Niue

Population: 2000
Schools: 8 schools total
ICT access: Moderate/Good

Background
The smallest pacific nation, Niue benefits from a close association with New Zealand, and has links to the NZQA educational framework and grants through NZAid. For example, Niue High school, which is relatively well-equipped with computers and digital media peripherals has collaborated with New Zealand MSC consultants from Dunedin College of Education who are helping to improve programs, resources, assessment and methodology in IT and in other subject areas. In 2004 the school began to offer Information Technology studies as a subject.

The Internet Society of Niue (ISN), operating under the Department of Administrative Services, is responsible for the provision of assistance in ICT in all government departments, private enterprises and community groups. The ISN provides support in maintaining computers and ICT equipment, offering advice on the purchase of equipment, and running professional development programs when needed. ISN has also assisted in the setting up of learning centres in the villages, equipped with a couple of computers for students, some of which have Internet access. But demand for ICT continues to be greater than the infrastructure can provide.

Policy
The Ministry of Education is reviewing the role of ICT in the curriculum, especially for the inclusiveness of all students. The aims are to raise awareness and increase access to ICT and the Internet, improve teachers’ skills and available personnel, extend the use of computers used for administrative purposes, and ensure that the use of ICT is sustainable in schools. The ministry has been eager to draw from regional experiences and has suggested the development a website that shares other Pacific nations’ experiences with educational ICT. The ministry’s key indicators are IT training enrollment rates, increases in Web use, tackling the problem of braindrain, the sustainability of community centers, and the role of high-level government support.

Challenges

- Sustainability and Quality of Internet access
- Availability of qualified personnel and teachers
• High costs of Internet and electricity needed to aircon the labs; Outdated infrastructure
• Difficulties accessing the NZQA online services

Recommendations

• Improve ICT infrastructure with new equipment and computers (one per teacher)
• Increase ICT budgets for education
• Develop improved teacher professional development activities in ICT
• Provide scholarships for teacher trainees to receive high quality ICT training
• Increase community awareness and participation