

# MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT

## SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS NIUE

### Snapshot section

**Country Name:** Niue

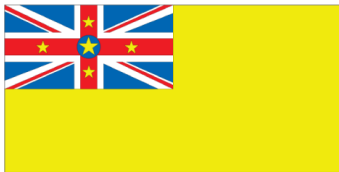
**Population:** 1,398 (July 2009)

**Government Type: (national, regional and local):** Self-governing, free association with New Zealand

**Geography/location in the world:** Oceania, South Pacific

**Number of people groups:** 2

**Picture of flag:**



### Religion Snapshot

Major Religion and percentage of population:

#### All religions and % for each:

Ekalesia Niue (Niuean Church – Protestant, closely related to London Missionary Society) – 61.1%

Latter Day Saints – 8.8%

Roman Catholic – 7.2%

Jehovah's Witnesses – 2.4%

Seventh - day Adventist – 1.4%

Other – 8.4%

Unspecified/None - 9.6%

#### Government interaction with religion:

Government is tolerant of all religious practice and does not interfere.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ne.html>

**Country Profile**  
**Basic Facts**  
**Niue**

**Country Name:** Niue (pronounced similar and between nyu-way and new-way)  
**Former:** Savage Island

**Demographics:**

The July 2009 population data suggests there are approximately 1,398 people residing on the island of Niue. There is no information on age structure, birth rate, death rate, infant mortality rate, and HIV/AIDS.

**Language**

Niuean is a Polynesian language that is closely related to Tongan and Samoan. English is also widely spoken.

**Society/Culture**

Niueans greatly respect their elders and anyone older than themselves. Males and first-borns have a special place in society.

Gifts show others that you value them as a friend and can be given at any time and/or on special occasions. Reciprocations can be expected.

There is usually one man who is looked to as the leader of the family, called a *patu*. Families are important and often several generations live under one roof. The *patu* is in charge of the whole family, including land distribution, religious affairs, and politics. A village is often made up of one extended family with some family members living in the area outside the village.

Children and youth of different families and villages meet and mix at schools. A school will usually support several villages. There is only one high school for the whole island. If a student wants to attend college, they will have to leave the island to do so. The government often offers scholarships to help Students. After they finish college they will usually return to the island to take up a government job or other area of service.

Preserving Niuean culture, pre-European, is not a priority for most Niueans. Traditional dances and music are part of weddings and ceremonies. Local art and crafts are done mostly for international commercial markets. The New Zealand government wants to keep Pacific and Polynesian arts continuous and promote their growth and historic culture.

**Government:**

Since 1974, Niue is self-governing and has full responsibility for all internal affairs. The only involvement New Zealand exercises is with external affairs and defense. New Zealand help is only offered when requested by the Government of Niue.

The head of the government in Niue is the premier, who is currently Toke Talagi as of June 2008. The premier is elected every three years by the twenty members of the *Fale Fono* or Niuean Assembly. The *Fale Fono* is made up of two groups; fourteen village representatives and six common roll members as island-wide representatives. The *Fale Fono* members are elected by popular vote for a three year term. Members are mostly made up of older, respected men who are likely a pastor, official, or successful businessman. The common roll members tend to be younger men and women who have probably been educated abroad and are in professions such as teachers, doctors, and administrators.

There is a small police force on the island who mostly deals with minor offenses such as petty theft, unsafe driving, and allowing pigs to wander the streets.

### **Economy**

Niueans grow food for themselves with very little left over to sell. There is a small market one day a week for people to buy and sell local goods. Most food and other necessities are imported.

The island's economy for a long time had been based around agriculture. It wasn't until the 1970s that this changed to a service provision economy. Within ten years, 80% of the working population was employed by the government. By 1990, the government decided to downsize despite opposition from many islanders. Niue did not suffer from this downsizing because so many Niueans had family overseas sending money back home. There was also international monetary support coming from places like New Zealand.

### **Literacy**

It is estimated that 95% of Niue people can read and write. It is expected that all children attend school for twelve years.

### **Land/Geography**

Niue is located in the South Pacific at coordinates 19 02 S, 169 52 W. Total land area is 260 square kilometers which is about 1.5 times the size of Washington, DC. There are 64 kilometers of coastline. The island has a tropical climate with many steep, limestone cliffs and a plateau in the middle of the island. About 15% of the land is used for crops. Niue is one of the world's largest coral islands.

### **History**

Captain James Cook and crew were the first known Europeans to see Niue and called it *Savage Island*. The islanders were not very friendly, welcoming them with screaming and spears.

Niueans continued their way of life as they always had. However, in the last half of the 1900s more and more outside influences came to the island. Missionaries, businessmen, and New Zealanders helping from the last hurricane, came to live.

The London Missionary Society tried to have a missionary presence in the later half of the 1800s. When this plan did not work, they took a Niuean with them to Samoa to learn at a theological college and then return to the island to convert the people. The Niueans became open to the Bible and Christianity and many became followers.

New Zealand annexed the island in 1901 after the United Kingdom had a short reign over it. Niue gained a self-governing status from New Zealand in 1974 which continues today.

## **Religion**

### **Non Christian**

#### *Non-religious*

Some 76 persons on Niue claim to be non-religious and are declining at -1.5% annually.

#### *Roman Catholic*

There are 41 Catholics and one congregation on the island.

#### *Baha'i*

Around 20 persons on Niue claim to be Baha'i, but are declining at -1.0 annually.

#### *Jehovah's Witnesses*

Around 55 persons gather in one congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses.

#### *The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Mormons*

The Mormons count over 120 members in 7 congregations on the island.

### **Christian or Evangelical**

#### *Ekalesia Niue (Congregational Christian Church of Niue)*

This church is very similar and has very close ties with the London Missionary Society (LMS). The LMS trained a Niuean in Samoa to then go back to Niue to declare the Gospel. Many of the people on the island eventually understood and responded positively to the Bible. Today, about 60-70% of the island is part of this church which is approximately 1300 members/adherents. They are independent of the LMS and other churches. They also have a few outreach churches

in New Zealand to minister to Niueans there. That outreach is not included in the membership totals of the church on the island.

<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/regions/pacific/niue/congregational-christian-church-of-niue.html>

## **People Groups**

**107346**

### **Niuean**

Niueans are the largest people group in Niue with approximately 1,300 on the island. There are a total of around 22,700 in all other countries in the world. The people living on the island primarily speak Niue. Almost all consider themselves Protestant. It is estimated that over 5% of those are evangelical.

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### **Pacific Islanders**

It is unknown the religious practices of this people group. However, they live in places where the Gospel is shared and the Bible is in the language of the people. It is thought that there are approximately 100 Pacific Islanders living in Niue. This group probably speaks Niue and English and has the Bible and other resources available to them.

## **Missiological Implications**

1. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to aid the local believers in discipleship efforts.
2. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to reach the non-religious group on the island.
3. Evangelical Christians and churches should seek to aid the churches in their evangelistic and discipleship efforts.

<http://www.everyculture.com/Ma-Ni/Niue.html>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ne.html>