

South Pacific Examination at Form Six. Fetuvalu also conducts the FJC, and will offer the Cambridge Examination for the first time in 2006.

A paradox in the secondary education system is that while Motufoua concentrates on preparing students for examinations and is biased towards white-collar education, it is also the only school that offers any technical and vocational education (TVET). Woodwork, technical drawing, graphic design, design technology and home economics are all taught, but only in lower forms as they do not form part of the syllabus for examination. Since all students must pass an entrance examination to attend Motufoua, many Tuvaluan students who most need TVET cannot access this type of education.

**Table Seven: Enrolment by gender and form, Motufoua 2006, Fetuvalu 2005.**

	Males	Females	Total
<b>Motufoua, 2006</b>			
Form 3	52	74	126
Form 4	54	92	146
Form 5	49	58	107
Form 6	34	49	83
<b>Motufoua Total</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>462</b>
<b>Fetuvalu, 2005</b>			
Form 3	21	14	35
Form 4	54	52	106
Form 5	17	20	37
<b>Fetuvalu Total</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>178</b>

Sources: Statistics supplied by Ministry of Education; Government of Tuvalu 2005: 33.

The data for Motufoua in **Table Seven** reflect the higher pass rate for females as compared with males in the MSS examination at the end of Class Eight. Females outnumber males in all forms, and this pattern was also typical of the years 2000-2005 (Government of Tuvalu, 2005: 33). Data on enrolment by class at Fetuvalu in 2006 were not available for this study, but it can be seen that the reverse tends to be true for Fetuvalu. Clearly many families are prepared to pay higher fees in order to obtain an appropriate source of education for their children, especially in the case of sons. Other pupils who do not achieve an MSS pass and do not appear in school statistics are those who have been sent at their parents' expense to secondary schools in Fiji or elsewhere.

**Table Eight: Examination results, Motufoua 2006**

<b>Fiji Junior Certificate</b>			
	Female	Male	Total
Fail	7	7	14
Pass	48	41	89
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>103</b>
<b>Pass rate</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>85%</b>	<b>86%</b>
<b>Pacific Senior Secondary Examination</b>			
	Female	Male	Total
Fail	30	19	49
Pass	19	17	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Pass rate</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>42%</b>

Source: Statistics provided by the Ministry of Education

**Table Eight** shows the examination results for Motufoua in 2006, i.e. for the 2005 academic year. It can be seen that the pass rate was substantially higher than is usual for the MSS entry examination, with 86 per cent of candidates overall passing in the 2005 school year. Girls performed slightly better than boys. This pass rate is a considerable improvement compared with much of the last decade when the average pass rate for the FJC was well below 50 per cent and reached an all time low of 13 per cent in 2001. This was largely because of stress caused by school changes for students repatriated after the Fijian Coup, and the tragic fire at Motufoua in 2000 that resulted in the death of 18 female students and one staff member. As in the case of the MSS examination, those who fail either repeat Form 4 and resit, or drop out if they become discouraged or when they attain the age of 16.

The 2006 Motufoua pass rates for the Pacific Secondary Examination that is conducted at the end of Form 6 (also shown in Table Eight), are much lower, around half those for the examination at the end of Form 4. Interestingly, the 2006 figures in Table Eight show boys outperforming girls, which is not normally the pattern in secondary education in Tuvalu. One respondent suggested that this is because in recent years girls have become more involved in school social activities than in their schoolwork. Both Motufoua and Fetuvalu now have more social activities, dancing and performances than they had in the past, and girls tend to be more involved than are boys. Others suggested that when boys are highly motivated to compete for scholarships for tertiary education places their academic performances are likely to improve.

Data for Fetuvalu were not available, but it is known not to have achieved good pass rates in the FJC. This can hardly be expected, given that most Fetuvalu students are those who have not met the Motufoua standard.

## **2.2.4 Post-secondary Education**

### **2.2.4.1 Academic and Professional Studies**

Unless parents are able to pay all costs of overseas study, progression in formal education after Form Six depends largely on performance in the Pacific Senior Secondary Examination. With donor assistance, the Government provides scholarships so that students who pass Form Six can continue to Form Seven, a bridging year for university studies. Prior to 2004, bridging was available only overseas, but the establishment of the Augmented Foundation Year at the USP Campus in Funafuti in 2003 allowed Form Seven study to be undertaken in Funafuti. By 2005 142 students were enrolled in Form Seven at the USP Campus, of whom 54 per cent were female. The costs of running this course at the USP are met by the Tuvalu Department of Education.

After Form Seven, successful students may be sponsored for overseas study. As part of the Government's targeted human resource development strategy, scholarships are allocated for particular fields of study on the basis of need. The main destinations for scholars are Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, New Zealand and Australia. Others who achieve entrance-level marks can continue as USP distance learning students or transfer to the USP Campus in Suva.

The USP Campus in Funafuti was established in 1976, and moved into its current premises in

the early 1990s. The buildings are well-maintained and resourced with satellite communications, distance learning facilities, a computer room with 18 PCs that students use on a roster system, and a small library. There are plans to extend the library, and build more classrooms and a science laboratory.

As well as the Augmented Foundation Year, the USP Campus offers most of the courses available at USP to degree and postgraduate level, with fees charged according to the scale set by USP.

The Foundation Year has its own staff, plus there are 10 part-time tutors to support other USP course offerings. At present there are no post-graduate students and most of those enrolled are employed people wishing to upgrade their qualifications in fields such as teaching, business studies, management, policing and counselling.

According to the Social Data Report 2005, in 2004 the most common fields of tertiary study for Tuvaluans were education, health and graduate maritime studies, but the largest was the catchall classification 'further studies', i.e. the Form 7 bridging year, which accounted for 25 per cent of enrolments. A reduction in the availability of donor funding for scholarships and also the phasing out of Government support for overseas studies at USP because of unsatisfactory performances has halved the number of post-secondary enrolments - 119 in 2004 as compared with 248 in 2000 (Government of Tuvalu, 2005: 33).

In 2000, 52 males and 57 females were enrolled in overseas universities and none in Tuvalu. By 2004 only 20 males and 18 females were studying overseas and eight males and 15 females were undertaking tertiary study at USP via distance education. This dramatic reduction in numbers was most pronounced for diploma and degree courses, with only 31 students enrolled at this level in 2004 compared with 84 in 2000.

This narrowing of opportunity for overseas tertiary studies raises some important issues. First, it means that fewer school leavers overall have the opportunity to achieve their goals. Second, it makes study more difficult for those who do proceed to further study. Although it can be argued that it is much cheaper to train students at USP in Funafuti, it generally requires much higher levels of commitment and determination to study effectively in a distance learning/home environment than at a well resourced university campus in another country. While the USP campus in Funafuti is quite well resourced and has a pleasant atmosphere, it is tiny, and cannot compare with the Suva campus of USP. Moreover, students living in a family environment usually have competing demands on their time and tend to be unable to study efficiently. This may be one reason why Funafuti USP enrolments have been slow to climb to the levels pertaining when most students studied overseas. Finally, fewer graduates mean a depletion of national expertise, which could have various implications for national development and opportunity.

#### **2.2.4.2 Vocational Training**

Vocational training opportunities in Tuvalu tend to be very restricted. The best known and most important in terms of its contribution to building labour force and employment capacity is the

Tuvalu Maritime Training Institute (TMTI), locally known as Amatuku after the islet on Funafuti atoll on which it is located. Amatuku was established in 1979. Since 1994 there have been from 90 to half this number of trainees per year, with an average of 60 in recent years. The course lasts for one year, with students specialising in one of three areas: Engineering, Stewardship or Deck Services. There are normally three intakes per year, each of 20-30 students. Amatuku offers internationally accredited courses and complies with the international Standards for Training for Certification and Watch-keeping (STCW) and is monitored regularly. Adherence to these standards is crucial because they mean that Amatuku graduates are eligible for recruitment on overseas shipping lines, and most are awarded contracts soon after graduation (TMTI, 2004).

The Government meets most of the costs of training at Amatuku, estimated as \$7,500 per year per student, so there are currently no fees for basic training. The Institute also receives some donor funding, and at the time of writing was implementing an extensive building upgrade with ROC Taiwan assistance. After completing a year of work experience, graduates of Amatuku can return for a further month of study to attain the rating of Able Bodied Seamen (TMTI, 2004). The fee for this is \$600, which may be paid by a lien on their future wages.

There is a very strong demand for places at Amatuku. Admission is by examination, focusing on English skills and aptitude for maritime training. In recent years the pass rate has been consistently good, always in excess of 85 per cent and close to 100 per cent in some years (Government of Tuvalu, 2005: 35). The case studies in Box Seven, Section 3.2.4 show clearly the importance of this institution in giving opportunity to young men who are not interested in a white-collar orientated education, and their willingness to accept a strictly disciplined environment when they can see benefits. As of 2006, only males had ever been admitted to Amatuku, but there are plans to accept a limited number of females in the future. There are some issues relating to the practicalities of achieving this gender equity objective, however, as discussed in Section 3.2.4 and Box Eight, below.

Other post-secondary options include a private school using self-paced education methods, the New Day Academy School. This school is effectively a private remedial school. It currently has only one principal instructor and a very small enrolment of less than 20 students, mostly males.

The Mareta Kapane Halo Typing School (MKH) was started in 1996 to provide training in office skills and computing. Between 1996 and 2004 only five out of a total of 264 enrolled students were males. The number of enrolments peaked at almost 70 in 2000, and the majority of female base-grade administrative staff in the Public Service attended this school at some stage. Enrolments have now declined dramatically to 10-12 overall, with about half failing to complete (Government of Tuvalu, 2005: 37). This was said by informants to be because of loss of interest of the proprietors and because computerisation has reduced the demand for typists.

### **2.2.5 Issues in Education**

It is widely recognised in Tuvalu that the education sector has under-performed in the past, and at the time of the author's visit a number of initiatives were in progress to address issues in education. Since then, a new government has been elected with a reform mandate, and the climate of change can be expected to continue. Some of the key issues that must be tackled are discussed here.

A major issue in both primary and secondary education is quality of teaching. As noted above, the favourable student teacher ratios in Table Four conceal a number of realities. First, as most of the teachers are female, there is a high rate of absenteeism because of maternity leave or other indispositions arising from family responsibilities. Second, although at primary level most teachers are qualified, many qualified long ago and have received little in-service training since then. Many are out of touch with modern trends in teaching and learning, and with electronic technologies including computers. Third, many of the qualified teachers are not qualified at the level or in the subject they are required to teach. Fourth, largely because of a discouraging, under-resourced teaching environment and their own lack of skills, some teachers are apathetic, uninspiring or not highly motivated, and remain in teaching because they need the income rather than because they enjoy it. These factors impair the quality of teaching, and manifest as poor student performances.

Another issue is that although they will be expected to make a greater contribution to the workforce in the future, school performances of boys tend to be poorer than those of girls, at both primary and secondary level. Teachers said some of the reasons why girls tend to outperform boys at lower levels of education are that girls tend to be better at mastering English, the language of instruction, and are less likely to be distracted during class. Another concern relating to the language of instruction is that most Tuvaluan school students are not able to read and write in Tuvaluan. This has led the EKT Church to introduce special after school classes for children to study the bible in Tuvaluan.

Low standards and apathy transfer from primary to secondary level. While it always tends to be more challenging to sustain the attention and effort of pupils in secondary schools, teachers said that secondary students are becoming increasingly disrespectful and morale is declining among both students and teachers. There is no provision for counselling at Motufoua Secondary School other than that provided in connection with religious education.

Other issues in secondary education mentioned by teachers were lack of diversity and opportunities because of the emphasis on education for white-collar employment. They said parents support this insisting that teachers focus on academic subjects and refuse to allow schools teaching of traditional skills, not even allowing teachers to teach basic daily life skills, such as cutting toddy.

Small numbers of students add to the expensive cost of diversifying the curriculum while the current emphasis of examinations at the end of primary school, Form Four and Form Six leaves little room in the school curriculum for technical and vocational training. Students who become bored or discouraged because they cannot master academic subjects can either drop out or struggle until they fail and are pushed out of the system. Already demoralised by their personal sense of failure, they are likely to enter the labour force as unskilled workers who command little respect and have little chance of acquiring skills and upgrading unless they are lucky enough to be admitted to Amatuku.

Until the early 1990s, vocational education was available from several Community Training Centres (CTCs) but these centres have now been closed. Currently the only sources of post-secondary technical and vocational education and training other than Amatuku are non-formal education and on-the-job training and the quality of training tends to be low.

The Tuvalu current education Master Plan includes expansion of TVET. It appears from discussions, however, that a change in community attitude is needed if TVET education is to be perceived as a valid alternative to academic education rather than as a consolation prize for those who fail to make the grade.

As mentioned above, education funding has been substantially reduced in recent years, and is unlikely to increase. Little capital is available for resourcing and running costs because most of the budget is used for staff salaries. In primary schools salaries accounted for 86 per cent of expenditure on education in 1996 but had increased to 95 per cent in 2005. At secondary level it was 33 per cent in 1996 increasing to 69 per cent in 2005, with much of the balance spent on student accommodation and food.

Although the EU funded schools construction programme is tackling the problem of the physical environment of primary schools, teachers commented that not just replacement buildings but also textbooks and equipment are needed, as they feel they never have enough resources. The EU has also provided \$200,000 for equipment and furniture, but much more is needed to adequately resource all primary schools.

In 2004 the Ministry of Education sought donor assistance to review the education sector. This has resulted in a major review and the formulation of the Education and Training Sector Master Plan and the Tuvalu Education Implementation Plan 2006-2010. The Master Plan sets out a number of objectives for all levels of education and strategies to achieve them, including curriculum reform, increased equity in education, vocational and life skills training, improving the quality and efficiency of management and teacher development (Government of Tuvalu, 2006b).

The ADB review of education proposes major reforms to secondary education and establishing junior secondary schools (JSS). It proposes that JSS would offer a more general, less academic style of education at Forms 3 and 4 levels, with a greater TVET component. Motufoua would become the senior secondary school for those with an academic orientation, and would focus on Forms 5 and 6 and on developing a Form 7. If this plan were implemented it could involve constructing a new building to re-house Motufoua on Funafuti, where most of its potential enrolment is located, and converting the old buildings in Vaitupu to a JSS (ADB, 2006).

The extent to which the objectives of the Education Master Plan are achieved and the proposals of the education review are integrated with the Plan will depend on government commitment and a substantial increase in funding for the education sector. The proposed strategies have the potential to bring about very substantial improvements to the education sector. Child and youth focussed organizations should lobby to ensure that educational development is progressed, using these or similar strategies, and adequately resourced so that children and youth receive their entitlement to quality and relevant education as defined by Article 28 of CRC.

## 2.3 PATTERNS OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

Economic activity in Tuvalu comprises paid employment (formal sector) and subsistence activities (informal sector). A key economic issue in Tuvalu is the scarcity of paid employment opportunities, especially for school leavers. There are three dimensions to this concern: the overall scarcity of wage employment; the concentration in Funafuti of most available employment; and lack of diversity in employment, with most opportunities in white-collar work. A major underlying reason for these features is underdevelopment of the private sector.

**Figure Eight: Economic activity, population aged 15 years and over, 2002**

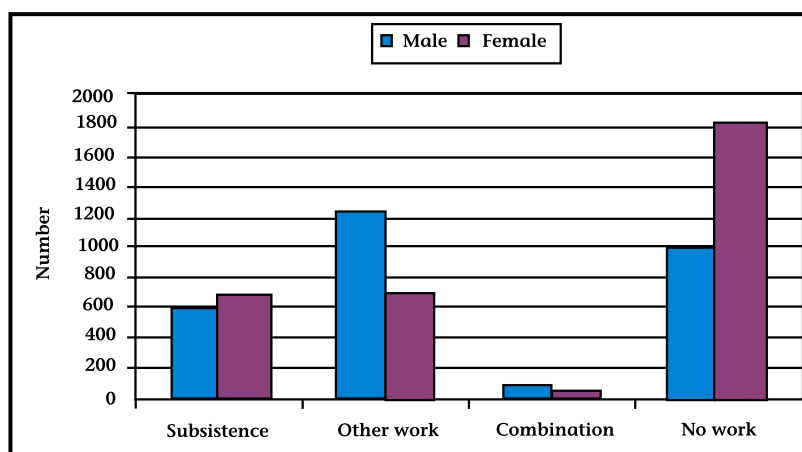


Figure Eight shows economic activity for the 6103 individuals over age 15 years as recorded in the 2002 Tuvalu census. A total of 2043 people counted in the census said they had an occupation, which represented 39 per cent of the total working age population (15-59 years), or 33 per cent of the total population aged 15 years and over. Only 35 people identified themselves as an employer and only 37 as self-employed, reflecting the very limited nature of the private sector (Tuvalu Census, 2002, Table 27P).

Table Nine shows the overall distribution of the employed population by sector and gender. Although production workers comprise the largest sector, there are nearly as many professional and technical employees. When the first three categories are combined, the dominance of white-collar work in Tuvalu wage employment is clearly apparent.

**Table Nine: Employed population aged 15 and over by sector and gender, 2002**

	Male %	Female %	Total	Total Number
Professional & Technical	49.5	50.5	100.0	549
Administrative & Managerial	75.4	24.6	100.0	179
Clerical & related	18.3	81.7	100.0	229
Sales workers	39.3	60.7	100.0	140
Service workers	55.1	44.9	100.0	205
Agriculture & Fisheries	100.0	0.0	100.0	14
Production workers	94.6	5.4	100.0	727
Total number				2043

Source: Derived from Government of Tuvalu, 2005: Table 34, p 48

The table shows roughly equal numbers of males and females classified as Professional and Technical, but males dominate Administrative and Managerial employment. The majority of Clerical and Related employees are female, many of whom work as base grade administrators. Females also outnumber males in Sales but there are more males in Services, while Agriculture and Fisheries and Production are almost entirely male.

**Table Ten: Funafuti share of national employment by sector and gender, 2002**

	Male	Female	All workers	Total
	%	%	%	Number
Professional & Technical	73.2	58.1	65.6	549
Administrative & Managerial	71.1	75.0	72.1	179
Clerical & related	66.7	77.5	75.5	229
Sales workers	36.4	75.3	60.0	140
Service workers	66.4	81.5	73.2	205
Agriculture & Fisheries	78.6	0.0	78.6	14
Production workers	50.3	43.6	49.9	727
<b>Total numbers</b>				<b>2043</b>

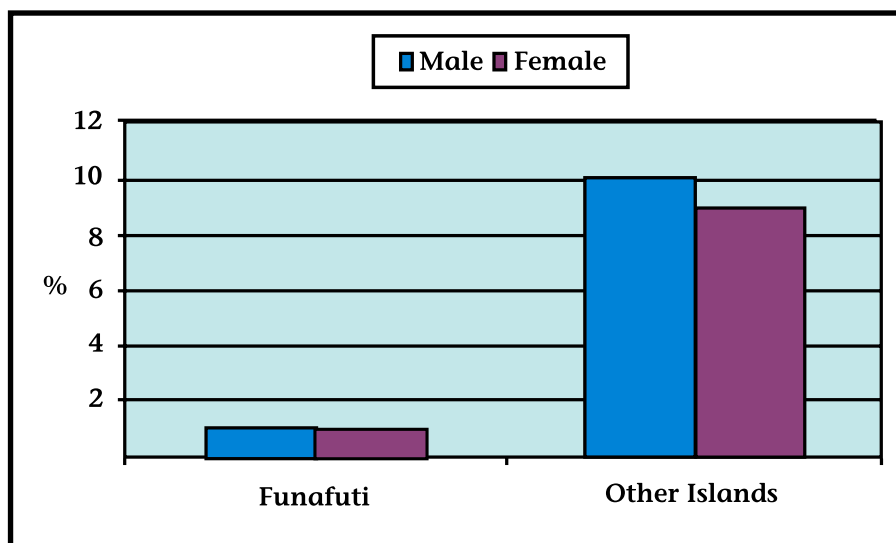
Source: Derived from Government of Tuvalu, 2005: Table 34, p 48

The extent to which employment opportunities are concentrated in Funafuti is illustrated in **Table 10**. It can be seen that more than 60 per cent of employment in all sectors except production (which is close to 50 per cent) was in Funafuti, although only 47 per cent of the total population lived there. The concentration was especially apparent in female employment in Administrative and Managerial, Clerical and Related, Sales and Services. Interestingly, the concentration of males in most types of employment, and especially in Sales, was lower than for females. This is because when there are few wage employment opportunities, such as on outer islands, males usually take priority in the job market. This tends to further limit employment opportunities for women in outlying areas.

**Figure Nine** shows subsistence activity by gender. It can be seen that, because of the scarcity of alternative employment opportunities in the outer islands and the scarcity of land in Funafuti, subsistence activity is more common in the outer islands. Even so, as can be seen from the figure, the percentages engaged in subsistence activities are very small, and subsistence is only a relatively minor economic activity in Tuvalu compared with larger, non-atoll Pacific environments such as those of Melanesia.



**Figure Nine: Subsistence activity by gender, 2002**



Source: Derived from Government of Tuvalu, 2005: Table 34, p 48

The pattern and distribution of employment described above have important implications for the situation of youth and women especially. For those not employed in government, subsistence and related activities are virtually the only source of employment for youth and women in the outer islands, but the subsistence sector is small. Lack of access to wage employment in the outer islands increases the dependence of youth and women, and promotes migration to Funafuti where conditions are already overcrowded.

The next part of this report focuses on issues specific to the three groups, children, youth and women.

# PART 3

## THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN, YOUTH AND WOMEN

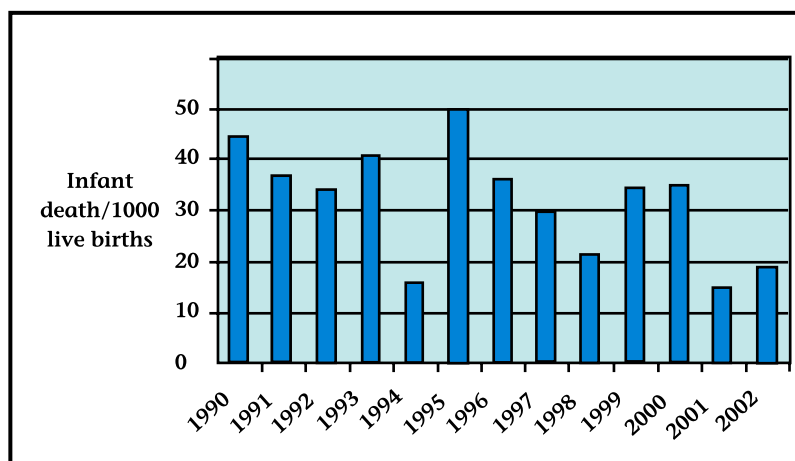
### 3.1. THE SITUATION OF CHILDREN

#### 3.1.1 Special Issues in Infant Health and Healthcare

The infant mortality rate is normally regarded as a sensitive indicator of living conditions and the quality of healthcare. Figure Ten shows that infant mortality rates are reasonably low in Tuvalu, although they fluctuate markedly from year to year. This is because there are normally less than 200 births in Tuvalu each year, and therefore only a few infant deaths. One or two more or less in a single year can thus appear as a major fluctuation.

The average for the period 1990-2002 was 32 per 1000. The estimated rate of 51 per thousand reported by SPC and several UN publications for the period 1991-1995 was incorrect, because the data on which the calculations were based included stillbirths, which should not be included as part of the infant mortality rate (Personal communication, former Health Statistician).

**Figure Ten: Infant mortality rate 1990-2002 (infant deaths per 1000 live births).**



Source: Statistics provided by the Ministry of Health

Maternal and child health care (MCH) is available from the Princess Margaret Hospital and from health clinics on the outer islands. As there is a health clinic on every atoll, most women are monitored during the ante-natal period, although the number of visits they make varies considerably.

In Funafuti most women deliver in hospital, and all expectant mothers in outer islands are advised to do so if possible. As a result many women from outer islands travel to Funafuti to deliver, especially if it is their first birth or if the birth has been identified as potentially high risk. Not all families can afford this, however, and it is quite common for women to deliver at outer island clinics, or at home with the assistance of relatives or traditional birth attendants, especially if they have already given birth several times before.

Attendance at MCH clinics in Funafuti is considered by hospital and clinic staff to be good, and it was said that virtually all infants receive post-natal care, including growth monitoring and immunization. **Table Eleven** below shows immunization coverage in Tuvalu is generally high and has tended to improve since 1997.

**Table Eleven: Immunization coverage, 1997-2004**

	BCG	DPT3	OPV3	HBV3	MMR
1997	100	77	78	88	100
1998	100	94	94	96	96
1999	100	83	84	93	94
2000	100	82	82	81	81
2001	100	96	96	99	100
2002	100	98	98	99	99
2003	100	93	93	95	95
2004	100	98	98	97	97

Source: Statistics provided by Ministry of Health

**Box Four: WHO Recommended infant immunisation schedule for Tuvalu**

- BCG (Tuberculosis) birth; 6 years;
- DTwP (Diphtheria, Tetanus, Pertussis) 6, 10, 14 weeks;
- HepB (Hepatitis B) birth; 6 weeks; 9 months;
- Measles 9 months;
- MR (Mumps and Rubella) 12, 18 months;
- OPV (Poliomyelitis) birth; 6, 10, 14 weeks;
- TT (Tetanus Toxoid) 1st contact; 4 weeks; 6 months; 1, 1 year;

Source: [http://www.who.int/immunization\\_monitoring/en/globalsummary/countryprofileresult.cfm?C='tuv'](http://www.who.int/immunization_monitoring/en/globalsummary/countryprofileresult.cfm?C='tuv')

The main factors preventing 100 per cent coverage are population mobility and the failure of some mothers to present infants for immunization at their arrival destinations, and the difficulty of making vaccines available at outer island health centres when required. Another issue is that, as noted in Box Three in Section 1.8 above, the Cold Chain cannot always be guaranteed when it is necessary to transfer vaccines from hospital storage to wharfs, from wharfs to ships, and from ships to shore in small boats. Nor can safe storage always be guaranteed when the vaccines do reach their destination, because refrigerators or cold boxes at health clinics on outer islands may break down or stop functioning for varying durations because of electricity supply interruptions. Even cold storage powered by gas may fail because of infrequent shipping or simple failure of central stores to ship adequate supplies.

While immunisation and basic infant health services are provided at MCH clinics, there are no specialised medical services for infants and children. At the time of writing there was no paediatrician in Tuvalu, so children with serious conditions had to be referred overseas. Lack of specialist services also increases the risk that serious conditions could be misdiagnosed or

undetected. Nor is there any systematic checking of child health in schools, although nurses visit schools in some communities and may test sight and hearing and conduct other health checks on an ad hoc basis.

A specific issue raised by the senior nurse at Nukulaelae was that the only premises available for MCH clinics are also used for general patient treatment, including for treating infections. She is concerned that this exposes infants to the risk of infection, and would like to conduct clinics at a different location if premises could be made available.

The same nurse also mentioned problems associated with the extensive use of disposable diapers. Disposable diapers cost around a dollar each, so represent a large percentage item in the household budget. According to the HIES 2004/5, diapers were the largest item expenditure in the category 'Clothing and Footwear' in Funafuti, and fourth largest in the outer islands, where more use is made of cloth diapers (Government of Tuvalu, forthcoming). The nurse said that mothers tend to try to economise by not changing disposable diapers as often as necessary, thus increasing the risk of nappy rash and infection. She says most shops no longer stock cloth diapers, and the shop managers refuse to stop selling disposable diapers because they are a high profit line.

### **3.1.2 Infant and Child Nutrition**

As discussed in Part Two, Section 2.2.1, although there are no absolute shortages of food in most Tuvaluan households, fresh fruit and vegetables tend to be scarce and/or expensive, and traditional foods are increasingly prepared in modern ways or replaced altogether with store-bought, imported foods. This increases the risk of poor nutrition in childhood.

The traditional staples of fish, swamp taro, coconut and breadfruit are nutritious and provide a good balance of protein, fat and carbohydrate, along with adequate fibre. Although they tend to be deficient in some vitamins and minerals, especially iron and Vitamin C, unless supplemented with fruit and vegetables. Adopting a modern diet usually involves substituting of rice for taro and adding fat, flour and sugar. This increases the kilojoule value of diets without adding the vitamins and minerals that healthy children need.

The 1996 Government of Tuvalu and UNICEF Situation Analysis identified over-nutrition as a major concern for infants, and referred to a 1984 finding that 60 per cent of infants under age 6 months were overweight because of early supplementation, bottle feeding and overfeeding (Save the Children, cited in Government of Tuvalu and UNICEF, 1996: 21). Nurses interviewed for the present study did not regard overweight in infancy as a major concern and said that most mothers breastfeed their infants and do not introduce supplements until the recommended age of six months. More important in their view was that many children do not eat enough fruit and vegetables, while the Tuvalu custom of men eating before women and children means that children tend not receive enough protein in their diets and exist mostly on carbohydrate and fat. Although high levels of activity in childhood appear to prevent most children from becoming overweight or obese, weight gain can be rapid in puberty, among girls especially.

There is clearly a need for more education in healthy methods of food preparation and the importance of providing a nutritious diet for children, but this should be accompanied by efforts to increase the availability and affordability of nutritious foods. While outer island villages have gardening projects, many people living in Funafuti do not have access to land where they can grow food. There is no produce market in Funafuti, and the range of fruit and vegetables available in shops is very limited and expensive. A few fresh vegetables can be purchased from the Taiwanese gardening project in Funafuti, but they are unaffordable for many families.

### **3.1.3 Services for Disabled Children**

There are no special health or education services for disabled children in Tuvalu. They are therefore at risk of being marginalised and excluded from society. At present there are no reliable data on the extent and nature of disability in the community. The Red Cross included a question on the extent of disability in a survey carried out in December 2005. The sample was not intended to be representative, however, and was heavily biased towards people who were affiliated with the Red Cross. The finding that 24.5 per cent of respondents had disabled people in their household cannot therefore be regarded as a realistic estimate of the extent of disability (Red Cross, 2006).

Surveys or census counts in Solomon Islands, Tonga and elsewhere in the Pacific suggest that the overall prevalence of disability is typically around 10 per cent, with one or two per cent seriously disabled (see Government of Tonga and UNICEF, forthcoming). There is clearly a need for a comprehensive, representative sample survey of disability in Tuvalu to establish prevalence and types of disability. Consideration should also be given to including a question on disability in the next Tuvalu census.

The absence of a paediatrician in Tuvalu means that disabled children are unlikely to receive adequate assessment and health care. As regards education, those who are only mildly impaired may be able to cope with the remedial stream in Nauti Primary School, but those with severe physical or mental disabilities are excluded from schooling.

The Red Cross in Funafuti conducts workshops for the disabled and distributes wheelchairs and crutches purchased with donor assistance. In the 1980s and 90s the Red Cross conducted a special school for the disabled, but this was abandoned because of resource and personnel constraints. At present there is no qualified special needs teacher in Tuvalu who can teach the disabled, but a qualified Japanese volunteer who worked with some children in Funafuti helped to raise awareness of special needs education. The Secretary General of the Red Cross said the organization has plans to resume special education at some time in the future, but it has not yet been decided whether this will be done independently with donor support or in conjunction with the Ministry of Education.

As for all other services in Tuvalu, capacity to provide services for the disabled is limited by settlement patterns and the high cost and inconvenience of servicing outer islands. If a special education programme for the disabled were to be re-established by the Red Cross it would almost certainly be located in Funafuti, and disabled children from outer islands would have to move to the capital to participate. Clearly not all families are able to relocate, so some disabled children would still be excluded from special education.

Access to special care and education for disabled children is a right specified in Article 23 of CRC. As part of its commitment to CRC, Tuvalu should ensure adequate services for disabled children are available and accessible.

### **3.1.4 Early Childhood Education and Development**

As discussed in Section 2, Part Two of this report, while virtually all Tuvaluan children attend school and most attend pre-school, the quality of education and school performances are not always of a good standard. Although these shortcomings are partly due to limitations in service delivery, they also derive in part from the way children are conditioned in the home.

Research has shown that mental stimulation of young children is essential to ensure optimum development of mental processes and the capacity to learn (UNICEF 2004). In Tuvalu, as elsewhere in the Pacific, the traditional approach to learning is passive. Although young children are constantly carried around and much affection is lavished upon them, it is not customary for parents to spend time engaging with them in ways that stimulate their mental development. Educational toys and books for young children are scarce, and active children are restrained in adult company and discouraged from exploring their environment. Most of their mental stimulation comes from watching their parents and older siblings and, when they are old enough, from playing with other children.

This traditional approach to parenting means that some children are not well prepared for school learning. As discussed in Section 2.2.1 above, pre-schools have limitations as regards their capacity to develop and prepare children for learning. Moreover, research suggests that if children are not appropriately stimulated in the home during their early years, passive learning habits are likely to be well-established by the time they reach pre-school age, and they may receive little benefit from pre-school efforts to prepare them for literacy and school learning.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that few parents in Tuvalu recognise the importance of the parent's role in child development. A common attitude is that the parents' responsibility is simply to pay the costs of their children's schooling, while pre-schools and schools are expected to do all the educating. This is reflected in teacher's comments to the author of this report that many parents do not take an interest in their children's day-to-day activities at school, do not provide children with learning materials or a good study environment in the home, and do not monitor their children's homework. While some of these constraints clearly result from the nature of Tuvaluan housing and from lack of cash to spend on children, there are ways to provide children with a good learning environment in even the poorest households. Moreover, parents need to understand that they can monitor school activities and encourage a good attitude to learning even if they themselves are illiterate or do not understand the material their children are being taught at school.

More research on early childhood development is needed in every Pacific country so that sensitive, country-specific strategies to develop parenting skills can be formulated. In Tuvalu such a strategy could make a substantial contribution to building better foundations for learning

and improving overall performance in education. Activities could include raising community awareness of the importance of parenting in children's mental development through the media and workshops on parenting methods. Such workshops could build on other life skill development activities such as the SPC/UNFPA/UNICEF Life Skills Programme, or be provided independently by NGOs and pre-schools.

### **3.1.5 Child Rights and CRC**

As noted elsewhere in this report, traditional Tuvaluan culture observes a social hierarchy based on age, and the typical Tuvaluan expectation continues to be that children should be quiet and submissive in the presence of adults. Today, as in the past, most parents tend to regard corporal punishment as the normal way of disciplining children and enforcing adherence to social norms. Since endorsing CRC in 1995, Tuvalu has restricted the use of corporal punishment in schools, but traditional attitudes, lack of awareness and lack of knowledge are hampering widespread recognition and protection of child rights in the general community. Although there has been some progress, traditional approaches to discipline that are not acceptable under CRC are still common. Even though such abuses of child rights may be unintentional because of lack of awareness, this issue should be addressed.

Most parents in Tuvalu are aware that modern parenting methods discourage physical punishment, but many have no idea how to guide and control children without using it. Restricting the right to impose corporal punishment in schools to head teachers is an important first step in raising community awareness of the unacceptability of corporal punishment. Like parents, however, not all teachers have the skills to discipline children by other methods, and violations are said to be common. One head teacher said that when children are sent to her for punishment she counsels them and tries to negotiate a different form of reparation for bad behaviour, such as a special work assignment, but some of her staff disapprove of this approach and regard it as undermining their authority.

Trained counsellors said that emotional abuse, including shaming, humiliating and threatening children, are less likely to be recognised as abuse by the general community. Nor are the harmful effects of allowing children to observe violence or arguments between their parents or others in the community. They said some uninformed parents regard children as property rather than as individuals with rights, and do not recognise the difference between teaching them to be responsible citizens and manipulating or exploiting them. This may lead to various forms of child abuse, including emotional abuse, exploitation and neglect. Moreover, these attitudes can transfer from one generation to another as new parents tend to copy the model provided by their own parents in the past, and may never have been exposed to positive parenting methods. Since parenting appears to be such a normal and natural thing, such parents may be reluctant to accept advice in parenting methods.

The tendency for young children not to receive adequate attention from their parents to ensure good mental development has been noted in the previous section. Informants said that many mothers are overcommitted to community responsibilities such as fund-raising and social



activities, which take up a great deal of time and money, and keep them from properly fulfilling their parenting responsibilities. This prevents them from spending 'quality time' with their children. When women have a wage job, it is even more difficult for them to keep up with their responsibilities in the community and in the home. Often they have no choice but to leave children with baby sitters, and this can compromise children's emotional development and physical care and the level of supervision they receive. Because the culture defines childcare as principally women's work, fathers tend to spend even less time with their children than do mothers.

Some informants said that the problem is mainly due to poor time management. They said many women do not know how to prioritise their responsibilities and ensure that important needs are met. Devoting too much time to playing Bingo, and other activities outside the household deprives their families of their attention. This points to a need to increase awareness of the principals and importance of parenting for child development.

In accordance with the recommendations of the 1996 Situation Analysis of Children and Women, Tuvalu formed a National Advisory Committee for Children (NACC) and this committee, chaired by the Ministry of Education, has coordinated the interests of stakeholders and helped to raise awareness of CRC. At the time of writing it was preparing a National Action Plan for Children. So far NACC has been a relatively low-profile committee, however, and has not realised its considerable potential to lobby for child rights. Strengthening NACC and increasing its role in coordination and lobbying is one of the major recommendations of this study (See Part Four).

## 3.2 THE SITUATION OF YOUTH

### 3.2.1 Definition of Youth

Tuvalu has a broader definition of youth than most other countries in the Pacific, spanning ages 15 to 34. Traditional Tuvaluan society has an even broader definition, extending up to age 49 years, but this largely relates to eligibility to speak at community meetings. The 2002 census found 27 per cent of the population were aged 15-34 years, distributed as shown in **Table Twelve**.

**Table Twelve: Age distribution of youth in Tuvalu**

<i>Age</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
15-19	474	352	826
20-24	326	356	682
25-29	245	278	523
30-34	278	267	545
Total	1,323	1,253	2,576

Source: Tuvalu Census, 2002.

### 3.2.2 Youth issues in Tuvalu

Youth in Tuvalu face similar problems to youth in other small island nations of the Pacific. Box Five summarises some of the comments from consultations between the author and Tuvalu youth in 2005 and 2006. It was clear from these consultations and discussions with youth and adults that major underlying concerns are limited opportunity and choice in education and employment, and, for many, lack of equity because of family hardship or limited access to services.

#### **Box Five: Issues identified by youth in Tuvalu**

*Although youth representatives are permitted to attend community meetings, they tend to leave all decisions to older people because there is a culture of respect for elders and because they lack a vote in community decision-making. They said 'Youth are the hands and legs of the community – elders are the voice'. If they do try to speak out, they find it difficult to get their message across. Virtually all Tuvaluan young people belong to a youth organization of some sort, and are entitled to request assistance from the Government's Youth Office through the National Youth Council, but youth organizations have only limited facilities and budgets. The total budget for the National Youth Council is only \$AUD 5,000 a year. The Tuvalu Association for NGOs (TANGO) has received many creative income generating project proposals from youth – piggeries, fisheries, agriculture etc – especially from the outer islands where there are more resources, but TANGO has very limited funding to assist youth. This means it may be difficult or impossible for youth groups to obtain the funding they need to start productive activities.*

*A common youth problem is low self-esteem. Some young people said that parents tend to chide and criticise them for poor performances rather than providing a supportive environment and looking for ways to help them. This undermines youth self-confidence and ability to cope with the pressures of adolescence.*

*Young informants said they find it difficult to deal with the challenges and risks of modernity, including alcohol, increased freedom, Western culture and media messages; and new measures of status and success. Cultural constraints and shame or fear of criticism prevents most from discussing these concerns with their parents. Some churches provide counselling services, but most of the available counselling services are in Funafuti and there is little support for youth in the outer islands. Often the only place they feel they can seek support and assistance is from their peers, who are likely to be misinformed and often encourage rather than discourage high-risk behaviour.*

*There are insufficient wage employment opportunities for youth in Tuvalu. Many young people do not aspire to career choices because they do not expect to have a choice. Girls are especially likely to be without ambition. There are no career counsellors in schools. Most youth in the outer islands have little opportunity for employment outside agriculture unless they migrate to Funafuti where they face strong competition in the job market. A few fortunate ones may gain admission to the Tuvalu Marine Training Institute at Amatuku, but there are few choices for those who fail to meet admission standards. The recent reduction in the number of Tuvalu Government scholarships for overseas study means still less opportunity to obtain quality education and skills training overseas.*

*Youth aspiring to wage employment in Funafuti were worried about the cost of living, since most families depend on store-bought goods. Some young people classified as 'employed', are actually working as unpaid volunteers at NGOs or for very low wages in the private sector.*

*There are few sporting facilities in Tuvalu, so it is difficult for young people to develop skills in sport or benefit from healthy exercise. While some islands have sports fields, there is a general lack of facilities for sports such as tennis, netball and indoor sports. There are even fewer sports facilities for girls than for boys.*

*While most young people have heard a lot about HIV/AIDS and the importance of practising safe sex, many feel they do not have easy access to family planning. Most know it is available, but embarrassment and fear of stigmatisation if they are seen visiting a health facility deters many from trying to obtain it. As a consequence there are still young people in Tuvalu taking risks that can lead to pregnancy and STIs.*

*Source: Based on consultations with youth in Funafuti in 2005 and 2006*

Authoritarian parenting; the challenge of managing conflicting traditional and modern cultures; age and gender based discrimination; and youth disempowerment are other factors that can further undermine youth self-esteem. A common response to these concerns is to engage in high-risk behaviours such as alcohol substance abuse and unsafe sex. These in turn can lead to teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and early on-set non-communicable diseases. Another symptom of youth stress and low self-esteem is disruptive and anti-social behaviour, or in extreme cases, suicide.

Tuvalu has recently become a participant in the SPC/UNFPA/UNICEF Pacific-wide Life Skills Programme, which helps to equip young people with the skills to cope with these challenges. The Life Skills Programme is based with the Ministry of Health and will be implemented in conjunction with two NGOs, the Tuvalu Family Health Association and the Tuvalu Red Cross. Both are already offering youth services in a supportive environment and their staff are experienced in establishing rapport with young people. Preparation for the first of these workshops was underway in August 2006.

The Department of Youth comprises one Youth Officer who shares administrative support services with other departments in the Ministry of Home Affairs and Rural Development. The Department receives some donor assistance, including UNICEF funding since 1999. The National Youth Policy 2005-2010 (NYP) has been formulated, and at the time of writing had recently been endorsed by the previous Government.

The NYP addresses a wide range of youth needs and interactions: spiritual development, education, culture, law, health, economic empowerment, environment and the family and community. It sets out strategies to address each of these areas and identifies the agencies that should be responsible for implementing them (Government of Tuvalu, 2006). As mentioned in the NYP, however, youth activities normally receive only very limited funding. This is partly because youth is only one part of the extensive mandate of the Ministry of Home Affairs and Rural Development. It is evident that unless there is substantial political will to provide adequate funding to implement the activities set out in the NYP, it cannot be expected to achieve its objectives.

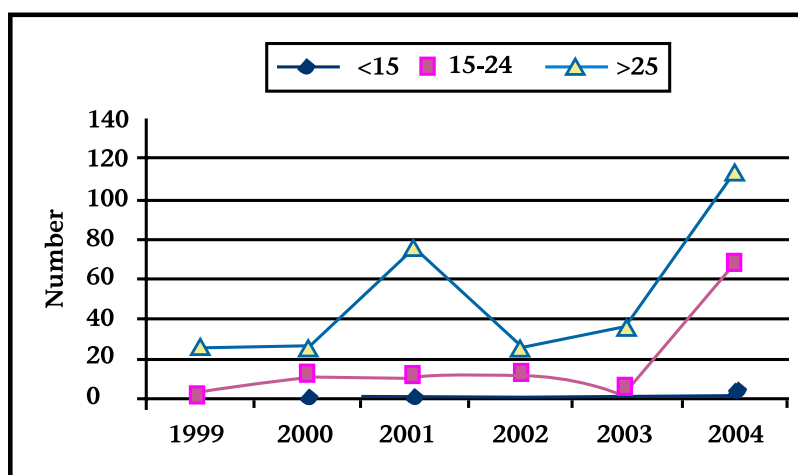
Another factor that will determine the success of the NYP implementation is the extent to which youth actually drive and take ownership of the activities. The NYP was developed from consultations with youth and other stakeholders, but even so, when such policies are formulated at Government level there is always a danger that young people perceive them as Government driven rather than youth driven. This can lead to passive involvement, with young people treating activities as entertainment and time filling rather than as springboards to trigger further action and initiatives. The only really effective way to create a sustainable future for youth is to ensure that, as far as possible, youth own and implement the activities.

### **3.2.3 Adolescent Reproductive Health and Teenage Pregnancy**

As discussed in Section 2.1.3, with nine reported cases as of the end of 2004, Tuvalu had one of the highest reported per capita rates of HIV/AIDS in the Pacific, and an increasing prevalence

of STIs. Although no new cases of HIV/AIDS have been diagnosed since 2002, youth engaging in unprotected sex are clearly at risk of contracting STIs and possibly HIV/AIDS if it is reintroduced. Homasi (2005) reported fluctuations in the annual number of STI cases, with a sharp rise in 2004. The pattern by age group is shown in **Figure Eleven**. It can be seen that the incidence of STIs is increasing across all the younger age groups, with four cases among youth aged less than 15 in 2004.

**Figure Eleven: Incidence of STIs\* by age group, 1999-2004**



Source: Homasi, 2005. \*Note: In this table STIs include syphilis, gonorrhoea, chlamydia, herpes and trichomoniasis but exclude HIV/AIDS.

Reports by Chandra (2000) and Chand (2001) found low levels of knowledge among adolescents of puberty, conception and STIs other than HIV/AIDS. Chandra's study, which sampled only females, tended to find higher levels of knowledge overall than Chand's sample of both sexes, while Chand found that knowledge tended to increase with age. According to Chand, only 15 per cent of those under age 18 had correct knowledge of when conception is most likely to occur, compared with 25 per cent of those aged 18 years and over (Chand, 2001:31). At that time only 30 per cent of a sample of 169 respondents aged 14-25 in Funafuti had heard of contraception, but among the 30 or so who were married, 83 per cent had heard of contraception (Chand, 2001: 31).

No recent data were available to compare with these studies, but it is very likely that knowledge has increased substantially. Partly in response to the studies by Chandra and Chand, which were funded by IPPF and Vision 2000, an Adolescent Reproductive Health (ARH) centre has been established in Funafuti under the auspices of the Tuvalu Family Health Association. This service provides youth with reproductive health services and counselling, and peer educators have been trained to provide basic information and distribute condoms. The ARH Project is youth-friendly, offering recreational facilities as well as condoms and counselling.

Utilisation of the ARH centre appears to have increased in 2006. In mid 2005 youth in Funafuti interviewed by the author said that although the ARH Centre was very effective in providing