood education sector. The draft policy advocated :

- improving the quality of early childhood education teaching by preparing and implementing a curriculum statement for early childhood education in the Cook Islands and by developing and providing a variety of educational resources to support the new curriculum.
- increasing the number of trained teachers by establishing a pre-service training course for early childhood teachers and providing in-service training assistance.
- improving early childhood quality by the provision of better information about ongoing development of the early childhood sector.
- improving the education of pre-school children by promoting awareness amongst parents and in communities of the parent’s role as the first educator of their children.

6.1.4 Early Childhood Education Teacher Training

A target of the 1992 Education Sector Action Plan was the provision of training for 100 % of early childhood teachers. By 1998 all 31 early childhood teachers in the Cook Islands had received training relevant to the new policy framework.

A comprehensive program was initiated in 1997 as part of the Education Development Project. In April 1997, 14 participants were involved in a 2 day planning workshop and another 26 participants were involved in a National 4 day planning workshop. In October 1998, 38 participants attended a National workshop on Early Childhood Curriculum implementation. On-island training has been initiated with a workshop on Mangaia for 11 participants. The Ministry of Education employs an Early Childhood Education Adviser who continues to provide advice and training opportunities for Early Childhood teachers throughout the Cook Islands.

6.1.5 Public Expenditure on Early Childhood Education

The Education Sector Action Plan recommended an increased percentage of the education budget be allocated to early childhood and primary school education. Recent data does not include expenditure on post secondary education therefore no direct

comparison can be made between previous and current percentage shares. However a recent cost analysis indicates that expenditure per preschool student in 1997/1998 may be more than double that recorded between 1991 and 1995. However this conclusion is tentative due to probable differences in reporting methods.

Public Current Expenditure on Preschools

	Public current expenditure on Pre-schools (\$NZ) (1)	% of education budget (2)	Pre-school Roll (3)	Expenditure per student (\$NZ)
1991/92	176, 700 (a)	2.4%	467	378
1992/93	176, 700 (b)	2.2%	575	307
1993/94	174, 700 (a)	1.9%	530	330
1994/95	176, 300 (b)	2.1%	527	335

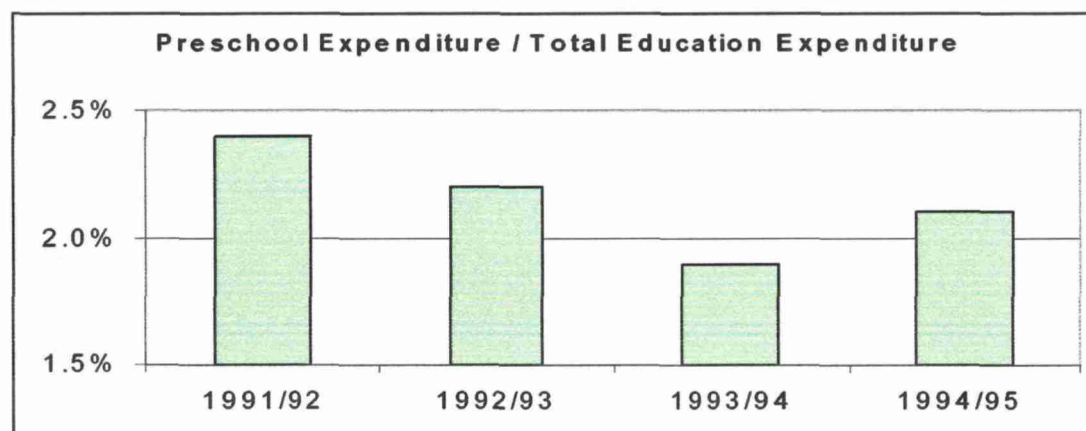
a = actual expenditure b = budget estimates only

Sources :

(1) "Estimates of the Expenditure of the Government of the Cook Islands" 91/92, 92/93, 93/94 and 94/95.

(2) Calculated from total education expenditure from the "Cook Islands Annual Statistical Bulletin June 1999", Statistics Office, Ministry of Finance and Economic Management

(3) Ministry of Education's Directorate of Planning and Finance, August 1999



Government expenditure on early childhood education from 1991 to 1994 remained relatively constant at about \$NZ 176, 000 or \$NZ 340 per enrolled student. The methods used by the Ministry of Education prior to 1996 to determine actual expenditure by level is unclear. Changes to the budget process and the devolution of outer island schools to the Ministry of Outer Islands Development in the second half of the decade prevent the precise determination of expenditure by level of education. However a cost analysis conducted in December 1998 by the Ministry of Education's Directorate of Planning and Finance estimated total government expenditure on preschool education in 1997/98 at \$NZ 363, 696. This equates to 6.1 % of the total education budget (excluding post secondary education) and an average of \$NZ 791 per preschool pupil.

6.2 PRIMARY AND BASIC EDUCATION

6.2.1 Introduction

The government has established schools on all permanently inhabited islands to provide education from Grade 1 to at least Grade 10 (Form 4). This education is "free" in that students are provided with free stationery and the payment of school fees is not compulsory. Private schools also provide basic education for students on Rarotonga and on 3 of the Southern Group islands. In 1998, there were 2, 711 primary school students (Grades 1 – 6) and 3, 955 basic education students (Grades 1 – 10).

6.2.2 Apparent Intake Rate (AIR)

The Apparent Intake Rate (AIR) in the Cook Islands is the number of Grade 1 new entrants divided by the number of 5 year old children in the country. The legal requirement for children aged from 5 to 15 to attend school implies that a fundamental goal of education in the Cook Islands is that all 5 year old children will be enrolled for primary school education. The Apparent Intake Rate of 104.0 % and an analysis of the Net Intake Rate confirm that virtually all 5 year old children are enrolled in the education system.

1997		New Entrants Total	New Entrants aged 5 years	Total 5 year old age population	AIR (Apparent intake rate) %	NIR (Net intake rate) %	AIR GPI	NIR GPI
NATIONAL	TOTAL	469	289	451	104.0	64.1	0.9	1.0
	Male	255	154	239	106.7	64.4		
	Female	214	135	212	100.9	63.7		
Northern Gp	TOTAL	63	46	68	92.6	67.6	0.7	0.8
	Male	38	27	36	105.6	75.0		
	Female	25	19	32	78.1	59.4		
Southern Gp	TOTAL	167	108	150	111.3	72.0	1.1	1.2
	Male	85	51	79	107.6	64.6		
	Female	82	57	71	115.5	80.3		
Rarotonga	TOTAL	239	135	233	102.6	57.9	0.9	0.9
	Male	132	76	124	106.5	61.3		
	Female	107	59	109	98.2	54.1		

GPI = Gender Parity Index

Source : Education Management Information System, Ministry of Education, March 1997
Census of Population and Dwellings 1996, Statistics Office, December 1996

In the Cook Islands there are 3 intakes of Grade 1 students each year. These are usually in February, May and August. Four year old children are permitted to enrol if their birthday occurs soon after the month of enrolment. The enrolment data used for statistical purposes, including this report, is taken in March and therefore records

Grade 1 enrolment from the February intake only. It is expected that the Grade 1 roll would increase with each successive intake during the year.

The 1997 Apparent (Gross) Intake Rate (AIR) for the Cook Islands was 104.0 % indicating that the total number of Grade 1 new entrants exceeded the official school entrance age (5 year old) population. The high AIR value is mainly due to a large number of 4 year old children being enrolled at Grade 1 level. Four year olds, in fact, make up 37 % of Grade 1 new entrant enrolments.

The relatively low AIR of 92.6 % in the Northern Group is due to the very low female AIR of 78.1 % . An analysis of the raw data shows that the low values are due to Grade 1 repetition and the small population exaggerating variations, rather than any significant problem with access to education. The total number of 5 year old females in this region was 32 of which 29 were enrolled in schools (2 in preschool and 27 in Grade 1). Only 3 female children are not enrolled in a school but due to the small population size the effect on ratio values is a significant 9 point reduction.

6.2.3 Net Intake Rate (NIR)

The Net Intake Rate (NIR) of 64.1 % simply indicates that about 64 % of 5 year olds are new entrants to Grade 1. A further 30% of 5 year olds are enrolled in Grade 1 as repeaters and about 7 % are enrolled in Grade 2. Therefore, virtually all 5 year olds in the Cook Islands are enrolled in schools.

6.2.4 Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)

It is a legal requirement for all children aged from 5 to 15 to attend school. The Gross Enrolment Ratio of 111.4 % for primary level and an analysis of the Net Enrolment Ratio confirm that virtually all 5 – 10 year old children are enrolled in the education system. In terms of basic education (G1 – 10), 98.6 % of 5 – 14 year old children are enrolled at school with less than 60 children (0.4 %) not complying with the legal requirement of school attendance.

1997 Data		Total enrolment			5 - 10 year old enrolment			Official school-age population
		Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	
NATIONAL	TOTAL	2,882	2,452	430	2,543	2,166	377	2,588
	Male	1,531	1,309	222	1,348	1,154	194	1,358
	Female	1,351	1,143	208	1,195	1,012	183	1,230
Northern Gp	TOTAL	441	441	0	399	399	0	410
	Male	232	232	0	211	211	0	208
	Female	209	209	0	188	188	0	202
Southern Gp	TOTAL	989	874	115	855	755	100	869
	Male	527	460	67	452	395	57	471
	Female	462	414	48	403	360	43	398
Rarotonga	TOTAL	1,452	1,137	315	1,289	1,012	277	1,309
	Male	772	617	155	685	548	137	679
	Female	680	520	160	604	464	140	630

		GER (Gross enrolment ratio)	NER (Net enrolment ratio)	Gender Parity Index	
				GER	NER
NATIONAL	TOTAL	111.4	98.3	1.0	1.0
	Male	112.7	99.3		
	Female	109.8	97.2		
Northern Gp	TOTAL	107.6	97.3	0.9	0.9
	Male	111.5	101.4		
	Female	103.5	93.1		
Southern Gp	TOTAL	113.8	98.4	1.0	1.1
	Male	111.9	96.0		
	Female	116.1	101.3		
Rarotonga	TOTAL	110.9	98.5	0.9	1.0
	Male	113.7	100.9		
	Female	107.9	95.9		

*Source : Education Management Information System, Ministry of Education, March 1997
Census of Population and Dwellings 1996, Statistics Office, December 1996*

In 1997 the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for Cook Islands primary schools was 111.4 % i.e. the Grade 1 – 6 roll exceeded the total population of 5 – 10 year old children by 11.4 %. Underage students (less than 5 years) and overage students (more than 10 years) account for the GER exceeding 100. The GER of 111.4 % is the sum of 5 – 10 year olds (98.3 %), underage students (6.8 %) and overage students (6.3 %).

All regions recorded GER values over 100 % for both males and females. The overall gender parity index of 1.0 indicates equal access to education for both sexes with the slightly lower female ratios in the Northern Group and Rarotonga generally balancing the higher female ratio in the Southern Group.

The gross enrolment ratio for basic education is 102.8 % with no significant difference between males and females.

6.2.4.1 Net Enrolment Ratio (NER)

In 1997 the Net Enrolment Ratio for Cook Islands primary schools was 98.3 % i.e. 98.3 % of 5-10 year old were enrolled in Grade 1 – 6. However an additional 1.3 % of 5 to 10 year old children were enrolled at secondary school level and another 0.3 % enrolled in preschool bringing the total enrolment of this age group to 99.9%. High overall NER values were recorded in all 3 regions. The NER Gender Parity Index of 1.0 for the Cook Islands reaffirms equal access to education for both sexes. The female NER of 93.1 % in the Northern Group appears to be low but a further 3.5 % of 5 – 10 year females are enrolled at secondary level leaving only 7 girls (3.4 %) unaccounted.

The net enrolment ratio for basic education (G1 – 10) was 96.8 % with the female ratio (97.6) slightly exceeding the male ratio (96.0). However there are other 5 – 14 year old children enrolled in pre-schools or in Grades 11 – 13 who do not show up in this data. In fact 98.6% of all 5 – 14 year olds are enrolled in formal education and only 1.4% or less than 60 are not attending an official school.

6.2.5 Special Education

An aim of the Education Sector Action Plan was the provision of special needs units from 1993 onwards. A Hearing Impairment program has resulted from the Education Development Project and special needs units are located at Avarua School and the Ngaei Tou Memorial Centre. Community initiatives have also resulted in the Cook Islands Learning Disability program.

Rarotonga school age students may enrol at the Te Apii Apiianga Po-ro-ro (Special Education Class) located at Avarua School. As the students develop their knowledge, skills and confidence they are progressively phased into the mainstream classes. The class had 12 students in 1998 and one teacher trained in special education. The teacher is also expected to visit home-based special needs students. Another staff member at Avarua School has been trained in Hearing Impairment through the Education Development Project and is to establish a program to identify and cater for the needs of hearing impaired students throughout the Cook Islands. A special education programme is also conducted in Amuri School on the island of Aitutaki.

The Ngaei Tou Memorial Centre is operated by the Disabled Persons Society and caters for preschool and adult special needs people. One staff member is paid by the Ministry of Education. In 1996 the centre catered for 6 attending pre-schoolers, 6 home-based pre-schoolers and 10 adults.

Source : Ministry of Education

The effort of one parent, who personally implemented a program to help her dyslexic child, has since evolved into the Cook Islands Learning Disability Program. With the assistance of PPSEAWA, a volunteer was sent overseas to study the Bannatyne System which is now used to assist school children with serious learning disabilities. At present, the program caters for about 40 students in 7 primary schools on Rarotonga and is conducted by 2 full time volunteers and 5 part time volunteers. The volunteers have also begun training courses for teachers.

Source : Jane Lamb, CI Learning Disability Volunteer, August 1999

6.2.6 Public Current Expenditure on Primary Education

An aim of the Education Sector Action Plan was to increase the early childhood and primary school share of the total education budget to 45 % by 1996 and to 50 % by 2001. Government's commitment to increased funding for basic education was reaffirmed in 1997 when Cabinet endorsed the "Human Resource Development Policy Framework" which stated that "primary and secondary schooling to Lower Form 5 are to receive priority funding, and a greater proportion of the education budget".

The combined early childhood / primary school share of the education budget was 38 % in 1990. From 1991 to 1994 it ranged from 31 % to 34 %. Recent data does not include expenditure on post secondary education therefore no direct comparison can be made between previous and recent percentage shares. However an analysis of the

available data indicates that the goal has not been achieved and that in fact there has been a decline in preschool-primary level expenditure since 1990. Although there is political commitment to increase proportional funding for the earlier years of education, the reality has been an overall decrease.

Year	Public current expenditure on primary education	Total public current expenditure on education	Total enrolment in primary education	Gross domestic product (GDP)	Total Population (mid year)
1990	2,723,400 (1)	7,732,000 (1)	2,442	107,117,000	17,000
1991	2,307,600	7,419,000	2,526	120,781,000	18,200
1992	2,447,000	8,372,000	2,564	134,069,000	19,000
1993	2,732,400	10,666,000	2,708	148,999,000	19,700
1994	2,742,400	8,249,000	2,750	161,206,000	19,500

(1) 15 month financial year

(2) 1991 and 1993 expenditures are budget estimates

(3) 1992 and 1994 expenditures are actual expenditures

Year	Public current exp. on primary ed. as % of total public current exp. on ed.	Public current exp. on primary ed. as % of GDP	Public current exp. on primary ed. per pupil as % of GDP per capita
1990	35.2	2.0 (1)	14.2 (1)
1991	31.1	1.9	13.8
1992	29.2	1.8	13.5
1993	25.6	1.8	13.3
1994	33.2	1.7	12.1

(1) Corrected from 15 months to 12 months

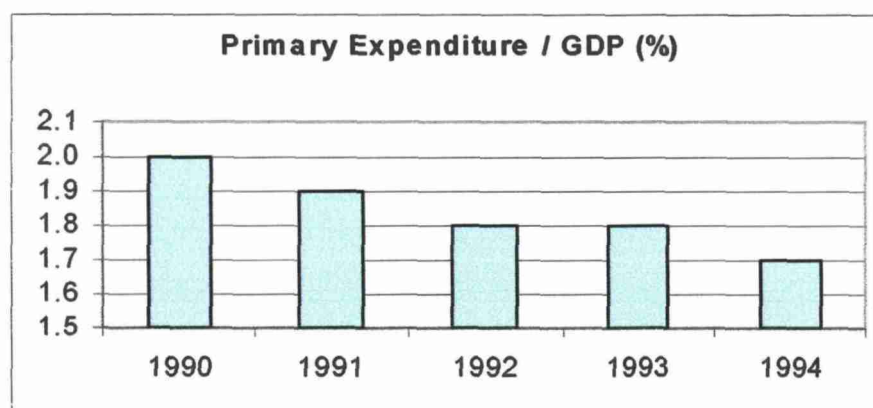
Sources :

GDP, Total Education Expenditure and Population : "Cook Islands Annual Statistical Bulletin", Statistics Office, MFEM, June 1999

Primary Expenditure : "Estimates of the Expenditure of the Government of the Cook Islands" 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994 and 1995

Enrolment : "1998 Education Statistics Digest", Ministry of Education, 1998

a) Expenditure as a Percentage of GDP

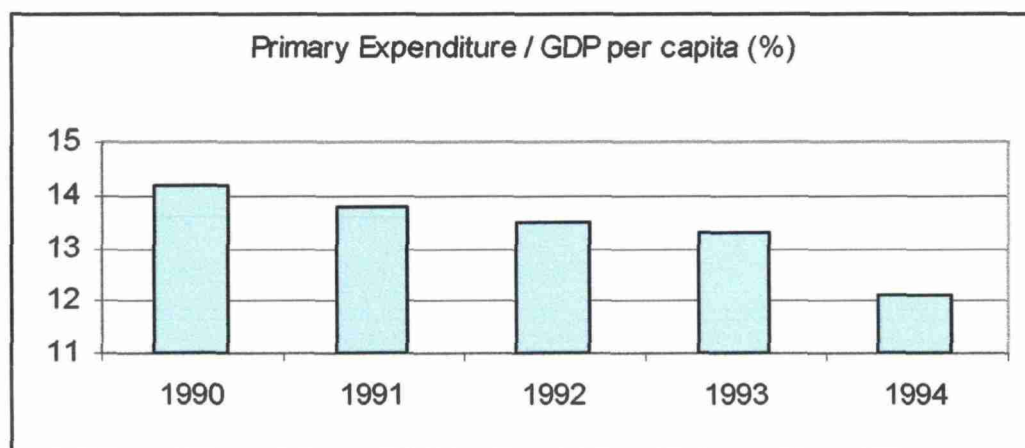


Public current expenditure on primary education as a percentage of GDP declined from 2.0 % in 1990 to 1.7 % in 1994. A 0.1 % decrease was recorded in 3 of the 4 years.

During this period GDP increased by 50 % while primary education expenditure increased by 26 %.

No official data on primary education expenditure is available from 1995 onwards. Both GDP and total public current expenditure on education decreased after 1994 (refer to Section 5.1) with GDP decreasing 10.5 % by 1997 and education expenditure decreasing 33.1 % in the same period.

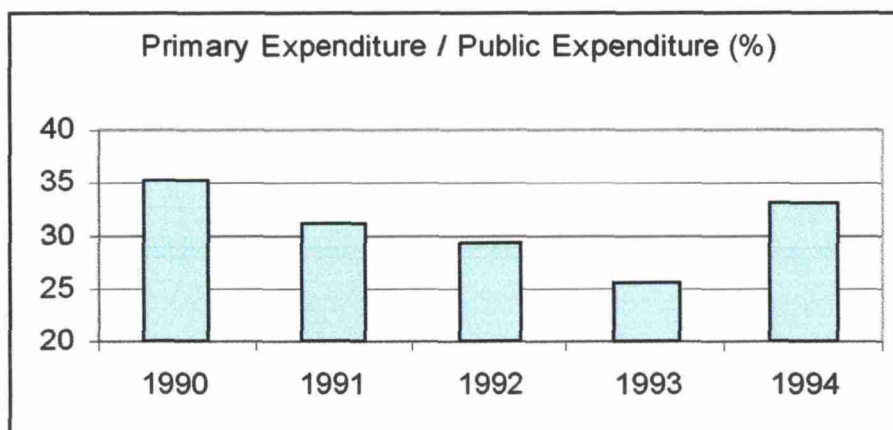
b) Expenditure per pupil as a percentage of GDP per capita



Public current expenditure on primary education per pupil as a percentage of GDP per capita decreased from 14.2 % in 1990 to 12.1 % in 1994. A decrease was recorded every year with the magnitude ranging from 0.2 % to 0.8 % .

The data indicates that between 1990 and 1994 a diminishing share of the value of the total domestic production of goods and services had been devoted to primary education. Although data on primary education expenditure is not available after 1994 it is highly likely that the decline continued until 1996 given that the total education expenditure rate of decrease was greater than the GDP rate of decrease and that the school roll continued to increase until 1996. A change in the downward trend is likely in 1997 when there was an increase in the total education budget coupled with a decrease in the school roll.

c) Expenditure as a Percentage of Total Public Expenditure on Education



Public current expenditure on primary education as a percentage of total public expenditure on education decreased from 35.2 % in 1990 to 25.6 % in 1993. An increase to 33.2 % was budgeted for the 1994/95 financial year but no actual expenditure data is available to verify that this was achieved.

The budget estimates for 1994 equate to anticipated expenditure of \$ 997 per primary school student throughout the Cook Islands. A cost analysis conducted by the Ministry of Education estimated that the primary school share of the 1997/1998 education budget (which excludes post secondary education) was \$ 2, 672, 945. This equates to \$ 927 per primary school student, which is \$ 70 or 7% less than the estimate for 1994.

6.2.6 Primary School Teachers Academic Qualifications

Improved teacher performance is one of the goals of the Education Sector Action Plan. However the low number (53%) of primary school teachers claiming to hold the minimum academic qualification is a constraint for the future improvement of teaching and learning in the Cook Islands.

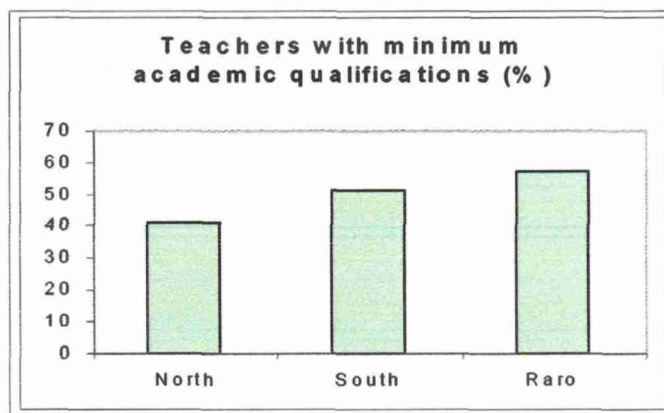
The minimum academic qualification in this report is taken as a pass (50 – 100 %) in at least one New Zealand School Certificate (NZSC) subject. This level was personally communicated to the EFA Coordinator in July 1999 by the Secretary of Education, Eric Ponia.

The data is derived from the Ministry of Education's 1998 Education Management Information System with the raw data being self-reports from teachers rather than verified documentation held by the Ministry.

1998		Number of primary school teachers			Percentage of primary school teachers		Gender Parity Index	
		Total	With academic qualification	Certified to teach	With academic qualification (1)	Certified to teach (2)	(1)	(2)
NATIONAL	TOTAL	140	74	130	52.9	92.9	1.2	1.1
	Male	18	8	15	44.4	83.3		
	Female	122	66	115	54.1	94.3		
Northern Group	TOTAL	22	9	20	40.9	90.9	3.0	1.1
	Male	6	1	5	16.7	83.3		
	Female	16	8	15	50.0	93.8		
Southern Group	TOTAL	45	23	42	51.1	93.3	1.0	1.1
	Male	6	3	5	50.0	83.3		
	Female	39	20	37	51.3	94.9		
Rarotonga	TOTAL	73	42	68	57.5	93.2	0.9	1.1
	Male	6	4	5	66.7	83.3		
	Female	67	38	63	56.7	94.0		

Source : 1998 Education Management Information System, Ministry of Education

Only 53 % of primary school teachers in 1998 reported that they have academic qualifications equal to or higher than one pass in NZSC. The Gender Parity Index of 1.2 indicates that relatively more females than males have the required minimum qualification. However the total number of male primary school teachers is only 18 (13 % of the primary school cadre) and a change in status of only 2 males would result in parity.



The regional data (Rarotonga 58%, Southern Group 51% and Northern Group 41%) indicate that percentage minimum academic qualifications decrease with isolation from Rarotonga. 13 of the 21 private primary school teachers (62 %) reported having attained the minimum academic qualification. However a change in status of only 2 private school teachers would result in parity with government school teachers.

6.2.7 Primary School Teachers Teaching Qualifications

Improved teacher performance is one of the goals of the Education Sector Action Plan. The high number (93%) of primary school teachers claiming to hold a relevant

teaching certificate provides a relatively sound foundation for the further improvement of teaching and learning in the Cook Islands.

The Education Act specifies that teachers in the Cook Islands must be registered. To be registered, a person must hold a recognised trained teachers certificate, a relevant degree or diploma or have completed an initial course of teacher training (i.e. a teacher pre-service course). The minimum level of teacher training in this report is therefore taken as a Teachers Training College Certificate. The data is derived from the Ministry of Education's Education Management Information System with the raw data being self-reports from teachers rather than verified documentation held by the Ministry.

The vast majority of primary teachers in 1998 reported that they had a teaching qualification equivalent to, or higher than, a Teachers College Certificate. The national average was 93 % with no significant regional variation. The gender parity index of 1.1 indicated that females were more qualified than males but the low number of males (18) precludes any firm conclusion that the difference is statistically significant. The high percentage of trained primary teachers is an outcome of the Cook Islands Teachers Training College which has run primary teacher pre-service courses for the most part of the last 40 years.

6.2.9 Inservice Training for Basic Education Teachers

The Education Sector Action Plan aimed to improve teacher performance through providing inservice training for 200 teachers by 1995. This goal was achieved by 1996 and further training over and above the original plan has been provided.

The Ministry of Education's Curriculum Development Unit has, for over 40 years, regularly provided teachers with relevant inservice training opportunities. Since 1996 the frequency and range of inservice courses have increased dramatically mainly due to the implementation of the Education Development Project. Inservice courses are also facilitated through the BELS programme (UNDP, UNFP, UNICEF, AusAID), the Awakening or Te Araanga programme (AusAID), the TESP project (NZODA) and the Inclusive Education project (NZODA). In 1997/98 alone workshops were planned for 149 teachers in Social Science, 8 in Agriculture, 8 in Tourism/Hospitality, 35 in English, 24 in Science, 20 in Mathematics, 6 in Life Skills, 35 in Early Childhood and 80 teachers in Inclusive Education. In addition, advisers conduct in-school courses to meet the specific needs of teachers in the school. The Senior Curriculum Advisor (Gill Vaiimene, personal communication) estimates that an average of about 200 teachers (67% of all teachers) have received some form of inservice training each year and in 1999 up to 80% of teachers will receive further training. Improved teacher performance has been reported as a consequence of the Inclusive Education course being delivered by the Wellington College of Education (NZ). However no definitive conclusion on whether overall teacher performance has improved since 1990 can be made as no system has been put in place to analyse and interpret the data available.

6.2.9 Inservice Training for Principals

The Education Sector Action Plan aimed to improve the quality of education through providing inservice training for 20 Principals by 1994. This goal was achieved in 1995 and further training over and above the original plan has been provided.

A 3 day workshop was held for 23 Principals and 4 Deputy Principals in August 1995 as part of the ADB Technical Assistance Institutional Strengthening of the Ministry of Education. Topics included school financial management, working with school committees and communities, and performance data collection and documentation. Primary and Secondary School Handbooks were also produced and distributed.

In 1997 the Ministry of Education conducted workshops for all Principals in the Cook Islands. The workshop covered school management, assessment and information processing. A program to develop quality management systems in Cook Islands schools was initiated in 1995 by the Ministry's Directorate of Audit and Quality Assurance. The Directorate has regularly provided all schools with guidelines, sample policies and in-school workshops and senior colleges have also received additional assistance from a Professional Development Facilitator employed under the TESP project. A positive outcome of the program is the accreditation of 7 of the 8 senior secondary colleges in the Cook Islands by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority.

Quality management system development has been slower at the primary school and junior high school level especially in the outer islands. To improve school management at this level, the Ministry of Education has developed a project proposal for consideration by an aid agency. The proposal includes tertiary level management studies, school management advisors from New Zealand, distance education and school twinning.

6.2.11 Primary School Pupil / Teacher Ratio

The Adjustment Strategies advocated by the Education Sector Action Plan included the containment of unit costs through improved use of teachers. The increase in the primary student / teacher ratio in 1997 to 20.7 represents a move towards reduced unit costs. However this was a one off increase and the ratio decreased in both 1998 and 1999.

1998	Total primary enrolment			Total number of teachers			Pupil-teacher ratios		
	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private
NATIONAL	2,711	2,302	409	140	119	21	19.4	19.3	19.5
Northern Gp	319	319	0	22	22	0	14.5	14.5	-
Southern Gp	896	804	92	45	40	5	19.9	20.1	18.4
Rarotonga	1,496	1,179	317	73	57	16	20.5	20.7	19.8

Source : 1998 Education Management Information System, Ministry of Education

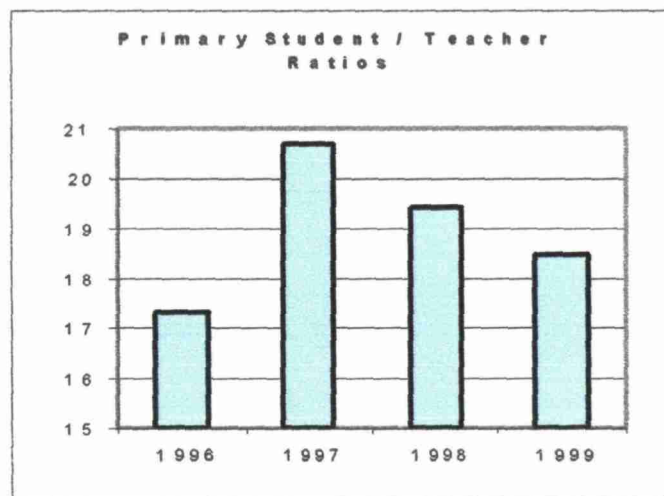
The number of primary teachers includes all classroom teachers, all teachers with positions of responsibility and all principals, but excludes all other non-teaching ancillary staff and volunteers. Only 5 primary school principals are designated as full

time non-teaching principals but in reality, even these 5 principals spend a significant amount of time in the classroom when teachers are absent due to illness, bereavements, workshops or sports events. Other teachers also double up classes to cover teacher absences.

The primary school pupil / teacher ratio in 1998 was 19.4 . There was no significant difference between government schools and private schools. The only significant difference was the extremely low pupil / teacher ratio of 14.5 in the Northern Group but this was a temporary aberration resulting from the devastation of Manihiki by a cyclone in November 1997. Mass emigration resulted in a 77 % decrease in the total school roll on the island. Families are gradually returning to Manihiki which will result in an increasing pupil / teacher ratio.

Primary student / teacher ratios 1996 - 1999

YEAR	1996	1997	1998	1999
Primary students	2956	2882	2711	2594
Primary teachers	171	139	140	140
RATIO	17.3	20.7	19.4	18.5



Source : Education Management Information System, Ministry of Education, 1996-1999

The primary school student to teacher ratio increased significantly following the economic crisis in 1996. The direct cause was an 18.7 % decrease in the number of primary teachers as part of the public sector down-sizing. During the same period the primary school enrolment decreased by only 2.5 %. Since that time the primary school roll has continued to decrease but the number of teachers has essentially remained the same thereby resulting in an increase in the student to teacher ratio. By international standards, the Cook Islands has an extremely low pupil to teacher ratio.

6.2.12 Repetition Rates

An aim of the Education Sector Action Plan was the achievement of minimum grade repetition rates from 1993 onwards. The data available only provides the status for 1997. The high Grade 1 repetition rate of 30% is a major area of concern and impacts adversely on promotion rates, survival rates and education system efficiency.

		G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	G10	
1997	M+F	733	433	442	444	445	385	329	343	335	298	
	Roll	F	330	191	212	215	220	189	175	175	164	138
	M	403	242	230	229	225	196	154	168	171	160	

1998	M+F	686	416	381	414	407	407	355	304	301	284	
	Roll	F	339	196	167	195	187	206	162	157	151	145
	M	347	220	214	219	220	201	193	147	150	139	

1998	M+F	220	2	2	2	2	5	0	3	0	0	
	Repeaters	F	99	1	1	1	1	2	0	1	0	0
	M	121	1	1	1	1	3	0	2	0	0	

1997 / 1998	G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	G10	Grades 1 to 5	Parity Index
TOTAL	30.0%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.4%	1.3%	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%	0.9
Male	30.0%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	1.5%	0.0%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	9.4%	
Female	30.0%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	1.1%	0.0%	0.6%	0.0%	0.0%	8.8%	

Source : Education Management Information System, Ministry of Education, 1997-1998

Repetition is only a real concern at the Grade 1 level. The major problem is that many Principals incorrectly believe that the Cook Islands "New Entrant" program is a one year course that is followed by a further year in Grade 1. Many students therefore spend up to 2 years in "New Entrants"/Grade 1. However the New Entrant program is officially regarded as being part of the Grade 1 level and it is expected that students should take only one year to complete the combined "New Entrants"/Grade 1 program. The Ministry of Education is aware of the problem and has initiated steps to minimise repetition at this level.

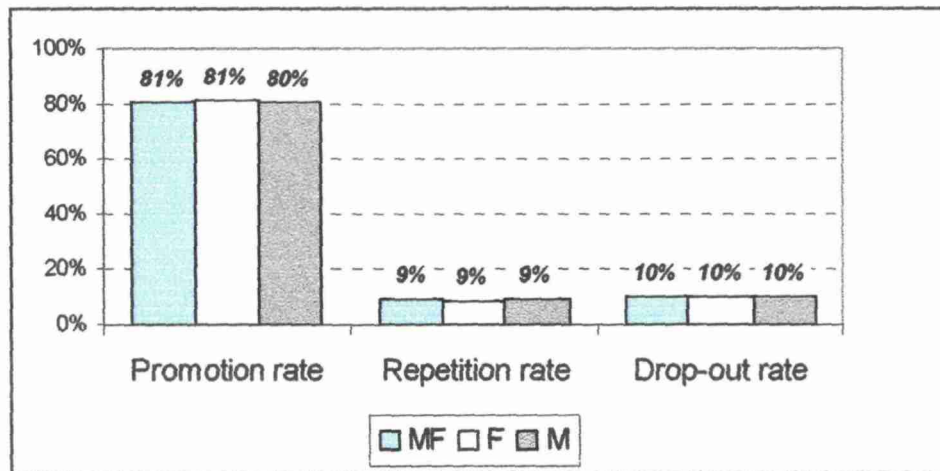
6.2.12 Promotion Rates

G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6	G7	G8	G9	G10	Ave G1-5
56.5%	87.5%	93.2%	91.2%	90.3%	92.2%	91.5%	87.8%	84.8%	100.0%	80.6%

Source : Education Management Information System, Ministry of Education, 1997-1998

A feature of the Cook Islands basic education system is the automatic promotion of students at the end of each academic year, except in rare cases where students with significant learning difficulties are kept back. Therefore the low repetition rates and high promotion rates from Grade 2 to Grade 10 cannot be linked to the attainment of any specified or uniform achievement standard.

Average pupil-flow rates up to grade 5



6.2.13 Survival Rates

Survival rate to Grade 5 1997/1998			Gender Parity Index 1997/1998		
Both sexes	Male (M)	Female (F)	Survival rate to grade 5	Coef. of efficiency at Grade 5	Coef. of efficiency in primary educ.
60.8%	62.5%	59.2%	0.9	1.0	0.9

Survival 1997/98	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10
Total	100%	80.7%	70.9%	66.4%	60.8%	55.2%	51.6%	47.2%	41.8%	35.4%
Female	100%	84.4%	73.7%	68.1%	59.2%	55.1%	49.3%	44.0%	38.2%	33.8%
Male	100%	77.6%	68.6%	65.0%	62.5%	55.2%	53.6%	50.4%	45.6%	37.0%

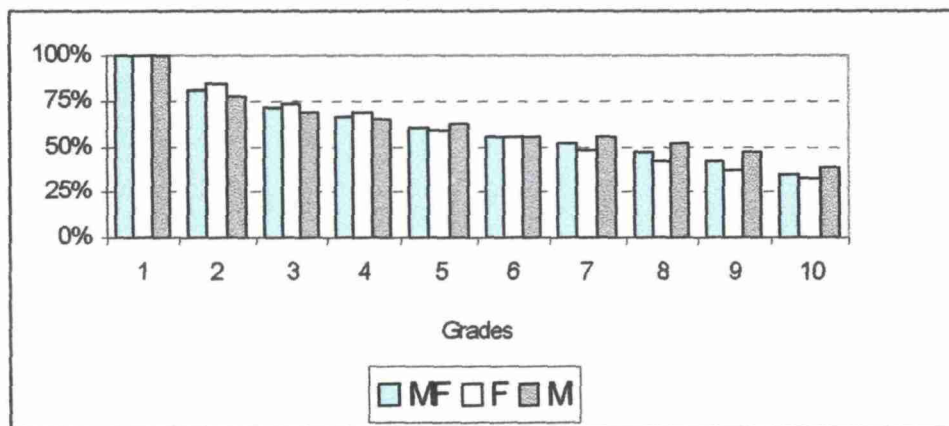
Dropout 1997/98	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10
Total	13.5%	12.0%	6.3%	8.3%	9.2%	6.5%	8.5%	11.4%	15.2%	0.0%
Female	10.9%	12.6%	8.0%	13.0%	6.8%	10.4%	10.9%	13.1%	11.6%	0.0%
Male	15.6%	11.6%	4.8%	3.9%	11.6%	3.0%	5.8%	9.5%	18.7%	0.0%

Source : Education Management Information System, Ministry of Education, 1997-1998

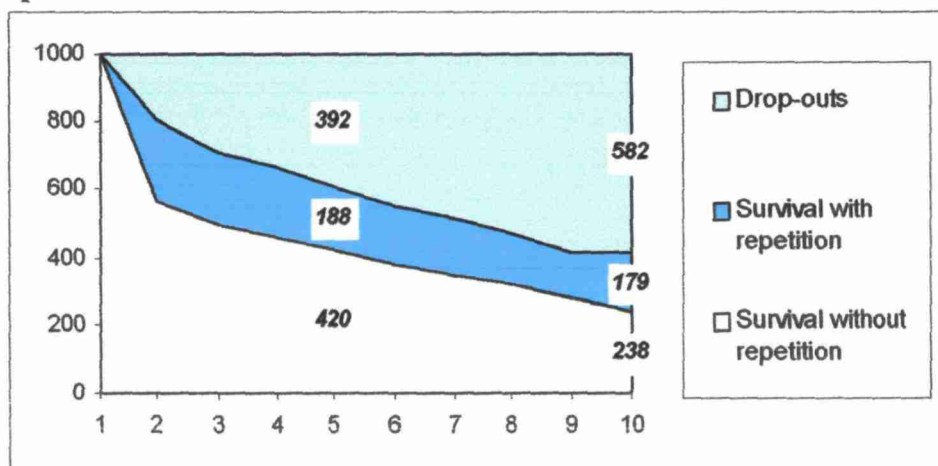
Survival rates and drop out rates in the Cook Islands must be interpreted with due regard to Grade 1 enrolment and the decreasing population of the country and schools.

The dropout rates are more reflective of emigration rather than students of school age simply not attending school. In 1997, 99.9% of 5 – 10 year children in the Cook Islands were enrolled in preschool, primary or secondary schools. Between 1996 and 1998 the resident population and the total school enrolment both declined by 11%.

Survival Rates by Grade and Gender



Survival to grade 5 and to final grade, with and without repetition



6.2.14 Coefficient of Efficiency

The coefficient of efficiency compares the ideal number of pupil-years with the actual number of pupil-years to provide a synthetic indication of the internal efficiency of an education system. If every child remains in the system and is promoted each year the coefficient of efficiency would be 100%. Values less than 100% are due to students repeating grades or leaving the system.

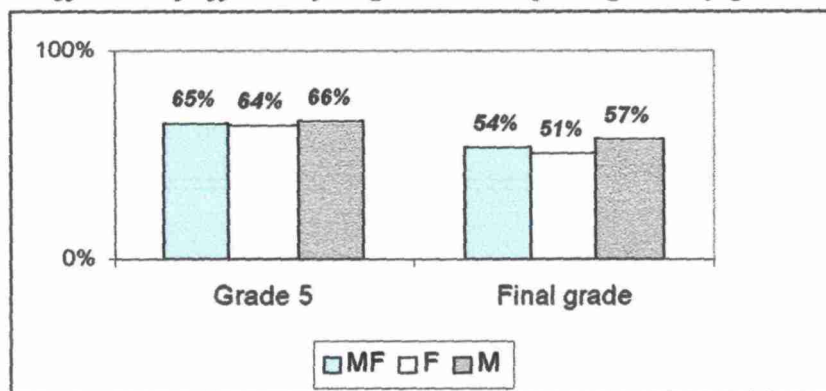
1997/1998 Coefficient of Efficiency

C of E	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10
Total	-	-	-	67.3%	65.3%	64.6%	62.3%	57.8%	51.4%	54.1%
Female	-	-	-	63.9%	64.1%	60.9%	57.5%	52.7%	49.2%	51.8%
Male	-	-	-	70.4%	66.1%	67.9%	67.0%	63.1%	53.4%	56.1%

Coefficient of efficiency in primary education Grades 1 - 6			Coefficient of efficiency in basic education Grades 1 - 10		
Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
64.6 %	67.9 %	60.9 %	54.1%	56.1%	51.8%

Source : Education Management Information System, Ministry of Education, 1997-1998

Coefficient of efficiency at grade 5 and final grade by gender



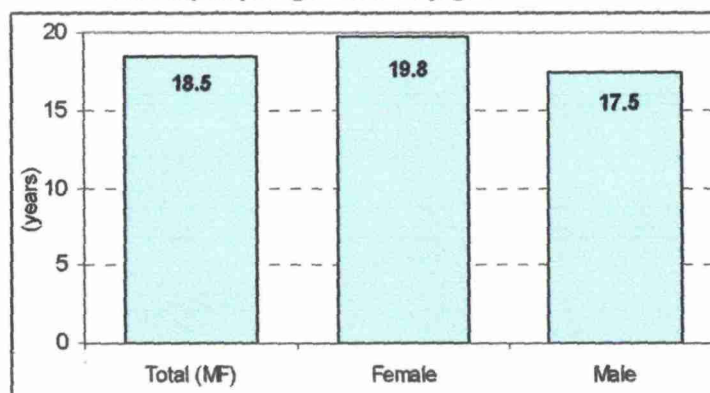
The low efficiency of the Cook Islands education system is due to the high repetition rate (30%) at the Grade 1 level and the apparent high dropout rates resulting from an 11 % decline in the school roll. Improvements in efficiency will result from decreased emigration and the development and implementation of new policy directives for the Preschool and New Entrant / Grade 1 levels.

1997/1998 Pupil - Years

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10
Total	1,429	810	712	667	611	559	516	476	418	354
Female	1,428	849	744	684	595	557	493	442	382	338
Male	1,429	779	686	653	627	561	536	510	456	370

Source : Education Management Information System, Ministry of Education, 1997-1998

Years input per graduate by gender



The apparently high number of years required for a student to complete basic education is again misleading due to the high Grade 1 repetition rate and population decreases. Another factor is that some parents send their children to schools in New Zealand especially from Form 3 (Grade 9) level onwards. The actual number of students involved is not known.

6.3 LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT AND OUTCOMES

6.3.1 Introduction

Education development in the Cook Islands has mainly focussed on quality improvement. The aims of the Education Sector Action Plan included improving the quality of primary school graduates and improving the scale and quality of the secondary school grade output for further education and the local labour market. Specific indicators of achievement in the Action Plan were improved national primary educational standards, improved secondary student performance, increased Form 5 graduates and increased numbers of students qualifying for further education.

6.3.2 Grade 4 Learning Competency

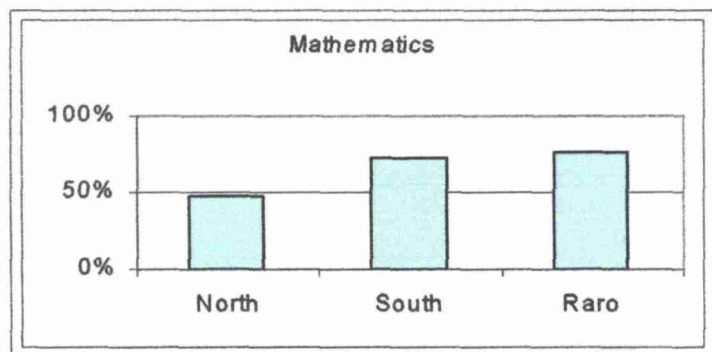
The Education Sector Action Plan aimed to improve national primary school educational standards. While the Grade 4 Diagnostic Tests do not provide any data on trends, they do provide baseline data for future comparisons and do indicate that standards in Maori are low on Rarotonga

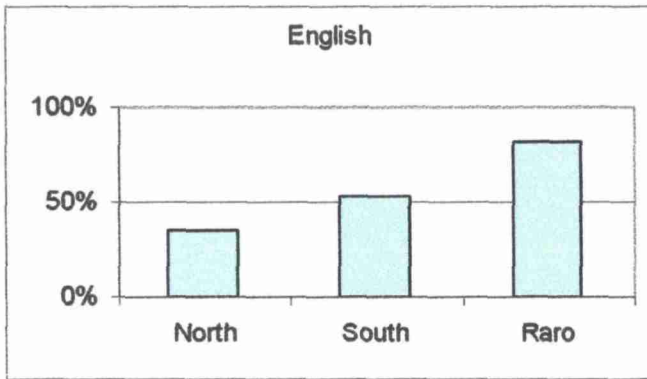
Grade 4 Diagnostic Tests were introduced in 1999. Students are tested in English, Maori and Mathematics. The Maori and Mathematics tests were translated into 7 island dialects including Pukapukan. Students sat the Maori test in their local island dialect and elected to sit the Mathematics test in either English or the local island dialect. The Maori and English tests comprised of Listening (5 marks), Reading (5), Writing (5) and Dictation (4). The Mathematics test comprised of Calculations (10 marks), Numbers (4), Measurement (3), Algebra (2), Geometry (5) and Statistics (1). Marks for each subject were converted to a 5 point scale (Achievement Levels 1 – 5). Achievement levels 1 – 2 are considered to be below the minimum standard of basic competency in the subject concerned. Achievement levels 3 – 5 are deemed to be above the minimum standard and levels 4 – 5 are deemed to be a high standard of basic competency. Data by gender is not yet available.

1999 G4 pupils who achieve the minimum standards in basic learning competencies

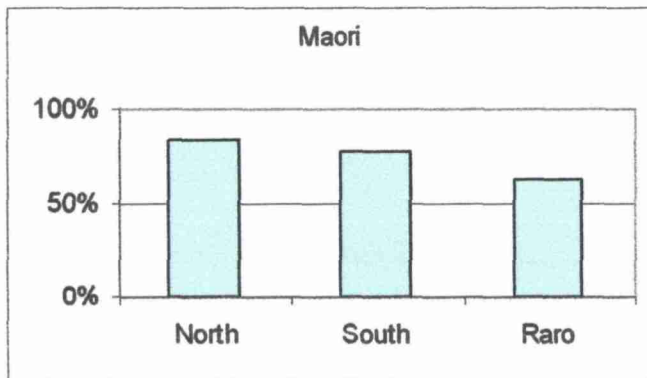
	Maori	English	Mathematics
Northern Group	84%	35%	48%
Southern Group	78%	53%	73%
Rarotonga	63%	82%	76%
National	71%	66%	72%

Source : Directorate of Audit and Quality Assurance, Ministry of Education, 1999





Achievement of minimum standard

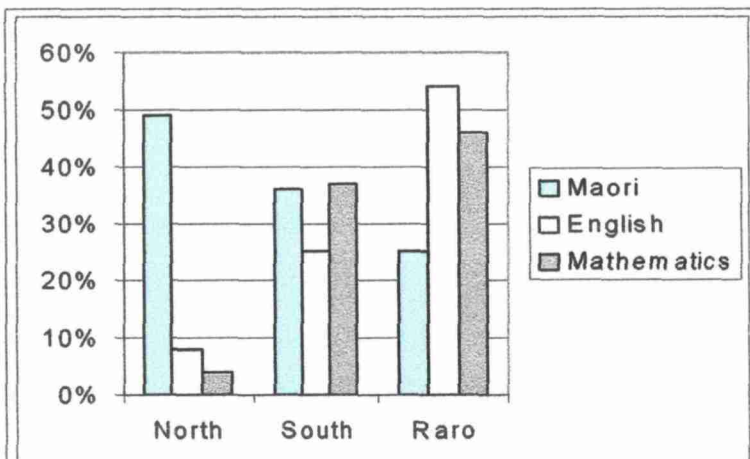


Achievement of minimum standard

1999 Grade 4 pupils who achieve high standards in basic learning competencies

	Maori	English	Mathematics
Northern Group	49%	8%	4%
Southern Group	36%	25%	37%
Rarotonga	25%	54%	46%
National	32%	38%	39%

Source : Directorate of Audit and Quality Assurance, Ministry of Education, 1999



Achievement of high standard

Competency in Maori is directly related to isolation from Rarotonga. The more isolated Northern Group islands have the highest percentage of students attaining minimum standards in Maori as well the highest percentage of students attaining high standards in Maori. Achievement by Southern Group students, although not as high as Northern Group students, is nevertheless significantly higher than the achievement of students on Rarotonga. Over a third of Rarotonga students fail to reach the minimum standard of competence in Maori. The low level of achievement in Maori on Rarotonga is generally attributed to parents and teachers assigning priority to English as the main language required by students for higher education and professions.

The reverse trend is true for competency in English, which is strongest in Rarotonga, weaker in the Southern Group and weakest in the Northern Group where only one third of students achieve the minimum standard of competence. In the outer islands Maori is the dominant language in the home and the workplace. Mathematics also follows a similar trend to English although the gap between Rarotonga and the Southern Group is not as pronounced.

Source : "Report on Grade 4 Diagnostics Tests 1999", Peter Etches, Ministry of Education

6.3.3 Grade 5 - 7 Standardised Tests of Achievement

The Education Sector Action Plan's aim of improved national primary education standards are yet to be achieved. Annual STACI tests indicate that there has been some improvement in Mathematics but standards in both English and Maori have declined since 1994.

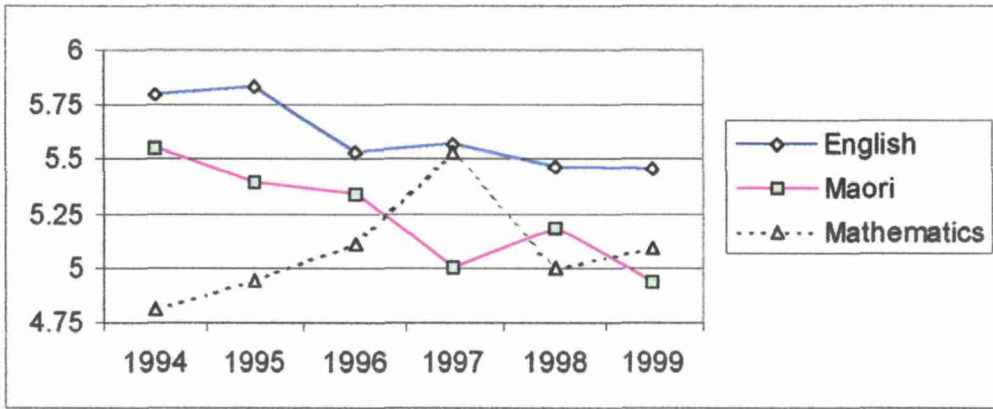
Each year Standardised Tests of Achievement are sat in Grade 5 English, Grade 6 Maori and Grade 7 (Form 1) Mathematics. Marks are converted into stanines (9 groups) ranked from 1 (low) to 9 (high). The same test is administered each year. The means for those schools which provided results each year since 1994 are tabled below.

1994 – 1999 STACI MEANS (only for those schools providing results every year)

	Grade	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
English	5	5.80	5.83	5.53	5.57	5.47	5.46
CI Maori	6	5.55	5.39	5.34	5.00	5.18	4.93
Mathematics	7	4.81	4.94	5.11	5.53	5.00	5.09

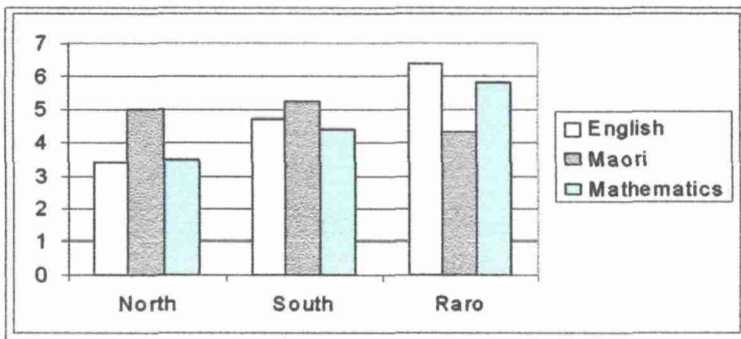
Source : Directorate of Audit and Quality Assurance, Ministry of Education, 1999

STACI TEST MEANS 1994 – 1999



1999 STACI MEANS (for all schools providing results in 1999)

1999	G5 English	G6 Maori	G7 Mathematics
Northern Group	3.39	5.03	3.49
Southern Group	4.69	5.25	4.41
Rarotonga	6.37	4.34	5.82



Source : Directorate of Audit and Quality Assurance, Ministry of Education, 1999

Overall, achievement in Grade 5 English has declined since 1994. Results from Rarotonga have improved recently and are significantly higher than in the outer islands. Results in the Southern Group have leveled out in recent years. The lowest levels of achievement are recorded by Northern Group students with results continuing to decline each year.

Achievement in Grade 6 Maori has also decreased since 1994. The decline is mainly due to lower achievement by students on Rarotonga. The gap between Rarotonga students and outer island students continues to widen.

Achievement in Grade 7 (Form 1) Mathematics has increased slightly mainly in line with improved performances on Rarotonga. Standards in the Southern Group have declined significantly since 1995. The Northern Group islands consistently produce the lowest results but their decline over the 4 years has been marginal.

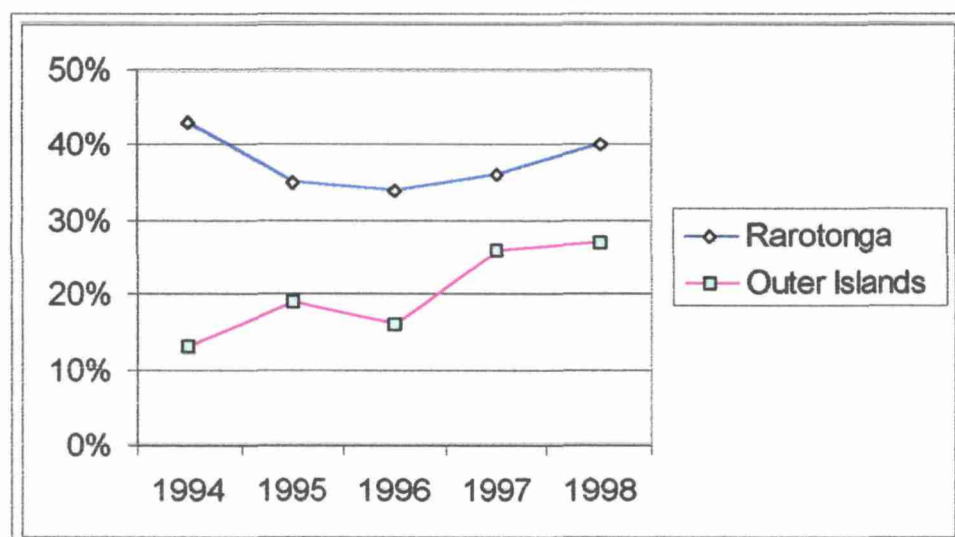
Source : "Report on Cook Islands Standardised Tests of Achievement 1999", Peter Etches, Ministry of Education

6.3.4 Secondary School Achievement

The Education Sector Action Plan's aim of improved secondary school students' performances is yet to be achieved in terms of national performances in New Zealand School Certificate examinations although the data does suggest that there have been improvements by students in the outer islands.

NZSC PASS RATES	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
National	33%	29%	29%	34%	37%
Rarotonga	43%	35%	34%	36%	40%
Outer Islands (Southern Group)	13%	19%	16%	26%	27%

Source : NZQA Examination Results Spreadsheets



Cook Islands secondary school students generally sit New Zealand School Certificate examinations in Upper Form 5 or Year 12 although for the more able students this is usually Year 11. The data above defines a pass as a grade of A, B or C which covers the range of marks from 50% - 100%. The pass rate is the number of papers passed divided by the total number of papers enrolled.

The national data indicates a decline from 1994 to 1996 then improved achievement from 1996 to 1998. The outer island students improved significantly between 1994 and 1998. Factors for improvement may include improved quality management systems, examinations no longer being scaled, decreased repetitions, high quality teachers in some subjects, students targeting specific subjects rather than enrolling in fully examinable courses and less able students not continuing on to the higher classes. The number of overage students has decreased significantly since 1996.

6.3.5 Literacy Rates of Grade 6 Students

Improved primary school literacy and numeracy rates are aims of the Education Sector Action Plan. Data from 1990 and 1997 indicate a possible marginal improvement (6%) in literacy, however no comparative data is available for numeracy.

The Pacific Islands Literacy Surveys (PILS) in English and Cook Islands Maori were conducted in 1990 and then conducted again in the same schools in 1997. The numeracy survey was conducted only in 1990. The survey involved Grade 6 students in selected schools in the Southern Group and Rarotonga. No Northern Group schools were surveyed.

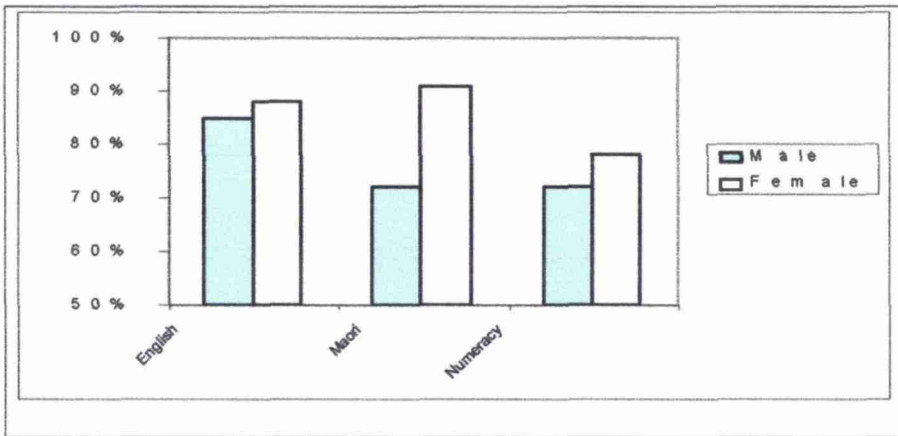
1990 and 1997 PILS	1990	1997
English Literacy	87%	93%
Cook Islands Maori Literacy	81%	81%
Numeracy	75%	NA

Source : Withers, 1992 and Directorate of Audit and Quality Assurance, Ministry of Education, 1997

The data indicates a possible marginal improvement in English literacy since 1990 whereas literacy in Cook Islands Maori has remained unchanged. There is no post 1990 data to determine any changes in numeracy levels.

1990 PILS	Female	Male
English Literacy	88%	85%
Cook Islands Maori Literacy	91%	72%
Numeracy	78%	72%

Source : Withers, 1992



In 1990, females achieved higher standards than males in all 3 tests and were most significantly stronger in Cook Islands Maori. No gender analysis was conducted in 1997. The Cook Islands English Literacy mean was 4 % higher than the mean for all Pacific Island countries conducting the same survey in 1990. However the Cook Islands Numeracy mean was 12% lower than the same countries.

Sources : "Pacific Islands Literacy Levels", Graeme Withers, UNESCO Pacific, March 1992
 "Trial Literacy Survey", P. Etches, Ministry of Education, 1997

6.3.6 Literacy and Numeracy Initiatives

During the last 5 – 10 years various literacy and numeracy related programs have been implemented by the Ministry of Education and community groups. These include :

- the Early Childhood Policy Framework
- the Cook Islands Languages Policy
- new syllabuses for English and Mathematics
- English and Mathematics Advisers funded by the NZODA TESP project
- appointments of local English, Maori and Mathematics advisers
- intensive inservice training courses
- procurement of substantial quantities of text books, library books and other teaching and learning resources
- the BELS program (UNDP, UNICEF and AusAID)
- the Cook Islands Learning Disability Program
- Te Araanga (AusAID)
- PPSEAWA's Reading Program

The AusAID sponsored Te Araanga (The Awakening) program stimulates language development through the use of story boards. Inservice courses on this teaching-learning technique have been conducted by a volunteer adviser and Ministry of Education Curriculum Unit staff in schools on Rarotonga and in the Outer Islands. The program has been supported by Australian aid funding of about \$NZ 9, 400.

Source : Paddy Walker, Te Araanga Adviser, August 1999

The Pan Pacific South East Asia Women's Association (PPSEAWA) hold after-school sessions in the Cook Islands Library (Rarotonga), one day a week throughout the year. The program caters for an average of 30 children, and at times up to 50 children, with ages ranging from 3 to 13 years. Language development is developed through story telling and plays.

Source : Paddy Walker, PPSEAWA member, August 1999

6.3.7 Literacy Rate of 15 – 24 Year Olds

No goals were set for 15 – 24 year olds' literacy rates and no survey has been conducted to determine the literacy rate for this age group in the Cook Islands.

A thesis by Karen Davis presented data on self reported proficiency by Cook Islanders studying in New Zealand tertiary institutions in 1997-1998. All 50 respondents had

completed some or all of their schooling in the Cook Islands. The percentages of respondents claiming to have good or high proficiency in informal listening, informal speaking, reading and writing are tabled below.

	English	Maori
Informal Listening	100 %	92 %
Informal Speaking	94 %	66 %
Reading	96 %	84 %
Writing	96 %	76 %

There is no assumption that the tabled data reflects the literacy rates of all 15 – 24 year olds in the Cook Islands. The data simply indicates the language proficiency of a group of Cook Islanders who are assumed to be mainly aged in the late-teenage to mid-twenty's age group and who are more academically talented than the majority of their peers. As such, it may be assumed that proficiency in English in this group will be higher than in the general population.

Source : "Cook Islands Maori Language in Auckland and the Cook Islands : a study of reported proficiency, patterns of use and attitudes.", Karen Margaret Davis. University of Auckland Thesis, November 1998

6.3.8 National Curriculum

An aim of the Education Sector Action Plan was the development of new syllabuses and a new national curriculum policy by 1994. A new national curriculum policy is yet to be developed but since 1994 new syllabuses have been developed for all cores subject areas and progress has been made on a number of optional subjects.

Delays in curriculum development have been due to Government's policy that the Cook Islands curriculum be aligned with the New Zealand Curriculum Framework. Curriculum development in the Cook Islands, therefore, cannot be fully pro-active but must await, and then react to, the developments in New Zealand. Delays in NZ curriculum development have therefore resulted in little progress being made in the Cook Islands during the first part of the decade. However substantial progress has been made in the second half of the decade with the Education Development Project making a major contribution. Since 1994 new curriculum policies and/or statements have been produced for Early Childhood Education, Primary level English, Mathematics, Science, Social Science and Maori Language and Secondary level English, Mathematics and Science. A comprehensive Language Policy and policies for Agriculture, Hospitality and Business Studies have also been developed. A National Curriculum Framework policy is planned for completion in 2000.

6.3.9 Testing and Measurement

The Education Sector Action Plan aimed to develop and implement an improved testing and measurement system by end of 1994. By this date, the main development was the partial introduction of achievement based assessment into senior secondary schools. In the second half of the decade major advances have been made including the development in 1998 of a National Policy on Assessment.

Since 1997 the majority of Cook Islands colleges (those with senior secondary students) have been accredited by the New Zealand Qualification Authority to offer Unit Standards.

Literacy (English and Maori) and numeracy tests at the Grade 4 level were initiated in 1997 and fully implemented in 1999. These tests will now serve to monitor national standards as well as to provide schools with diagnostic information on individual students and overall school performance.

Standardised Tests of Achievement in Maori (Grade 5), English (Grade 6) and Mathematics (Grade 7) have been administered since the 1980's but their validity is questionable as they are no longer closely aligned with the curriculum. Competitive examinations at Grade 6 level in English, Maori, Mathematics, Health and Social Science have been administered since 1990 but lack of standardisation does not enable the results to be used for national monitoring. A program to eventually standardise the tests at Grade 6 level was initiated in 1998. A database to monitor individual student achievement was also initiated in 1998.

6.3.10 Text books and Library Books

The Education Sector Action Plan aimed to improve school library stocks by the end of 1994 and to supply 12, 500 books to primary schools and 1,100 books to secondary schools. The target was achieved in 1998 and quantities far in excess of the original plan will be in schools by the end of 1999.

The initial target date of 1994 was not achieved due to the delay in the implementation of the ADB Education Development Project. The project began in 1995 and is now coming to its completion. By December 1999 the Project is expected to provide \$US 120, 000 worth textbooks for primary education, \$US 315, 000 worth of textbooks for secondary education and \$US 100, 000 worth of library books for primary and secondary schools combined. Project Officers estimate an average price of \$10 per book. This would result in over 50, 000 books being provided to schools or the equivalent of more than 10 books per pupil. The Ministry of Education proposes to continue to provide schools with books through the introduction of an annual text book / library book allocation of \$NZ 5 per primary school pupil and \$NZ 10 per secondary school pupil.

6.4 ADULT LITERACY

No goals for adult literacy were set in the Education Sector Action Plan.

The "Pacific Human Development Report", UNDP 1994, reported adult literacy rates of 96 % in 1980 and 99 % as the latest data available by 1994 with the rates for males and females being the same. A 99 % female literacy rate in 1995 was reported in UNICEF's "The State of the World's Children 1999".

However current Ministry of Education personnel are not aware of any reliable survey of adult literacy having been conducted in the Cook Islands, nor are they aware of any current programs that deal with adult illiteracy.

In 1998, the Language Panel, working in conjunction with the Curriculum Advisory Unit of the Ministry of Education, developed and attempted to conduct a Cook Islands Maori Language Survey. However insufficient surveys were completed to enable any meaningful analysis. (Goodwin, 1999)

In 1997-1998 a survey was conducted on language proficiency of Cook Islands tertiary students in Auckland, New Zealand. Of the students surveyed, 84 % claimed good-high proficiency in reading in Maori and 76 % claimed such proficiency in writing in Maori. 96% of the students claimed good-high proficiency in both reading and writing in English. (Davis, 1998)

The adult literacy rate in the Cook Islands is not known. Therefore the first initiative is to develop and conduct a valid survey that will provide Maori and English literacy data by island, gender and age. This data will then enable analysis to determine whether there are any significant problems with adult literacy.

6.5 TRAINING IN ESSENTIAL SKILLS

6.5.1 Coordination of Training

An aim of the Education Sector Action Plan was coordination of human resource policy and planning across all sectors. Since 1995, coordination of human resource activities has been facilitated by the Public Service Commission with many programs involving inter-ministry cooperation and coordination with non-government organisations. The Cook Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations has coordinated training especially amongst NGOs since 1994.

6.5.1.1 The Public Service Commission

The objective of the Public Service Commission (PSC) training programme is to improve people's choices through training that is vocationally aligned. Training courses are mainly non-formal and conform to the National Human Resources Policy Framework and to Government's Strategic Results Areas. Important factors in course selection include gender balance, cost sharing and the use of local trainers and training facilities. Some programs have emanated from community requests and from an outer islands training needs analysis. The average annual budget of about \$NZ 100, 000 is funded by NZODA. The courses facilitated by the PSC in the past 2 years is tabled below.

COURSES July 1997 - July 1999	ISLAND	NUMBER OF COURSES	PARTICIPA NTS	FEMALES
Tourism	Rarotonga	4	48	14

COURSES July 1997 – July 1999	ISLAND	NUMBER OF COURSES	PARTICIPANTS	FEMALES
Tourism	Rarotonga	4	48	14
	Outer Islands	8	197	121
Fishing	Rarotonga	0	0	0
	Outer Islands	4	201	0
Horticulture	Rarotonga	1	12	5
	Outer Islands	1	6	2
Basic Engine Maintenance	Rarotonga	0	0	0
	Outer Islands	5	129	0
Basic Computer	Rarotonga	60	438	249
	Outer Islands	1	16	9
Office Administration	Rarotonga	0	0	0
	Outer Islands	1	5	4
Media Skills	Rarotonga	2	24	8
	Outer Islands	0	0	0
Justice of the Peace	Rarotonga	0	0	0
	Outer Islands	2	14	1
Customer Services	Rarotonga	1	18	–
	Outer Islands	0	0	–
Music Workshop	Rarotonga	1	24	–
	Outer Islands	0	0	0
Carving Attachment	Rarotonga	1	1	0
	Outer Islands	0	0	0
TOTAL	Rarotonga	70	565	276
	Outer Islands	22	568	137

Source : Frances Topa-Apera, Training Program Coordinator, Public Service Commission
 Since 1997, the PSC has coordinated at least 60 basic computer courses and 32 general courses. The average course duration is 5 days. A total of 1,133 people have participated in the courses and while gender balance is a target, females account for only 37% of this total. This is mainly due to high male attendances at basic engine maintenance and fishing courses. The actual deliverers of the training courses have been personnel from the private sector, various government agencies including Marine Resources, Tourism and Outer Islands Development and non-government organisations such as the Red Cross.

The range of courses and large number of participants indicate that the PSC has made a significant contribution towards achieving the Education Sector Action Plan objectives of increased numbers of people trained in information technology, small businesses, management, tourism and crafts.

Source : Arthur Taripo / Frances Topa-Apera, Public Service Commission, August 1999

6.5.1.2 CIANGO

The Cook Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations (CIANGO) was established in 1994 as the Government recognised national umbrella for all NGOs in the Cook Islands. CIANGO has conducted numerous development programmes for NGO leaders and members including :

Population Development and Management	SPREP
Disaster Mitigating and Management	AusAID
Family Development and Management	IPPF / CIFWA
Leadership and Capacity Building	UNDP
Enhancing Volunteerism	UNDP
Fund Raising Workshop	UNDP
Environmental Development and Management	SPREP
Quality Handicraft Production	CIANGO
Women and Youth Development	CIANGO
Project Planning and Implementation	CIANGO
Effective Communication and Networking	CIANGO

Forthcoming programmes include :

Report and Speech Writing, and Public Speaking	UNDP
Human Resources Development	UNDP
Financial Management and Budgeting	UNDP

total of 50 NGOs have been financial members of CIANGO. All of these NGOs have been involved in providing basic education opportunities for their own members, their target clients or the public. The organisations that are currently active and financial members of CIANGO are :

Women's Groups

CI National Council of Women
 CI Catholic Women's League
 Puaikura Ekalesia Vainetini
 Araura Enea Women's Council
 Mangaia Tiare Taina Vainetini
 Enea Manu Vainetini NGOs
 Tapuahua Vainetini
 Palmerston Women's Council
 Rakahanga Vainetini
 Sacred Heart Women's Sewing Club
 Punanga Tauturu
 Mauke Women's Council
 CI Business and Professional Women's Association
 Pan Pacific and South East Asia Women's Association (PPSEAWA)

Youth Groups

Arorangi Boys Brigade
 CI Boys Brigade Company
 CI Girls Brigade Company
 CI Girl Guides Company
 Rangiura Catholic Youth League
 Aitutaki Girls Brigade Association
 Enea Manu Mapu Taokotai

Ruaau Christian Youth Club
Betela Christian Youth Club

Others

CI Preschool Association
CI Teachers' Institute
Cook Islands Nurses Association
Cook Islands Disabled Society
Taporoporo Ipukarea Society (environment)
CI Sports Association
Mitiaro NGOs
Pukapuka NGOs
Penrhyn Island NGOs

Source : Vereara Maeva, CIANGO President, August 1999

6.5.2 Economic Sector Education and Training

A major aim of the Education Sector Action Plan (1992) was to improve the scale, quality and equity of output from the local and overseas training system appropriate for projected labour market requirements in the Cook Islands. Other government policy papers, including budget policy statements, particularly targeted development in the drivers of economic growth i.e. Marine Resources, Agriculture, Tourism, Offshore Banking and Private Sector Development. Reports on programs conducted by the Ministry of Marine Resources, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Tourism and Transport, and Small Business Enterprises Centre, as well as reports from other ministries, NGOs and media organisations, indicate that there has been significant opportunities for individuals to develop their skills in the key economic sectors.

6.5.2.1 Marine Resources

The Ministry of Marine Resources role in Commercial Species Development and its FAD / Extension Program is to :

- provide management advice to owners, managers and exploiters of the resource
- facilitate links to markets for users
- provide technical training for interested parties including workshops
- conduct workshops on artisanal fishing techniques
- facilitate training attachments for private sector personnel

The Public Service Commission also reported that Ministry of Marine Resources staff were used to deliver fishing workshops for 201 outer island participants.

*Source : "1998/99 Budget Estimates", Cook Islands Government, July 1998
Francis Topa-Apera, Public Service Commission, August 1999*

6.5.2.2 Agriculture

"Growing your own food" is a basic feature of life in the Cook Islands and a part of Cook Islands' culture and heritage. In 1996, 72% of households were engaged in subsistence level agriculture. However commercial production and exports have been declining since 1970 and this decline continues today.

The Ministry of Agriculture, with financial assistance from NZODA, AusAID, HSF, UNICEF, FAO and SPC, has conducted a wide range of workshops in order to enhance the skills and employment opportunities of individual Cook Islanders and to contribute towards a growth in the national economy. The workshops for November 1993 to October 1999 are listed in the following table.

WORKSHOP	ISLAND	DATE
Food Production follow up	Manihiki, Nth Group	Nov 1993
Crop Production and Marketing	Atiu, Sth Group	Feb 1994
Crop Production and Marketing	Mangaia, Sth Group	Apr 1994
Aitutaki Coffee Processing	Aitutaki, Sth Group	May 1994
Family Food Production	Mitiaro, Sth Group	Feb 1995
Southern Island Livestock Officers	Rarotonga	Mar 1995
Crop Production and Marketing follow up	Mangaia, Sth Group	June 1995
Crop Production and Marketing	Mauke, Sth Group	July 1995
Crop Production and Marketing	Atiu, Sth Group	Oct 1995
Family System Development	Mauke, Sth Group	Oct 1995
Family System Appraisal System	Mauke, Sth Group	Feb 1996
Goal Oriented Project Planning Tree Awareness		Mar 1997
Crop and Livestock Production and Marketing	Mitiaro, Sth Group	Apr 1997
Family Food Production and Nutrition	Rakahanga, Nth Grp	May 1997
Horticulture, Livestock and Quarantine	Penrhyn, Nth Group	Oct 1997
Family Food Production and Nutrition	Atiu, Sth Group	Feb 1998
Goal Oriented Project Planning follow up		Apr 1998
Plant Propagation for Small Farm Development	Aitutaki, Sth Group	May 1998
Family Food Production and Nutrition	Mitiaro, Sth Group	Oct 1998
Intensive Livestock for Small Farm Devp	Mangaia, Sth Group	Oct 1998
Goal Oriented Project Planning meeting		Dec 1998
Atiu Resource Management on Trees Plan		Feb 1999
Plant Propagation for Small Farm Development	Mauke, Sth Group	June 1999
Integrated Pest Management	Mangaia, Sth Group	June 1999
Integrated Pest Management	Atiu, Sth Group	July 1999
Integrated Pest Management	Aitutaki, Sth Group	July 1999
Intensive Livestock for Small Farm Devp	Atiu, Sth Group	Oct 1999
Family Food Production and Nutrition	Mauke, Sth Group	Oct 1999

The Ministry also conducts publicity and promotion campaigns through :

- An agricultural radio programme
- Occasional TV presentations
- Agricultural publications and leaflets
- School visits
- Community meetings

Source : Sabati Solomona, Senior Planning and Policy Officer, Ministry of Agriculture, August 1999

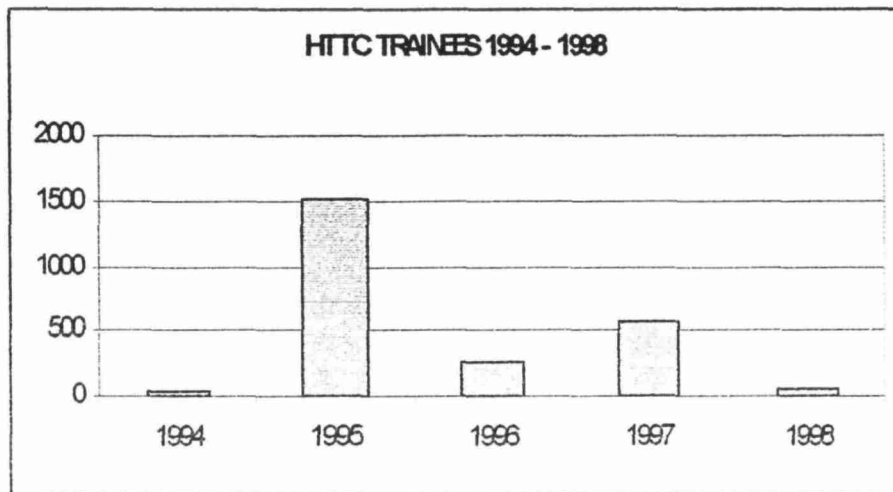
6.5.2.3 Hospitality and Tourism

The Education Sector Action Plan aimed for increased numbers of hotel and tourism trained staff from 1993. Significant numbers of people have received such training at the Hospitality and Tourism Training Centre (HTTC) on Rarotonga.

HTTC was a joint venture funded by the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Cook Islands Government. The Centre was opened in 1994 and is managed by the Ministry of Transport and Tourism. Its main objective is to provide the tourism industry with appropriate tourism education and training development. HTTC delivers courses on Food and Beverages, Food Production, Management, and General Topics e.g. First Aid, and Introductions to Hotels and Catering. Funding assistance has been received from NZODA and the Cook Islands Business and Professional Women's Association. Most of the courses have been delivered on Rarotonga. A few courses have been delivered on the Southern Group island of Aitutaki.

HTTC Course Participants 1996 - 1997

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 (1)
Rarotonga	32	1444	264	553	68	95
Outer Islands	0	79	0	15	0	0
National	32	1523	264	568	68	95



(1) January – August 1999 only Source : Hospitality and Tourism Training Centre

Participant numbers peaked in 1995 when HTTC was in its first full year of operation, demand for training was high and the country's economy was still considered to be stable. The number of participants in 1995 (1,523) exceeded the total number of people employed in the Trade/Restaurant/Accommodation industry in 1996 (1,468). Io Tuakeu Lindsay, a former Director of the Tourism Directorate, attributed the decline in participant numbers to HTTC succeeding in meeting the basic training needs of the majority of hospitality workers. (personal communication, 1998)

Source : Theresa Noovao, HTTC Training Coordinator, Ministry of Tourism and Transport, August 1999

6.5.2.4 Small Businesses

An objective of the Education Sector Action Plan was to increase the number small business trained people in the Cook Islands. The Small Business Enterprise Centre Ltd (SBEC or Te Mato-Tupuranga) opened in January 1998 and since that time has conducted basic business skills training workshops on Rarotonga, Aitutaki, Atiu, Mauke, Mitiaro, Mangaia and Penrhyn. In the first 15 months of operation the SBEC trained 645 participants including 406 (63%) from the outer islands. Workshops delivered from 1 January 1998 to 31 March 1999 are summarised in the table below.

SKILL	WORKSHOP DURATION	ISLAND	NUMBER OF WORKSHOPS	PARTICIPANTS
Starting a Small Business	3 days	Rarotonga	4	29
		Outer Islands	5	58
Small Business Accounting	2 days	Rarotonga	4	25
		Outer Islands	4	59
Book Keeping and Accounting	2 days	Rarotonga	2	8
		Outer Islands	3	44
Small Business Cashflow	3 days	Rarotonga	0	0
		Outer Islands	4	41
Product Costing, Pricing and Break-even Analysis	2 days	Rarotonga	2	17
		Outer Islands	7	103
Business Plan Preparation	2 days	Rarotonga	1	5
		Outer Islands	0	0
Small Business Marketing and Market Research	2 days	Rarotonga	4	16
		Outer Islands	2	42
Basic Stock Control for Small Businesses	2 days	Rarotonga	2	9
		Outer Islands	0	0
Small Business Office Administration	2 days	Rarotonga	5	23
		Outer Islands	0	0
Customer Service Skills	2 days	Rarotonga	9	74
		Outer Islands	2	47
Time Management	2 days	Rarotonga	4	29
		Outer Islands	0	0
Staff Motivation	3 days	Rarotonga	1	4
		Outer Islands	0	0
Food and Beverage Training	1 day	Rarotonga	0	0
		Outer Islands	1	12

The SBEC has also conducted 43 vocational skills training sessions in 3 Rarotonga colleges.

Source : Lisa Sadaraka, Manager, SBEC, June 1999

6.5.3 Health, Environment and Social Issues

As a signatory to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Government of the Cook Islands is committed to a number of goals including :

- To achieve universal access to quality education, with particular priority being given to primary and technical education and job training
- To promote non-formal education for young people
- To promote greater responsibility and awareness on the interrelationships between population and sustainable development; health issues, including reproductive health; and gender equity.
- Ensuring equal access to education
- Improving women's access to vocational training, science and technology and continuing education;
- Developing non-discriminatory education and training

The significant progress being made towards these goals is reflected in the education, training and public awareness programs conducted by the ministries and non-government organisations that work towards social progress in the Cook Islands.

6.5.3.1 Population Education In Schools

The Population Education In Schools project aimed to develop in Cook Islanders an awareness and understanding of population and family life issues for the improvement of their quality of life while maintaining the environmental, cultural and traditional heritage. The project sought to integrate population and family health issues into the Social Science and Health programs. UNFP funding of about \$NZ 34, 000 has been received since the start of the project in 1996.

A new integrated Social Science syllabus has been completed and distributed in Maori and English and all planned workshops on Rarotonga and in the Outer Islands have been conducted. A primary Health syllabus and Teachers Guide has also been written and distributed in Maori. Sample units for the proposed secondary school Family Life Education program were produced on topics such as Pregnancy, Abortion, Adoption, Transmitted Diseases, Physical and Emotional Development, Goal Setting, and Family Responsibilities. Some units were trialed but the loss of key Curriculum Unit staff in 1996-1997 resulted in the project losing its momentum and little progress has been made since that time.

Source : Pare Maui, Social Science Curriculum Adviser, Ministry of Education, July 1999

6.5.3.2 The Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health has 3 units that contribute to the development of essential skills. Health messages are conveyed to the target audience through school and clinic visits, workshops, competitions, posters, radio, television and newspapers.

The Public Health Nursing Unit supports and coordinates health activities with teachers, parents and the community and promotes birth control with particular emphasis on reducing teenage pregnancy.

The Nutrition Unit has, for several years, promoted to school children and the general public, various aspects of healthy living including Food and Sports, Heart Disease, Lifestyle Diseases, Nutrition Guidelines, the Healthy Food Pyramid and Healthy School Lunches.

The Health Education Unit was established in 1989 and has conducted lectures and organised essay, poem and poster competitions to promote awareness and knowledge of health issues. Such issues include Alcohol, Smoking, HIV/AIDS/STD, Family Planning, Dengue Fever, Lifestyle Diseases, Teenage Pregnancy, Feelings and Behaviour, Reproductive Health, Menstruation and Healthy Islands. The Healthy Island project is a recent initiative to promote health awareness in schools.

Source : Dr Teariki Tamarua, Secretary of Health, June 1999

6.5.3.3 Red Cross

The Cook Islands Red Cross Inc has 2 full time staff and a core annual budget of about \$NZ 42, 000 which is funded by the New Zealand Red Cross. There are branches on all inhabited Southern Group islands and the first Northern Group branch is expected to be opened in late 1999. Red Cross provides educational and training programs in :

- Safety and First Aid
- Disaster Preparedness and Relief
- Blood Donor Recruitment
- International Humanitarian Law

Safety and First Aid

Red Cross delivers 6 different first aid courses and since 1995 has trained over 3, 000 people or the equivalent to 18 % of the 1998 resident population. Training has been provided to all sectors of the community including schools, non-government organisations, Ministries and the commercial sector. Positive responses to course evaluations and anecdotal evidence of trainees applying acquired skills in real situations indicate that the training is having its desired effect.

In 1999 a Swimming and Water Safety Program was introduced to schools on Rarotonga. To date, one primary school and one high school have successfully completed the program. Training for Trainers in First Aid and Community Based Self Reliance is planned for 14 outer island participants and a Road Safety campaign is in the planning stage.

Disaster Preparedness and Relief

Red Cross works closely with the National Disaster Management Office to educate the public on what to do before, during and after a disaster. Child Welfare Clinics are commonly used venues for conveying this information.

Blood Donor Recruitment

Associated with its drive to recruit blood donors, the Red Cross raises public awareness on related issues such as “drink-driving”, “inter-period bleeding”, hepatitis and HIV/AIDS.

International Humanitarian Law

Red Cross incorporates aspects of humanitarian law into all its training programs and in August 1999 ran a seminar on the Geneva Convention which was attended by over 40 people and received wide media exposure.

Source : Niki Rattle, Secretary General, Cook Islands Red Cross Inc, August 1999

6.5.3.4 Ministry of Internal Affairs

Women's Division

All programs operated by the Women's Division of the Ministry of Internal Affairs are guided by the Government endorsed Cook Islands National Policy for Women. The policy focuses on :

- Economic Empowerment
- Social Development Issues
- Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women
- Leadership and Decision Making
- Natural Resources and Environment

Economic Empowerment

The Women's Division has worked towards improving the income generation capacity of women throughout the Cook Islands by developing Handicraft Pricing Policy Guidelines and conducting workshops on credit and revolving fund schemes, and handicraft production and selling methods. The program will be complemented by training delivered by the Small Business Enterprise Centre, with financial assistance from NZODA.

Social Development Issues

The Women's Division, with the support of the Ministry of Health, has provided training programs on heart disease, diabetes, teenage pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, oral health and parental skills. In 1998, the Women's Division, assisted by UNFPA, held a Women's Health Awareness Week to educate women on the importance of regular breast and PAP Smear examinations.

Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

The Women's Division has conducted gender and development training programs for men and women at the local and national level and have identified and trained specific Gender and Development Focal persons in line Ministries and NGOs. This program has been supported by the Forum Secretariat, UNFPA, UNIFEM and NZODA.

The Division has also promoted the awareness and understanding of International Laws and Conventions relating to Human Rights issues, the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Leadership and Decision Making

With financial and technical assistance from UNIFEM and NZODA, training programs on Good Governance and Transformative Leadership were conducted for men and

women in the Southern Group. Special training was also provided for all the women candidates who contested the recently held general election.

Natural Resources and Environment

Environmental issues were incorporated into other educational workshops for women which were conducted on Rarotonga and the outer islands in collaboration with the Environment Service, the Taporoporo Ipukarea Society and the Rarotonga Environment Awareness Program (REAP).

Youth Division

Development of a National Policy for Youth is in progress with funding being provided by the Commonwealth Youth Project (Commonwealth Secretariat). The Division currently runs 4 programs involving youth education and training.

Cook Islands Youth Empowerment Project

This project provides funding awards (\$NZ 500 each) for 10 youths (aged 16 – 24) to pursue training for personal or career development skills. Awards of up to \$NZ 1, 000 are also available for youth organisations to conduct educational workshops. The project runs on a 4 quarterly basis per year.

Commonwealth Youth Program

This program provides opportunities for youths to gain academic qualifications (diploma and degree level) in youth work and sociology. The training has been usually carried out in the Solomon Islands but this year, training is now offered through the University of the South Pacific Extension Program.

Sir Michael Somare Awards

This program provides awards (\$NZ 1,000 each) for one male and one female to continue their education either locally or overseas. There are also awards (\$NZ 2, 000 each) for one outer island organisation and one Rarotonga organisation.

Te Orama Puapinga o te Uki Ou Workshop

This UNESCO funded workshop was facilitated by the youth representatives who attended the South Pacific Youth Forum in Australia. The training program focused on Youth Problems such as teenage pregnancy, alcohol and drug abuse, crime and sexually transmitted diseases.

Source : Neti Tamarua Herman, Director for Women, Youth and Sports, Ministry of Internal Affairs, August 1999

6.5.3.5 Punanga Tauturu

The Punanga Tauturu Incorporated (Cook Islands Women's Counselling Centre) was incorporated in 1994 to provide counselling for victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse. The Centre has since extended its programme to include Legal Literacy and Human Rights education at the community level and dissemination of materials and information on rights through the media and workshops. The Centre has been funded by the Asia Foundation, Canada Fund, NZODA and the Pacific Regional Rights Resource Team (Fiji). To date the Centre has completed the following basic education activities :

- Conducted Legal Literacy workshops on Rarotonga and in the Outer Islands
- Coordinated, in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNICEF, the National Forum on the Convention of the Rights of Children
- Provided, in collaboration with the Ministries of Justice and Police, training workshops for Justices of the Peace and police personnel
- Completed a series of 10 family law pamphlets covering marriage, separation, divorce, defacto relationships, affiliation, maintenance for women and children, custody and access, and matrimonial property.
- Conducted, in collaboration with the Electoral Office, introduction workshops on voters rights and responsibilities and the electoral process
- Conducted Counselling workshops

Source : Punanga Tauturu Incorporated Fact Sheet, Rongo File, August 1999

6.5.3.6 Social Responsibility

6.5.3.6.1 Law Related Education Programme

The Law Related Education Programme is implemented by the Police Department to encourage young people to take responsibility for their own safety and wellbeing and that of others in their community. Programme objectives include reducing crime and traffic accidents involving young people and improving the communication and decision-making skills of young people and enabling them to take a more responsible role in society. The four strategic themes of the programme are :

1. ***Crime Prevention and Social Responsibility*** – to enhance young people's perceptions of social responsibility and to foster partnership with the police in crime prevention initiatives.
2. ***Drug Abuse Resistance Education*** – to enable young people to avoid illegal drugs, to make sensible choices about the use of alcohol and other drugs and to seek help when required.
3. ***School Road Safety Education*** – to enable young people to learn skills needed to act safely and confidently on roads and other places associated with traffic.
4. ***Violence Prevention*** – to enable young people to develop non-violent relationships and to learn skills needed to manage situations where the risk of violence is evident.

The planned performance measures for 1999/2000 awareness programmes are :

- Media promotions : TV 48, Radio 6, Newspaper 52, Brochures 1200
- School Visits, 60
- Youth Group and NGO workshops, minimum of 8
- Consultations with other agencies, minimum of 50
- Home Visits, 104

Source : Jane Tuavera, Community Policing Coordinator, Cook Islands Police, August 1999

6.5.3.6.2 Religious and Community Groups

Religion is an integral part of Cook Islands' culture and society. Many churches of different Christian denominations are located on each island and also in each major village. In the 1996 Census, 94% of the resident population claimed an affiliation to a Christian denomination. The churches play a major role in promoting personal spiritual, emotional, mental and physical development thereby assisting people to become valued members of the community. Churches provide formal education for about 12 % of school children in the Cook Islands. They also provide a wide range of nonformal education opportunities including religious studies, youth groups, music, drama, sports and counselling.

There are a vast number of sports associations on each island and in each major village promoting a wide range of sporting activities. Sports clubs provide opportunities for the development of physical skills and instill positive attitudes towards working together for the betterment of the individual and the community.

6.5.3.7 Cultural Development

The Ministry of Cultural Development facilitates public education and awareness through the delivery of courses and workshops and through its management of the National Library, National Museum, National Auditorium and National Archives.

The National Auditorium is the main venue for the development and promotion of the performing arts including drama, song and dance. The Ministry once played a major role in training artists and staging public performances but this role has been increasingly devolved to the private sector.

National Library staff conduct library skills workshops for Teachers College trainees. The workshops held in 1994, 1995 and 1999 were attended by a total of 52 trainees. In 1998, 5 participants attended a workshop on the conservation of valuable documents and books and a workshop on Disaster Planning in relation to books and documents is planned for late 1999.

Cultural Development Unit staff deliver a Cultural Studies course at the Tourism and Hospitality Training Centre. The course involves 12 lectures of 1 hour duration and educates trainees about our cultural heritage, the relationship between culture and tourism, and the importance of cultural tolerance. From 1996 to 1999 the course has had 30 participants, most of whom have been recent school leavers. Other workshops

coordinated by the Ministry include a Traditional Navigation Workshop (1991), a Traditional Canoe Making Workshop (1994) and a Stone Carving Workshop (1997).

Source : Carmen Temata, Secretary of Cultural Development, August 1999.

6.5.3.8 Environmental Education

Environmental awareness is promoted by Government agencies such as Tuuanga Taporoporo (The Environment Service) and the Natural Heritage Trust and by a variety of non-government organisations including the Taporoporoanga Ipukarea Society, Rarotonga Environment Awareness Program (REAP), the Takitumu Conservation Area and the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF).

The Environment Service is established by the Rarotonga Environment Act 1994-95 and is required by the Government to implement the National Environment Management Strategies (NEMS). NEMS identifies environmental awareness and education improvement as a major goal and recommends the strategies of increasing environmental training, increasing public information activity and preserving traditional knowledge management systems. The 6 awareness and education programs implemented by the Environment Service are :

1. Environmental Awareness Training
2. Environmental Youth Program
3. Environmental Education in School Curricula
4. Environmental Information Officer
5. Environment Resource Centre
6. National Biennial Environment Conference

The Environment Service identified the lack of information about the Cook Islands environment and the lack of materials in the Maori language as major constraints and has responded by building up a local resource base including fact sheets, reports, videos, slides and photographs. The Service has developed resources for environmental units in the school curriculum, has trained teachers on environmental issues and regularly communicates environmental information to schools through a column in the monthly Education Gazette.

The Natural Heritage Project (formerly part of the Environment Service but now a separate entity) specialises in collecting and communicating information on the biological diversity of the Cook Islands. The Project has conducted lectures and field trips for schools and the public, produced a variety of posters and books, and is developing a comprehensive database on Cook Islands species which will be accessible to the public.

The Service has found that past attempts to conduct community workshops specifically on environmental issues have not been very effective. The Service has had more success by "piggy-backing" onto programmes and workshops initiated by non-government organisations. These include the Koutu Nui and the House of Ariki (traditional leaders' organisations), the National Council of Women, Youth Groups, Uniformed Organisations and environmental NGOs such as Taporoporoanga Ipukarea Society and the Rarotonga Environment Awareness Program (REAP).

ACTIVITIES	FUNDING	YEAR	COORDINATOR
Taau Taku Tita (Women's Project)	Canada Fund	1994-95	Environment Service
Capacity Building	UNDP	1995-97	Environment Service
Ra'ui (marine conservation)	WWF / Marine Resources	1998	Koutu Nui
Waste Minimisation	Local sponsors	1998	Taporoporo Ipukarea Society
Save Our Shores	Local sponsors	1998	Rarotonga Environment Awareness Program

As well as cooperating with NGOs to educate and promote awareness of local environmental issues the Environment Service also cooperates with international agencies such as SPREP, UNESCO and WWF to promote regional themes and global initiatives.

THEMES	FUNDING / ASSISTANCE	YEAR
Media Education	UNESCO	1994 - 95
Year of the Turtle	SPREP	1994 - 95
Year of the Coral Reef	SPREP	1995 - 96
Environmental Education	SPREP and AusAID	1995 - 97
Clean Up The World	WWF and Local Businesses	Annual

The Environment Service promotes environmental issues through the television, radio and newspaper. It intends to expand its services to the outer islands and to target local issues such as Waste Management, Climate Change and Sea Level Rise, Biodiversity, Traditional Knowledge, Fishing Practices, Land Use Management, Environmental Impact Assessments and Disposal of Chemicals.

The future plans for environmental education were established at the 1998 National Forum with specific action being recommended on a number of issues.

ISSUE	RECOMMENDED ACTION
Formal Education - Primary and Secondary	Focus on promoting values and awareness
Non-formal Education	Train the trainers approach encompassing the community, NGOs and religious groups
Spreading the Environment Message	An environment person in each Ministry, school, business sector etc
Coordinating and Maintaining the Environment Education Training Program	Establish an EET Working Committee and securing resources for a full time EET Coordinator

6.5.3.8 USP Continuing Education Courses

In 1998, the University of the South Pacific Centre delivered 10 Continuing Education courses catering for 107 students.

Course	Semester 1 Enrolment	Semester 2 Enrolment
Conversational Maori	15	10
Tivaevae / Local Weaving	10	6
Floral Arrangement	16	-
Basic First Aid	11	-
Glass Blowing	11	-
Introduction to Basic Computing	14	-
Introduction to Basic Excel 7		7
Introduction to Basic Word 7		7
TOTAL	77	30

The USP Centre also raises public awareness of issues through a free weekly column in the Cook Islands News newspaper and a quarterly journal entitled "Search" which is sold for \$1 a copy. The Centre explored the possibility of facilitating education via panel discussions on television but decided that the costs involved were somewhat prohibitive.

Source : "Cook Islands USP Centre Annual Report 1998", John Herrmann, USP Centre Director

6.6 EDUCATION FOR BETTER LIVING

6.6.1 Introduction

The emphasis in this section is on the use of the mass media and modern channels of communication to reinforce and complement formal and non-formal education programs. In the Cook Islands there are 2 radio stations, 1 daily newspaper, a modern telephone system with Internet access, and 2 libraries and museums that are used to complement education programs.

6.6.2 Radio and Television Broadcasts

One FM radio station and one AM radio station broadcast programs on Rarotonga. Reception of the FM broadcast is limited to Rarotonga. The AM broadcast can be heard reliably in the Southern Group but reception in the Northern Group is variable. Radio has the potential to reach almost all the homes on Rarotonga and about three quarters of the homes in the outer islands.

	% of homes with a broadcast radio receiver
Northern Group	74 %
Southern Group	74 %
Rarotonga	98 %
NATIONAL	89 %

Source : Census of Population and Dwellings 1996, Statistics Office, December 1996

All 13 inhabited islands, except Palmerston, Nassau, Suwarrow and Rakahanga, have television transmitters. Transmitter signals from one island are not able to be received by another island. In the past, video tapes of programmes shown on Rarotonga were flown to the outer islands for retransmission. Television has the potential to reach 80 % of homes on Rarotonga. Less than half the homes in the outer islands can receive television transmissions or view pre-recorded video tapes.

	% of homes with a Television Monitor	% of homes with a TV Video Player
Northern Group	36 %	46 %
Southern Group	49 %	48 %
Rarotonga	80 %	71 %
NATIONAL	67 %	62 %

Source : Census of Population and Dwellings 1996, Statistics Office, December 1996

A range of Government and Non-Government agencies have used radio and television broadcasts to educate the public and raise awareness of local, regional and global issues. The following table lists the promotions broadcast by Radio Cook Islands and Cook Islands Television during 1998 and 1999.

AGENCY	PROMOTION	MEDIA
Ministry of Health	HIV/AIDS Awareness	TV/R
	Cancer Awareness	TV/R
	Alcohol Abuse	TV/R
	Breast Feeding	TV/R
	Smoking Awareness	TV/R
	Tutaka (Home Cleanliness)	TV/R
	World Population - Elderly People	TV/R
	Condom Use	TV/R
Environmental Services	World Environment Day	TV/R
	Turamarama - Environmental News	TV/R
	Rarotonga Environment Act	TV/R
	Litter	TV/R
	Environmental Impact Reports	TV/R
	Waste Recycling	TV/R
	Characteristics of Streams	TV/R
Rarotonga Environment Awareness Program (REAP)	Coral Reef	TV
	Littering	TV
	Recycling	TV
	Environment Awareness	TV
	Fish Poisoning	TV/R
	Dengue Fever	TV/R
	Toxic and Dangerous Chemicals	TV
	Clear, Clean Streams	TV
	Raui (Protected Lagoon Areas)	TV/R
	Health-Environment-Tourism-Economy	TV/R
	Suwarrow (Conservation)	TV/R
	Business - Government - Environment	TV
	Child Education - Crossing the Road	TV/R
Child Education - Maths Timestables	R	
Ministry of Agriculture	Role of the Sub-Regional FAO Office	TV
Taporoporo Ipukarea Society	Say Yes to Cloth Sopping Bags	TV
World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)	Save Our Suwarrow (Conservation)	TV/R
	Clean Up the World	TV/R
	Environmental Programme	TV/R
CI Family Welfare	Family Planning	R
	Child Welfare	R
	Antenatal Care	R
CI Red Cross	Role of the Red Cross	R
University of the South Pacific Centre	USP Role, Courses, Learning Experiences	R

R = Radio only TV = Television only TV/R = both Television and Radio

Source : Jeane Matenga, General Manager, Radio Cook Islands, August 1998

6.6.3 Newspapers

The only Cook Islands based newspaper to be continuously printed since 1990 is the daily (Monday to Saturday) CI News. For several years the "CI Press" was published every Sunday. This weekly newspaper tended to focus on political and economic issues. "Today's Vision Magazine" is a new weekly publication with a focus on television programmes, movies and music. For several years the University of the South Pacific Centre has produced a quarterly publication entitled "Search" with a focus on education, governance and the promotion of new ideas. The monthly "Education Gazette" is distributed free to all schools and is a means by which the Ministries of Education, Health and Culture as well as environmental agencies communicate instructions and promote awareness to teachers and students throughout the Cook Islands. Newspapers from New Zealand that are sold in the Cook Islands include the New Zealand Herald and The Cook Islands Star. The following information about the Cook Islands News is edited from a report submitted by the Editor of the CI News.

Cook Islands News Ltd, privatised from government since 1989, operates on a daily circulation that expects to cover about 2,000 people (10 – 12 % of the population). The majority of customers are on Rarotonga but daily batches are sent to the Southern Group islands and weekly batches to the Northern Group, both depending on air line schedules. Although no survey has been conducted, it is generally accepted by CI News that the newspaper is mainly bought by one working adult who would then circulate it around all other family members of the household. Educational and public awareness campaigns promoted by CI News include :

1. Ministry of Health : "Oraanga Meitaki" is a weekly column, published free of charge from 1996 to the present, on annual topics such as AIDS and Safe Sex, Basic Health and Hygiene, Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Birth Control and Pregnancy, Childcare and Parenthood, and Oral Hygiene. These topics are also promoted by front page advertisements with the costs subsidised by the World Health Organisation and other agencies.

2. Ministry of Agriculture : From 1989 to 1997 a free column was published fortnightly on topics such as livestock care, planting advice, pest control, export produce returns and agricultural workshop information.

3. Ministry of Education : From 1995 to 1997 a free column was published on issues relating to the curriculum, sports, exam results, projects and coming events.

4. Ministry of Police : The weekly "Police Round Up" column has been published free of charge from 1996 to the present. The column raises public awareness of crime being committed and seeks the public's assistance for a safer community. Issues include youth crime, dog population control, theft and drug abuse.

5. Environmental Awareness : CI News provides free space for environmental issues in the “To Tatou Ipukarea” section of the Monday edition and the “Environment” section of its weekend feature supplement. Contributors to these sections include the Environment Service, the World Wide Fund for Nature, the Taporoporoanga Ipukarea Society and the Rarotonga Environment Awareness Program (REAP).

6. Community Counselling and Welfare : CI News in its daily information page provides, free of charge, contact information on community counselling and welfare services such as Punanga Tauturu Inc (Anti Violence), the Family Welfare Association (Family Planning), the Children Welfare Association, the Cook Islands Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, the Esther Honey Foundation (Animal Clinic), Cancer Support Group, SDA Family Life Department, Health Watch Inc, Alcoholics Anonymous and Are Pa Metua (Elderly Health Centre).

7. Free Editorial Space : CI News provides free editorial space for public awareness issues as they arise. These have included :

First Aid	Red Cross
Home and Work Place Safety	Red Cross Ports Authority Ministry of Internal Affairs
Personal Relationships, Self Esteem and Individual Rights	CI Professional & Working Women’s Assoc Pan Pacific & South East Asia Women’s Assoc Miss Cook Islands Pageant Association
Reading and Writing	Taunga Artists Society Pan Pacific & South East Asia Women’s Assoc
Employment – Job Seeking Skills, Budgeting, Business Management	Small Business Enterprise Centre Ltd Development Investment Board
Fishing and Agriculture Skills	Ministry of Marine Resources Ministry of Agriculture
Hospitality, Cooking and Crafts	Food Festival Committee Hospitality and Tourism Training Centre Vainetini (Women’s Community Groups)

8. Supplement Features : Issues featured in the CI News WeekEnd Magazine supplement and its Business Monthly supplement include Marijuana Abuse, Alcohol Abuse, Domestic Violence, Literacy, Child Mothers, Environment Recycling, Breast Cancer and Prostate Cancer.

Source : Alex Sword, Editor, Cook Islands News

Basic education advertisements and articles printed in the Cook Island News between 1 July 1999 and 7 August 1999 are listed in the table below.

AGENCY	PROMOTION
Ministry of Health	Healthy Weight Cancer Awareness – PAP Smears High Blood Pressure Breast Feeding Drinking and Driving Alcohol Abuse HIV-AIDS prevention and transmission STD prevention and condom usage
Te Aponga Uira o Tumute-varovaro (Electricity Authority)	Electrical Safety Electrical Efficiency
Punanga Tauturu Inc (Women’s Counselling)	Child Sexual Abuse
Rarotonga Environment Awareness Program (REAP)	Toxic Chemical Disposal Coral Cuts
University of the South Pacific Centre	Weekly articles promoting learning, study techniques and student counselling
Cook Islands News Community Service Message	Reduce-Reuse-Recycle-Rethink Don’t Rubbish Raro Mosquito Breeding Prevention Counselling and Welfare Agencies contacts
Cook Island News Daily and Weekly Articles	“Daily Bread” - a daily text from the Bible “Virtue of the Week” - weekly article on virtues “Kids Page” – weekly page of quizzes, poems, stories Weekly article on Cook Islands Culture Weekly article on religion Weekly article on the Internet (Internet Oyster)

Source : MOE Directorate of Planning and Finance, Survey, August 1999

6.6.4 Libraries and Museums

There are 2 public libraries and museums in the Cook Islands. The Cook Islands National Library and Museum is located within, and managed by, the Ministry of Cultural Development, Takamoa, Rarotonga. The Cook Islands Library and Museum, also located in Takamoa, Rarotonga is operated by the Cook Islands Library and Museum Society. The Society organises regular public seminars on a wide range of topical issues. The Library is also the venue for a weekly language development programme for children organised by PPSEAWA. The public also has some access to small, specialist libraries in the Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Marine Resources and to some school libraries in the outer islands. The University of the South Pacific Extension Centre, Takamoa, Rarotonga has a library for enrolled students. There is no mobile library service in the Cook Islands. National archives are stored in the National Archives division of the Ministry of Cultural Development, Takamoa, Rarotonga.

Source : Carmen Temata, Head of the Ministry of Cultural Development, Jan 1999

6.6.5 Formal Distance Education

The Education Sector Action Plan (1992) proposed increased utilisation of distance education modes. Distance education initiatives taken by the Ministry of Education include the promotion of correspondence lessons, policy development and the establishment of a centre for distance education delivery.

6.6.5.1 Correspondence Lessons

The Ministry of Education has reported an increase in the use of New Zealand Correspondence School courses particularly by senior secondary school students in the Southern Group islands of Aitutaki and Mangaia. In 1996, the Ministry of Education took the initiative to promote NZ correspondence courses for junior secondary school students in the Northern Group. However the program has not proved to be as successful as anticipated with the major problems being language difficulties and delays in receiving materials. New Zealand allows the Cook Islands a maximum of 250 student places in Correspondence School. (Gill Vaiimene, Director of Operations, personal communication, 1999)

6.6.5.2 Radio Broadcasts

In the early 1970's school radio programmes were regularly produced and broadcast. The Ministry of Education operated a recording studio. Mr Fabian Kairua, a former studio employee, has suggested that school broadcasts were terminated for a number of reasons including high production costs, reception difficulties in the Northern Group and lack of interactive learning. The Ministry of Education's Distance Education Report (1997) does not support the reintroduction of broadcast radio for the delivery of formal education lessons in schools.

Source : "Distance Education Report", Ministry of Education, 1997

6.6.5.3 Television Broadcasts

A willingness to screen educational programmes during school time has been expressed by the management of television stations on Rarotonga and Aitutaki. In 1998, a community based committee raised funds and purchased television sets for every school on Aitutaki. However the regular transmission of relevant programs that complement the curriculum is yet to eventuate.

The Distance Education Report identified limitations and concerns with broadcast television including coordination of transmission with school timetables, the content and presentation of imported pre-recorded tapes, the lack of interactive learning, and the production costs of local production. The costs for the use of the Rarotonga television broadcast network in 1997 was estimated at \$250 per hour of broadcast time and the production costs estimated at \$NZ 3,000 for a locally produced 45 minute programme. The Report does not recommend broadcast television at this stage as a priority option for distance education in schools.

Source : "Distance Education Report", Ministry of Education, 1997

6.6.5.4 High Frequency Radio

High frequency radio has been used extensively for inter-island communication and is still the main means of communication with Palmerston, Suvarrow, Nassau and Rakahanga. Mr Stuart Kingan, a noted local scientist and amateur radio operator, has, in the past, facilitated HF radio based conferences between islands for medical and educational purposes. However Telecom Cook Islands holds the rights to the two frequencies allocated to the Cook Islands for outer island communication by the International Frequency Registration Board. The Education Distance Report does not view HF radio as a sustainable option for distance learning in Cook Islands schools.

Source : "Distance Education Report", Ministry of Education, 1997

6.6.5.5 Telephone and Computer Links

Telecom Cook Islands is the sole provider of telephone services in the Cook Islands. All 13 inhabited islands, except Palmerston, Nassau, Suvarrow and Rakahanga, have a satellite earth station and a digital exchange which enable communication by telephone, facsimile (Fastfax), email and the Internet. Telephone and facsimile services on Rakahanga are also possible via their Ultra High Frequency radio link. In 1998 the analogue satellite links between Rarotonga and the outer islands were upgraded to digital links resulting in stable Internet access for the outer islands. The 1996 Census reports that 73% of dwellings in the Cook Islands had a telephone and 9% had a personal computer.

The Distance Education Report recommends distance education in schools be implemented in 5 phases :

1. Improving telephone and facsimile access
2. Providing Internet email and WWW browsing
3. Using an Internet based audio-graphics environment
4. Providing a Teacher Resource Centre located in the Ministry of Education
5. Providing the Ministry of Education with a WWW Server and Conference Server

The recommendations for schools to be equipped with facsimiles, computers and email access have been accepted by the Ministry of Education's Senior Management Team.

The Ministry of Education's Technical and Vocational Education Training Centre opened in June 1999. The Centre will train teachers in the use of computer systems and will be the focal point for the delivery of distance education through electronic email and the Internet. In 1999 the Ministry received 100 computers through the Rarotonga Rotary Club, of which 70 have been distributed to schools with the remainder to be processed by the end of the year. The Ministry of Education is affiliated to UNEVOC which provides a world wide network for information sharing in regard to establishing and managing distance learning programs.

Source : "Distance Education Report", Ministry of Education, 1997

7. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EFA STRATEGY, PLAN AND PROGRAMMES

7.0 Ministry of Education Restructuring and Decentralisation

The ADB funded “Institutional Strengthening of the Ministry of Education” programme and the ESPAM Module of the BELS program have been successful in :

- restructuring the Ministry of Education
- improving policy and planning capacity
- establishing an effective education management information system
- developing effective school based quality assurance processes
- providing training for central and community level management

Some progress has been made towards decentralisation of the education system. The Ministry of Education is now only responsible for Rarotonga schools but it still controls the decisions on teacher appointments and operating expenditure for these schools. The major role of a school committee is still regarded as that of a fund raiser rather than a school manager. The Ministry of Outer Islands Development is responsible for outer island schools with island based Chief Executive Officers facilitating local decision making and establishing the groundwork for Island Councils to eventually assume responsibility for all public services.

Some additional resources for education have been mobilised through cost sharing especially through some school committees being very active in improving school resources and facilities. Increased user charges were introduced for the Rarotonga bus service but this was to reduce expenditure rather than to increase resources. Cost sharing and user charges are sensitive issues in a community that has experienced an economic crisis.

Containment of unit cost was driven by a substantial reduction in the budget appropriation for education following the economic crisis in 1996. Greater efficiency, without unduly comprising effectiveness, was achieved through reducing the number of teachers, school ancillary staff and Ministry of Education administration staff. The potentially adverse effect of reducing public expenditure on school resources was offset by an increase in aid funding. Increased efficiency and effectiveness has also been achieved through the amalgamation of small schools on 3 of the Southern Group islands and through the increased use of correspondence courses.

7.1 Early Childhood Care and Development

Early Childhood education has received significant inputs in terms of curriculum development, teacher training and resources, mainly as a result of the Education Development Project. The framework for more effective teaching and learning is now in place. However a reliable and valid system to monitor and measure the quality of education at this level needs to be developed and implemented. Another concern is that the gross enrolment of 64 % in 1997 shows that enrolment has not improved since 1990 and therefore suggests that initiatives taken to date are, on their own, insufficient to achieve the goal of 90 – 100 % gross enrolment. The role of the parent as the first educator needs to be genuinely promoted and supported.

7.2 Primary and Basic Education

The accessibility and importance of primary school education in the Cook Islands is reflected in net and gross enrolments approaching and exceeding 100%. The Education Development Project, complemented by other programs including TESP, BELS and Inclusive Education, has been effective in improving :

- the quality and availability of textbooks and library books
- the provision of the basic teaching resources
- school buildings, facilities, equipment and furniture
- teacher development opportunities
- education and curriculum policies and statements

7.3 Learning Achievements and Outcomes

The currently used STACI tests indicate that there has been an improvement in Mathematics since 1994. However standards in English and Maori have declined since 1994. Achievement in Maori has been declining on Rarotonga whereas English is a problem in the outer islands, especially the Northern Group. However, the improved resources, buildings, teacher training and curricula are expected to improve primary school teacher and student performances over the next 10 years. The Ministry of Education's Directorate of Audit and Quality Assurance has developed a system for assessing teacher performance and, if approved by the Ministry, this system will be able to provide annual data from which trends can be ascertained. Recently completed and imminent testing and measurement systems will provide more valid information on student achievement.

7.4 Adult Literacy

No goals were set for adult literacy and there is no reliable data on such literacy rates in the Cook Islands.

7.5 Training in Essential Skills

The original program to establish a National Employment and Training Authority within the Ministry of Education was not implemented. Instead, the Public Service Commission (PSC) assumed responsibility for post secondary education, training and human resource development. The PSC is facilitating the coordination of human resource development across all sectors with the Cook Islands Association for Non-Government Organisations (CIANGO) assisting by coordinating and promote NGO initiatives.

Substantial opportunities for individuals to develop essential skills in the economic sectors of Marine Resources, Agriculture, Tourism and Business, have been provided by the relevant Ministries and the Small Business Enterprise Centre. These agencies have contributed towards meeting the goals of increased numbers of trained in information technology, crafts, tourism, management and small business operations.

The wide range of social sector ministries and non-government organisations are effectively meeting the country's commitment to international convention objectives including promoting non-formal education, health issues, reproductive health, gender equity and women's access to a range of vocational and continuing education opportunities.

7.6 Training in Essential Skills

Through the media, especially the newspaper, television and radio, virtually all Cook Islanders are exposed to public education and awareness programs. The range and frequency of such opportunities increase with proximity to Rarotonga. The country has a well-developed communication system and an increasing number of personnel with information technology skills which provides the foundation for future developments in distance learning opportunities.

8. MAIN PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND ANTICIPATED

The "Institutional Strengthening Technical Assistance Project Final Report" clearly detailed the major risk factors that impacted on the initial stages of the education development programs. These were :

- delays on restructuring due to bureaucratic factors, resistance of Ministry of Education staff to change and limited leadership and management capabilities
- limited scope and impact of staff development programmes, due to delays in senior and mid-level staff appointments and release for training
- limited operationalisation of management reform, due to uncertain timetables for specific policy developments
- delays in staff appointments, deployment and rationalisation, due to an uncertain financial/budgetary climate and absence of suitably qualified candidates in some positions
- lack of management and organisational efficiency, due to fragmentation of operations over different sites
- delays in policy resolutions, due to central-line ministry cooperation

The same risk factors, to varying extents, were also constraints throughout the implementation of the education development programs.

The Ministry of Education, as was the case with other ministries, was grossly overstuffed with under-skilled and under-worked employees who contributed to an overall lack of work ethics and motivation. Supervisors tended to be reactive administrators rather than proactive managers. Down-sizing since 1996 and the appointments of new staff have resulted in some improvement in efficiency and effectiveness. However a lack suitably qualified people in some positions has continued to hamper education development initiatives. Down-sizing has also presented problems including some divisions becoming understaffed, a lack of continuity in some programs due to changes in personnel, and a reduction in the pool of trained teachers.

The public sector reforms and reductions in public expenditure on education have been major constraints. The pressure on Ministries to operate strictly within their appropriation tended to focus managers on cost savings, efficiency and retrenchment rather than on investment, effectiveness and initiative. Budgetary constraints resulted in delays in allocating funds and appointing staff for planned development programs. The reform also transferred responsibilities between some Ministries without creating or amending the relevant legislation. There has been uncertainty, inaction and conflicting instructions due to the Education Act still delegating legal responsibility to the Ministry of Education for provisions that have since been devolved to other Ministries.

A major risk to sustainable, quality early childhood education in the Cook Islands is the lack of pre-service teacher training programmes and plans. The Cook Islands Teachers College only delivers a pre-service programme for primary school teacher trainees. Potential secondary school teachers apply for scholarships to study at overseas tertiary institutions. Early childhood classes are increasingly being taught by primary school teachers who have neither the qualifications nor the experience at this level of teaching.

A plan to ensure the continued availability of trained and qualified early childhood teachers is required.

9. PUBLIC AWARENESS, POLITICAL WILL AND NATIONAL CAPACITIES

There has been no public awareness of the Education For All program in the Cook Islands. Awareness of the program within the Ministry of Education was also virtually nonexistent until late 1998 when information began to be received regarding the EFA 2000 Assessment Report.

Similarly, awareness of the Education and Training Sector Study and the Education Sector Action Plan is limited to only a very small number of people. The initiation of the Education Development Project was widely publicised for several months in 1995 but since that time there has been no planned and implemented program to keep teachers, parents and the public regularly informed on the objectives, progress and benefits of the project. The renovation of school buildings was designed to be a shared responsibility between the Ministry of Education and the school community with the Ministry funding materials and the community assisting with manpower. Delays that have occurred with this component of the project may have been minimised by a carefully managed public awareness campaign.

The Government initiated and remained committed to education development in the 1990s. Government commissioned the "Polynesia Way" review (1989) and the "Education and Training Sector Study" (1992). In December 1992 the Government and the ADB Loan Reconnaissance Mission signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the proposed Education Development Project. When it became apparent that the Ministry lacked the capacity to implement the project, the Government approved a technical assistance program to restructure and strengthen the Ministry of Education. During the earlier stages of the Project, there was some concern at the rate of progress being made towards meeting implementation schedules and compliance with loan covenants. Government's commitment was reflected in the increasingly proactive role taken by core Ministry members of the Project Coordinating Committee to ensure that the Project regained the momentum required for a successful and timely completion.

The Cook Islands has a strong capacity to develop and implement education development. It has a healthy and well-educated population with a pool of highly qualified people experienced in education, economics, finance, policy and project planning and implementation. The pool is rapidly increasing particularly as a result of ongoing graduate diploma courses in Public Sector Management. One area of deficiency is the lack of suitably qualified people to align the Cook Islands curriculum with the New Zealand curriculum and to train teachers on new aspects of the New

Zealand curriculum. Another constraint to improving the quality of education is the high proportion of teachers who lack senior secondary or tertiary level academic qualifications. Education is valued by people in the community and, if kept well informed, they are willing supporters of development initiatives.

The country has modern communication systems, widespread media penetration, and regular air services to most islands. Schools are established on all permanently inhabited islands with the student population occupying only about one half of the maximum classroom capacity. Development in education is therefore focused on improving quality rather than on quantity or access. The Cook Islands economy is sufficiently sound to ensure that the recurrent costs of education and investments into small development initiatives can be funded from the annual government budget. However the Cook Islands is often reliant on loans or aid assistance from overseas agencies to implement large-scale development projects.

10. GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF THE PROGRESS

Rapid progress was made between 1989 and 1992 in reviewing Cook Islands education and establishing the direction to take for the rest of the decade.

From 1993 to 1995 little progress was made, mainly due to the lack of capacity within the Ministry of Education.

From 1995 onwards, significant progress has been made. The Ministry of Education has been strengthened and there has been significant progress in curriculum development, teacher training, school resources and school renovations. There has been a revitalisation of education in the Cook Islands and it is expected that the benefits of this investment will be revealed in improved student and teacher performances over the next decade.

Primary school enrolment ratios have been maintained at or above 100% proving that at this level there is "Education For All". The challenge is now to achieve the same for level for Early Childhood and secondary school education.

PART III PROSPECTS

11. POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

11.1 The Strategic Goals of Government

The National Vision of the Cook Islands is :

“To enjoy the highest quality of life consistent with the aspirations of our people, and in harmony with our culture and environment.”

To attain this vision Government has identified three Outcomes :

- Economic Growth
- Social Progress
- Good Governance

Social Progress is typified as :

“A nation of strong, healthy, well educated and caring citizens where there are greater opportunities for individual and community growth. A community that is committed to improving its social infrastructure, the delivery of public services and the care and management of the environment.”

Strategic Result Areas have been identified to achieve all three outcomes. The education aligned Strategic Result Area is :

“A community that will achieve a higher quality of life by providing greater opportunities for increasing individual and community self reliance and growth in physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.”

The Ministry of Education has identified 5 Sectoral Goals to achieve its Strategic Result Area :

- To diversify and update relevant curriculum statements and support resources.
- To increase teacher competency and ensure an adequate supply of trained teachers.
- To increase capacity of school management to ensure consistent delivery of quality education.
- To expand the range and quality of relevant secondary qualifications.
- To improve delivery of student learning programmes.

Sources : *“Budget Policy Statement 1999/2000”, Cook Islands Government, March 1999*
“Draft Education 1999/2000 Budget”, Ministry of Education, June 1999

11.2 The Way Forward

The Cook Islands Party is the majority member of the present coalition Government. “The Way Forward” for education and human resource development is stated in the Party’s 1999 manifesto. The following is a summary of these policies.

- Re-new emphasis on the primary level
- Strengthen outer island primary education through quality teachers and resources
- Implement distance education through the Technical & Vocational Training Centre
- Enhance the partnership between students, parents and the state at secondary level
- Develop relevant, portable certificates recognised by NZQA and internationally
- Finance 20 % of tertiary costs for those who fully qualify on secondary results
- Conduct a training needs analysis to align skills with the National Vision
- Target higher education to meet perceived community needs 10 – 20 years hence
- Increase aid-funded scholarship through a strong local contribution component
- Implement Phases 2 and 3 of the new teachers salary scale
- Progressively increase the national budgetary allotment to education
- Complete a comprehensive review of the education sector

The significant inputs made into education during the 1990s and the commitment of the government and people to social progress, provide a sound foundation for the future development of educational opportunities for all Cook Islanders.

Ken Matheson
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