Nauru

Population: 12,000
Schools: 3,000 students (99% enrollment) 2 secondary schools, 4 primary schools
ICT access: Low/moderate

Background

A smaller Pacific country, Nauru faces somewhat fewer challenges with respect to education and ICT because of its relative compactness. An ICT in education policy is being implemented which aims to use ICT as a learning tool. Most teachers (90% are women) have limited access to ICT but are more likely to have used computers if they underwent overseas training, which many teachers do. Although Taiwanese and JICA grants helped to install computers in schools, only a minority of these are functioning – the majority are not working for unknown reasons as there is no expertise to diagnose the problems. Radio, television and video are often used in schools and education.

In spite low telephony and Internet penetration and other infrastructural challenges, Nauru is well-placed for ICT in education growth.

Policy

The government recognizes the benefits in terms of improved communication, international positioning, research, and the evolution of an individualized curriculum.

It is noteworthy that the Nauru ministry of education has recently developed a unique task-based curriculum based on New Basics and Rich Tasks, called Footpath. A new Government Network is a wireless network via point to multipoint routing. It involves fisheries, airport and NPC (Nauru Phosphate Corporation). Government has the option to connect schools via one of the 11Mb channels, enabling access to Intranet, mail and Internet for schools. Antenna for wireless network is placed on Command Ridge, within view of large part of the island.

Existing communications infrastructure was installed by a Japanese company in the 1970’s and is now seen as eroding. Dial-up access is unreliable and highly priced, and there is no mobile service. LAN cabling partially available. CenPac is the national ISP, and in 2002 the RONTel telecommunication corporation established. These companies run Internet Cafes, but overall costs are seen as high.

By the end of September/early October 2007, there should be an island-wide Wi-Fi network installed on the island. This will provide VoIP telephony and Internet access. It is intended that the Education department will have a dedicated 512kbps connection shared between the 10 schools.
There has also been a massive injection of funds for ICT this year (mostly NZAid funds) that has seen a major investment in ICT hardware.

**Challenges**

- Inadequate expertise, little institutional support for ICT
- Lack of trainers, few human resources available to provide backup
- Substandard, limited infrastructure, monopoly legacy. Routine power outages
- Few or no repairs are available on island, all accessories shipped in
- Lack of finances

**Recommendations**

- Improve teacher training opportunities
- Integrate ICT into the curriculum
- Develop infrastructure, and expertise for sustainable management
- Raise community awareness and participation in ICT programme