

MISSIONARY ATLAS PROJECT

SOUTH PACIFIC ISLANDS

NAURU

Snapshot section

Country Name: Nauru

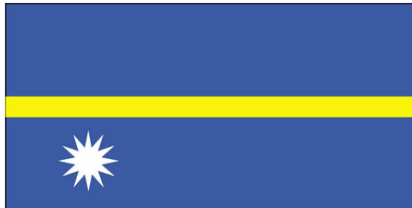
Population: 14,019 (July 2009 estimate)

Government Type: (national, regional and local): Independent Democracy

Geography/location in the world: Oceania – South Pacific, south of the Marshall Islands

Number of people groups: 8

Picture of flag:



Religion Snapshot

Major Religion and percentage of population:

All religions and % for each:

Nauru Congregational – 35.4%

Roman Catholic – 33.2%

Nauru Independent Church 10.4%

Other – 14.1%

None – 4.5%

Unspecified – 2.4%

Government interaction with religion: Government is tolerant of all religions.

Country Profile

Basic Facts

Country Name: Nauru

Conventional Long Form: Republic of Nauru

Former: Pleasant Island

Demographics

The estimated population of Nauru is 14,019. Children up to fourteen years of age account for 34.7% of the population. There are 2,482 male children between the ages of newborn to fourteen years of age. There are 2,384 female children between these same ages. Adults between the ages of fifteen and sixty-four years of age account for 63.2% of the population. There are 4,362 males in this age category and 4,495 females. In the last age category, sixty-five years and above, there are 151 males and 145 females. The 65 and over age group accounts for 2.1% of the population. The median age for males is 21 years, and the median age for females is 22.2 years.

The birth rate is 23.9 births for every 1,000 people. There are an estimated 2.85 children born to every woman. The infant mortality rate is 9.25 deaths for every 1,000 live births. The death rate is 6.42 deaths for every 1,000 people. The life expectancy for the total population is 64.2 years. The life expectancy for males is lower at 60.6 years while the life expectancy for females is higher at 68 years.

The majority of people are native Nauruan at 58% with other Pacific Islander nationalities making up an additional 26%. There are also Chinese and Europeans on the island who account for the remaining 16% of the population.

Language

Nauruan is the official language of the island. However, most people understand and speak English and it is often used for government and trade purposes as well.

Society/Culture

The local food staples in Nauru are coconut and fish. Fish is caught by Kiribati men. Food other than fish and coconut is imported.

Formerly, the culture consisted of two classes. *Temonibe* and *amenengame* made up the senior maternal lineage which was the higher of the classes. The second and lower class was called *itsio* meaning slave class. People belonging to this group were non-Nauruans and did not own any land on the island. These classification systems have been done away with and replaced with the Nauru Local Government Council which is made up of elected members.

In marriage, the two people usually choose their spouse. Marriage is based on the Christian model in the Bible. Family lines are traced through the mother's side. Mothers and women are in charge of all the household affairs, including finances, child-rearing, and decision-making. Men have some leadership within the family, but it is mostly the women deciding on issues and letting the men carry it out. Land is passed down through the mother's line. Women can give all her land to all her children, however, a son would have to get special permission to pass that land on to his children while a daughter can pass it on to her children freely. If a baby were born to a Nauruan man and non-Nauruan woman, special permission would have to be granted for the baby to be registered as a Nauruan, therefore, allowing the baby to receive land and phosphate revenue. Nauruans have a large sense of identity in their Nauruan status. It is very important and very much a difference between being a Nauruan and non-Nauruan.

There is little known about Nauruan religious and spiritual heritage before the white men arrived. Christianity has played a huge part in the religious culture of Nauru in the past 100+ years. The Catholics and the London Missionary Society sent missionaries over in the 1880s.

One problem the island is facing is young men driving drunk which is the leading cause of death. Police men patrol the island, but usually for major social violations. Otherwise, the family is mostly in charge of helping their family members stay out of trouble.

Government

Nauru gained independence from a UN trusteeship administered by Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom on January 31, 1968. They still celebrate their Independence Day on this date every year.

The president is head of the government and chief of state. He is elected by Parliament every three years. He then elects a cabinet from members of Parliament. There are 18 seats in the legislative branch. They are elected every three years by popular vote. The Judicial branch is made up of a Supreme Court. Suffrage is at age 20.

The government is active in the South Pacific Bureau of Economic Cooperation (SPBEC). They were and are very interested in helping establish sustainable development for the area.

A large welfare system provided housing, education, health care and other public services to all Nauruans. Funded by the Nauruan Trust Fund with money that came from the phosphate profits, it ended in 1986. Some people find it very difficult to live without these funds leading to some strains between the government and the people.

Economy

Nauru is one of three South Pacific Islands with huge phosphate rock. It has been mined for over 90 years (mostly by the United Kingdom, Australia, & New Zealand) and has left about 90% of the island a wasteland. The remaining, limited resources of the island are threatened as well. Some estimate that the remaining phosphates will last only until 2010 at the current mining rate.

The island faces serious economic issues due to the lack of natural resources to support the population. Although the government has set up trust funds from the sale of phosphates, they still face bankruptcy. They are almost completely dependent on foreign aid and imports, especially from Australia. Many buildings and facilities are deteriorating.

Nauru supports vast offshore banking through the internet. This business provides a large income for the country. Actually, the banking is a front for laundering money for the Russian Crime syndicates. The banking adds some \$ 65 million to the coffers of Nauru. What wealth has come to Nauru has been taken by the upper classes with little, if any benefit to the lower socio economic groups.

Johnstone and Mandryk, *Operation World*

Literacy

The estimate literacy rate in the country is 93%.

Johnstone and Mandryk, *Operation World*

Land/Geography

Nauru is located at 0 32 S, 165 55 E in the South Pacific, south of the Marshall Islands. At 21 square kilometers, it is one of the smallest nations in the world. The island is one of three South Pacific Islands made of phosphate rock.

History

Historians are still unsure as to where the Nauruans and Nauruan language originated. Initially there were twelve tribes living on the island although not much is known about their heritage or traditional life. The first documented sighting of the island was from Captain John Fearn in 1798. After that sighting, several Europeans (whalers, blackbirders, loggers, buccaneers) stopped by. Not only were they stopping by, but they were leaving guns and liquor for the local Nauruans. This caused fighting along with a ten-year war. Germany invaded the island in 1888 and in 1914 incorporated it into the German Marshall Islands.

It was discovered by the British that the island was almost entirely made of phosphate in 1899. This discovery excited the British prospecting company because phosphate was used in farming in both the UK and Australia. Phosphates are used to help the soil become more fertile therefore yielding more crops. Nauruan phosphates could help each of their own countries. Australia began mining and their first act in World War I was to take Nauru Island from the Germans.

The island was then under Britain administered by Australia. They continued mining phosphates until World War II when Germany sunk several Australian ships therefore taking back control of the island. In 1942, the Japanese controlled the island and deported about 1,200 Nauruans, which at that time was about half of the population. The people were sent to Truk Island for forced labor. Five years later, the 737 survivors from Truk Island returned home to find that less than

1,000 Nauruans were still alive. Australia became the island administrator once again, this time under the United Nations Trust Territory.

In 1968, Nauru received full independence. Two years later, the mining of phosphate was completely given to the Nauru Phosphate Corporation. The estimate is the phosphate resource might become exhausted by 2010.

Religion

Non Christian

Non-religious

Around 4.9% of the population considers themselves non-religious (564 persons).

Roman Catholic

About one-third of the population follows Roman Catholic traditions. Catholic missionaries arrived at Nauru in the late 1800's. The membership stands at around 1,900 in two congregations. They have a secondary school along with a church on the island.

Christian or Evangelical

Nauru Congregational Church

The Nauru Congregational Church can be traced back to 1887 to missionary Timoteo Tabwia. The church continued to grow while the calcium phosphate was discovered and mined. With many Australians on the island from the mining companies, the church partnered and made ties with the Congregational Union of Australia. The church is now an active participant in the Council for World Mission.

There are seven congregations around the island with a total of 7,000 people affiliating with the church.

<http://www.reformiert-online.net/adressen/detail.php?id=13246&lg=eng>

People Groups

100354

Anglo-Australian

There are between 143- 600 Australians living in Nauru. They speak English and have the Bible among many other resources available to them in their language. Sixty-seven percent of the population claims to follow Protestant Christian practices. Over 10% of the population is considered evangelical.

109692
Filipino

There about 50 Filipinos living on Nauru. It is estimated that 95% of the almost 20 millions Filipinos world-wide follow Roman Catholic traditions. There are evangelical Filipinos; however the percentage of people is uncertain perhaps being around 2%. Their primary language is Tagalog and the Bible has been translated as have other religious resources and materials.

103701
Han Chinese

There are between 400-1,300 Han Chinese living on Nauru. They primarily speak Chinese. Only 6.8% of the population is claims to follow any Christian teachings. It is unknown how many may be evangelical, but it could be as large as 2-5% of the population. They have the Bible, the *Jesus* film, and other resources available in Chinese.

105038
Kiribertese (or Gilbertese)

There are approximately 1,100-2000 Kiribertese living in Nauru. The Bible has been translated into their primarily language of Kiribati as have other resources like the *Jesus* film. Most Kiribertese follow Roman Catholic traditions; however, it is estimated that as many as 10% of them are considered evangelical Christians.

105256
Kusaiean (Kosraen)

There are about 100 Kusaiean people on Nauru who speak Kosraean. Ninety percent consider themselves Protestant Christian with 22% considered evangelical. The Bible is available in their language, but no other Christian resources.

106356
Marshallese

Out of the 57,000 Marshallese, about 100 live in Nauru. They primarily speak Marshallese. Ninety-eight percent consider themselves Protestant Christian with 23% considered evangelical. They have the Bible and other Gospel recordings available in their language.

107123
Nauruan

There are 5,200 – 7,750 Nauruans who live on Nauru and speak Nauru. The Bible has been translated along with the *Jesus* film and other resources. Nauruans are generally either Protestant Christian or Roman Catholic. About 14% are considered evangelical.

110330

Tuvaluan

Out of the 13,000 world-wide, about 400-700 Tuvaluans live on Nauru. Only the Bible is translated into their primary language of Tuvaluan. Almost all are considered Christian adherents with over 20% evangelical.

Missiological Implications

1. Evangelical Christians and churches should emphasize child evangelism since over 34% of the population is under 14.
2. Evangelical Christians and churches should aid the peoples on the island to break with the money laundering banking operations. Such operations usually enrich the upper groups and do little if anything for the lower groups. Some help replacing the phosphate mining with other money producing opportunities would help the country.
3. Evangelical Christians and churches can help provide needed resources for discipleship among the Church members

<http://www.joshuaproject.net/peopctry.php>

<http://www.peoplegroups.org/Detail.aspx?PID=9553>

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

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