



Secretariat of the Pacific Community

FIELD REPORT No. 1
AN ASSESSMENT OF
THE ROLE OF WOMEN
IN FISHERIES
IN NIUE

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Secretariat of the Pacific Community
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BCN	Broadcasting Corporation of Niue
DAFF	Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
FFA	Forum Fisheries Agency (South Pacific)
MFN	Moui Faka Niue
NZD	New Zealand dollar
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
SPREP	South Pacific Regional Environment Programme
USP	University of the South Pacific



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I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the many people who were willing to provide their time, knowledge and experience: the women involved in fisheries activities, representatives from government, non government and private sectors, and others.

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Niue is an uplifted atoll with a former reef and lagoon raised to about 60 metres above sea level

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Niue baseline survey on the role of women in fisheries was carried out from 26 February to 12 March 1998. The survey was conducted by Ms Patricia Tuara (SPC's Women's Fisheries Development Adviser), with the assistance of Ms Charlene Funaki (Agriculture Marketing Officer, Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries). The assessment was requested by the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Government of Niue.

The main objectives of the field survey were to:

- i) review the social and economic role played by women in the fisheries sector, including activities undertaken in the harvesting, processing and marketing of marine resources;
- ii) provide details on both government and non-government services available to support the interests of women in the fisheries sector;
- iii) outline the constraints that inhibit the effective participation of women within the fisheries sector; and
- iv) provide guidelines to assist the effective participation of women within the fisheries sector.

1.1 Survey design

The survey entailed interviews with women who were involved in fisheries activities, government agencies (dealing with fisheries, women's development, education, health, the media, island development, and commerce), non-government agencies (including representatives from women's village working groups, church groups, and the business sector).

In addition to interviews, visits were made to fishing, processing, and marketing sites to observe women engaged in these activities. A forum with the Niue Council of Women was held to discuss the SPC Women's Fisheries Development Project, and the Niue survey.

A list of the people interviewed can be found in the appendix.

1.2 Findings

- i) Women in Niue participate in the harvesting, processing, and to varying degrees depending on the type of fishery, marketing of marine resources. Most of the marine resources harvested are for family consumption.
- ii) The activities carried out by women are influenced by cultural and traditional bearers, women's preferences, availability of time, and difficulties posed by the environment and fishing gear.
- iii) Government and non-government agencies do not provide support services catering specifically to women in the fisheries sector as the needs have not been clearly identified. Services either cater to fisheries in general, or artisanal fisheries (carried out by men). Credit offered tends to target the private sector.
- iv) There is little to no information documenting the activities of women involved in fisheries in Niue.
- v) Although marine studies are offered at the secondary and tertiary levels, there has been little interest to date by students in wanting to undertake such studies. At present, there are only two officers employed in the Section, both of them male. Funding constraints have prevented this section from employing more staff.

1.3 Recommendations

Below is a list of recommendations to support the participation of women in fisheries.

It is recommended that the Fisheries Section take the lead in initiating a programme of support for women involved in fisheries activities by:

1.3.1 **Developing closer ties with women involved in fisheries activities.**

This could be done by holding village meetings with women to discuss the findings of this report. The discussion could include more detailed feedback from the women concerning the type of assistance required, and inform them about local services available. From this meeting, a national programme of support could be initiated. At the meeting the Section could discuss their interest in collecting data from inshore harvesters.

The Niue Government would need to provide funding support to assist any programmes for women in the fisheries sector.

1.3.2 **Meeting with government representatives to discuss areas of collaboration in assisting women.**

Meetings with the Department of Community Affairs (responsible for Women, Youth, Conservation, Museum, Library), Education Department, National Training and Development Office, University of the Pacific (USP) and the Broadcasting Corporation of Niue would be useful in implementing a national programme of assistance to women in the fisheries sector. The departments could be tapped for help in providing training (staff could be used as workshop lecturers), and disseminating fisheries information.

1.3.3 **Meeting with non-government representatives to discuss areas of collaboration in assisting women.**

Meetings with representatives from the Niue Council of Women, Niue Island Sport Fishing Club, Fishermen's Association, church, Niue Star, Chamber of Commerce, Niue Development Bank, and Westpac would be useful in discussing fisheries issues, exchanging information, training, encouraging more public interest in the fisheries sector, and acquiring financial support for setting up income generating ventures.

1.3.4 **Continuing to develop the existing fisheries public awareness programme.**

Staff of the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries (DAFF) currently promote public awareness through their weekly radio programme. In addition, assistance is provided in helping school pupils with their fisheries projects and assignments. As well as maintaining these activities, staff could look into working with schools to organise "fisheries open days". Working with women's, youth, church and other groups would be another means of promoting fisheries. SPC could possibly source funds to support activities such as the fisheries open day.

2.0 BACKGROUND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INFORMATION

2.1 General

This report looks at the participation of Niuean women in fisheries. In order to understand the degree of participation by women, one needs to look at the roles women play in Niuean society as a whole and, the socio-economic environment in which they live.

2.2 The role of women

Traditionally, the role of women focussed on duties that were linked to the wellbeing of the family and home. Apart from the care of her husband and children, a woman not only carried out domestic household chores but was also engaged in agriculture and fisheries. Women weeded the plantation, cut copra, planted root crops, harvested reef resources and made handicrafts¹.

The family is still of primary concern to women, but added to domestic duties today, women are employed in both the public and private sectors. They are active in village community activities and share responsibilities in the church. According to a 1995 government report, women are not restricted in any formal way by custom or law from participating fully in society. The disparities are not so much between men and women in society, but between women employed in government and women employed in the private sector. Those in government have more benefits and entitlements. However, the report also states that Niue needs to plan and provide more resources for women through government's development policies, and through the private sector².

2.3 Population

The population of Niue has changed significantly over time. Prior to 1970 and the opening of the Hanan International Airport, 5200 people lived on Niue³. Today the figure has more than halved in size, because of New Zealand. As holders of New Zealand passports, Niueans move freely between New Zealand and Niue. Most prefer to stay in New Zealand, enjoying the employment and educational opportunities offered.

The mid-year population figures for 1997 gave an estimate of 2088 people, and a density of 8.1 people per km². The male to female population ratio is 102 males per 100 females⁴. Because there is an average of 41 births and 15 deaths each year (as shown during the 1991 to 1997

¹ The Government of Niue, 1996

² Chapman, 1995

³ Demmke & Haberkorn, 1999.

⁴ Ibid

census period), there should be an increase of 26 people per annum. However, 51 people migrate each year and as such the annual growth rate is –1.2 per cent.

The current population structure shows a youthful population with 33 per cent under the age of 15. However, it also shows a relatively large percentage of elderly people with 13 per cent over 60 years. This means that those in the economically active age group, between 15 and 59 years, migrate overseas.

Although small in size, Niue society is made up of a number of ethnic groups, 85 per cent of the people are of Niuean descent, 9 per cent from other Pacific islands (Tonga, Tuvalu, Fiji, Samoa and the Cook Islands), 5.5 per cent from Europe, and 0.5 per cent from other parts of the world⁵.

2.4 Health

The Lord Liverpool Hospital and dental surgery in Alofi is the main centre for health services. A community outreach programme includes village visits by maternal health nurses, school clinics and public health village inspections. Medical services in Niue are provided free to the public. Most medical cases are dealt with locally, and those few that require specialist attention are sent to New Zealand⁶.

The standard of general hygiene is high and the country is largely free from tropical diseases, although there have been outbreaks of dengue fever. Life style diseases include hypertension, obesity, cancer and car accidents⁷.

Niuean diet is supported by local agricultural products of taro, tapioca, yams, kumara, bananas, breadfruit, papaya, watermelon and citrus, as well as coconut crabs, seafood and imported meat. The market in town, which operates twice a week, sells agricultural produce and seafood at reasonable prices. Processed imported foods such as biscuits, rice, chocolates and canned products cost more and are of less nutritional value.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ The Government of Niue, 1996.

⁷ Ibid.

2.5 Education

The education system is under the control of the government, there being no private schools in operation. Between the ages of 5 and 14 years, education is free and compulsory. The school system is patterned on New Zealand's structure with pre-school, primary and secondary school universal up to 5th Form. Success in the 5th Form examination enables progress into the 6th and 7th Forms. The 7th Form is offered through the local University of the South Pacific extension centre. The language of instruction for years 1 to 4 is Niuean and English. Most teachers are trained in New Zealand. In 1989, due to falling numbers in student population, village schools were closed and schools were centralised in Alofi. This enabled the reduction in education costs for government, the setting of uniform national education standards, and the exchange of information among youth living in all parts of the island⁸. A mobile pre-school unit travels to four areas of the island to provide instruction in early childhood education.

Although there are local training schemes (mainly in the public sector), most short-term training, tertiary education, and teacher training is undertaken in New Zealand, Fiji, Solomon Islands and elsewhere.

Non-formal training is provided locally by most non-government organisations such as youth and women's groups, with instruction taking place in village centres and libraries.

2.6 The economy

Due to the constraints of a small population, distance from markets, water restrictions, unstable shipping and air schedules, cyclones, and limited tourist numbers, economic self sufficiency in Niue is difficult to achieve⁹. Financial assistance from New Zealand and international aid agencies helps maintain an adequate standard of living for residents.

Over half the Niue work force is employed in the public sector. In an effort to reduce the reliance on aid, the government encourages the development of private sector ventures. Agriculture is a main form of domestic income generation. Most, if not all families, own a plot of land that grows fruit and vegetables for family consumption and sale at the market. A number of families export crops with the assistance of the Agriculture Division of DAFF. Accommodation, transport, entertainment and sport (cave walks, island walks, scuba diving, and game fishing), and handicrafts are services and sales that have been developed to attract tourists. The tourism office has developed a number of package deals to attract yet more visitors to Niue.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ The Government of Niue, 1996

2.7 The fisheries sector

The island of Niue is an uplifted atoll with a former reef and lagoon raised to about 60 metres above sea level. There are no lagoons and the coastline descends to over 1000 metres within five kilometres of the shore¹⁰. A fringing reef around most of the island provides fish, molluscs, seaweeds, and other reef resources. Mainly women are found harvesting resources within the reef area.



Until recently, fishing has tended to be subsistence in nature – reef gleaning, spear fishing, reef rod fishing, and canoe fishing. However with the use of larger and well-equipped aluminium dinghies, more fishermen have started commercial fishing for deep-sea snapper and most pelagic species. The traditional easier-accessed fishing grounds on the western side of the island are still being exploited, but with better equipped fishing vessels fishermen are now able to fish grounds on the eastern side of the island¹¹.

The catch of local fishermen and women is either for family consumption, used for community functions, sold through local restaurants and takeaways, or sold at the Alofi market. Fish is not exported due to the lack of a reliable infrastructure with links to external markets, and also the lack of a regular supply of fish.

A fringing reef around most of the island provides fish, molluscs, seaweeds, and other marine resources

The fisheries division of DAFF is aware that due to the increase and improvement in fishing technology and the increase in fishermen and women, there has been a significant increase in fishing pressure on inshore marine resources. Lobster, giant clams, turban shell molluscs, urchins, sea cucumber, octopus, and some species of crab are showing signs of over harvesting¹².

To promote conservation of marine resources, DAFF has passed fisheries legislation protecting marine stock. In addition, it has produced visitor guidelines that deal with prohibited fishing techniques and technology, designated fishing areas, endangered species, and adherence to fishing customs¹³. In addition to legislation, DAFF has carried out a number of marine resources studies with assistance from SPC, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other organisations.

¹⁰ Dalzell et al. 1993.

¹¹ Pasisi 1995

¹² Ibid.

3.0 THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR

3.1 Pacific overview

Women within the Pacific have been involved in fisheries activities for many years and the type and degree of participation varies from one island to another depending on socio-cultural limits. Nevertheless, the main aim of women's fishing activity is to provide a regular supply of food for the family diet. When there is a surplus, seafood is sold and the money is used to supplement the family income.

For those women who engage in the harvest of resources, there are similarities in the resources exploited, the gear used, and the techniques employed. Apart from using their hands, women use rudimentary equipment such as coconut fronds, sticks and baskets to reef glean for shellfish, molluscs and seaweeds. To catch reef fish, they use spears, traps, nets, and hand lines, fishing either by standing in the lagoon or on nearby rocks, or from boats.

Once the seafood is collected, the women are responsible for post-harvest activities. Those living on atolls, where freezing facilities are scarce, employ a range of preservation techniques such as drying, salting and smoking to preserve the catch for future consumption or export to the main island for sale. In a number of countries, the trade in shells provides a steady income. The women in the Cook Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu are active in collecting trochus shells. The meat of the trochus is consumed after extraction by boiling, and the shell is either sold as ornaments or jewellery to tourists, exported overseas, or processed locally into button blanks and buttons. In the Solomon Islands, shells processed in Malaita are used in traditional exchange ceremonies.

The marketing of marine products is in many communities, the sole responsibility of women. The women may sell their own catch or that of other fishermen and women. Shellfish, shells, sea urchins, lobsters, crabs, and seaweed are also sold. Handicrafts made for sale on atoll islands often incorporate shells, sharks' teeth, coral and other sea life, as evidence of the close relationship the inhabitants have with the sea.

In addition to harvesting, processing and marketing marine resources, women also make and mend fishing gear (nets and fish hooks).

Apart from direct involvement in fishing, women are employed as crew and scientific observers on fishing vessels, as staff in both public and private fisheries organisations, as marine studies lecturers and students in educational institutions, and as researchers who document the activities of women in the sector.

¹³ Dept. of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, n.d.

4.0 THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR IN NIUE

The information provided in this section comes primarily from discussions with Niuean women involved in fisheries activities, and organisations that provide support to these women.

4.1 Harvesting

During low tide women harvest on the reef flat, collecting octopus, **alili** (turbo snail), **ugako** (tube worms), sea urchins, sea cucumbers and shellfish using their hands, steel hooks, spanners, axes hammers, screw drivers, and sticks. The metal tools are used to chip away at the reef and dislodge the tubeworms, and clams. **Kama kama** (crabs) are collected manually or with the assistance of spears and knives. Two types of **limu** (seaweed) are collected by hand from rock pools in the reef. **Hihivao** (sea snail) are collected by hand, primarily to make shell necklaces, while **hiihii uli** (sea snail) are collected for food and for shell necklaces. Reef gleaning is carried out during the day when the tide is low. At night the women hunt for crabs, lobster (when in season), and reef fish, using their hands, bush knives, or long spears. A coconut frond torch or a battery-operated torch is used to light the way.



Caulerpa, a popular edible seaweed, is collected from rock pools in the reef

The **kafika** rod made from native timber (*Syzygium inophylloides*) with an attached nylon line and a steel hook is used by many women during the day and night to catch reef fish from inshore rock pools, the edge of the reef and from cliff ledges. Depending on the season, women use a rod and line to fish for **kaloama** (yellow striped goatfish). **Kaloama** season is from December to March when schools of the small fish swim in shallow waters, close to shore. Traditionally, the whole community engages in line fishing for **kaloama**. Women who catch reef fish use bamboo and other wooden rods. The meat from the head of the crab, shellfish meat, or small fish is used as bait. During **kaloama** season the sea is closed to swimming, and fishing.

In the past, nets made of coconut sennet or nylon were used for fishing but these are no longer used. It has been said that the nets tended to strip the reef of resources and so to ensure that stocks are not overharvested, nets are not commonly used although an increase in their use by other ethnic groups has become a concern. There is fisheries legislation that sets net mesh size restrictions.

It is traditionally taboo for women to go out on boats, particularly outrigger canoes. However, times are changing, and the restrictions are no longer stringent. Although still not common, a few women engage in deep-sea fishing but do so from aluminium boats rather than from outrigger canoes. A few women fish commercially with their husbands, or accompany them on family-owned fishing charters servicing tourists.



Rod fishing on the fringing reef is a popular activity

4.2 Processing

Primary processing in the form of gutting, scaling, and cleaning of fish and shellfish is carried out by both men and women.

Seafood recipes vary and include the making of **ota** (raw fish marinated in lime juice and coconut cream, eaten with chopped onions, tomatoes and cucumbers), boiling fish and shellfish in water or coconut cream, baking fish and shell fish in coconut cream and herbs wrapped in banana leaves as **fai kai** in an **umu** (earth oven) or wrapped in tin foil baked in the oven, and frying or barbecuing. **Kaloama** are either eaten raw, marinated in lime juice, or are fried in oil. The gonads of sea urchins are eaten raw with a lime. Particular sea crabs are eaten raw usually the day after harvest when the meat is soft and tasty. Octopus are baked with herbs and coconut cream either in the oven or in an umu. Seaweed, **ugako** and **limu**, are eaten raw with a mature coconut and a lime.

Salting and drying of reef fish and shellfish is not carried out on Niue.

Smoking has been done by a few people in the past (both men and women). Villagers in Mutalau have used portable smokers to smoke flying fish, **hahave**. The owners of the Tapeu Fisheries (husband and wife) began smoking fish commercially at the end of 1996 into early 1997. They built their own smoker and found the demand for their smoked fish to be high. Tuna fillets and deep sea fish were smoked and bought for local consumption. In addition, customers bought fish to take with them overseas. Tapeu Fisheries also provided smoked fish for catering dishes. However, after undertaking a cost/benefit analysis of smoking fish, Tapeu Fisheries decided to stop production when they saw that costs (such as the length of time to smoke fish, and the need to use quality deep-sea snapper) outweighed the benefits.

Women carry out shell craft. The making of necklaces using the **hihi vao** alone or together with the **puka** seed (from the *Hernandia pisonia* tree) is common. However, there does not appear to be much variety of shells featured in shellcraft. This may be due to the combination of a lack of different shellfish species, and difficulty in obtaining local stocks. To process the shells (rid them of the animals inside), they are put into a bottle or jar of seawater and left from three to seven days. The stale water is emptied and replaced by fresh seawater, and the shellfish are shaken to remove the animals. The seawater is emptied and replaced with fresh seawater and left to stand again for another three to seven days. The same procedure is carried out again and fresh seawater added and left to stand for the same period. It takes about two weeks to clean the shells of their animals. The shells are then dried in the sun. Holes are pierced into each shell using a needle or nail, and a needle and nylon thread is used to string the shells into necklaces.

4.3 Marketing

Most women stated that the seafoods they harvest are for family consumption. It is only when there is a surplus that seafood is sold either raw or cooked at the Alofi market on Tuesdays and Fridays. A few women also sell from home, or to restaurants, hotels and shops.

A shell necklace costs NZD 4 to 8 depending on the length and composition of the necklace, and the sales outlet (NZD 4 from the village, NZD 5 from the Alofi market and NZD 8 from the Tourism Office).

Seafood prices at three main outlets

Seafood	<u>Alofi market</u> (in NZD)	<u>Tapeu Fisheries</u> (in NZD)	<u>Mitaki's Bakery and Café</u> (in NZD)
10 hahave (flying fish)	12	8	12
8 hahave	10		10
Margarine container of ugako (seaweed)	25		
Fish and shellfish baked as fai kai together with taro	6		
Bonito	6		
Tuna	7		6
Wahoo	7 or 8 9 when in short supply	8.50	8
Kama kama /per shopping bag	10		
30-40 alili /per shopping bag (turbo snail)	10		
Kaloama /score (goat fish)	5		
Mahimahi		9-10	6
Red longtail snapper		8	
Small red snapper		8	
Reef snapper		5-7	
Yellowfin tuna, barracuda and deep-sea cod		7.50	
Lobster		18	
Ota (small container)		4.50	3
Ota (medium size container)			4
Ota (large container)		7.50	
Fish cooked in batter		2	2
Smoked tuna fillets		10.50	
Smoked deep-sea fish		12-13	
Barracuda			5
Bottom fish			7
Fried mackerel			2
Sashimi (small container)			3
Sashimi (medium size container)			4

4.4 Women involved in gear technology

The fishing gear used by women to reef glean are readily available from around the home. However, women, like men and children make the **kafika** and bamboo fishing rods. Women make the **oa** (coconut frond fishing baskets) used to hold their harvest.

4.5 Women employed in the marine public sector

Four women are involved in the marine public sector. Three women are currently involved in the marine sector, while one woman was employed there for seven years. Peleni Talagi is the Crown Council in the Attorney General's Office and assists with fisheries legislation and fisheries legal issues, while Josie Tamate is based in the Solomon Islands working for the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency as their Economist Project Development Officer. Charlene Funaki is the Agriculture Marketing Officer within the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries who has taken on the additional role of providing assistance to women involved in fisheries activities. Sisilia Talagi, held the post of Director with the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries for seven years, from 1989 to 1995.

4.6 Women undertaking formal marine studies

There is one woman currently undertaking formal marine studies as part of her B.Sc. degree at USP in Fiji. Another woman graduate who obtained a B.Sc. in earth science (1997) undertook a number of marine-related subjects as part of her course work.

5.0 NATIONAL SERVICES AVAILABLE TO PROMOTE AND ASSIST WOMEN IN FISHERIES

5.1 Government ministries and departments

5.1.1 Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF)

The Fisheries Division is based within the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Comprising only two staff, the department and the division is responsible for all aspects of the management and development of marine resources. The Department does not have a programme specifically targeting women in the fisheries sector. However, it is interested in securing the assistance of women in researching reef resources. To assist in undertaking this women in fisheries review and followup workshops, the Division has secured the assistance of a staff member from the agriculture division. Organisations such as SPC, the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme, the Forum Fisheries Agency and others are contacted when additional assistance is required in research, legislation, and management of resources.

5.1.2 Department of Community Affairs

This department is responsible for a variety of programmes ranging from social welfare to cultural and environmental conservation. It is the main agency for the delivery of government services to the fourteen villages¹⁴.

The goal of the women's programme is to improve the social and economic status of women by providing advice on key policy areas and issues affecting women. Activities of the department include the pandanus planting project, traditional and contemporary handicraft workshops, and environmental awareness-raising and health related workshops¹⁵.

The department does not have a specific programme for women in fisheries, but is interested in working with the Fisheries Division if a programme is organised. The director of Community Affairs participated in this review and the followup workshops.

¹⁴ The Government of Niue, 1996

¹⁵ Singh, 1997

5.2 Information and educational institutions

5.2.1 Niue Public Library

The national library in Alofi is government-owned. It is open five days a week during public service working hours. There are few fisheries resources within the library itself, but the archive section does have copies of fisheries reports, written by visiting scientists who have worked with DAFF.

5.2.2 National Museum

The museum in Alofi was opened in 1987. Like the library, the museum is also government-owned and operated. There is an excellent display of fisheries information and gear featuring historical information on legislation, fishing techniques and gear. Wood and shell fish hooks, coconut frond torches, traditional canoes and bailers, fishing lines made of human hair, sennit nets, and seafood baskets are on display. Such information promotes public awareness of fishing activities, and could be used as an educational tool for young people.

5.2.3 Niue Training and Development Office

The Training and Development Office is responsible for public sector training programmes. Each year, government departments provide the Office with their training requirements. It is the responsibility of the Office to organise suitable training. The Office is also responsible for providing awards to 7th Formers for overseas study. Applicants compete for government scholarships, with successful candidates signing a bond that requires them to return to Niue to take up employment upon graduation. The length of the bond is equal to the length of the study programme, which means that a graduate of a three-year study programme must work for three years upon graduation. Apart from overseas government-sponsored study programmes there are also overseas privately-sponsored study programmes, and incountry training programmes. There are scholarships for marine studies but few students are interested in such programmes, as most tend towards careers in business, law and administration.

5.2.4 University of the South Pacific (USP)

The USP extension centre is the only tertiary training institution in Niue. Courses are offered through a credit and non-credit extension programme. Courses in marine studies are available but to date, there have been no applicants.

5.3 Community development groups

5.3.1 Niue Council of Women

The Niue Council of Women, established in 1962, has a membership of over 600 women representing 16 groups (14 village groups and 2 church groups).

The aim of the Council is to maintain Niuean culture in language, crafts, traditions and customs and performing arts; promote economic and social advancement of women; and promote good health and nutrition to improve family life with an emphasis on the elderly and children. Activities have included the drum oven project, and the home gardening project¹⁶.

A working committee meets monthly to discuss women's projects, while the Council meets quarterly. The Council is very interested in women in fisheries activities, and participated in both this review, and followup workshops.

5.3.2 Religious Groups

There are eight religious denominations in Niue, with the main one being the Ekalesia of Niue (based on the London Missionary Society). The Ekalesia has the girls and boys brigade companies in each village. These youth are taught a number of skills, including fishing techniques, and canoe making. The brigades are affiliated with the National Youth Council under the government programme.

5.3.3 Fishermen's Association

The Association is comprised mainly of fishermen who share an interest in fishing as a livelihood or a hobby. Members of the Association have attended a number of fisheries workshops (on fishing techniques) organised by the Fisheries Division. The Fishermen's Association membership includes males and females.

5.4 Financial institutions

There are no restrictions on women's access to loans and credit, but more men than women obtain loans. This may be due to the fact that more men than women are members of the work force. A criterion for loans is that they are available to those with a regular cash income rather than gender.

5.4.1 Niue Development Bank

The Bank was established in 1993 to provide financial and advisory assistance to promote long-term economic and social development within the framework of national development plans, strategies, and priorities. The emphasis is on promoting participation of Niuean citizens and residents in economic and social development; providing housing; and stimulating export and import activities¹⁷.

¹⁶ Singh, 1997

¹⁷ Niue Development Bank, 1997

Loans can be obtained under the sectors of agriculture and fishing, commerce and industry, or micro loans. Interest rates range from 3 per cent to 6 per cent for agriculture and fishing, with loans beginning at NZD 1000. Under commerce and industry (which includes tourism activities i.e. restaurants, fishing tours etc.) interest rates are from 4 per cent to 7 per cent, while micro loans (which must not exceed NZD 1000) have a flat rate of 10 per cent. All applications must have detailed proposals. There is a security requirement for each loan, and penalties for late and non-repayment of loans.

5.4.2 Westpac Bank

The bank provides two types of loans: personal finance loans and commercial loans. Local approval for loans can be given for those from NZD 500 to 5000. For loans greater than NZD 5000 approval must be granted from the Westpac office in Fiji. The interest rate for personal finance loans is 14.5 per cent while the rate for commercial loans is 13.85 per cent. Loan applications must have a detailed proposal.

5.5 Business

5.5.1 Chamber of Commerce

In operation since 1973, the Chamber of Commerce was set up as an association of those involved in the private sector. Members meet to discuss issues of interest and concern to them. Government, through the Niue Development Bank, assists private sector development by providing training programmes.

5.5.2 Gabes Food Bar and Restaurant

Gabes Food Bar and Restaurant is a family business which is owned and operated by Mr and Mrs Organ Viliko. Open since 1998, the business sells a range of food, including seafood.

5.5.3 Mitaki's Bakery and Cafe

Mitaki's Bakery and Café is a family-owned business that sells seafood dishes, including battered fish and chips, and fresh flying fish.

5.5.4 Tapeu Fisheries

Another family-owned business, Tapeu Fisheries started in 1993. A seafood restaurant and takeaway outlet, the business sells fresh fish and cooked seafoods (such as battered fish and chips, seafood salad, and marinated fish). Smoked fish was produced and sold in the past, but proved to be economically unfeasible.

5.6 Media promotion

5.6.1 **Broadcasting Corporation of Niue (BCN)**

The BCN is responsible for radio and television in Niue.

Radio

Started in 1967, *Radio Sunshine* is a publicly-owned, public service broadcaster. The station broadcasts news on health, youth, and sports, as well as a regular weekly DAFF programme on fisheries and the marine environment (including safety at sea). A board runs BCN but the government subsidises operations. Hours of operation are 6 a.m. to 10 or 11 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Television

Niue television became a state-owned enterprise in 1989. Hours of operation are 5.30 p.m. to 11 p.m. The station has local programmes on cultural and special events, sports, news and current affairs, as well as New Zealand programmes. The station also features fisheries and environment videos.

5.6.2 **Newspaper – *The Niue Star***

The *Niue Star* is a privately-owned and produced newspaper. The paper provides features on local events such as sport, health, education, religion, the environment, and fisheries, as well as news of workshops, and visitors to the island. The paper is sold locally for NZD 1.50 and in New Zealand for NZD 2.00.

6.0 CONSTRAINTS THAT INHIBIT WOMEN'S EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR

6.1 Social and environmental issues

6.1.1 Cultural taboos

A number of traditional taboos restrict women from participating in all types of fishing activity. There are beliefs that women bring bad luck to fishermen, should not be permitted to touch fishing gear or step over fishing lines, and should be kept away from all types of fishing activity. These restrictions are most stringent for menstruating women. Traditional restrictions prevent women from fishing from boats, thereby stopping them from engaging in deep-sea fishing. However, women are beginning to fish with their husbands or friends from aluminium dinghies.

6.1.2 Time constraints

Domestic, community, and work responsibilities restrict the amount of time available to women to engage in fisheries activities. Apart from their household chores, women work on plantations, participate in village working groups, and may be employed in either government or private businesses Monday through Friday.

6.1.3 The environment

Women do not have the safety of lagoons in which to fish. Instead they must harvest seafoods on the reef flat, from the reef edge, or perched on cliff ledges. The marine environment can be quite hazardous as the women are exposed to the incoming waves, and so must take care that they are not trapped or taken out by the tide. Gleaning is done at low tide, but a woman can still lose her footing on the slippery rocks. Fishing at the reef edge is particularly dangerous.

The weather can also be a constraint to fishing activity. Wet and windy weather conditions may deter both men and women from harvesting seafood.

6.2 Access to resources

6.2.1 Women's preferences for reef gleaning

Most Niuean women are content to reef glean for seafood, having no desire to fish in the deeper waters surrounding the island. To ensure that inshore stock are not over-exploited, the sustainability of reef gleaning will need to be determined before any increase in gleaning activity is considered. By using non destructive and sustainable methods of reef gleaning, women can assist in ensuring that the marine environment and its stock are conserved for future generations.

Apart from reef gleaning, Niuean women also show a keen interest in processing seafoods and marketing.

6.2.2 Deep-sea fishing technology

The use of heavy canoes and boats, as well as the 'mechanics' of deep-sea fishing, inhibit women undertaking such fishing activity. Launching and landing outrigger canoes, maintaining outboard motors, and using deep-sea fishing techniques require the physical strength and technical skills associated with men.

6.2.3 Lack of equipment

There is no evidence of programmes (government or non-government) that provide equipment to women in the fisheries sector. The government focus is on providing loans to men and women through the Niue Development Bank to enable them to obtain equipment.

6.2.4 Limited finance

DAFF does not have funds available to support income-generating ventures for women, and there does not seem to be much interest from women in setting up income-generating ventures. Women are content to focus on harvesting primarily for family consumption, with any surplus sold at Alofi market. The sale of shell necklaces is an additional source of income.

Loans can be obtained from the Niue Development Bank, and an alternative source of credit is the loan scheme from Westpac Bank. There is no separate assistance programme specifically targeting self employed women. There are programmes and schemes for the private sector in general. Support tends to be given to projects and ventures initiated by established businesses, making it difficult for women who wish to establish a fisheries income-generating venture.

6.3 Access to opportunities

6.3.1 Lack of written information

The activities of women in the fisheries sector have not been documented. In addition, there is no information detailing services available to women in the sector (such as where to go for technical information, training, or credit). As in other countries, information is generally passed by word of mouth through non-formal channels such as the church and community groups. Women's groups are very active in Niue, meeting one day a week in each village as part of a handicraft group. The women make hats, embroider, sew quilts, make shell and seed necklaces, and crochet. At the gatherings, the women share their skills with one another, as well as information about family health and community projects. Invited guests share their experiences with the women.

6.3.2 Limited interest in, and access to training

There are plans to include marine studies into the high school curriculum. Marine studies courses are being developed for 4th and 5th Form students. USP provides correspondence courses in marine studies but, to date, no students have enrolled in these. The government scholarship programme offers scholarships in marine studies, however students have not expressed interest in pursuing such studies.

The Fisheries Section does not offer courses specifically targeting women in the fisheries sector. Workshops are provided to the fishing community as a whole and topics include safety at sea, outboard motor maintenance, data collection, fishing techniques, and gear technology. To date, no women have attended the workshops.

7.0 AREAS REQUIRING ASSISTANCE: A SUMMARY

7.1 Improvement of support services

This report recommends that:

7.1.1 **Documentation of women's involvement in fisheries be promoted.**

This national assessment report will be one means of addressing this need.

7.1.2 **Fisheries Section liaise with women undertaking fisheries activities**

The Fisheries Section is interested in collecting catch data from women. This will provide Fisheries staff with an estimate of stock populations and stock depletion numbers. Such data can assist staff in managing reef resources. Where stocks appear to be over harvested, restrictions can be put into place (e.g. closed areas, size restrictions, and bans on harvesting) to prevent overexploitation, and allow population growth. Women can provide data to the Fisheries Section, and Fisheries staff can provide information, advice and training to the women. In this way, a working relationship between fisherwomen and Fisheries staff will develop. More importantly, as women are the main group who harvest from the inshore reef area, it is important to take their activities into consideration when implementing a marine resources management and conservation programme.

7.1.3 **Public awareness programmes on fisheries should be promoted. More specifically, information on and for women in the sector needs to be made available.**

Government and private media channels should continue to disseminate fisheries information, including services available (e.g. scholarships and educational courses).

Both government (Fisheries Section, Women's Affairs Section, the National Training and Development Unit, and the Niue Development Bank) and non government agencies (Niue Council of Women, women's village working groups, Fishermen's Association, USP Centre, schools, and youth groups) can provide information at the national level, while SPC can provide information at the regional level.

7.1.4 **Training programmes for women should be developed.**

In developing national workshops, the Fisheries Section could work with the Women's Affairs Section. Local expertise such as representatives from both government (Department of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries & Moui Faka Niue, Health Department, Niue Development Bank, Museum) and non-government organisations (Niue Fishermen's Association and women involved in fisheries) could be used as technical expertise. Representatives of the groups can also be used as guest lecturers at schools to promote marine studies. Assistance in carrying out the above can be provided by the SPC Women's Fisheries Development Section.

7.2 Immediate assistance requested by women involved in fisheries

7.2.1 Workshops on the following topics

- i) Smoking of fish.
- ii) The making of new seafood recipes, including recipes for **loli**, **limu**, and **gege**.
- iii) Salting and drying of fish.
- iv) Shellcraft including the weaving of shells into hats and other woven craft. Ideas on how to make use of shells as **gege**, **alili**, cats eyes and periwinkles.
- v) The making of scoop nets. (This is not feasible as the use of most net mesh sizes is banned).



Niue shellcraft workshop

The Niue Women's Workshop on the Production and Marketing of Shellcraft was held from the 29 September to 1 October 1998. This workshop targeted women who rely on selling shellcraft as a means of income. The women were introduced to new designs using both local and imported shells. Shells were woven into hats, necklaces and fans, and were used to make jewellery. In addition, the women were taught how to ensure quality in their products, and how to market them.



Fish smoking at the Niue processing and marketing workshop

The Niue Women's Workshop on the Processing and Marketing of Seafood was held from the 2 to 7 October 1998. The workshop targeted women who were interested in learning different seafood processing methods, mainly for home consumption. Topics included sustainable harvesting techniques, seafood nutrition, hygiene and handling, smoking, salting and drying of fish, seafood recipes and seafood marketing.

7.2.2 Training

- iv) One of the women who sells fresh and processed fish commercially, requested information on courses that teach a variety of seafood processing methods, food presentation, catering skills, and marketing. She will be developing a catering service to tourists on board her family's charter boat and is interested in developing appropriate practical training. She requested information and funding for correspondence or short-term overseas courses.

Following the field survey, information of training courses was mailed to the interested woman. Details of the April/May 1999 regional workshop for women in the seafood industry were also provided.

- v) Participants of the Niue Council of Women meeting requested the possibility of sending a Niuean woman overseas to learn skills in areas such as processing and marketing. This woman would then be responsible for running similar workshops in Niue. It was suggested that Charlene Funaki may be the ideal person for such training. (Charlene's long-term role in working with women in the fisheries sector will need to be confirmed in order to support such training).

This request is still pending. The Women's Fisheries Development Section has kept in contact with the local counterpart concerning national initiatives. Following the workshops, the participants have held workshops in their villages, and the Niue Council of Women has hosted a shellcraft display. The Women's Fisheries Development Section is waiting to hear of requests from the local counterpart for follow-up assistance.

7.2.3 Information

- vi) Seafood recipes.

Each participant at the seafood processing workshop was provided with a folder of seafood recipes. Around 25 other women who requested folders also received folders.

7.2.4 Equipment

- vii) Cowrie shells for making octopus lures.
- viii) Fish hooks (26") and nylon lines (10 kg and 14 kg) for rod and line fishing.
- ix) Jewellery attachments such as hooks for earrings, and links for necklaces.
- x) Small hand drills for shellcraft.

Cowrie shells are provided by one of the local handicraft store owners to those who make octopus lures for the tourist market. Fishing gear (hooks and nylon lines) are readily available locally. Jewellery attachments and other materials were provided to the participants in the shellcraft workshop. In addition, extra attachments were provided to a handicraft store owner to sell to the women following the workshop. A list of equipment suppliers, and shellcraft buyers was provided to the women during the workshop. Women were taught how to produce shellcraft without the use of hand drills.

7.2.5 **Funds**

- xi) A number of women are interested in starting up small businesses and have been advised to send proposals to SPC via Charlene Fukui.

No proposals have been received to date.

7.2.6 **Export markets**

- xii) When Air Nauru flights were available between Niue and New Zealand, raw marinated fish, *ota* was either sold to local customers who took containers to New Zealand or bottles of *ota* were exported to restaurants in New Zealand. This was one income-generating venture that has now stopped with the end of the Air Nauru service. A request has been made to seek alternative markets for local seafoods.

The Forum Secretariat's Marketing Officer was contacted for advice, and was put in touch with the local counterpart.

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APPENDIX: Persons consulted

The following people were consulted in the course of researching this report. Grateful acknowledgement is expressed to all of them for their invaluable time and assistance.

In order of interview:

1. Charlene Funaki - Agriculture Marketing Officer, Dept of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries & Moui Faka Niue
2. Brendon Pasisi - Fisheries Adviser, Dept of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries & Moui Faka Niue
3. Sauni Tongatule - Director of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries & Moui Faka Niue
4. Women representatives from the north - Makefu, Tuapa and Mutalau villages
5. Jenna Jackson - Director, Department of Community Affairs
6. Women representatives from the south - Alofi South, Hakupu and Tamakautoga
7. Terai McFadzien - Manager of the Niue Development Bank
8. Hon O'Love Jacobsen - Minister of Women's Affairs
9. Ida Talagi-Hekesi - Niue Tourism Office
10. Frank Sioneholo - Director, Statistics Unit
11. Hariesa Faitala - Ekalesia Niue Church
12. Matagi Vilitama - Ekalesia Niue Church
13. Aifolia Poumale - Ekalesia Niue Church
14. Sisilia Talagi - Assistant Head of External Affairs
15. Lady Rex - President of the Niue Council of Women
16. Gillian Hekau - Manager, National Training and Development Office
17. Coleen Kulatea - Officer, National Training and Development Office
18. Wally Saunders - Secretary of the Niue Chamber of Commerce
19. Hima Douglas - Manager of the Niue Broadcasting Corporation
20. Dr Semo Koro - Director of Health, Health Department
21. Robin Hekau - Curator, Niue National Museum.
22. Logo Seumanu - Conservation Unit
23. Mohamed Bereteh - Conservation Unit
24. Ioane Mamaia - Conservation Unit
25. Masani Togiamana - Conservation Unit
26. Ligi Sisikefa - Niue Public Library
27. Diamond Tauevihi - Archives Unit, Niue Public Library
28. John Faitala - Statistics Officer, Statistics Unit
29. Tene Kingi - Head of Economics, Economics Office
30. Kupa Magatogia - Director of Education, Education Department
31. Noelene and Vaine Pasisi - Tapeu Fisheries
32. Representatives - Niue Council of Women
33. Mitaki Lio - Owner, Mitaki's Bakery and Café
34. Siieli Fusikata - Acting Manager of the Westpac Bank