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TONGA GENDER STATISTICS PROFILE 2021



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Prepared by the
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Tonga Statistics Department
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More Information

For more information about the 2021 Census of Population and Housing, or to request additional statistical information not included in this publication, please contact the Tonga Statistics Department. Questionnaire and other related Tonga census 2021 information is available here: Census Documentation | Tonga Statistics Department (tongastats.gov.to)

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Foreword

The Census of Population and Housing is the largest data collection in the Kingdom of Tonga, counting the characteristics of all people and households across all our islands. The Census collected quality data about all people in the Kingdom on 30 November 2021 in terms of where they were living, if they were living in a private household or institutions like hospitals, boarding schools or hotels as well as a range of demographic, social and economic variables about them.

The Tonga Statistics Department (TSD) has disseminated aggregate 2021 Census results and this publication is part of the suite of Census products. Census 'point in time' data is essential to policy and decision making in terms of data insights regarding our people and how they live in relation to our national sustainable development agenda, sector priorities, and other regional and global commitments. TSD is committed to meeting the needs of stakeholders and informing decision making through publications like this focusing on Census data analysed through a gender perspective. TSD is legally obliged to disseminate data collected under the Statistics Act, and our Strategy for the Development of Statistics reinforces this function. Integrating a gender perspective into statistics means that gender issues and gender-based biases are systematically considered in the production of all official statistics and at all stages of data production, including analysis.

Women and girls make up 51% of the population of the Kingdom of Tonga, and the sex disaggregated 2021 Census data analysis in this publication provides insights into the similarities and differences between women and men, boys and girls. This publication aims to improve the coverage, data analysis and presentation of gender issues in statistics on a wide range of topics; and to deliver gender statistics in a format that is easy to use by policymakers and planners. This publication includes detailed disaggregated data for males and females, derived variables and analysis about our population, households and families, migration, education and literacy, health, wellbeing, communications and the internet, civic engagement, economic activity and household amenities and housing.

TSD acknowledges the valuable contributions made by the Pacific Community Human Rights and Social Development division and the Statistics for Development Division for their resources, technical assistance and support for this publication, with gratitude to Mr Toga Raikoti, for his data expertise knowledge and guidance. I also extend my thanks to the technical assistance of Ms Kim Robertson for this report and to SPC for their collaboration in compiling the report, working closely with the Population and Social Statistics Program.

The 2021 Census was conducted in unprecedented times, during the global COVID-19 pandemic when our international borders were closed, domestic travel was limited, and our people were apprehensive about possible outbreak. I extend my sincere gratitude to the 100,179 people who participated in the 2021 Census, many with help from parents and care givers; the district and town officers for their support; the hard-working enumerators and supervisors during the fieldwork as well as TSD data processing staff. With our people's cooperation, the Census was a success in providing data for publications like this.

Malo 'Aupito



Sione Lolohea

Government Statistician



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Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ECE	Early Childhood Education
FHH	female-headed households
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities
LPG	Liquid Petroleum Gas
MHH	male-headed households
MOH	Ministry of Health
NCD	Non-Communicable Disease
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
TSD	Tonga Statistics Department
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

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Key gender equality insights and questions

The ten thematic areas explored in this report analysed from a sex disaggregated data perspective, provide 'data analysis to policy action and decision-making questions' for more research and a better understanding about gender equality and equity issues identified.

Population, households, and families

The total Census night population in the Kingdom of Tonga on 30 November 2021 was 100,179, of which 51% was female – 1.7 points more than in 2011. Tonga's population decreased by 3% in the ten years to 2021, due to a decline in the number of men (-6%) offset by a slight increase of the number of women (+0.3%). At the sub-national level, the female population in Tongatapu has increased (+2.1%), while it decreased in the outer islands (-4.5%). Tonga has a 'young' population – 35% or about one-in-three people are aged under 15 years, but this share has decreased since 2011 (-9.3%).

Census findings raise considerations for policy and decision makers, including:

- The number of males in the population is decreasing. Is this due to decreasing male life expectancy or emigration? Are there different sex disaggregated morbidity and mortality rates? What policies could have contributed to the decreasing male population including scholarships, visa waiver programmes or like and (temporary) labour mobility schemes?
- Is there increased need for support to women for paid maternity and family leave, childcare, medical and support services for elder care and for those with long term chronic health conditions?
- What are the pathways for young women and men after compulsory education in terms of post-secondary education, training, employment, or business creation? Are there 'gender neutral' and affordable post-secondary training options available in Tonga?

Migration

- What support is accessible for outer island females migrating to Tongatapu?
- Females were more likely than males to be involuntarily displaced for medical reasons. What are the health conditions that require relocation and is this to receive family care or to access medical services?
- Far more men than women migrate internally and overseas for work and employment, including temporary labour mobility schemes. Do gender equity interventions need to be introduced to increase women's participation in temporary labour mobility schemes?

Education and literacy

- More males than females have never attended or are not attending school in the compulsory school age of 4–18 years. Do all Island Divisions have equitable access to education at all levels? Are education pathways accessible for compulsory age alternative or divergent learners, including those living with disability?

- More females than males aged under 19 years leave school because of marriage, and females leave school because of pregnancy. Is support available to assist these young women complete their education, including broader family support?
- More women than men have completed upper secondary and tertiary or university as their highest level of education, but are not participating in the labour market (working for pay or profit). What support or incentives are available and accessible to women to enter and remain in the work force given expectations around their unpaid work roles?
- More men than women have completed technical and vocational education and work for pay or profit. Are technical and vocational training opportunities equitable for men and women? What is being done to change gender stereotypes and norms preventing women entering technical and vocational training?
- 24% of the population aged 15–24 years is ‘not in education, employment or training’ (NEET), and most have secondary or higher qualifications. Do labour, work and small business policies promote early career work entrants or young entrepreneurs?
- Employment in post-secondary and vocational education¹ is male-dominated: Are technical and vocational training opportunities equitable? Would more women be employed in this sector if more women had these qualifications?
- More females than males aged 10–24 years are likely to be using the internet for educational purposes. What is the ‘unmet need’ for education that the Internet offers?

Economic activity and the labour market

- Labour force participation data shows 56% of males compared with 43% of females are participating in the labour force, with variations across Island Divisions and age groups: Does the labour regulatory framework (laws, regulations and policies) ensure non-discrimination in recruitment and employment? How can gender equity be introduced in apprenticeships and broader internship programmes? Do laws, regulations and policies support working mothers and their families, including returning to work? Is quality and affordable childcare accessible to all women working in the formal and informal sector?
- Occupations and sectors (industry) of employment are highly gender segregated and concentrated. For example, primary school teaching and nursing is usually ‘women’s work’, while trades like mechanics, security guards and carpenters are ‘men’s work’. What are the career pathways, in terms of ongoing education and training, for women in education and health for them to progress to management level? Do scholarships or other public and private sector awards for education and learning have gender quotas?
- Males represent 78% of people employed on Temporary Labour Mobility Schemes between January 2020 and November 2021 and their remittances were mostly used for basic family needs and other goals: How can government as the regulatory body and employers provide better targeted seasonal work opportunities for women, especially young unemployed women?

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 1 For an overview of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) see: <https://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>

Health

- Considerably more males than females drink *Kavatonga*, consume alcohol and smoke cigarettes (tobacco), while a significant number of females drink alcohol and smoke cigarettes. Are public health 'stop' or 'don't start' messages and campaigns reaching all people in Tonga and effective in changing behaviours or reinforcing good behaviours? What other incentive or disincentive programmes can be implemented?
- 14% of people reported having a health professional diagnosis of a Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) or chronic illness, and for those people with one or more illness, females comprise 58%. The three highest illnesses and conditions reported are the same for both sexes and generally increase with age: diabetes, hypertension/high blood pressure and heart disease, with females more likely to experience obesity and males more likely to have gout: Are healthy lifestyle messages and campaigns reaching all people in Tonga, including the importance of regular medical check-ups? Is there universal access to health care and medical / curative services? What is the 'NCD burden of care' for women?
- Women are the primary caretakers of the family, caring for children and other dependent household members, preparing meals, cleaning, and looking after the ill and infirm are tasks mainly carried out by women. What happens to this traditional care system when women as primary caregivers are themselves unwell with NCDs or other chronic conditions?
- Mental illness and behaviour problems are gendered, with women more likely to report experiencing sickness due to (bad) spirit or possessed by evil and males reporting problems related to drug consumption and being affected mentally or experiencing intellectual disability: Do all people in Tonga have access to mental health care and medical / curative services?
- Census data on COVID-19 stress, anxiety, depression, or hopelessness shows that females were more prone to this than males, but that younger males were more affected than younger females. Future State of Emergency regulations and associated lock downs should be informed by gender, social inclusion and disability analysis.

Disability

- The prevalence of self-reported disability, using Washington Group definition, was 3% for males and 3% for females aged 5+ years, with the number and prevalence of persons living with disability increasing for those aged over 50 years: Are all persons living with disability receiving support, clinical, rehabilitation and other services and assistive devices?
- Among compulsory-school-aged children with disabilities, 79% are attending school or post-secondary learning, with a slightly higher proportion of females: How inclusive is the compulsory school education policy? What are the education options and pathways for children living with disability in Tonga?
- Among people aged 15+ years with disabilities, 28% of males and 21% of females are employed: Do legal and regulatory frameworks as well as public and private sector human resource policies stipulate non-discrimination and promote recruitment and retention of persons living with disability?
- A higher proportion of males (22%) than females (18%) with disabilities were not registered to vote. How can voter registration be more accessible for persons living with disabilities?

Wellbeing

- The Census data, combined with other research findings, suggests there are gender differences in the financial ability to purchase and the prioritisation of replacement of worn-out clothes and to buy presents for friends or family, linked to economic activity and employment.

Access to ICT

- 63% of females and 62% of males aged 10+ years had a working cell phone, with younger and older males more likely than females to have cell phones, with differences across Island Divisions: What regulations, including pricing, ensure universal access to cellular networks across all Island Divisions and are these enforced?
- 93% of females and 90% of males used their cell phones to access the Internet, and overall 60% of females and 55% of males reported using the Internet in the last 3 months, with variations by age groups and Island Divisions. The Internet was used mostly for social media and communication, with female share of Internet use for education and shopping or product information slightly higher than males: Do government, private sector and community service organisations utilise social media and other Internet platforms effectively to disseminate information, education and communications for key messages such as public health and healthy lifestyles? What support is available for small businesses, formal and informal, to market their goods and services via the Internet?

Voter registration

- Overall, 86% or 43,815 of residents in private households were registered to vote, 24,159 females (88% of females) and 19,656 males (85% of males). Across Island Divisions, the lowest proportion is observed in Tongatapu.
- More males than females were not registered to vote because they were not interested, while more females than males did not know where to register. Why are men less interested in voting than women? Why are women less informed than men?

Household amenities and housing

It is difficult to analyse gender equality from Census housing (dwelling) and household perspective because the data is related to the 'head' of the household. The head of the household on Census night is supposed to be the person in the household responsible for decision making, however this is often interpreted to be the oldest person in the household. Further, the Census doesn't measure intrahousehold (i.e. among people usually living in the household) ownership and usage of utilities and economic assets like vehicles and cell phones, as well as the dwelling and land itself.

- Female-headed households (FHHs) are more likely to receive remittances as the main source of income. Is this because of a spouse being absent on migrant labour? How regular and reliable are remittances to meet the basic needs of female household heads year-round?
- A higher proportion of male household heads (MHH) had transportation assets (cars, trucks, vans, etc.), and transport is essential for income generation (i.e. economic

empowerment): What is the 'transport gap' in terms of female household heads (FHH) being able to access affordable and reliable transport, especially in rural and maritime regions?



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Introduction and background

The Kingdom of Tonga recognises gender equality as essential to the process of sustainable development and the formulation of effective national development policies and programmes, as stated in the *Tonga Strategic Development Framework (TSDf II) 2015–2025* and articulated in the *National Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality Tonga policy and strategic plan of action: 2019–2025*. Tonga Statistics Department (TSD) is establishing its gender statistics programme as part of the Tonga Strategy for the Development of Statistics 2019–2023 and is working with stakeholders across the national statistical system to provide quality gender data and statistics, with the objective of mainstreaming gender issues in all areas of official statistics.

Gender statistics promote understanding of the actual situation of women and men, boys and girls, in society. Gender statistics are about everybody: the young, the elderly and persons living with disabilities or chronic health conditions. This gender statistics data profile informs stakeholders, the broader public and partners – including the media – raising consciousness, encouraging public debate and promoting change in society. The dissemination of gender statistics is crucial in reducing both gender stereotypes and the misrepresentation of the roles and contribution to society of women and men, as well as in promoting a new gender balance in the distribution of roles within the family, at the workplace and in positions of decision-making, as per the Kingdom of Tonga’s planning and policy priority outcome areas.

This gender statistics profile utilises data from the Census of Population and Housing 2021, reflecting TSD’s commitment to increase access to gender data and statistics for informed decision making. It is an initiative of TSD and the Ministry of Internal Affairs to provide stakeholders with detailed statistics about men and women, boys and girls in the Kingdom of Tonga. The structure of the report was developed by gender stakeholders, based on international reports and standards. The purpose is to provide analytical information necessary to improving the use of gender statistics in the Kingdom of Tonga.

The COVID-19 global pandemic resulted in Tonga’s border being closed in late March 2020 and in 2021 there were limited repatriation flights, affecting the population in Tonga for the November 2021 Census, notably students studying overseas and those employed on temporary migrant work schemes who were not able to return to Tonga.

Most of the statistics presented in this report are based on the usually resident population in Tonga who live in occupied private households, as preferred by policy analysts, although some statistical tabulations and charts use total Census night population. The ‘subject population’ or the people included in each tabulation is stated in the table or figure caption, noting that totals might differ from other tabulations produced by TSD.

The contents of this publication complement and deepen dissemination of Census 2021 data and statistics produced by TSD, available at: <https://tongastats.gov.to/>.

1. Population, households, and families

1.1. POPULATION

The total Census night population in the Kingdom of Tonga on November 30, 2021, was 100,179, with 51% of females. The population of Tonga has decreased by 3% since 2011 (**Table 1**), while the number of females has remained about the same at 51,000 (an increase of 0.3%); at the sub-national level the female population in Tongatapu has increased while decreases occurred in the outer islands. The number of males has decreased by about 3,200 or 6%, mostly from urban areas and Greater Nukualofa. The decrease is also significant in Ha'apai (-18.2%) and Ongo Niua (-14.1%).

Table 1. Total population and 10-year growth rate by sex, Island Divisions and region

Division/ Region	2011			2016			2021			Growth rate 2011–2021 (%)		
	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females
Tonga	103,252	51,979	51,273	100,651	50,255	50,396	100,179	48,749	51,430	-3.0	-6.2	0.3
Tongatapu	75,416	37,833	37,583	74,611	37,135	37,476	74,320	35,959	38,361	-1.5	-5.0	2.1
Vava'u	14,922	7,559	7,363	13,738	6,866	6,872	14,182	7,044	7,138	-5.0	-6.8	-3.1
Ha'apai	6,616	3,406	3,210	6,125	3,118	3,007	5,665	2,787	2,878	-14.4	-18.2	-10.3
'Eua	5,016	2,514	2,502	4,945	2,486	2,459	4,864	2,386	2,478	-3.0	-5.1	-1.0
Ongo Niua	1,282	667	615	1,232	650	582	1,148	573	575	-10.5	-14.1	-6.5
Urban	24,229	12,156	12,073	23,221	11,529	11,692	21,185	10,229	10,956	-12.6	-15.9	-9.3
Rural	79,023	39,823	39,200	77,430	38,726	38,704	78,994	38,520	40,474	-0.04	-3.3	3.3
Greater Nuku'alofa	36,045	18,100	17,945	35,184	17,490	17,694	34,142	16,463	17,679	-5.3	-9.0	-1.5
Rest of Tongatapu	39,371	19,733	19,638	39,427	19,645	19,782	40,178	19,496	20,682	2.0	-1.2	5.3

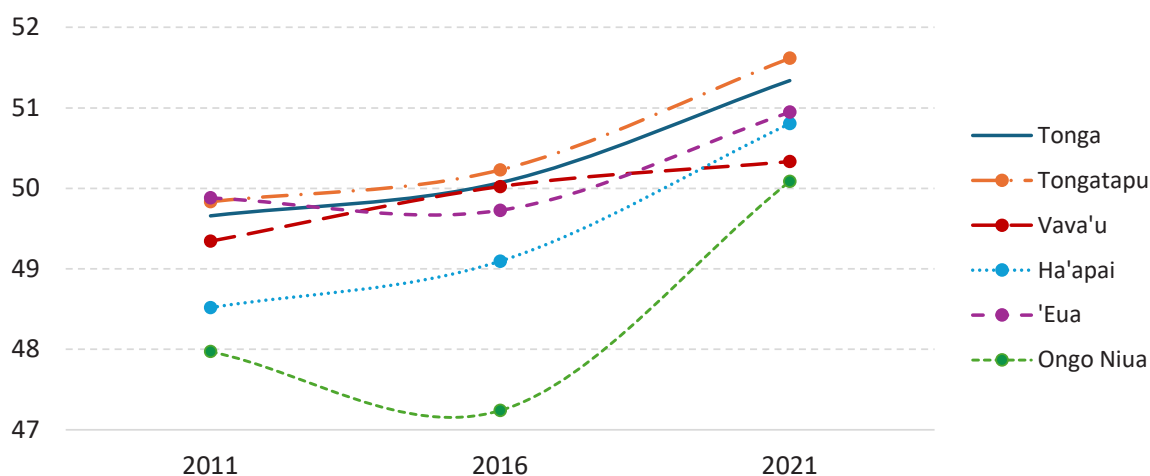


Figure 1. Proportion of women, by Island Divisions (%)

The sex ratio is the number of males per 100 females. It is determined by biological, social, technological, cultural, and economic factors and, in turn, it has an impact on society, demography and the overall economy. The sex ratio at birth and in childhood typically show more males than females, decreasing throughout life mainly because women tend to live longer than men, and other factors like overseas migration of men (**Figure 2**). On Census night 2021, the sex ratio for the 4,190 people aged 70+ years was 76 men for every 100 women.

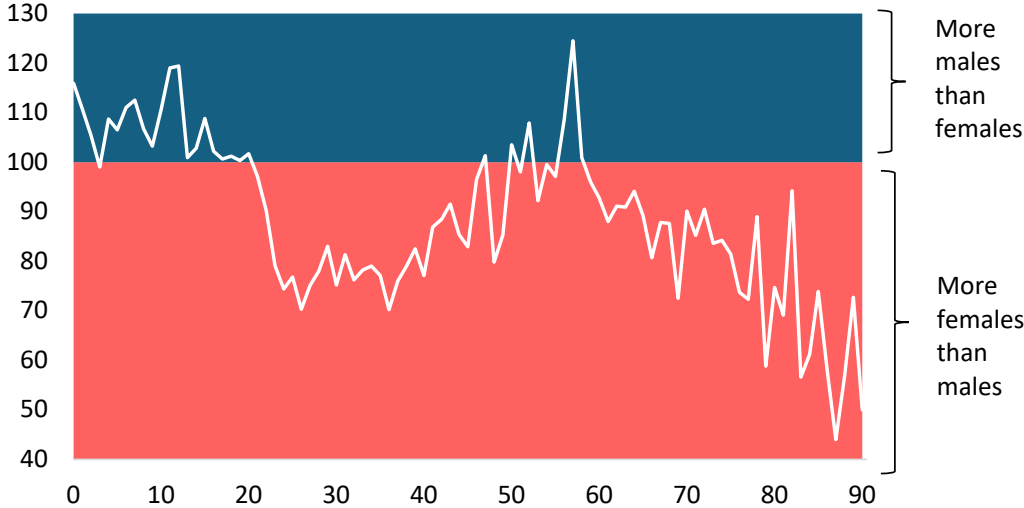


Figure 2. Sex ratio of total Tongan population by age in single years

The 2021 Census data shows the typical sex ratio at birth seen globally, with more males than females aged less than one year. Nevertheless, the sex ratio in Tonga is greater than the biological norm (between 102 and 106) with 116 baby boys for every 100 baby girls aged less than 1 year. At the Division level there was considerable variation, and the sex ratio for Ongo Niua is not reliable because of the small number of babies on Census night (**Figure 3**).

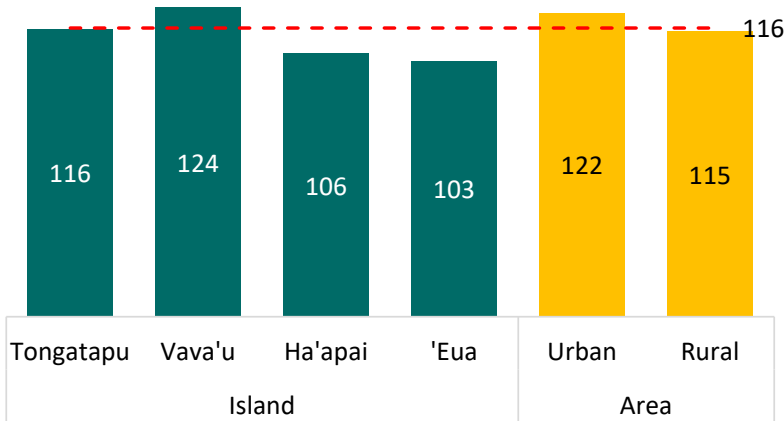


Figure 3. Sex ratio of population aged less than 1 year, by Island Divisions and areas

Note: Ongo Niua is excluded from this graph, due to the small number of births.

Tonga has a 'young' population – 35% or about one-in-three people is aged under 15 years, and the age-sex pyramids show that the fertility rate (the number of children born per woman) has been decreasing since 2011. The narrowing of the population pyramids in the youth and economically active age group shows the effects of both internal and overseas migration for education and/or employment (**Figure 4**).

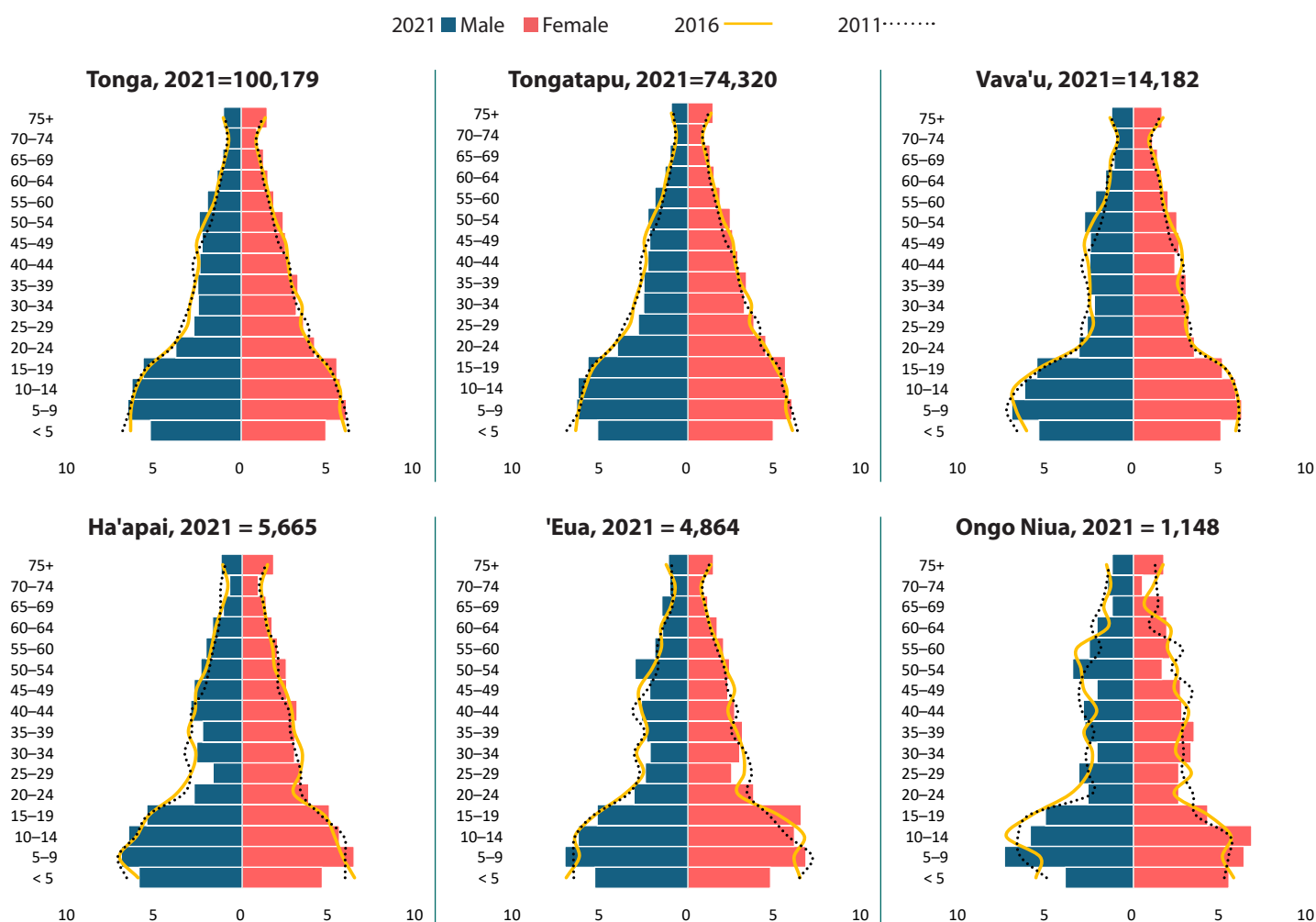


Figure 4. Tonga Population Pyramids by Island division, 2011, 2016 and 2021 (Total Population)

The decrease in fertility and the aging of the population is evident in the steady decrease in the dependency ratio, from 84% in 2011 to 80% in 2021. The youth dependency ratio (0–14 year age group) decreased substantially (from 68% to 62%) while the aged dependency ratio increased slightly (from 15% to 17%). The economically active group increased slightly in 2021.

Table 2. Tonga broad age groups and dependency ratio

Age group	2011		2016		2021	
	Pop.	% total	Pop.	% total	Pop.	% total
0–14	38,457	37%	36,534	36%	34,873	35%
15–59	56,163	54%	55,305	55%	55,806	56%
60+	8,617	8%	8,771	9%	9,500	9%
Dependency ratio	84		82		80	

Note: In 2011, 15 individuals did not state their age, and 41 in 2016. The dependency ratio is calculated using 15–59 years and not the international definition of 15–64 years.

1.2. HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES

The composition of households and families informs gender analysis to some extent, with limitations because Census data is based on the person identified as the 'head of the household' or the adult who completed the household interview and does not collect detailed information about household decision making or other dimensions of gender equality within households and families.

Overall, nearly 8% of households are headed by a single parent, with 84% of these being mothers, i.e. mothers living alone with their children – and these numbers are on the rise. However, their living arrangements are diverse: many do not live alone with their children but live in extended family households, meaning that they are not counted – and mostly invisible to policy makers (Leave no single mother Behind: solutions from across the world, 2023). This is typical in the Pacific region, where young mothers and their children continue living in their family home.

Worldwide, widowhood is more common among women than among men, because generally women live longer lives than men, tend to marry men who are older than themselves, and are less likely than men to remarry when their spouse dies. Another factor affecting the proportion of women as household heads is that divorces, separations and dissolution of consensual unions are increasing and more women than men are separated or divorced. Census data shows an increase of the number of people aged 15+ years separated or divorced, with the number of women divorced increasing by 29% from 407 in 2016 to 523 in 2021; compared with an increase of 27% for men, although the overall number of men divorced is lower (262 in 2016 and 333 in 2021): 61% or about six-in-every-10 people who are divorced are women. This is supported by the marital status of the head of the household, that shows 52% more women household heads are divorced compared to men and that women comprise 57% of household heads who are separated or divorced.

A lot of Tongans (8,164) live in extended family living arrangements (see box 1), with a third headed by a woman. There are 8,203 nuclear family households, that is a couple living with or without children or a sole parent living with their children, and of these 18% were headed by women (**Figure 5**). Composite family households are less common, but of the 1,130 such households, 23% are headed by women.

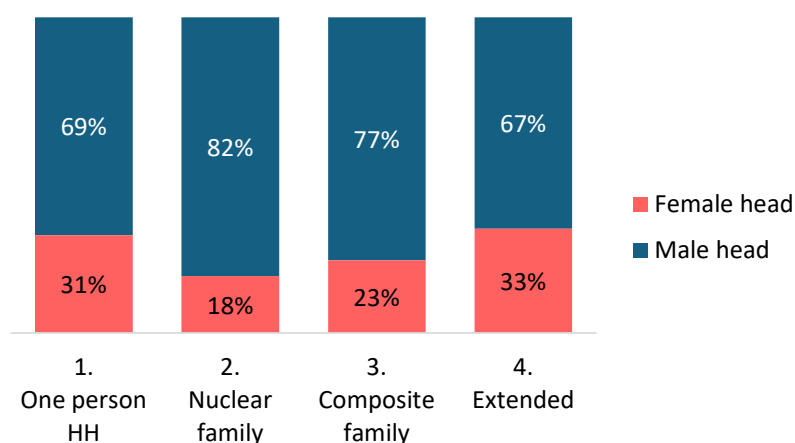


Figure 5. Household family structure and sex of the household head, % of private occupied households

Overall, the proportion of households headed by women is 26%, or 4,851 households. The distribution of wealth index (see box 2) by sex of household head shows a slightly higher than average share of female household heads in the second quintile, and a lower share in the highest quintile, suggesting that households headed by women are in general slightly less wealthy than households headed by men (**Figure 6**).

The wealth index is derived from numerous variables including quality of housing, access to utilities, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), items owned by the household (assets), ICT and access to resources including land, sea and income from labour. Gender analysis of the wealth index is problematic as the Wealth Index assumption is that all household members benefit equally from the household’s wealth and are ‘equally wealthy’, which is not necessarily true.

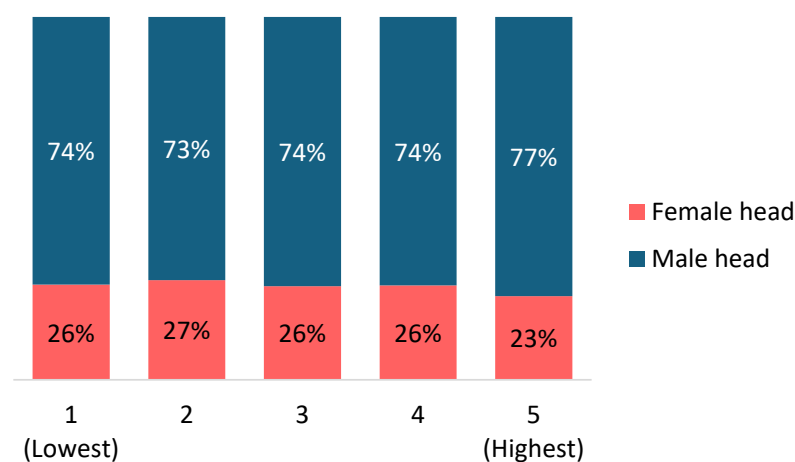


Figure 6. Household wealth index and sex of the household head, % of private occupied households

Statistics on the age group of people in households is often used to understand the ‘care burden’ of household members, particularly the household head and households with young children (less than 5 years) or the elderly (in Tonga this includes people aged 60+ years, as the retirement age). Overall, 39% of households with at least two members in Tonga have a child member aged 0–4 years, consistent with the ‘young’ population structure. Composite and extended family had a significant number of children aged 0–4 years (**Figure 7**).

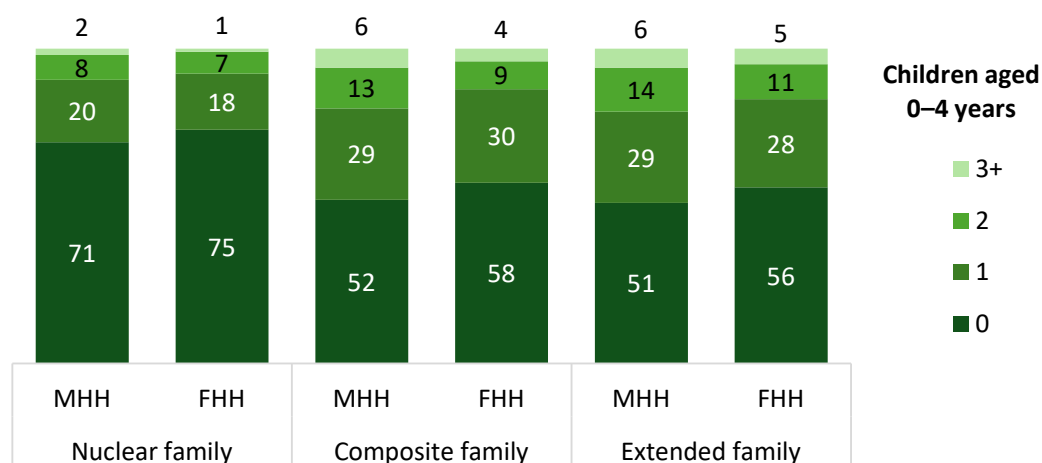


Figure 7. Proportion of households with or without children aged 0–4 years by family structure and sex of the household head (%)

Overall, a higher proportion of people aged 60+ years is observed in female-headed households (47%) compared with male-headed ones (35%) (**Figure 8**).

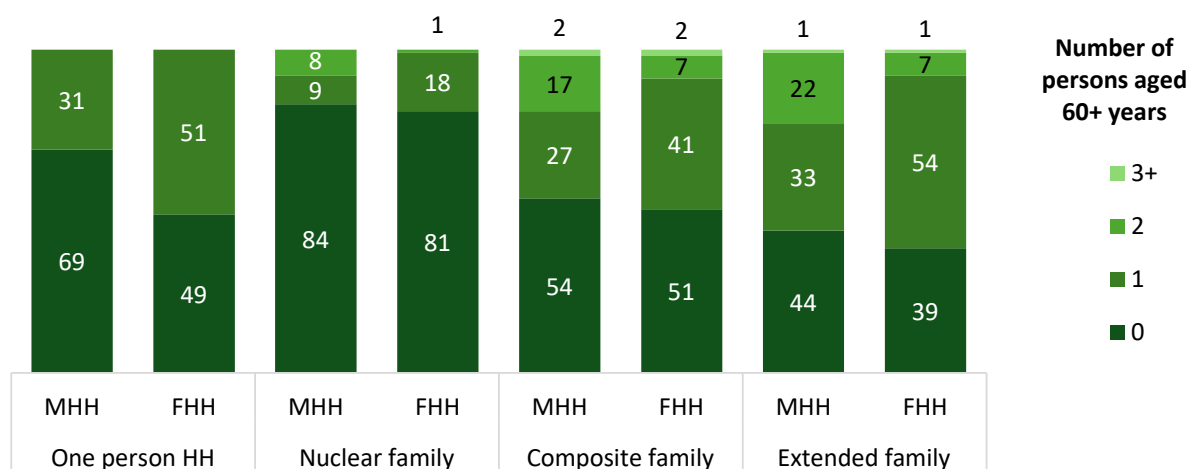


Figure 8. Proportion of households with or without persons aged 60+ years, by family structure and sex of the household head (%)

Box 1. Definitions and concepts for Family Structure

One-person household consists of the male or female head of household only.

Nuclear Family household is defined as a household consisting entirely of a single family nucleus. It may be classified into: (i) Married-couple family with or without child(ren), (ii) Partner in consensual union (cohabiting partner) with or without child(ren), (iii) Father with child(ren), or (iv) Mother with child(ren);

Extended Family household, defined as consisting of any one of the following: (i) A single nuclear family and other persons related to the nucleus, for example, a father with child(ren) and other relative(s) or a married couple with other relative(s) only; (ii) Two or more nuclear families related to each other without any other persons, for example, two or more married couples with (or without) child(ren) only; (iii) Two or more nuclear families related to each other plus other persons related to at least one of the nuclei, for example, two or more married couples with other relative(s) only; (iv) Two or more persons related to each other, none of whom constitute a family nucleus;

Composite Family household defined as a household consisting of any of the following: (i) A single nuclear family plus other persons, some of whom are related to the nucleus and some of whom are not, for example, mother with child(ren) and other relatives and non-relatives; (ii) A single nuclear family plus other persons, none of whom is related to the nucleus, for example, father with child(ren) and non-relatives; (iii) Two or more nuclear families related to each other plus other persons, some of whom are related to at least one of the nuclei and some of whom are not related to any of the nuclei, for example, two or more couples with other relatives and non-relatives only; (iv) Two or more nuclear families related to each other plus other persons, none of whom is related to any of the nuclei, for example, two or more couples one or more of which with child(ren) and non-relatives; (v) Two or more nuclear families not related to each other, with or without any other persons; (vi) Two or more persons related to each other but none of whom constitute a nuclear family, plus other

unrelated persons; (vii) Non-related persons only.

Source: *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3; 3. Household and family characteristics* (paras. 4.146.); https://unstats.un.org/unsd/publication/seriesM/Series_M67Rev3en.pdf accessed 09/02/2023.

Box 2. Wealth Index Concepts

The **wealth index** is a composite measure of a **household's cumulative living standard**. The wealth index is calculated using easy-to-collect data on a household's ownership of selected assets, such as televisions and vehicles; materials used for housing construction; and types of water access and sanitation facilities, as well as whether any household member works their own or their families agricultural land and the tenure of the dwelling.

Generated with a statistical procedure known as principal components analysis, **the wealth index places individual households on a continuous scale of relative wealth**. All interviewed households are separated into five wealth quintiles to compare the influence of wealth on various indicators. The wealth index is derived in household surveys like the MICS, DHS and Census survey datasets as a background characteristic and is used in this section as an analytical variable for household and dwelling characteristics and sex of the household head.

Source: *DHS Program Wealth Index*, <https://dhsprogram.com/topics/wealth-index/> and https://dhsprogram.com/programming/wealth%20index/Steps_to_constructing_the_new_DHS_Wealth_Index.pdf accessed 10/02/2023.

1.3. SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Social characteristics collected in the Census include ethnicity, citizenship, religion and marital status. Women and girls from ethnic minorities, non-citizens, those belonging to minority religions or widows or never married may be more vulnerable to economic shocks, have access to fewer resources and assets or be excluded from social, economic and or political life in other ways (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017).

Almost all the population, 99%, identified their ethnicity as Tongan or Tongan and other(s) ethnicity.² The next most significant single ethnicity was Chinese (528 people), 61% of whom were males. Females comprised most of the smaller numbers of people identifying as Pacific Island ethnicity, notably Fijian, Samoan and other Pacific Island ethnicity (**Table 3**).

Citizenship status (citizen, foreigner/non-citizen) is often used with ethnicity to analyse aspects of migration from place of birth or original citizenship and economic activity. Almost all the population, 98%, were citizens of Tonga by birth, naturalisation or dual citizens with another country. Females comprised 54% of the 704 citizens by naturalisation. Most females with other citizenship were of Tongan ethnicity, while most males were of Chinese ethnicity (**Table 4** and **Table 5**).

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² Note that in this analysis, the reference population corresponds to people living in Tonga for at least 6 months of the year and in a private occupied dwelling.

Table 3. Number and percentage of usual residents, by ethnicity (broad combined groups) and sex

Ethnicity	Sex		Total	%
	Males	Females		
Tongan only	45,883	48,771	94,654	96.8
Tongan & other(s)	826	857	1,683	1.7
Chinese only	320	208	528	0.5
Fijian only	137	181	318	0.3
European only	141	120	261	0.3
Mixed ethnicity (non-Tongan)	84	74	158	0.2
Indian only	40	32	72	< 0.1
Other Pacific Islander only	23	36	59	< 0.1
Samoan only	NA	NA	54	< 0.1
Other only	NA	NA	9	< 0.1
Total	47,479	50,317	97,796	100

Table 4. Number of usual residents, by citizenship and sex

Citizenship	Sex		Total
	Males	Females	
Tonga born citizen	45,697	48,574	94,271
Dual citizenship (Tonga and other country)	696	640	1,336
Tonga by naturalised citizen	327	377	704
Other countries citizenship	759	726	1,485
Total	47,479	50,317	97,796

Table 5. Number of usual residents, by ethnicity, citizenship and sex

Ethnicity	Citizenship and sex								Total
	Tonga born citizen		Dual citizenship (Tonga and other country)		Tonga naturalised citizen		Other country citizenship		
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	
Tongan only	45,119	47,951	370	354	264	322	130	144	94,654
Tongan & other(s)	550	589	202	191	21	19	53	58	1,683
Chinese only	NA	NA	46	29	17	10	249	165	528
Fijian only	NA	NA	19	17	8	9	107	149	318
European only	NA	9	34	25	9	NA	93	82	261
Mixed ethnicity (non-Tongan)	9	NA	9	7		NA	66	59	158
Indian only		NA	7	NA	6	5	27	NA	72
Other Pacific Islander only	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	19	27	59
Samoan only	NA	NA	5	9	NA	NA	NA	21	54
Other only			NA			NA	NA	NA	9
Total	45,697	48,574	696	640	327	377	759	726	97,796

In Tonga, freedom of worship to the 'law and peace of the land' is enshrined in the Constitution (Part I, Section 5). Tonga is almost entirely a Christian society, and just over one-third or 34% of males' and females' religious affiliation or church congregation is the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, followed by Latter Day Saints, Roman Catholic and Free Church of Tonga with no significant sex differences (**Table 6**). There are differences in the dominant religions across island divisions, however; for example, the Roman Catholic religion is the main affiliation in Ongo Niua. More males than females reported having no religious affiliation or refused to answer the question.

Table 6. Religious affiliation or church congregation of usual residents, by sex

Religion	Males	Females	Total
Free Wesleyan Church	16,231	17,167	33,398
Latter Day Saints	9,335	9,900	19,235
Roman Catholic	6,474	7,007	13,481
Free Church of Tonga	5,398	5,652	11,050
Church of Tonga	3,170	3,453	6,623
Seventh Day Adventist	1,168	1,255	2,423
Assembly of God	1,141	1,275	2,416
Other Pentecostal	865	998	1,863
Tokaikolo/Maama fo'ou	673	754	1,427
Constitution Church of Tonga	561	567	1,128
Bahai Faith	386	336	722
Mo'ui Fo'ou ia Kalaisi	319	364	683
Anglican Church	295	282	577
Gospel Church	224	250	474
Jehovah's Witness	194	202	396
The Salvation Army	160	170	330
Hinduism	43	35	78
Islam	30	30	60
Buddhist	32	24	56
Other	365	333	698
No religious affiliation	352	208	560
Refuse to answer	63	55	118

In Tonga, to obtain a marriage licence, parties must be 18+ years, or 15–17 years with the consent of their parents; and marriage licences incur a fee and require original birth certificates (Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2016). Marital status data is used to explore the extent to which young age at marriage or union is associated with early age childbearing and rearing, affecting young women's life choices for education, training, and employment. At older ages, because women typically live longer than men, "older ages are associated with changes in marital status, living arrangements, wealth and health status that may affect women and men in different ways" with older women more likely than older men to be widowed or divorced, live in one person households and have less access to income from formal social protection systems including retirement earnings (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017).

In Tonga, almost three times more females aged 15+ years than males are widowed, and females comprise 60% of the 1,506 people who are separated or divorced. Almost the same proportion of females and males reported being legally married (53% and 54%).

Table 7. Marital status of usual residents aged 15+ years, by sex

Marital status	Sex		Total
	Males	Females	
Never married	11,684	11,800	23,484
Legally Married	16,031	17,956	33,987
De facto or marital union	314	347	661
Separated	286	397	683
Divorced	317	506	823
Widowed	969	2,849	3,818
Total	29,601	33,855	63,456



Figure 9. Percentage of usual residents aged 15+ years, by marital status, age group and sex

Figure 9 shows that, in the age group 20–24, more females (26%) than males (17%) reported being legally married or in a de facto relationship. An interesting observation is that more males than females aged over the 50–54 age group reported they are legally married or in a de facto relationship.

Marital status is commonly analysed in conjunction with women’s reproduction: childbearing and rearing (see also section 5.5 Childbearing). Just over half, 53%, of 33,855 women aged

15+ years had ever given birth, with 94% married (legally or de facto) or formerly married (separated, divorced or widowed); 80% of these females ever having given birth were currently legally married. A higher proportion of all never married females have given birth by the time they reach 25 years of age (26%) compared to 5% of all women in a union (legally married or de facto) (**Table 8**).

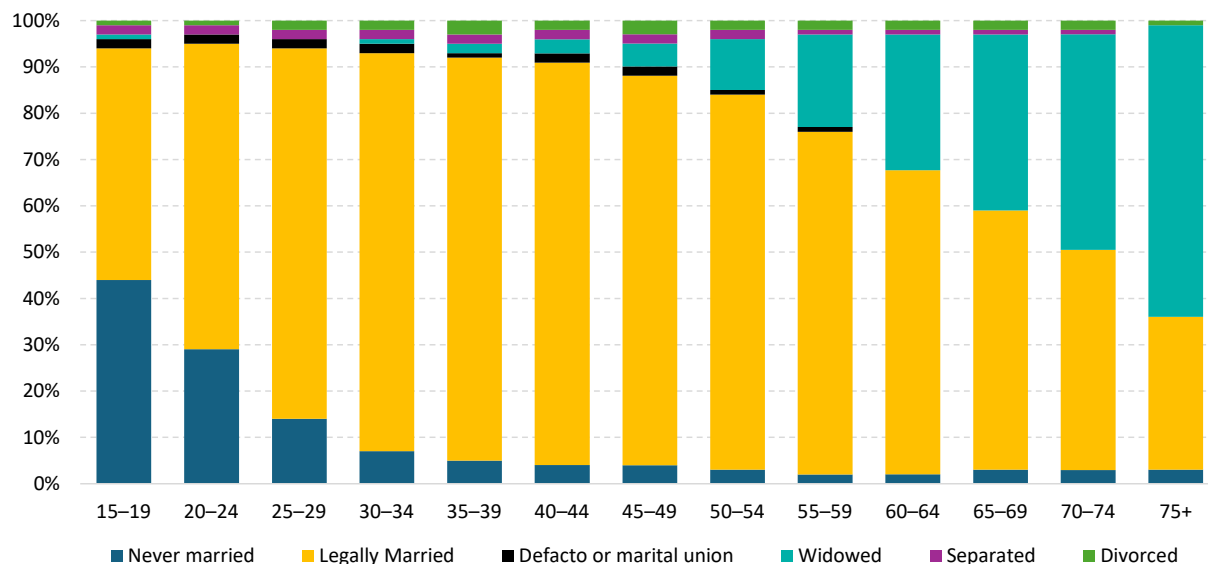


Figure 10. Proportion of usually resident women who have ever given birth, aged 15+ years, by marital status

Table 8. Marital status of usually resident women who have ever given birth, aged 15+ years, by age group

Age group	Marital status and ever given birth						Total
	Never married	Legally Married	Defacto or marital union	Separated	Divorced	Widowed	
15-19	60	69	NA	NA	NA	NA	129
20-24	239	549	20	17	NA	NA	825
25-29	225	1,312	30	34	34	5	1,640
30-34	137	1,655	39	36	35	13	1,915
35-39	113	1,962	31	49	62	45	2,262
40-44	90	1,756	33	48	48	63	2,038
45-49	70	1,554	29	36	59	90	1,838
50-54	56	1,462	16	33	44	197	1,808
55-59	35	1,038	8	15	27	283	1,406
60-64	28	763	NA	NA	20	344	1,155
65-69	27	561	NA	NA	15	382	985
70-74	20	345	NA	NA	13	334	712
75+	33	412	NA	NA	7	779	1,231
Total	1,133	13,438	220	305	375	2,537	18,008

Most male household heads, 87%, are legally married, while female-heads are most likely to be widows or legally married, noting that 26% of households had a female head (**Table 9**).

Table 9. Marital status of the household head, by sex

Marital status	Sex of household head					
	Males		Females		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Never married	629	4%	577	12%	1,206	6%
Legally Married	12,167	87%	1,888	39%	14,055	75%
Defacto or marital union	156	1%	51	1%	207	1%
Separated	126	1%	136	3%	262	1%
Divorced	143	1%	218	4%	361	2%
Widowed	775	6%	1,981	41%	2,756	15%
Total	13,996	100%	4,851	100%	18,847	100%

In terms of family structure (see box 1), most divorced or separated female household heads live in extended family households or with their child(ren) in nuclear family households (**Figure 11**). A third of head of households of 'extended family' are females, and the majority are widowed (**Table 10**). Households where the head is separated or divorced have a generally lower wealth index (see box 2): 39% of these male household heads are in the first quintile and 28% of female household heads (**Figure 12**).

Table 10. Marital status of the household head, by family structure and sex

Marital Status	One person HH			Nuclear family			Composite family			Extended family		
	Male	Female	Share of female	Male	Female	Share of female	Male	Female	Share of female	Male	Female	Share of female
Never married	328	122	27%	17	98	85%	72	36	33%	212	321	60%
Legally married	357	111	24%	6,489	819	11%	696	80	10%	4,625	878	16%
Defacto or marital union	6	NA	14%	99	23	19%	21	NA	12%	30	24	44%
Widowed	123	146	54%	115	390	77%	56	120	68%	481	1,325	73%
Separated	40	NA	30%	25	42	63%	12	NA	40%	49	69	58%
Divorced	72	27	27%	11	75	87%	10	16	62%	50	100	67%
Total	926	424	31%	6,756	1,447	18%	867	263	23%	5,447	2,717	33%

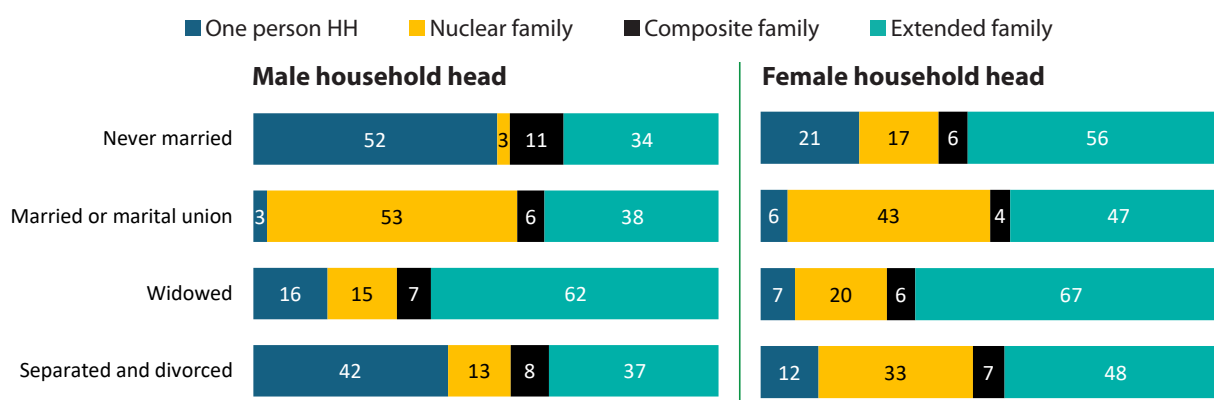


Figure 11. Broad marital status of the household head, by family structure and sex

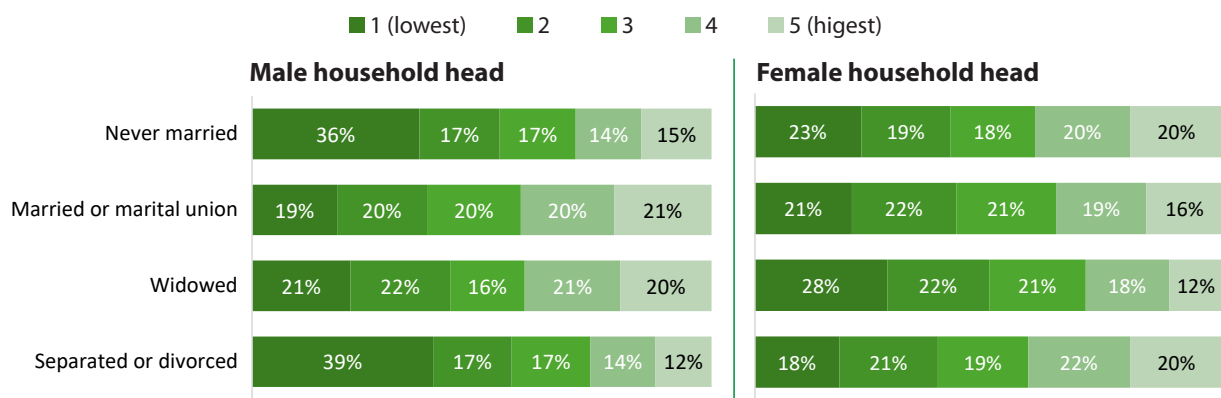


Figure 12. Broad marital status of the household head, by sex and household wealth index



2. Migration

Migration is the movement of people into different households or dwellings either internally, within Tonga, or overseas to and from nations like New Zealand, Australia, and the United States. Migration can lead to population growth as well as loss, both internal (urbanisation, for example) and external. The Census measures migration in terms of where a person was born, as well as where they were living (resided) one year and five years ago. Seasonal workers like those with New Zealand and Australia schemes are considered temporary migrants because their work contracts and visas require them to return to Tonga.

Gender influences reasons for migrating, who migrates and to where, how people migrate and the networks they use, opportunities and resources available at destinations, and relations with the place of origin (Gender equality and women's empowerment). Women and men, boys and girls and people of diverse abilities migrate for different reasons including education, work, health, marriage or marriage dissolution, access to land and housing tenure, family reasons and temporarily or permanently due to climate change and disasters.

Tonga has a relatively significant proportion of the population with dual Tongan and other nationality citizenship or residency: the diaspora. Some in this group maintain housing and property rights in Tonga while residing overseas, and most maintain close family ties and links and visit Tonga when they can, as well as sharing remittances in the form of cash and goods.

Table 11. Residence one year ago of usual residents aged 1+ years, by Island division of residence and sex

Sex and usual residence	Total	Usual residence 1 year ago						Implied change in 1 year
		Tongatapu	Vava'u	Ha'apai	'Eua	Ongo Niua	Overseas	
Male	46,542	34,288	6,559	2,588	2,215	541	351	-
Tongatapu	34,440	33,913	142	103	36	21	225	527
Vava'u	6,654	146	6,388	11	5	9	95	266
Ha'apai	2,620	118	16	2,468	NA	NA	NA	152
'Eua	2,278	76	8	NA	2,170	NA	21	108
Ongo Niua	550	35	5	NA	NA	504	NA	46
Female	49,507	36,889	6,816	2,721	2,337	551	193	-
Tongatapu	36,967	36,470	172	114	45	18	148	497
Vava'u	6,841	159	6,625	nc	7	8	36	216
Ha'apai	2,738	125	10	2,593	NA	NA	NA	145
'Eua	2,399	96	NA	7	2,283	NA	6	116
Ongo Niua	562	39	NA	NA	NA	518	NA	44
Total	96,049	71,177	13,375	5,309	4,552	1,092	544	2,117

There were 96,049 usual residents in Tonga in private households on Census night, defined as the population in private households excluding those who reported usually residing overseas. Migration data shows the concentration of the population in Tongatapu and

the high number of females residing there, as well as internal movements within one year and five years. **Table 11** suggests the impact of seasonal work programmes with the larger number of males returning from overseas than females. Note that this table doesn't show internal migration within Island Divisions, for example within Tongatapu.

In terms of usual residence five years compared to one year ago, the sex differences in residing overseas are not as apparent while the trend is similar for people to return from overseas to Tongatapu division (**Table 12**), again noting that this does not include internal migration within Island Divisions or people who have moved between multiple places in the last five years.

The number of people reporting a different usual residence five years ago was considerably higher than those with a different usual residence one year ago, with contributing factors being border closures and travel restrictions global COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 affecting both internal and external migration.

Table 12. Residence five years ago of usual residents aged 5+ years, by Island Division of residence and sex

Sex and usual residence	Total	Usual residence 5 years ago						Implied change in 5 year
		Tongatapu	Vava'u	Ha'apai	'Eua	Ongo Niua	Overseas	
Male	42,314	30,351	5,897	2,292	1,985	518	1,271	-
Tongatapu	31,347	29,502	373	266	119	77	1,010	1,845
Vava'u	6,046	331	5,478	19	NA	NA	190	568
Ha'apai	2,350	269	23	2,001	21	13	23	349
'Eua	2,057	167	15	NA	1,828	NA	41	229
Ongo Niua	514	82	8	NA	NA	413	7	101
Female	45,505	32,970	6,305	2,488	2,137	528	1,077	-
Tongatapu	33,999	32,107	482	294	131	77	908	1,892
Vava'u	6,256	307	5,781	20	11	19	118	475
Ha'apai	2,539	308	19	2,160	NA	NA	28	379
'Eua	2,206	178	14	NA	1,985	NA	17	221
Ongo Niua	505	70	9	NA	NA	415	6	90
Total	87,819	63,321	12,202	4,780	4,122	1,046	2,348	6,149

More women than men move residence between the ages of 20 and 34 years, probably due to marriage or changes in duty stations for health and education sector workers, and in the population aged over 60 years. In general, men's migration decreases with age, with more men than women migrating in the 50–59-year age group, **Table 13** contains the source data used for **Figure 13**.

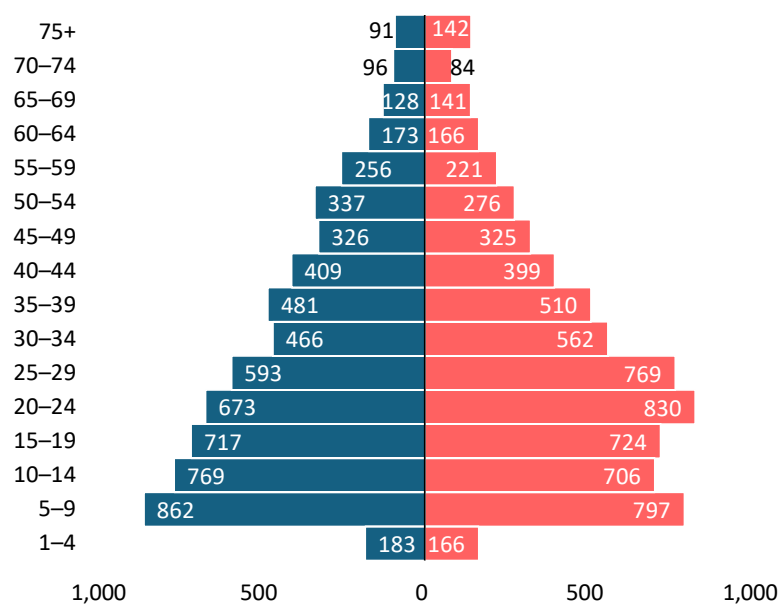


Figure 13. Number of usual residents who have moved residence in the 1 or 5 years before the census, by age group and sex

Table 13. Migration status of usual residents aged 1+ years, by age group and sex

Age group	Migration status and sex (M=Males and F=Females)														
	Never Moved			Moved 1 year ago			Moved 5 years ago			Moved both 1 and 5 years ago			Total moved		
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total
1-4	4,045	3,836	7,881	183	166	349	-	-	-	-	-	-	183	166	349
5-9	5,617	5,204	10,821	17	18	35	635	592	1,227	210	187	397	862	797	1,659
10-14	5,465	4,943	10,408	16	20	36	558	510	1,068	195	176	371	769	706	1,475
15-19	4,826	4,698	9,524	42	37	79	479	488	967	196	199	395	717	724	1,441
20-24	2,890	3,177	6,067	80	67	147	423	550	973	170	213	383	673	830	1,503
25-29	2,054	2,738	4,792	49	39	88	408	554	962	136	176	312	593	769	1,362
30-34	1,919	2,552	4,471	30	25	55	344	411	755	92	126	218	466	562	1,028
35-39	1,943	2,707	4,650	28	24	52	354	369	723	99	117	216	481	510	991
40-44	1,912	2,361	4,273	26	9	35	297	312	609	86	78	164	409	399	808
45-49	1,897	2,173	4,070	13	9	22	240	243	483	73	73	146	326	325	651
50-54	2,037	2,104	4,141	21	13	34	234	187	421	82	76	158	337	276	613
55-59	1,665	1,616	3,281	10	11	21	182	160	342	64	50	114	256	221	477
60-64	1,204	1,343	2,547	8	9	17	121	119	240	44	38	82	173	166	339
65-69	917	1,119	2,036	11	10	21	92	107	199	25	24	49	128	141	269
70-74	663	796	1,459	NA	NA	13	63	57	120	26	21	47	96	84	180
75+	928	1,322	2,250	NA	NA	8	71	104	175	17	33	50	91	142	233
Total	39,982	42,689	82,671	544	468	1,012	4,501	4,763	9,264	1,515	1,587	3,102	6,560	6,818	13,378

The reasons for moving (see box 3) to a different place of usual residence differ by sex and over time. Border closures and travel restrictions due to global COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 affected both internal and external migration, noting that temporary labour mobility scheme visas were extended in host countries (New Zealand, Australia) and by employers (in industries such as maritime).

In terms of reasons for moving in the previous year, males and females reported similar patterns with approximately 91% of each sex moving for voluntary reasons, 4% moving for involuntary reasons and 5% moving for other reasons (**Figure 14**). However, reasons for moving within these categories vary, with males more likely than females to have relocated because of employment and temporary labour mobility schemes (15% and 8% respectively); while females were more likely to move for family reunification. Females were more likely than males to be involuntarily displaced for medical reasons.

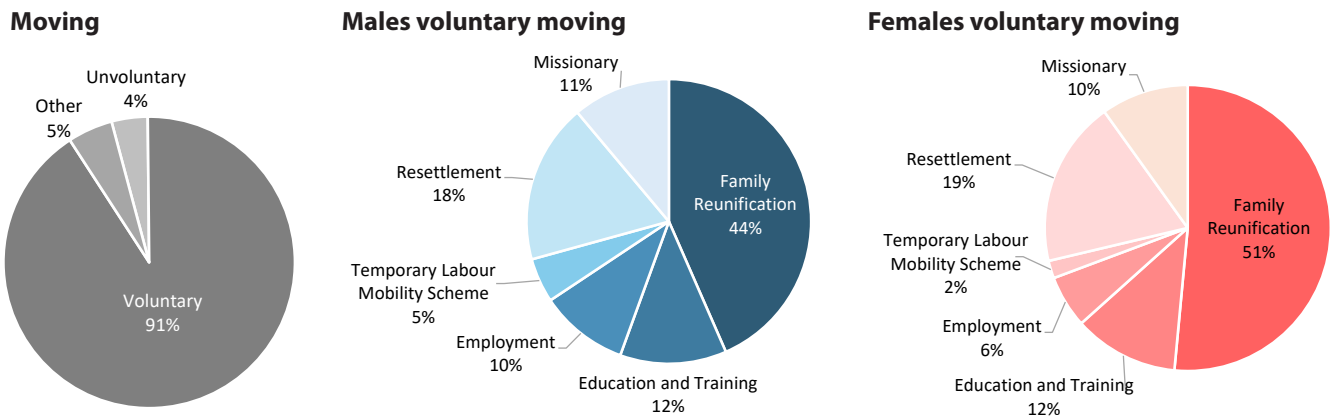


Figure 14. Reason for moving 12 months ago of usual residents, by sex

Figure 15, reasons for moving in the last five years, shows similar results, with 6% or 334 more females reporting reasons for moving to a different household than men, mostly for family reunification. Again, there are gender differences between males and females moving for employment and labour mobility schemes (21% of male moves compared with 18% of female moves): males were one-and-a-half-times more in number than females.

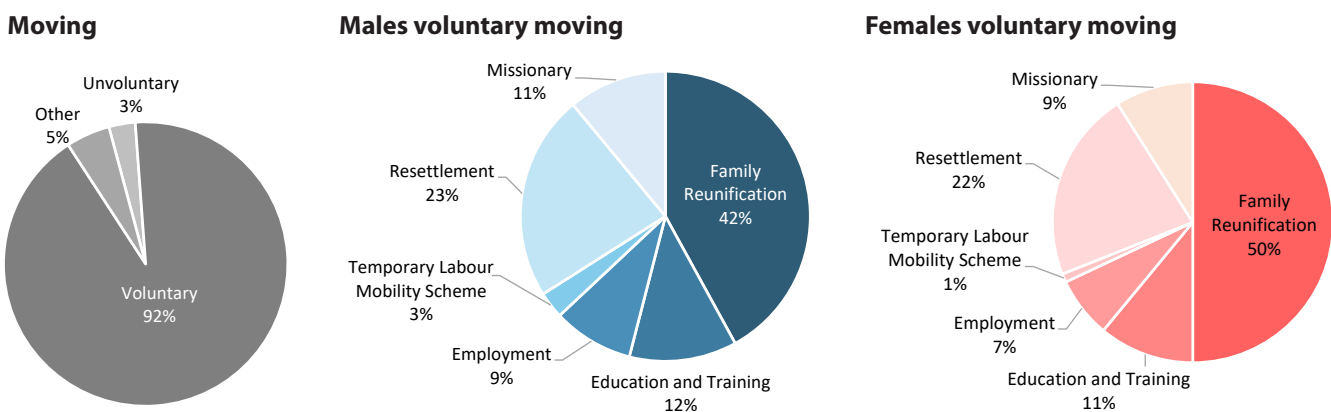


Figure 15. Reason for moving 5 years ago of usual residents, by sex

The Census collected information on the reasons for migration, noting that the coding rule that household or family members (spouse, children, etc.) accompanying a household member for reasons of education and training, employment, medical treatment or missionary service should have been classified as moving for ‘family reunification’ possibly has not been applied consistently. Thus family reunification is under-counted while other categories are possibly over-counted.

At the time of the Census, 812 usual household members were reported as absent from 612 households because they were participating in a temporary labour scheme: 172 females and 640 males (**Figure 16**). Over 78% of females were from Tongatapu, compared with 75% of males.

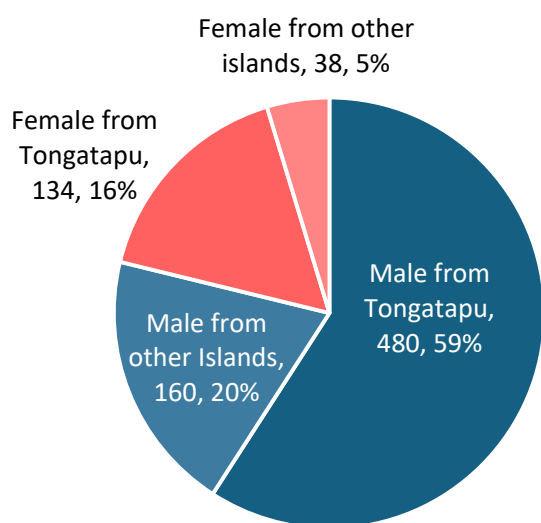


Figure 16. Share of private occupied households reporting usual members absent participating in temporary labour mobility schemes, by sex

Box 3: Reason for migration

The main reason a person moved to his/her usual village/country was classified according to:

Voluntary

Family reunification – When a person moved to reunite with family. This could be outside of Tonga, in another Island Division in Tonga, etc. Includes marriage or family formation.

Education and Training – When a person moved to pursue his/her studies in another country or a different Island Division or for those returning after studying. Students with spouse and children accompanying them while on education and training will be classified as ‘Family reunification’.

Employment – When a person moved due to employment opportunity or returning after employment opportunities. Persons with spouse and children accompanying them on employment will be classified as ‘Family reunification’.

Temporary Labour Mobility Scheme – When a person moved for a job opportunity at seasonal work in Australia or New Zealand.

Resettlement – The person moved to a new location to settle into that village due to buying a new house, renting a new apartment, etc. (long term/permanent stay).

Missionary – Persons moved due to religious work. For example, LDS missionaries, Patele, kau faifekau ngaahi siasi. Spouse and children of church ministers on mission will be classified as ‘Family reunification’.

Involuntary

COVID-19 – Relocated due to COVID-related reasons.

Medical Reasons – The person moved for medical treatment. For example, moved overseas for treatment, moved to a village close to Vaiola (National Referral Hospital) for medical treatments. Persons accompanying persons (family or friends) on medical reasons will be classified as 'Family reunification'.

Forced Displacement – The person was forced to move location due to unforeseen disasters such as cyclone, fire, tsunami, etc. Includes conflicts, refugees, asylum seekers, temporary protection, etc.

Other

Other – Any other type of reason that does not fall in one of the above categories such as a special event, holiday or vacation, etc.

From: Tonga 2021 Census of Population and Housing Fieldwork Training Manual, https://tongastats.gov.to/download/280/documentation/7653/phc2021_training-manual_final.pdf, accessed 27/03/2023.

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3. Education and literacy

3.1. LITERACY

Literacy data highlights that gender issues need to be considered, along with geographic location and age group, to identify the most effective means of communication with people and communities. The Census asked household members aged 5+ years about Tongan, English and other language literacy (reading and writing a simple sentence). A high proportion of males and females aged 5-9 years are not literate in any language, as many would not yet have developed basic literacy skills and so have been excluded from this analysis.

There is no gender difference in literacy, with almost all Tongans aged 10+ years (over 98%) able to read and write, whether in Tongan, English or another language (**Figure 17**). Tonga has two official languages: Tongan and English. People are less literate in English: 92% of males and 93% of females are literate.

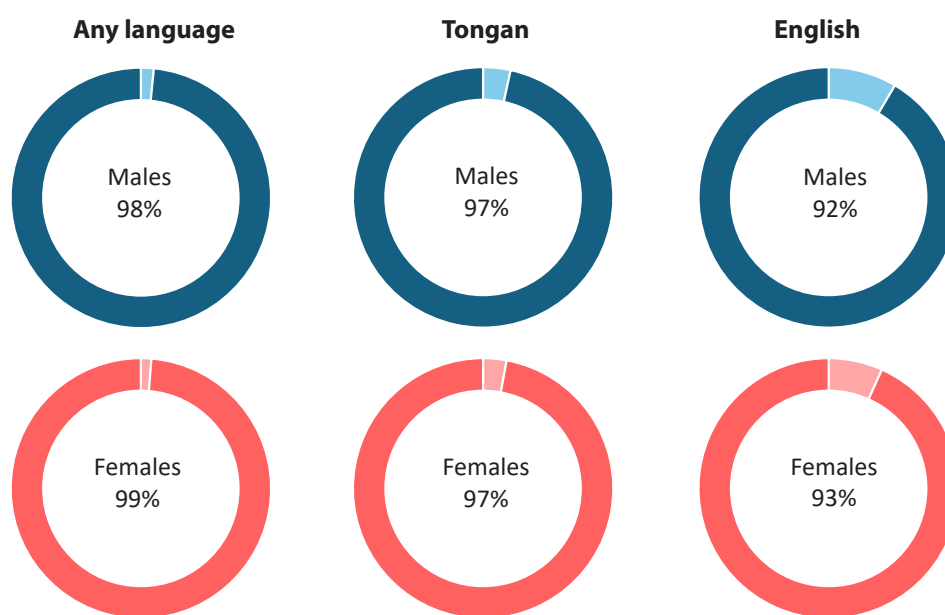


Figure 17. Proportion of usual residents aged 10+ years who are literate, by language and sex

Note: people can be literate in both Tongan and English.

Literacy levels vary by age. People over 60 are less likely to be literate than younger people. There is no gender difference in Tongan literacy rates even among the oldest people: 8% of men and 9% of women aged 70+ years are illiterate in Tongan. Literacy in English decreases with age for both sexes, with greater differences in favour of men. Women aged 70+ years are less literate in English than men, with almost two-in-five (37%) of women illiterate compared to 30% of men.

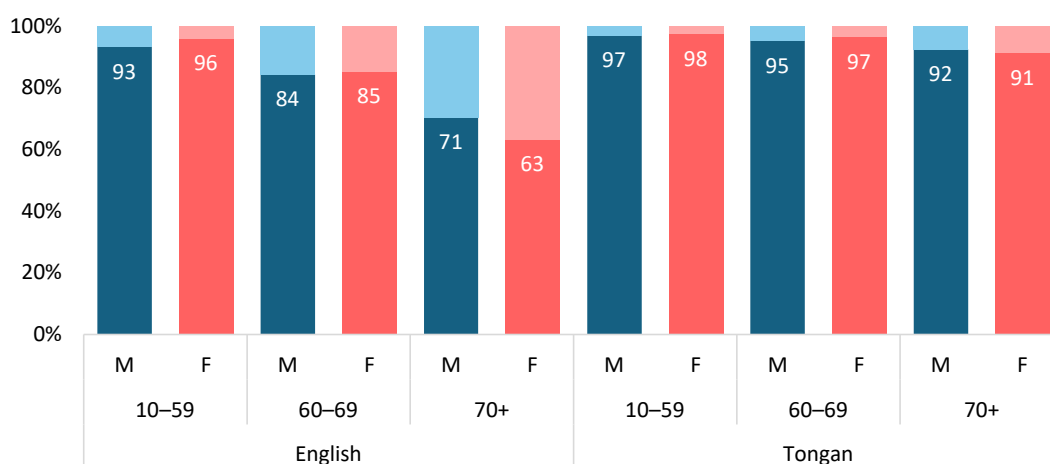


Figure 18. Proportion of usual residents aged 10+ years who are literate in English or Tongan, by sex and age group

This gender difference in English literacy is even greater depending on where one lives (urban or rural). Overall, people aged 70+ years living in rural areas are less literate in English, and even more if they are women. Two-in-five women aged 70+ years living in rural areas are illiterate, compared with 24% of women living in urban areas. Men in this age group are more likely to be literate in English: 68% of men aged 70+ years living in rural areas and 80% of those living in urban areas are literate (**Figure 19**).

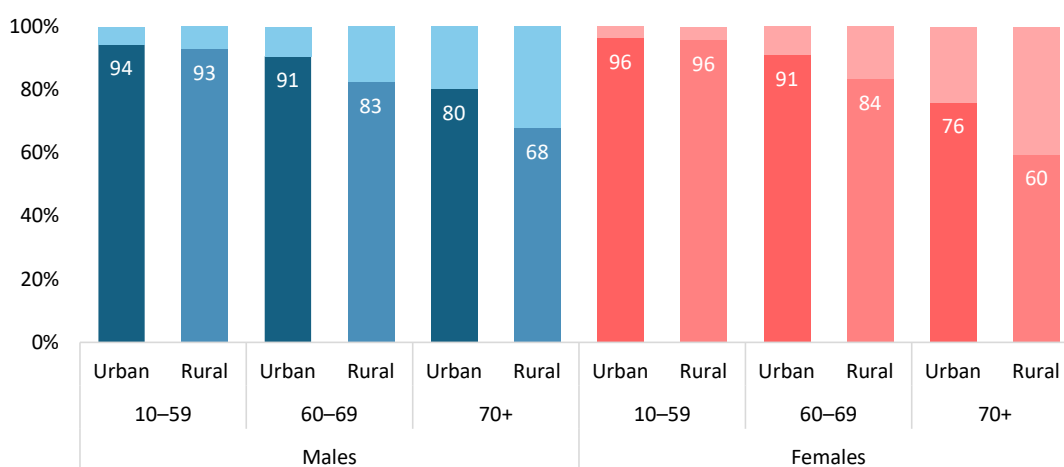


Figure 19. Proportion of usual residents aged 10+ years who are literate in English, by sex, age group and area

3.2. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

In Tonga, girls and boys have equal access to basic education, and enrolment and literacy rates are high. Recently introduced targeted social protection systems provide financial support for disadvantaged students to access education. The global data shows that, once enrolled, girls tend to progress as well as or even better than boys and that boys repeat more than girls in primary education, usually dropping out at much higher rates than girls. At older ages, the before- or after-school or household work burden for both boys and girls increases, and older girls are often asked to care for their younger brothers and sisters or to take over some household responsibilities, while boys may have to work in the plantation or take

wage work. Many children combine working, including work such as 'street vendors', with attending school; however, irregular attendance generally results in lower achievements for both girls and boys (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017).

Every child in Tonga has a right to quality, inclusive universal basic education, which is compulsory for all children between 4 and 18 years old (Education Act, Act No. 25 of 2013). Universal basic education is provided through early childhood education (for children aged 4–5 or optional for under 4 years), primary education (Year 1 to 6) and secondary education (Year 7 to 13). The 2021 Census collected information about school attendance, education and training from people in private households aged 3+ years.

On Census night, there were 37,566 people aged between 3 and 18 years usually resident in private households in Tonga, and 35,509 aged between 4 and 18 years: 18,392 males (52%) and 17,117 females (48%). The analysis in **Table 14** of compulsory education uses the age group 4–18 years and excludes 3 males aged over 15 who did not specify if they had ever attended school.

Table 14. Summary of school attendance of usual residents aged 4–18 years, by age and sex (%)

Age	Males			Females		
	Never attended	Attended, but not currently	Currently attending	Never attended	Attended, but not currently	Currently attending
4	48	3	49	47	3	50
5	20	2	78	17	2	81
6	3	1	95	4	0	95
7	2	1	97	2	1	97
8	2	1	97	2	1	97
9	2	1	97	2	0	97
10	2	1	97	0	1	99
11	2	1	97	2	1	98
12	2	2	96	1	1	98
13	3	2	95	2	1	97
14	2	4	94	2	2	97
15	2	9	89	2	3	94
16	3	16	81	3	6	91
17	2	26	72	2	12	86
18	2	37	61	2	25	74
Total	6	7	87	6	4	90

A higher number of males (1,151) than females (986) have never attended school. Most children (more than two-thirds) who have never attended school are in the age group 4–5 years, hence in Early Childhood Education (ECE). The significant gender difference is among those who have attended but are currently not attending: approximately two-thirds or 65% of those who had attended school, but not currently attending school were males (1,221 compared with 646 females). These students represent 7% of males aged 4–18 years and 4% of females, and most are between 15 and 18, the secondary school level. They have dropped out for several reasons including meeting, or not meeting, their academic ambitions

or requirements. Females comprise 54% of currently attending students aged 16–18 years (2,769 currently attending compared with 2,379 males).

Of those who had attended but were not currently attending school, 664 (378 males and 286 females) had attended upper secondary level of education or higher, while 1,203 attended levels below this (843 males and 360 females), potentially limiting their options for meeting qualifications for employment in the labour market (**Table 15**).

Table 15. Highest level attended of usual residents aged 4–18 years currently not attending school but had attended, by Island Division/region and sex

Highest level attended	Division/region and sex (M=Males and F=Females)												Total
	Greater Nuku'alofa		Rest of Tongatapu		Vava'u		Ha'apai		'Eua		Ongo Niuva		
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Pre-school	27	16	24	21	10	NA	5	NA	14	10	NA	NA	139
Primary	45	19	62	33	12	9	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA		197
Lower secondary	135	53	320	115	106	33	36	14	31	18	6		867
Upper secondary	96	79	133	120	38	29	18	6	NA	17	NA	NA	543
Technical and vocational	22	10	43	10	12	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA			103
Tertiary/ University	NA	NA	5	7				NA	NA				18
Total	326	180	587	306	178	78	63	26	55	53	NA	NA	1,867

The largest numbers of males and females left school because they had no interest or were dismissed from school, 60% of males and 42% of females. Only a small number of students left school for access reasons (which includes schools being too far away, there were no places in nearby schools, lack of safety and transport). More males than females were not attending school due to disability, as well as due to their parents' belief that they were not ready for school (too young). Other reasons include school, course or training completion/ graduation or preparing to migrate. Females were more likely than males to have left school because of marriage, with a small number having left due to pregnancy (summarised in **Figure 20**).

Reason left school	Males	Females	Total
Access	16	1	27
Too young (parents view)	66	1	41
Drop out/dismissed	735	136	271
Family problems/obligations	154	42	96
Financial reasons	81	8	49
Married	6	13	19
Medical/disability	75	13	58
Other	74	11	65
Pregnant	0	14	14
Working	14	0	6
Total	1,221	445	646

Figure 20. Reason to left school of usual residents aged 4–18 years currently not attending school but had attended, by sex

The majority of students attending school are within the appropriate age range by level, with females slightly more likely than males to be 'over age' for the school level, implying that females are more likely to have commenced schooling at older ages or stay at school longer than males.

The Tonga qualifications framework includes levels of education and training beyond secondary school with enrolment based on qualifications. At the time of the Census, 1,634 males and 1,589 females were attending post-secondary levels of education, with no significant sex differences. **Table 16** details current school/education level attendance by age and sex.

Table 16. School level attending of usual residents aged 4–24 years currently attending school, by age and sex

Underage Appropriate grade for age Over-age

School Level	Age																								Total																							
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24																											
Males																																																
Pre-school	549	384	33																						966																							
Class 1		527	782	88																						1,397																						
Class 2		33	456	735	86																						1,310																					
Class 3			36	434	727	78																						1,275																				
Class 4				55	394	692	98																						1,239																			
Class 5					36	398	674	136	13																						1,257																	
Class 6						51	400	800	100	15	6																						1,372															
Form 1							39	435	715	215	44	11																						1,459														
Form 2								5	29	326	564	221	36	10																						1,191												
Form 3										35	272	536	271	58	2																						1,174											
Form 4											33	255	541	285	8	3																						1,125										
Form 5												3	15	206	419	332	111	20																						1,106								
Form 6														15	111	198	142	38	11																						515							
Form 7															14	60	123	50	21																						268							
Year 1																13	148	169	187	104	76	37	25	19																						778		
Year 2																	1	39	77	114	96	76	39	32	21																						495	
Year 3+																		14	42	40	56	78	63	35	33																						361	
Total	549	944	1,307	1,312	1,243	1,219	1,216	1,400	1,189	1,102	1,077	1,080	911	801	667	449	288	230	139	92	73																						17,288					
Females																																																
Pre-school	522	410	27																						959																							
Class 1		495	680	61																						1,236																						
Class 2		28	419	660	69																						1,176																					
Class 3			44	405	639	68																						1,156																				
Class 4				37	430	684	63																						1,214																			
Class 5					29	395	653	62	5																						1,144																	
Class 6						46	381	673	61	6	4																						1,171															
Form 1							22	415	607	149	29	8																						1,230														
Form 2								3	25	305	583	163	33	7																						1,119												
Form 3										34	336	589	193	34	2																						1,188											
Form 4											47	274	545	242	5	4	1	1																						1,119								
Form 5												6	21	255	543	383	143	26																						1,377								
Form 6															16	157	375	213	77	17																						855						
Form 7																2	12	133	237	134	56																						574					
Year 1																	1	48	165	167	123	74	57	39	27																						701	
Year 2																		11	37	112	115	97	55	39	31																						497	
Year 3+																			3	14	50	63	76	76	71	38																						391
Total	522	933	1,170	1,163	1,167	1,193	1,122	1,175	1,012	1,127	1,080	1,052	996	960	813	567	374	248	188	149	96																						17,107					

The United Nations education standard is that by age 25 years most people should have completed education, including to tertiary post-graduate degree level. On Census night there were 44,920 people aged 25+ years resident in private households in Tonga, 20,495 males (46%) and 24,425 females (54%). Almost all – 42,496 or 95% – had ever attended school. Two-in-five of those having never attended were aged between 25 and 44 years and a further one-in-five were over 65 years, although more women than men aged 65+ years had never attended (**Table 17**). In proportion, more young men than women have never attended school (**Figure 21**).

Table 17. School attendance of usual residents aged 25+ years, by age group and sex

Age Group	Ever attended school						Total
	No			Yes			
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	
25–29	105	107	212	2,542	3,400	5,942	6,154
30–34	118	134	252	2,267	2,980	5,247	5,499
35–39	131	144	275	2,293	3,073	5,366	5,641
40–44	119	109	228	2,202	2,651	4,853	5,081
45–49	139	140	279	2,084	2,358	4,442	4,721
50–54	130	143	273	2,244	2,237	4,481	4,754
55–59	115	112	227	1,806	1,725	3,531	3,758
60–64	102	96	198	1,275	1,413	2,688	2,886
65–69	67	80	147	978	1,180	2,158	2,305
70–74	60	65	125	699	814	1,513	1,638
75+	80	128	208	939	1,336	2,275	2,483
Total	1,166	1,258	2,424	19,329	23,167	42,496	44,920

Note: 1 person did not state their school attendance.

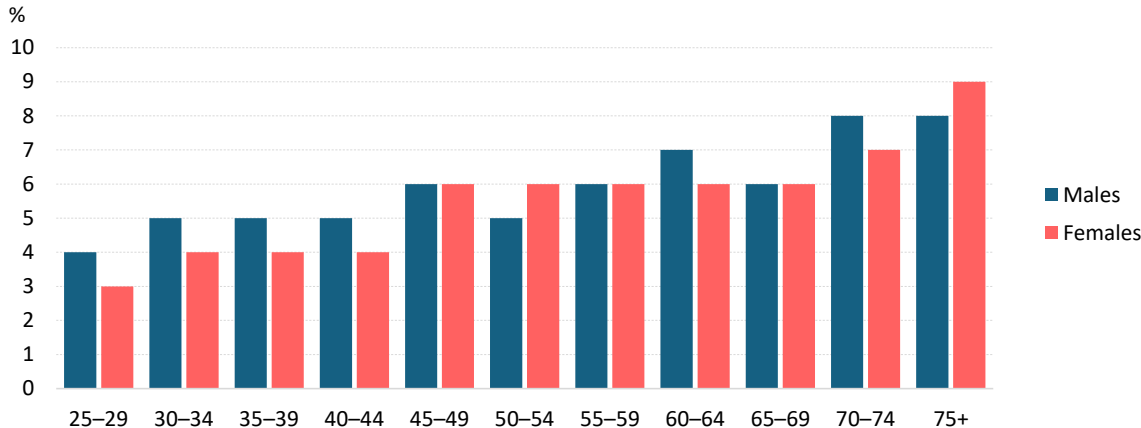


Figure 21. Proportion of usual residents aged 25+ years who have never attended school, by sex and age group (%)

Adult women were more likely than men to have completed upper secondary and tertiary or university as their highest level of education attended, with men more likely than women to have completed lower secondary and technical and vocational levels. There are just over twice as many women than men aged 25–39 years with tertiary or university as the

highest level completed: 2,833 women compared with 1,397 men (**Table 18** and **Figure 22**). It appears that access to technical and vocational training has increased over time, notably for men aged 25–49 years.

Table 18. Highest level of education attended of usual residents aged 25+ years, by sex and age group

Sex and highest level attended	Age group											
	25–29	30–34	35–39	40–44	45–49	50–54	55–59	60–64	65–69	70–74	75+	Total
Males	2,542	2,267	2,293	2,202	2,084	2,244	1,806	1,275	978	699	939	19,329
Pre-school	8	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	25
Primary	47	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	120	124	125	118	246	1,128
Lower secondary	454	453	572	572	565	712	590	405	355	241	326	5,245
Upper secondary	1,154	981	951	974	981	937	703	467	285	207	243	7,883
Technical and Vocational	386	313	258	177	146	147	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	1,664
Tertiary/ University	493	459	445	410	333	350	313	207	168	113	93	3,384
Females	3,400	2,980	3,073	2,651	2,358	2,237	1,725	1,413	1,180	814	1,336	23,167
Pre-school	NA	NA	NA		5	NA		NA	NA	NA	13	34
Primary	NA	NA	NA	45	58	102	125	131	168	204	377	1,331
Lower secondary	345	406	496	543	539	653	556	504	460	301	503	5,306
Upper secondary	1,646	1,429	1,475	1,350	1,245	1,082	758	537	383	222	348	10,475
Technical and vocational	276	250	167	129	109	NA	45	NA	NA	NA	15	1,162
Tertiary/ University	1,092	859	882	584	402	311	241	202	139	67	80	4,859
Total	5,942	5,247	5,366	4,853	4,442	4,481	3,531	2,688	2,158	1,513	2,275	42,496

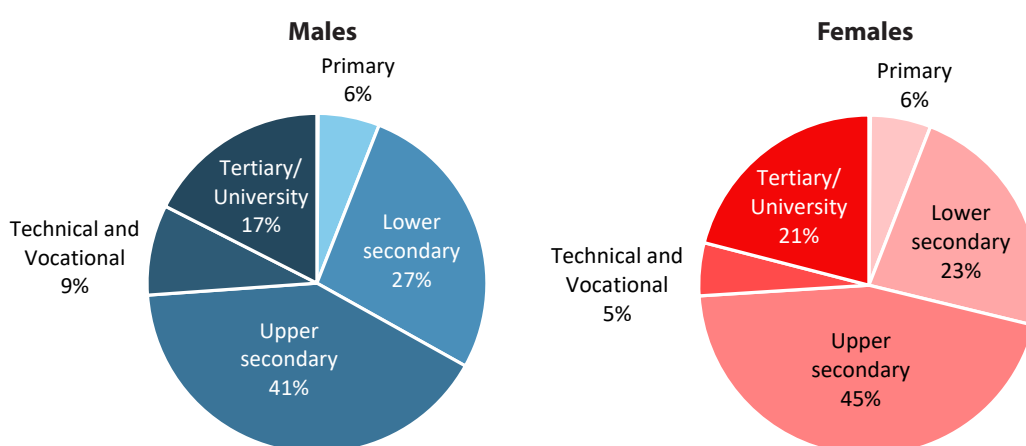


Figure 22. Highest level of education attended of usual residents aged 25+ years, by sex

There were 18,158 persons aged 20–59 working for pay or profit who have ever attended school, 45% were women. Women who work for pay and profit have attended a higher level of education than men, 45% attended a tertiary level of education compared to 24% of men, suggesting women in this employment category have higher qualifications (**Figure 23**). For people having attended tertiary level, one-half had attained a diploma qualification (53% of females and 45% of males), while at the upper end of the qualification scale males tend to have the highest qualifications, 12% have a master’s or doctorate degree compared to 9% of women (**Figure 24**).

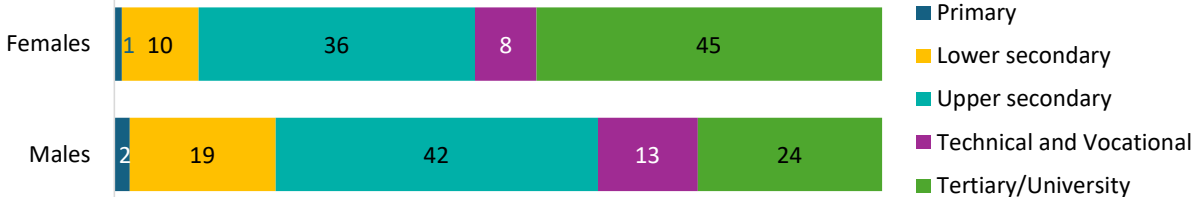


Figure 23. Highest level attended of usual residents aged 20–59 years working for pay or profit, by sex (%)

Note: People with the pre-school as the highest level attended represent less than 1% of males and females.

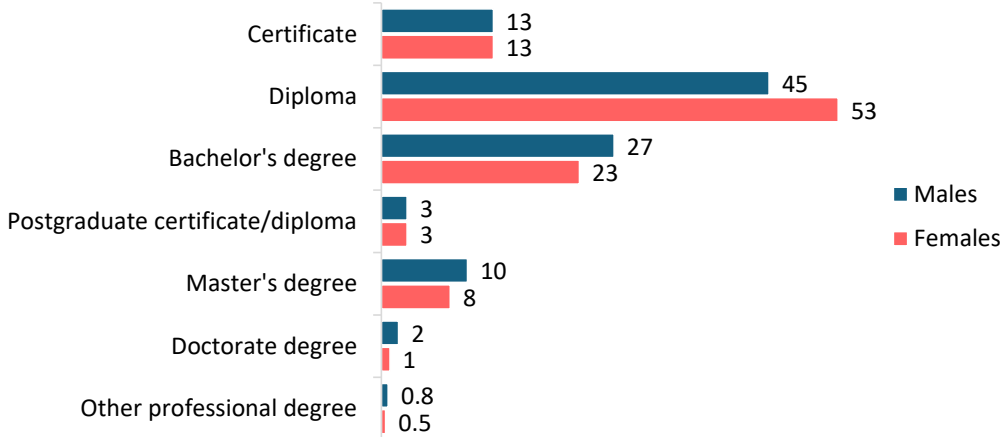


Figure 24. Tertiary level attained of usual residents aged 20–59 years with a tertiary or university qualification working for pay or profit, by sex (%)

To measure the potential contribution of youth (15–24) to national development, it is interesting to look at the NEET rate, i.e. “Not in Education, Employment or Training”. In Tonga, the NEET rate is 24%, with slightly more females in this situation (25%) than males (23%). More than two-thirds of NEET females (69%) were aged 20–24 compared to 56% of males.

Table 19. Education, employment, or training status by age group and sex

Education, employment, or training status	Age group and sex				Total
	15–19		20–24		
	Males	Females	Males	Females	
School, studying or employed	4,619	4,698	2,374	2,408	14,099
NEET	924	724	1,189	1,599	4,436
Total	5,543	5,422	3,563	4,007	18,535

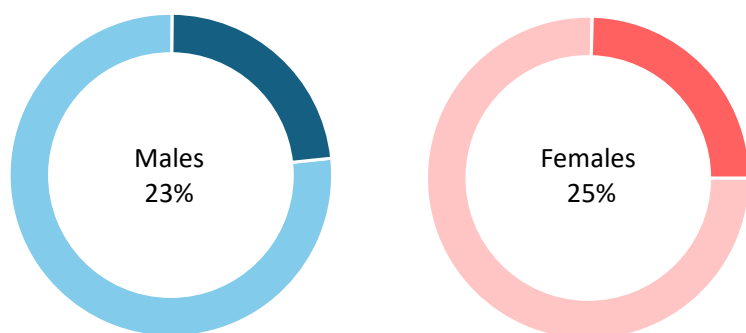


Figure 25. Proportion of usual residents aged 15–24 years not in education, employment and training (NEET)

Using as a benchmark the secondary education level attained or higher, the data suggests that 90% of the NEET population meet this level. More males aged 20–24 have attained technical and vocational levels (13% compared to 9% of females) and more females have attained tertiary or university levels (10% compared to 5% of males), (**Table 20**).

Table 20. Highest level of education attended of usual residents NEET population aged 15–24 years, by age group and sex (%)

Highest level of education attended	15–19		20–24		Total
	Males	Females	Males	Females	
Never attended/not stated	11%	13%	6%	4%	7%
Pre-school or primary	5%	3%	2%	2%	3%
Secondary	75%	76%	74%	76%	75%
Technical and Vocational	8%	5%	13%	9%	9%
Tertiary/university	2%	3%	5%	10%	6%

Occupations in the education sector such as managers, teachers, teacher aides, total 2,321 workers. Two-thirds of people employed in the education sector are women, although men outnumber women as university and higher education teachers and vocational education teachers. Most people in education occupations – 88% – had post-secondary education qualifications.

Table 21. Number and female share of usual residents aged 15+ years working in education occupations by sex

Occupation	Males	Females	Total	Share that is female
1345 Education Managers	23	43	66	65%
2310 University and Higher Education Teachers	75	69	144	48%
2320 Vocational Education Teachers	52	31	83	37%
2330 Secondary Education Teachers	387	624	1,011	62%
2341 Primary School Teachers	164	620	784	79%
2342 Early Childhood Educators	3	83	86	97%
2351 Education Methods Specialists	15	25	40	63%
Other Teachers or Teachers' Aides	40	67	107	63%
Total	759	1,562	2,321	67%

3.3. ACCESS TO INTERNET IN EDUCATION

The proportion of Tongan people aged 10–24 years reporting using the internet in the 3 months before the Census is similar for women and men: 46% of females and 44% of males (figure 22). Young people are using the internet for education purposes. This is the case for two-in-five (41%) people aged 10–24 compared to only 7% of people aged 25+ years.

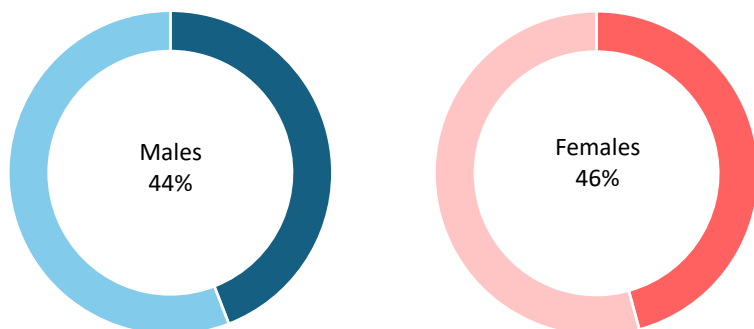


Figure 26. Proportion of usual residents aged 10–24 years who are using internet in the last 3 months, by sex

More women (46%) than men (36%) are using the internet for education purposes, with almost all of these (92%), women or men, being current students.

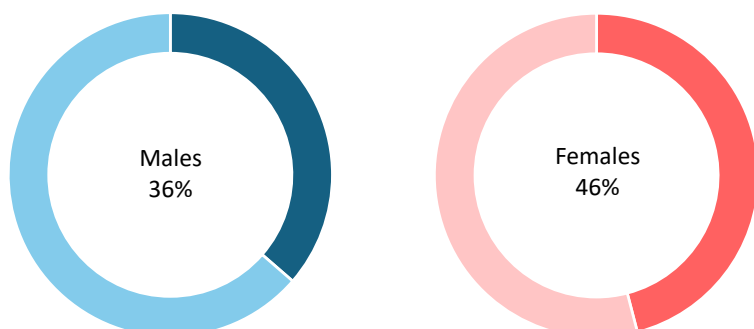


Figure 27. Proportion of usual residents aged 10–24 years who are using internet for education purposes, by sex



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4. Economic activity and the labour market

Women and men have different levels and trends of both paid and unpaid labour force activities. Labour force participation rates are generally lower for women than for men and the share of women in the labour force is still far from parity. In most countries, employment is lower for women than for men and unemployment is higher for women than for men. In general, women encounter more difficulties than men in finding and keeping jobs, both at younger and older ages (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017).

4.1. LABOUR FORCE COMPOSITION

The official labour force statistics are based on the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definitions. There are differences in labour force participation between males and females. The **labour force participation rate** is the total number employed and unemployed (the labour force) divided by the total working age population and is 56% for males and 43% for females. The **employment to population ratio** is the number of employed divided by the total working age population and more than half of males (54%) aged 15+ years are employed, compared with two-in-every-five females (42%) (**Figure 28**). The **unemployment rate** is the number of unemployed (available and looking and willing to start a job) divided by the total labour force and is 3% for males and females. The adjusted unemployment rate, which includes the jobless who are looking or available for work is 9% for males and 13% for females, indicating a significant female potential labour force.

As for males, the largest number (6,647) of employed females were working for pay (wages or salary), with females comprising 44% of these employees. The number of persons aged 15+ years employed producing agriculture, fisheries and handicraft products for sale was approximately the same for males and females, with the female share of this employment group at 49%. Of the 223 persons employed in apprenticeships or internships, 168 or 75% were males. There were 2,035 adults whose main activity was working in any kind of business activity, as employers, or self-employed. Females comprise 74% or 10,696 of those outside the labour force performing household duties, and 54% of those reporting studying as their main activity.

A combined total of 7,484 persons (12%) work as their main activity in own farming or gardening, raising animals or livestock, fishing and handicrafts for sale or for own use (subsistence) and 37% of these were females. Females were more business oriented in this main activity, with 61% working to sell their products, presumably handicrafts, compared with 38% of males.

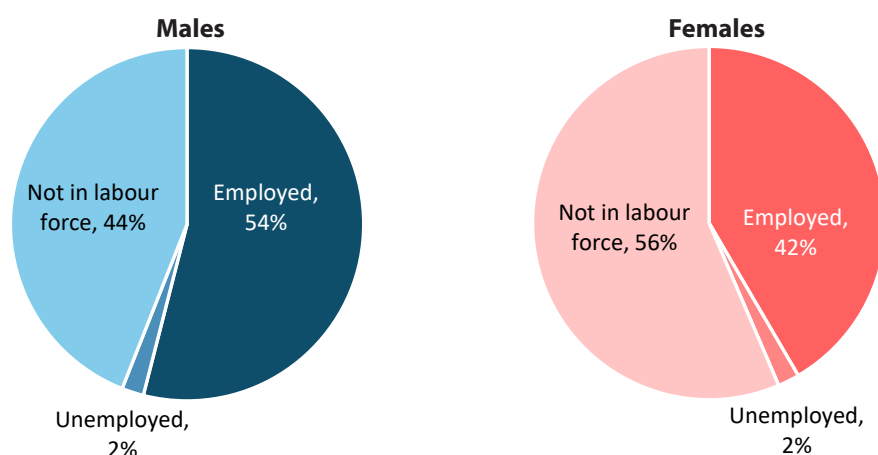


Figure 28. Labour force status of usual residents aged 15+ years, by sex

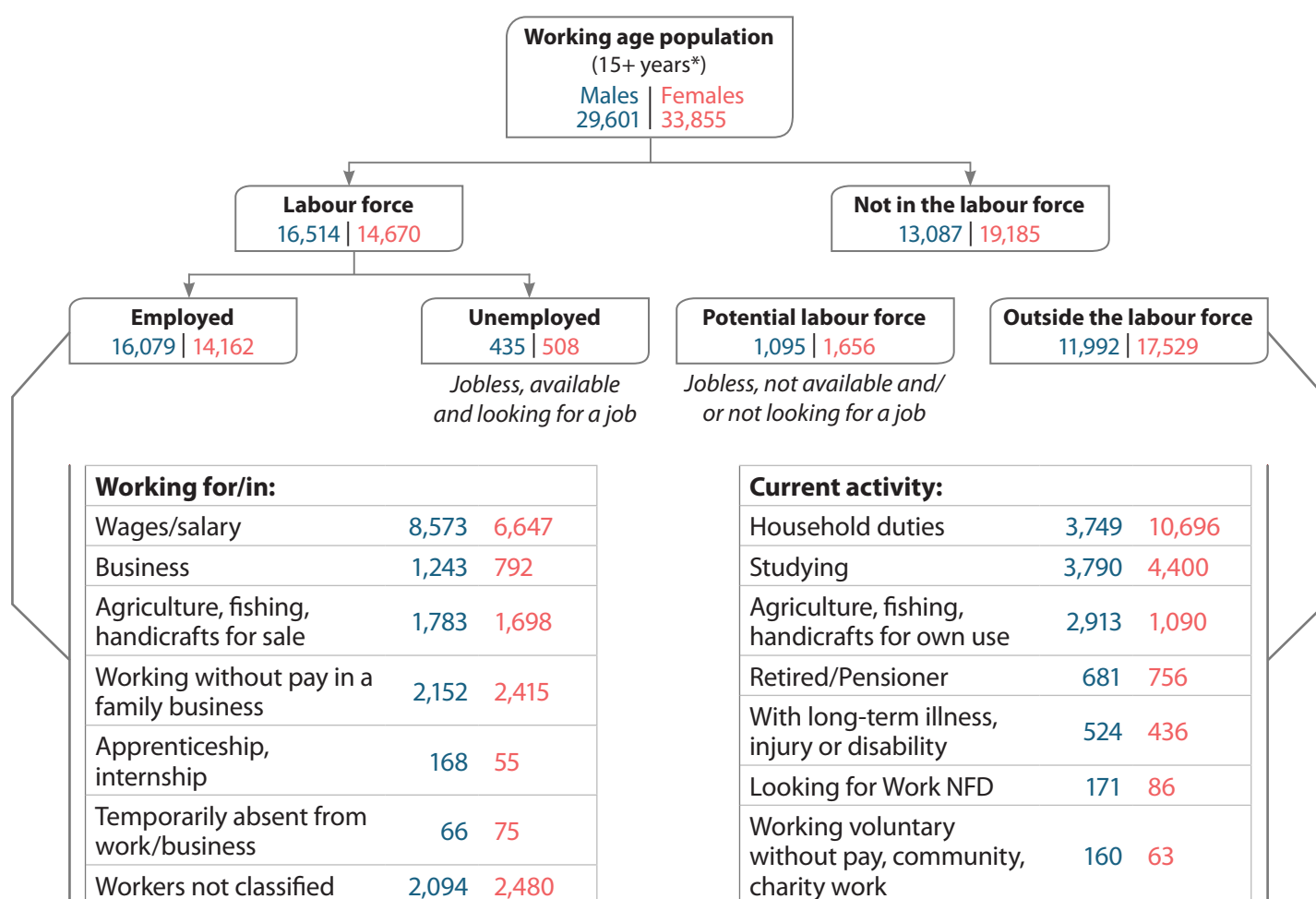


Figure 29. Labour force composition of usual residents aged 15+ years, by sex

Source: Based on ILO definition Labour Force Statistics (https://ilostat.ilo.org/methods/concepts-and-definitions/description-labour-force-statistics/#elementor-toc_heading-anchor-34).

*Usually resident population in private households

The results of the labour force statistics by Island Divisions must be interpreted with caution, particularly for Ongo Niua, which has a small population. The labour force participation rate was relatively high in Tongatapu with 56% of males, and 43% of females, participating in the

labour force (**Table 22**). The unemployment rate was highest for females in 'Eua (5%), and lowest in Vava'u, although there was minimal variation across Divisions. When the jobless, or those not available and/or not looking for a job, are included as unemployed (the adjusted unemployment rate), the largest percentage points increase in female unemployment are in Tongatapu and 'Eua (**Table 22**).

Table 22. Labour force indicators of usual residents aged 15+ years, by Island Division and sex (%)

Island division	Labour force participation rate		Unemployment rate		Adjusted unemployment rate		Employment to population ratio	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Tonga	56%	43%	3%	3%	9%	13%	54%	42%
Tongatapu	56%	43%	3%	4%	9%	14%	55%	41%
Vava'u	55%	44%	2%	2%	8%	11%	54%	43%
Ha'apai	55%	51%	2%	3%	8%	9%	54%	49%
'Eua	50%	40%	3%	5%	9%	15%	49%	38%
Ongo Niua	60%	51%	1%	2%	9%	7%	59%	50%

Labour force participation by age group shows that younger and older males and females are most likely to be outside the labour force, with 25% of males and 18% of females aged 15–19 years who were participating in the labour force, and 16% of males and 11% of females aged 75+ years (**Table 23**). The youth (15–24 years) unemployment rate for males was 6%, and 7% for females.

Table 23. Labour force status and statistics of usual residents aged 15+ years, by sex and age group

Age group	Labour force composition (M=Males and F=Females)									Labour Force Statistics			
	Employed			Unemployed			Outside labour force			Labour force participation rate		Unemployment rate	
	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F	M	F
15–19	1,304	885	2,189	86	70	156	4,467	4,153	8,620	25%	18%	6%	7%
20–24	1,800	1,685	3,485	114	134	248	2,188	1,649	3,837	54%	45%	6%	7%
25–29	1,750	1,905	3,655	62	93	155	1,509	835	2,344	68%	57%	3%	5%
30–34	1,706	1,731	3,437	49	61	110	1,322	630	1,952	74%	58%	3%	3%
35–39	1,795	1,843	3,638	41	48	89	1,326	588	1,914	76%	59%	2%	3%
40–44	1,688	1,481	3,169	22	35	57	1,244	611	1,855	74%	55%	1%	2%
45–49	1,585	1,344	2,929	16	24	40	1,130	622	1,752	72%	55%	1%	2%
50–54	1,591	1,221	2,812	19	17	36	1,142	764	1,906	68%	52%	1%	1%
55–59	1,251	828	2,079	12	9	21	1,000	658	1,658	66%	46%	1%	1%
60–64	739	538	1,277	6	7	13	964	632	1,596	54%	36%	1%	1%
65–69	443	373	816	NA	NA	11	882	596	1,478	43%	30%	1%	1%
70–74	260	175	435	NA	NA	NA	703	497	1,200	35%	20%	1%	1%
75+	167	153	320	-	NA	NA	1,308	852	2,160	16%	11%	-	2%
Total	16,079	14,162	30,241	435	508	943	19,185	13,087	32,272	56%	43%	3%	3%

4.2. DIFFERENCE IN OCCUPATION

Women and men have different employment conditions and different opportunities for career advancement, and certain careers are gender stereotyped, for example primary school teaching and nursing are typically female occupations, while trades like mechanics, security guards and carpenters are typical male occupations.

Females comprise 50% or more of those employed in Professionals, Clerical Support Workers and Service and Sales Workers major occupation groups. Female employees are concentrated in Professionals (27%), Craft and Related Trades Workers (17%), and Services and Sales Workers (16%). Males comprise 92% of employees in the Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries Workers occupation group, and 15% of male employees are in this group (compared to 2% of females). The largest number of males are employed as Professionals, comprising 18% of male employees followed by the Craft and Related Trades Workers occupation group (16%) where a large proportion of males are employed as Building and Related Trade Workers. Males represent 89% of those employed in Armed Forces occupations. A similar proportion of males and females are employed as Managers, but the female share of this occupation group is only 44% (**Table 24**).

Table 24. Major group of occupation of employed usual residents aged 15+ years, by sex

Major group of occupation	Number of persons		Female Share	Distribution	
	Males	Females		Males	Females
1 Managers	983	783	44%	8%	8%
2 Professionals	2,161	2,502	54%	18%	27%
3 Technicians and Associates Professionals	1,183	893	43%	10%	10%
4 Clerical Support Workers	351	1,215	78%	3%	13%
5 Services and Sales Workers	1,504	1,482	50%	13%	16%
6 Skilled Agricultural, Forestry & Fishery Workers	1,734	157	8%	15%	2%
7 Craft and Related Trades Workers	1,893	1,607	46%	16%	17%
8 Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	598	254	30%	5%	3%
9 Elementary Occupations	963	292	23%	8%	3%
10 Armed Forces Occupations	329	40	11%	3%	0.4%

Note: Occupation was not stated for 9,317 respondents, occupation is only known for people working for pay, in any kind of business, in their own farming or gardening mainly for sale, and the ones who were temporarily absent from work.

The employment status is only known for people working for pay, in any kind of business, in their own farming or gardening mainly for sale, and those temporarily absent from work. About three-quarters of employed males and females are employees: 73% of males and 74% of females (**Figure 30**). A further 21% of females and 19% of males are self-employed not employing others, also known as 'own-account workers' who run their own businesses, typically small scale. Females comprise 47% of the self-employed and not employing others. Males represent 70% of the 936 employers with hired employees.

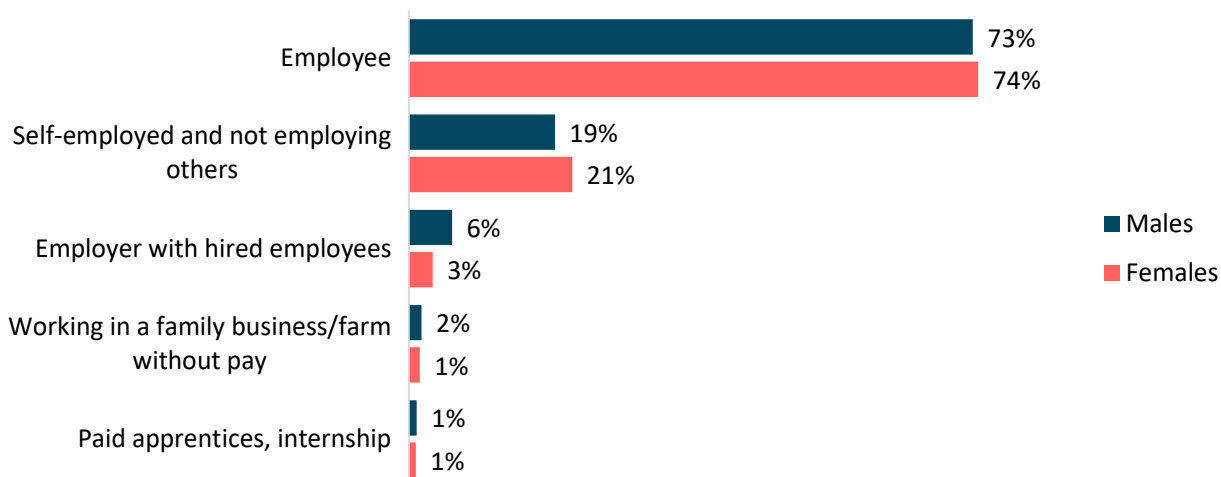


Figure 30. Employment status of usual residents aged 15+ years, by sex

Table 25. Industry of employed usual residents aged 15+ years, by sex

Industry (ISIC section and division)	Distribution (%)		Female Share (%)
	Males	Females	
Agriculture			
1 Agriculture, forestry and fishing	17.8	3.5	14
Industry			
2 Mining and quarrying	0.7	0.2	23
3 Manufacturing	8.7	19.3	64
4 Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	1.1	0.3	19
5 Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities	1.2	0.3	17
6 Construction	14.8	0.8	4
Services			
7 Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	7.9	10.9	52
8 Transportation and storage	4.6	1.6	22
9 Accommodation and food service activities	1.5	4.4	70
10 Information and communication	2.4	2.6	46
11 Financial and insurance activities	2.4	5.8	65
12 Real estate activities	0.1	0.1	37
13 Professional, scientific and technical activities	2.7	3.2	49
14 Administrative and support service activities	4.4	4.8	46
15 Public administration and defence; compulsory social security	15.9	14.9	42
16 Education	6.6	17.1	67
17 Human health and social work activities	1.7	5.5	72
18 Arts, entertainment and recreation	0.5	0.7	48
19 Other service activities	4.4	2.3	29
20 Activities of households as employers	0.4	1.4	74
21 Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies	0.1	0.1	53

In terms of aggregate economic activity, females outnumber males as employees in the services sector, with 75% of employed females (**Figure 31**) working in the Services sector, notably Public Administration, Education and Wholesale and retail trade. Females comprise 64% of those employed in Manufacturing and 75% of females working in Manufacturing are self-employed and not employing others (**Table 25**). There are many gender differences regarding the industry sector. For example, the Construction sector is almost exclusively composed of males (96%) while 74% of persons working in Activities of households as employers are females.

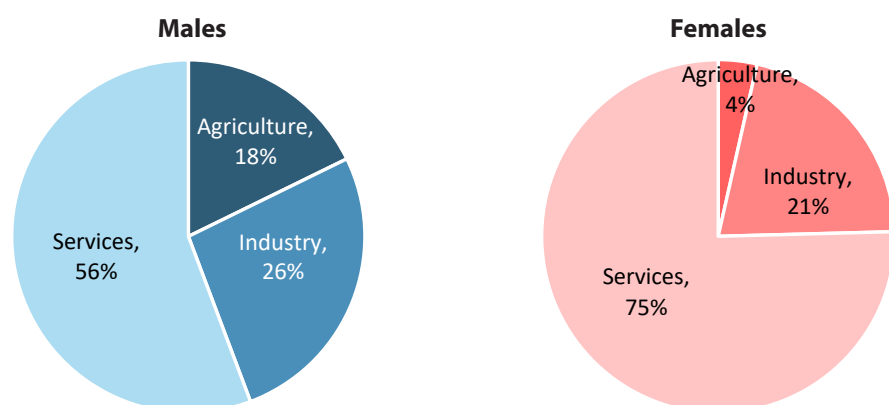


Figure 31. Industry of employed usual residents aged 15+ years, by sex

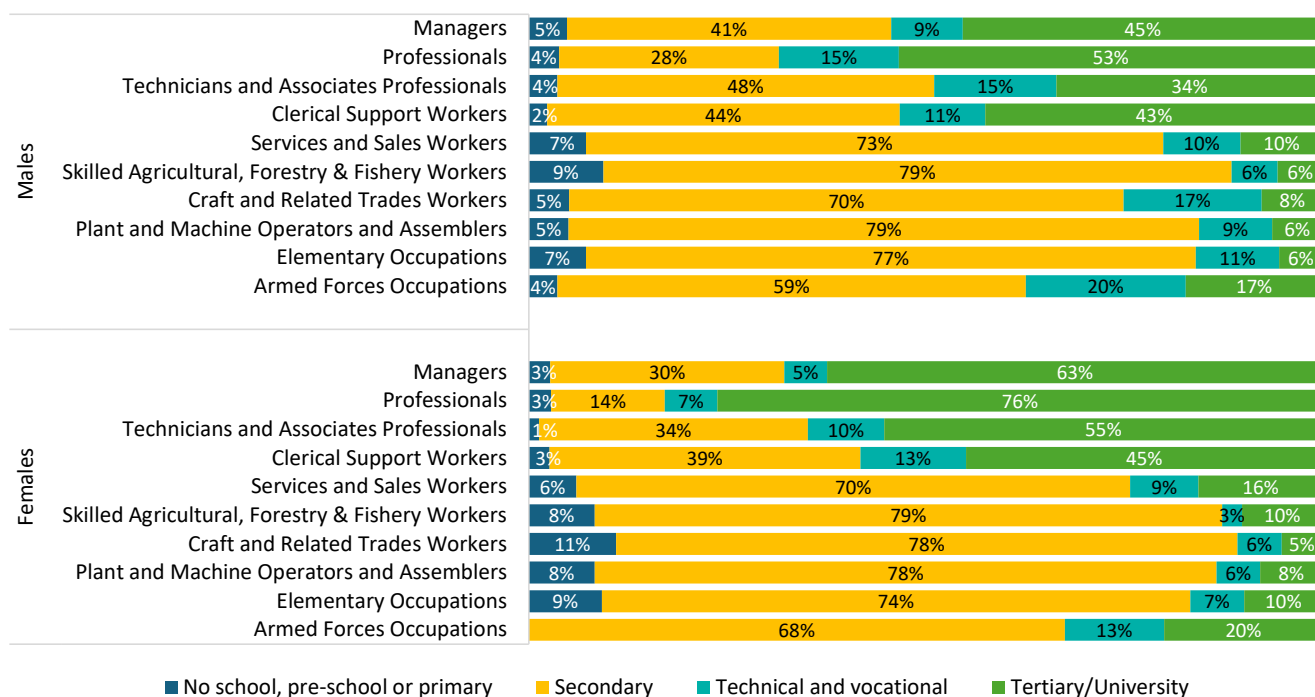


Figure 32. Major group of occupation of employed usual residents aged 15+ years, by highest level of education attended and sex

The classification of occupations, or the types of jobs that people do, is a skills-based classification, with skill level, and implied education, training and qualifications, decreasing from the highest (Managers) to the lowest (Elementary) occupation groups. There is general gender consistency between highest level of education attended and occupation, and those with Technical and Vocational education or Tertiary/University (Year 1 to Year 3 or more) more

likely to be in the first three occupation groups (**Figure 32**). This is especially true for females: when they occupied a position of manager, 63% had attained tertiary level compared to 45% of males. Overall, nearly half (46%) of females with an occupation have attained the tertiary level compared to only 23% of males. 6,916 or 59% of males had secondary as the highest level attended and the highest proportion working as ‘Skilled Agricultural, Forestry & Fishery Workers’ and ‘Craft and Related Trades Workers’. This compares with 4,225 or 46% of females with secondary level education, most likely to be ‘Craft and Related Trades Workers’ and ‘Services and Sales Workers’.

4.3. THE IMPACT OF TEMPORARY LABOUR SCHEME

Overall, 6% of male and 2% of female usual residents aged 15–64 years in private households had been employed in temporary labour mobility schemes in Australia or New Zealand at any time between January 2020 and November 2021. Almost 80% of those who had participated in such a scheme and were in Tonga at the time of the Census were males (1,667 or 78%). Females were most likely to have participated in the Australian scheme (64%) while males have participated in both equally in the Australian and New Zealand Schemes (**Table 26**).

Table 26. Number of usual residents aged 15–64 years who have been employed in temporary labour scheme(s), by sex

Employed in temporary labour scheme	Sex		Total
	Males	Females	
No	25,107	29,767	54,874
Yes	1,667	483	2,150
Yes – Australia	746	308	1,054
Yes – New Zealand	753	141	894
Yes – both Australia and New Zealand	168	34	202
Total	26,774	30,250	57,024

Note: 5 persons did not respond.

For those who had been employed in temporary labour mobility schemes, the current labour force status was different for males and females (**Figure 33**). More females (57%) were ‘outside the labour force’ in household duties while 58% of males were employed.

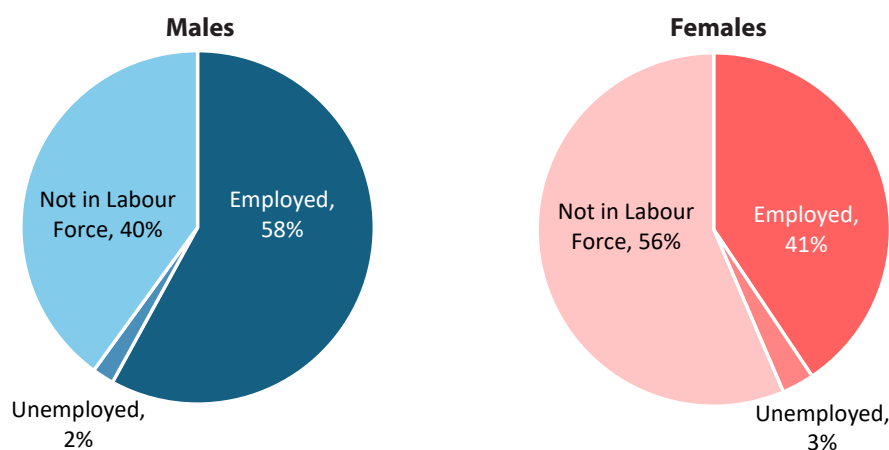


Figure 33. Labour force status of usual residents aged 15–64 years who had been employed in temporary labour scheme, by sex

4.4. GIFTS AND REMITTANCES

At the household level, questions were asked about if the household received gifts (cash and goods) from anyone not in the household, and a series of questions collected data on remittances, including if these were from temporary labour mobility schemes in Australia or New Zealand. In total, 79% of female household heads received remittances, compared to 73% of male household heads; with 25% of female household heads reporting receiving remittances from temporary labour schemes compared with 15% of male household heads. Female household heads comprise 26% of private households, and 37% of households receiving remittances from temporary labour mobility schemes (**Table 27**).

Table 27. Private occupied households having received money/goods from someone not in the household, by sex household head and source

Received money/goods from anyone not in household	Number of households			Distribution		FHH share
	MHH	FHH	Total	MHH	FHH	
No	3,772	1,009	4,781	27%	21%	21%
Yes	10,224	3,842	14,066	73%	79%	27%
- Yes, the main source is from temporary mobility scheme	2,119	1,230	3,349	15%	25%	37%
- Yes, from other sources	8,105	2,612	10,717	58%	54%	24%
Total	13,996	4,851	18,847	100%	100%	26%

In 80% of female household heads, temporary labour mobility scheme remittances were received regularly (fortnightly or monthly), compared with 68% of male household heads. male household heads were more likely to receive these remittances on a less regular basis: 12% of males received remittances occasionally compare to 7% of females (**Table 28**).

Table 28. Frequency of remittances (money/goods) received by private occupied households from someone not in the household, by sex of household head

Frequency remittance received	Household head sex		Total
	Female	Male	
Every 2 weeks	657	792	1,449
Every month	332	649	981
Every 2–3 months	131	356	487
Twice a year	10	48	58
Once a year	8	26	34
Occasionally	92	248	340
Total	1,230	2,119	3,349

A further question collected responses about goals achieved through participation in temporary labour mobility schemes in Australia and New Zealand. A fifth of female household heads (20%) have at least one member that has ever been in Labour Mobility Scheme since January 2020 compared to 11% of male household heads. Almost all of them had achieved one or more goals (92% of female household heads and 93% of male household heads). The

most common goal was to provide for basic family needs; build/renovate home, purchase vehicles and pay school tuition had all about the same importance for all households. Overall, 95% of households reported no members of the household experienced any social problem because of participation in temporary labour mobility schemes in the last 12 months (95% of male household heads and 96% of female household heads).

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5. Health

Women tend to live longer than men, due to both biological and behavioural factors. In 2021, life expectancy at birth for women was 74 years and 68 years for men, showing women live on average six more years than men. Gender differences in life expectancy are observed where lifestyle factors such as harmful use of alcohol, smoking and kava consumption reduce lifespans combined with other risk factors for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as diet and physical activity. The types of NCDs and chronic illnesses experienced may be different for women than for men. Social and cultural factors have traditionally led men to take up health-damaging habits, such as drinking and smoking. Men tend to consume more alcohol than women in all regions of the world and at all ages. Obesity, often the result of sedentary lifestyles and unbalanced diets, puts an individual at increased risk for many diseases and health problems, including hypertension and diabetes. Prevailing cultural norms in some countries result in girls and women being engaged less often in physical exercise, and in some cases, they are prohibited from taking part in certain physical activities and sports (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017).

Globally breast cancers are the leading cause of cancer deaths among women, and cancers of other reproductive organs, including cervical cancer, ovarian cancer and uterine cancer, cause hundreds of thousands of deaths in women worldwide each year; and among men lung cancers the leading cause of cancer deaths (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017).

5.1. CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL, KAVA AND TOBACCO

The Census asked people aged 10+ years their frequency of drinking alcohol, drinking *Kavatonga*³ and smoking or chewing tobacco in an average week. Males were most likely to consume alcohol, *Kavatonga* or tobacco (**Figure 34**). Almost two-in-five men are consuming *Kavatonga* compared to only 1% of women, and 22% are drinking four times or more per week (compared to 8% of women).

More men are smoking or chewing local tobacco (30% compared to 7% of females), and two-in-five men are regular – equivalent of 10 cigarettes per day – (24%) or heavy consumers – equivalent of 15 or more cigarettes per day – (17%). When women consume local tobacco, they also tend to be regular (22%) or heavy consumers (14%). People also smoke manufactured tobacco: 23% of men and 8% of women. A quarter (26%) of both men and women are regular or heavy smokers.

Drinking alcohol can also have an impact on health: 27% of men are drinking alcohol and 9% of women. There is no gender difference regarding the frequency of consumption, three-in-five people consuming 1–2 drinks per week. In other words, two-in-five people consuming alcohol reported having three or more drinks per week, with 7% of males and 4% of females consuming 15 or more drinks per week.

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³ Kava is a type of drink made from the ground roots of the plant *Piper methysticum*.

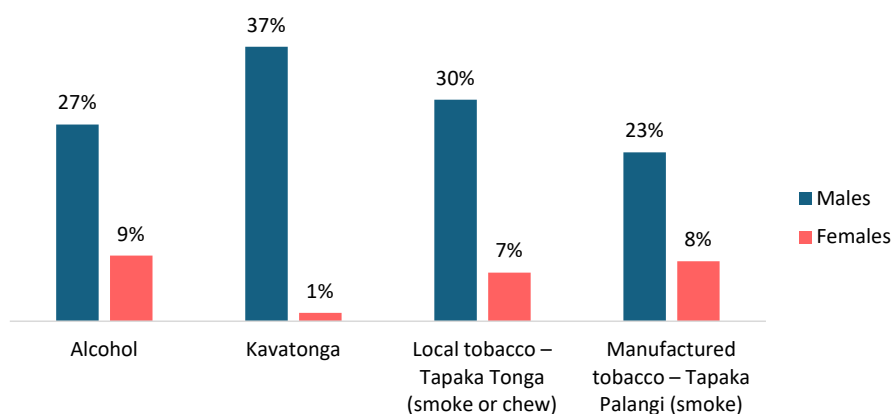


Figure 34. Summary of health risk behaviours of usual residents aged 10+ years, by sex

Young people under 20 and people aged 70+ years are the groups that consume the least alcohol, *Kavatonga* or tobacco (**Table 29**). Young men tend to consume more than young females (10% versus 4% respectively). The type of consumption is also different between young women and men. More than one in ten young men consume local or manufactured tobacco, or alcohol (compared to 4% of young women in each category), while one in ten young women drink *Kavatonga* (compared to 8% of young men).

People aged 20–39 years represent a third of the population aged 10+ years but almost half (45%) of the consumers of alcohol, *Kavatonga* or tobacco. In this age category, 58% women consume at least one of these products and 42% of men, the main product consumed is alcohol (51% of men and 64% of women).

Table 29. Proportion of usual residents aged 10+ years who are consuming alcohol, *Kavatonga* or tobacco, by sex and age group (%)

	Alcohol	<i>Kavatonga</i>	Local tobacco – Tapaka Tonga (smoke or chew)	Manufactured tobacco – Tapaka Palangi (smoke)	At least consume one of them
Males					
10–19	11	8	12	11	10
20–29	30	21	25	26	23
30–39	21	19	20	19	19
40–49	17	20	18	17	18
50–59	13	19	15	14	17
60–69	6	9	8	8	9
70+	3	4	4	4	5
Females					
10–19	4	10	4	4	4
20–29	34	33	24	24	28
30–39	30	26	33	33	30
40–49	20	18	23	23	21
50–59	8	9	10	11	10
60–69	3	3	4	4	4
70+	1	1	2	2	2

5.2. NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE HEALTH STATUS

The 2021 Census included questions on health status and seeking professional advice about a Non-Communicable Disease⁴ (NCD) or chronic illness, injury in the past two weeks, as well as general behavioural and mental illness, COVID vaccination status and the Washington Group short set of questions on functioning disability.

The Census asked all people if they had “Ever been told by a health professional that (s)he has any of these ongoing NCD or chronic illness” with a list of 12 illnesses, providing general statistics on the burden of NCD/chronic diseases in Tonga. Overall, 14% of people reported having a health professional diagnosis of an NCD or chronic illness, 12% of men and 16% of women reported at least one NCD or chronic illness. Females comprise 58% of the 13,605 people with one or more illnesses; about one-third (32%) of females had two or more illnesses, compared with 28% of men (**Figure 35**).

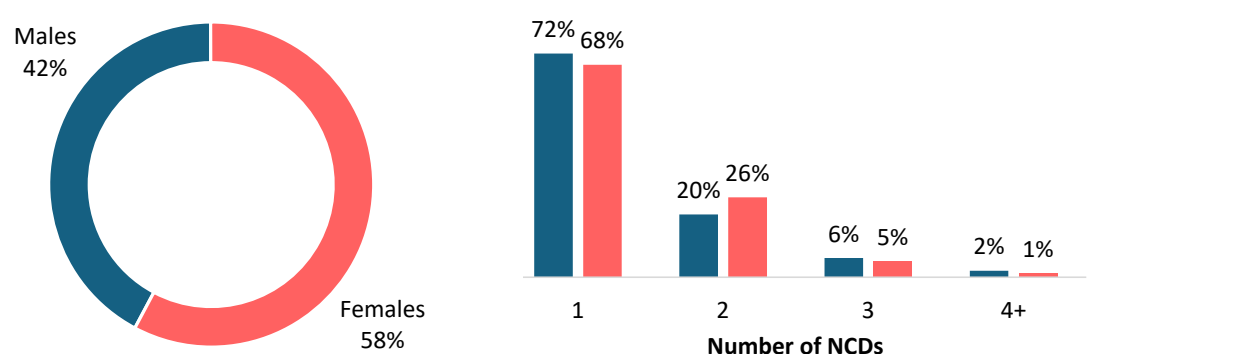


Figure 35. Distribution by sex of usual residents who have at least one NCDs and number of NCDs/Chronic Illnesses

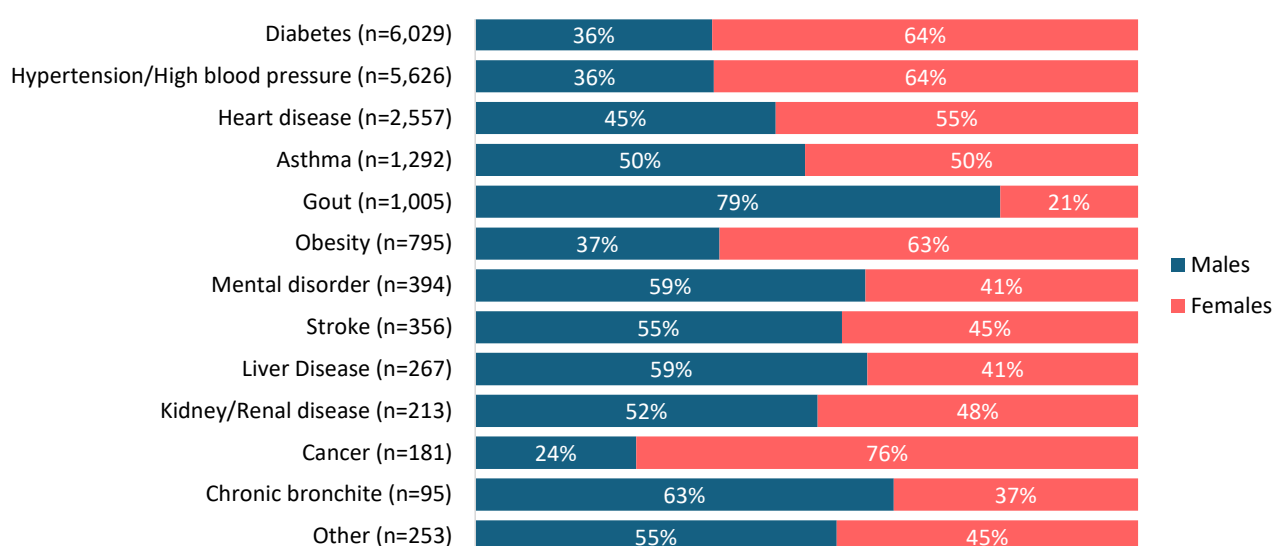


Figure 36. Distribution of usual residents who have a NCDs/Chronic Illnesses experienced, by sex

Note: “Other” illnesses include responses such as seizures, palsy, epilepsy, disability, polio, paralysis and dementia.

.....
⁴ Data analysis of a person with a NCD and/or chronic condition and main activity is based on the Census data, acknowledging that there is no data about severity, frequency or other complications from the list of medical conditions.

The three most common illnesses and conditions reported are the same for both sexes: diabetes, hypertension/high blood pressure and heart disease, but women and men experienced them in different ways. Women represent the highest proportion of people with these three main NCDs: 64% of people who have diabetes or hypertension are women and 55% for heart disease. Women comprise most of the people affected by obesity (63%) and cancer (76%), while men are more afflicted by gout (79%), chronic bronchitis (63%), mental disorder (59%) and liver disease (59%). The number of females reporting diabetes and hypertension is about 80% higher than the number of males, while this proportion reaches 211% for cancer (**Figure 36**).

Responses from those diagnosed with NCDs and/or chronic illnesses by age group show a higher frequency of younger women with heart disease (36% of females aged 10–19 years versus 33% of males), younger males regarding asthma (16% of males aged 0–9 years versus 8% of females), while hypertension and diabetes peak for males aged over 50 years for males and females (**Figure 37**). Gout and obesity do not affect women and men at the same age. Obesity concerns women of all ages between 10–69 years, while most obese males are aged 40–69 years. The inverse situation is observed for gout, men are more afflicted across ages (between 20–69 years versus 50+ years for women).

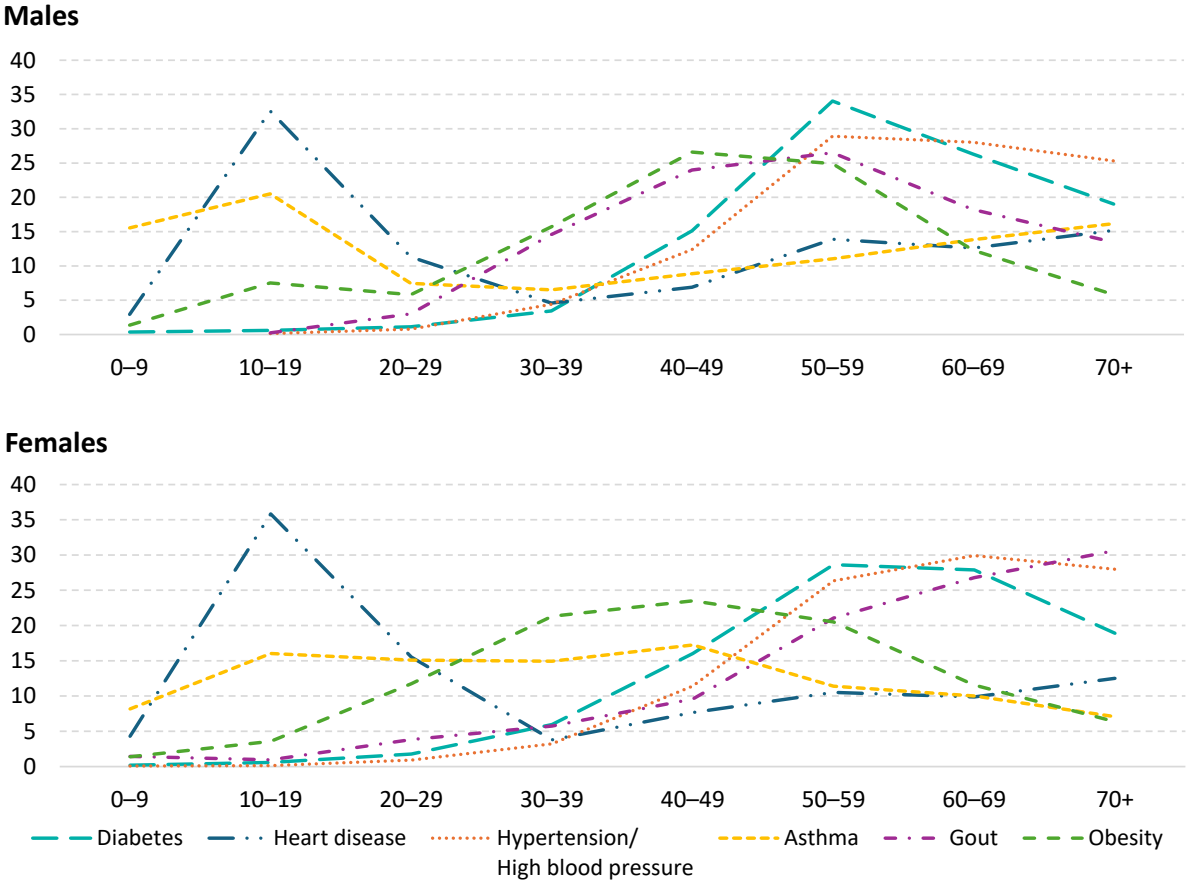


Figure 37. Distribution of usual residents who have a NCDs/Chronic disease, by age group (%)

Consumption of alcohol, *Kavatonga* or tobacco can impact the health of a person suffering from a NCD, and men and women’s behaviours are different. More than half (58%) of the men affected by NCDs consume at least one of these products (compared to 50% of men without NCDs). Women with NCDs tend to consume less than those without NCDs (13%

and 15% respectively). Among all top three NCDs, *Kavatonga* is the main drink consumed by men with diabetes, hypertension or heart disease, in comparison 1% of women with a NCD reported drinking *Kavatonga* (**Figure 38**). Three out of ten men smoke or chew tobacco (manufactured or local) that have a negative effect on all these NCD. Alcohol can also increase the risk to develop or aggravate these chronic illnesses, and two-in-five men report drinking alcohol and one out of ten women.

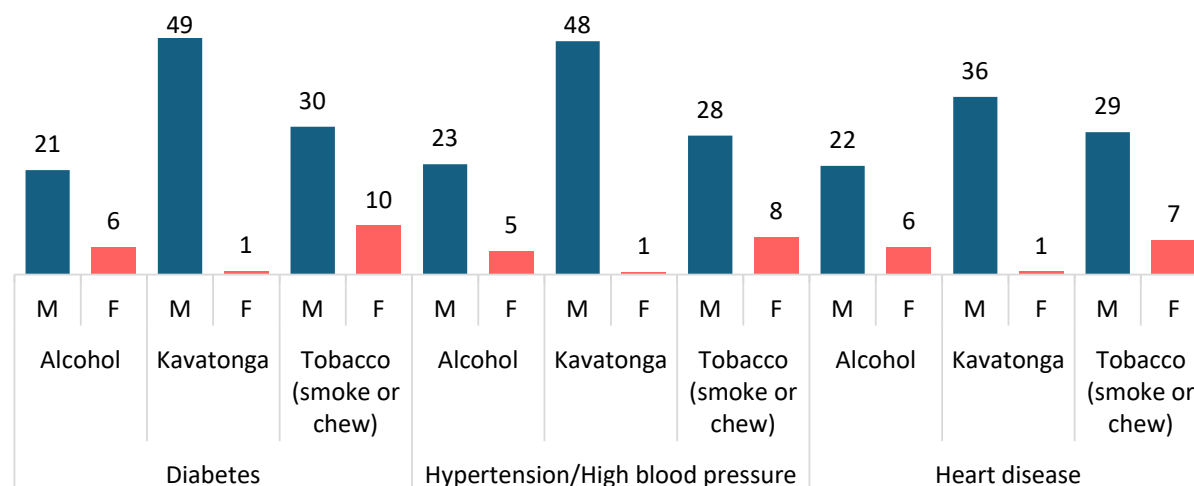


Figure 38. Usual residents aged 10+ years with NCDs, by consumption of alcohol, *Kavatonga*, tobacco and sex (%)

NCDs or chronic illnesses can have an impact on employment opportunities for people. Among people reporting NCDs and chronic illnesses, the employment ratio to population is higher for men, 51% are employed compared to 35% of women. Almost two third (64%) of women with an NCD are outside the labour force, mostly in unpaid household duties. This proportion is higher than for women without NCD for men (**Figure 39**).

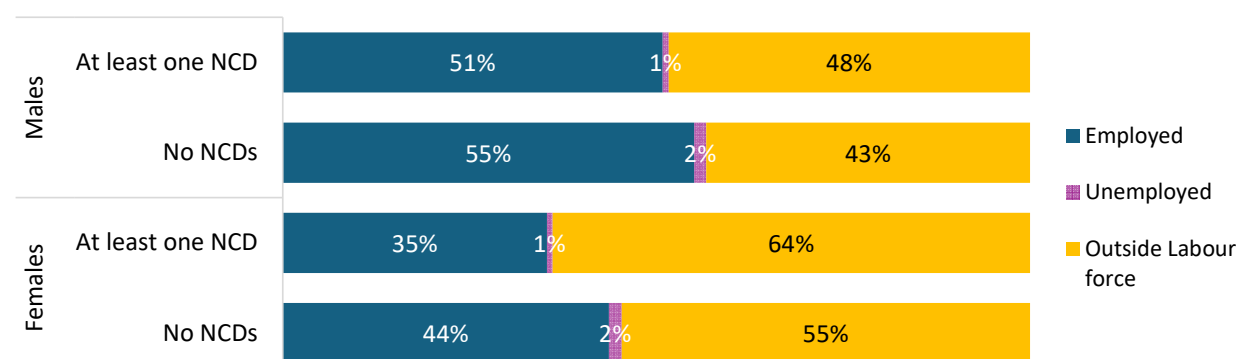


Figure 39. Labour force status of the usual residents aged 15+ years, by sex and NCDs/Chronic Illnesses status

5.3. BEHAVIOURAL PROBLEMS OR MENTAL ILLNESS

People aged 5+ years were asked if they had experienced one or more of five behavioural problems or mental illnesses. A total of 2,019 people reported experiencing one or more of the problems (2% of males and 2.5% of females), with males more likely to experience multiple problems or illnesses (30% compared to 18% of females), **Table 30**.

Table 30. Number of behavioural problems or mental illnesses of usual residents aged 5+ years, by sex

Number of behavioural problems or mental illnesses	Sex		Total
	Males	Females	
None	41,414	44,386	85,800
1	626	921	1,547
2	175	136	311
3	50	27	77
4	20	9	29
5	29	26	55
Total	42,314	45,505	87,819

The main condition for both males and females was mental health and behaviour that had deteriorated due to being elderly. Sex differences are apparent with females more likely to report experiencing sickness due to (bad) spirit or possessed by evil (32% of females compared to 15% of males) and males comprise the majority of those reporting problems related to drug consumption (16% of males compared to 5% of females) and being affected mentally or experiencing intellectual disability (36% of males compared to 22% of females) (**Figure 40**).

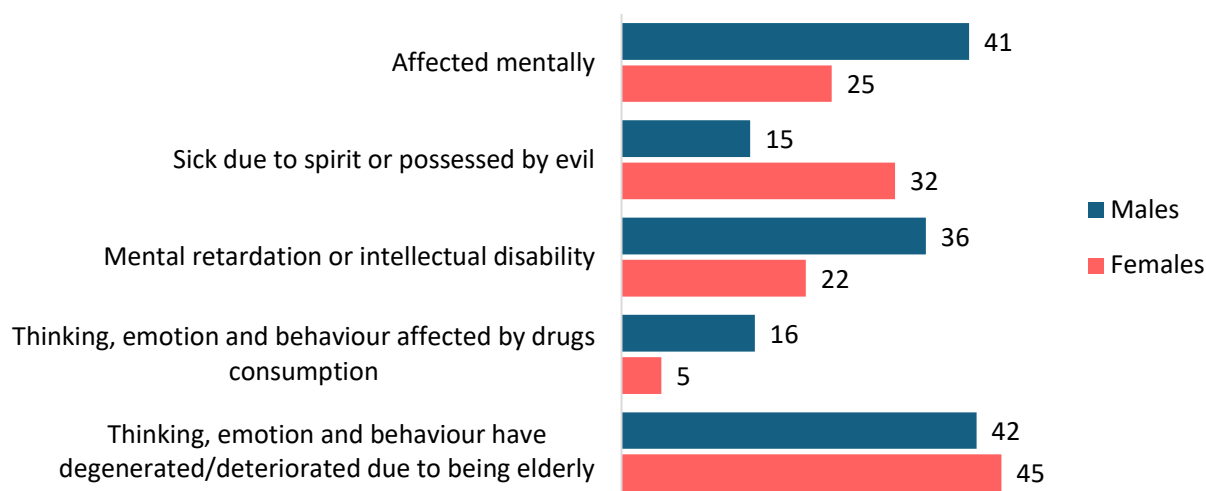


Figure 40. Proportion of usual residents aged 5+ years with a behavioural or mentally illness, by type of experience reported

5.4. COVID-19

The 2021 Census took place during the COVID-19 pandemic. A National State of Public Health Emergency was first declared by the Tongan government on 12 March 2020, and a National State of Emergency was declared on 20 March 2020, with progressive roll-out of COVID-19 vaccination from April 2021. The Public Health Act was amended in August 2021 to allow compulsory COVID-19 vaccination. By March 2022, after the 30 November 2021 Census night, 90% of Tonga's eligible population had been double vaccinated, 98% had received their first vaccination, and 47% had received their booster.

The COVID-19 pandemic was confirmed to have reached Tonga in a quarantine facility on 29 October 2021, one month prior to the Census night, and the first community cases were detected in Tongatapu in January and February 2022 (associated with stevedoring aid supplies after the 2022 Hunga Tonga–Hunga Ha’apai eruption and tsunami). On 1 November 2021, the Tongan government imposed a seven-day lockdown on Tongatapu, closing all schools, banning public gatherings (except funerals) and most economic activities were ordered to close; apart from banks and essential services that allowed final Census preparations. Other nationwide lockdowns followed from February 2022 in response to rising cases.

At the national level, people overall reported that they had not experienced stress, anxiety, depression, or hopelessness due to COVID-19 in the last seven days (93% of males and 90% of females) (**Figure 41**).

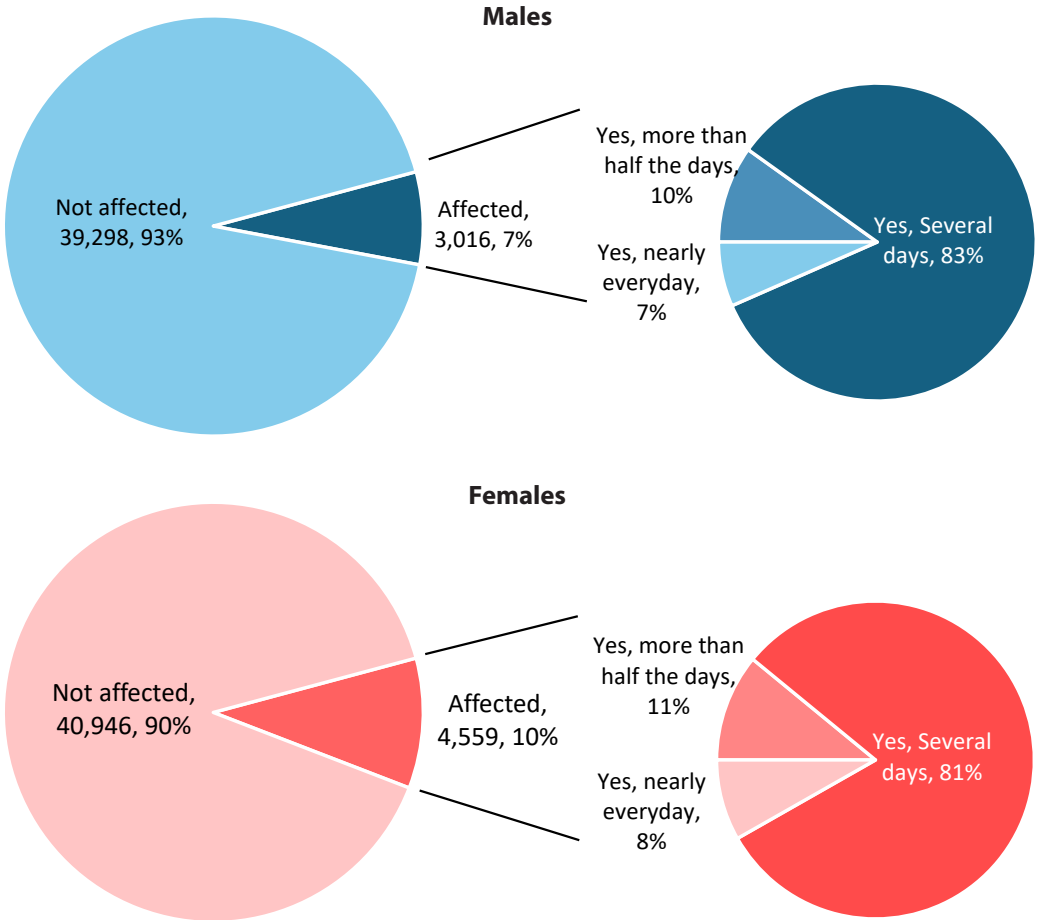


Figure 41. Usual residents aged 5+ years, experience of stress, anxiety, depression or hopelessness due to COVID-19 in the last 7 days, by sex

Among those who experienced stress, anxiety, depression, or hopelessness due to COVID-19 in the last week, young people were the most affected, with higher rates for males than females: a third of males aged under 20 years and a quarter of females (**Figure 42**).

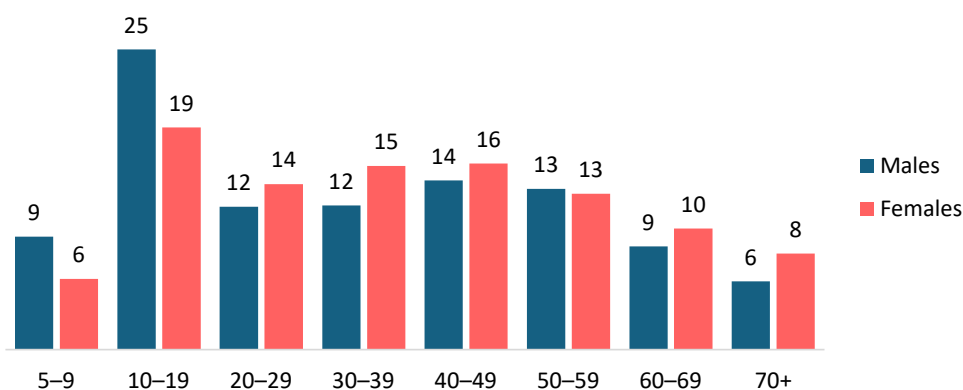


Figure 42. Distribution of usual residents aged 5+ years who experienced stress, anxiety, depression or hopelessness due to COVID-19 in the last 7 days, by age group and sex

At the time of the Census, COVID-19 vaccinations were available to people aged 12+ years with progressive vaccination roll out across islands for first and second doses, noting that at the time of the Census Tonga had one of the highest COVID-19 vaccination rates in the Pacific region. Tonga’s Ministry of Health (MOH) reports coverage of vaccination, and Census responses to COVID-19 vaccination questions should be considered in relation to MOH situation report updates. **Figure 43** is a summary of respondent reported vaccination status, with a slightly higher proportion of females having received two doses of the vaccine than males.

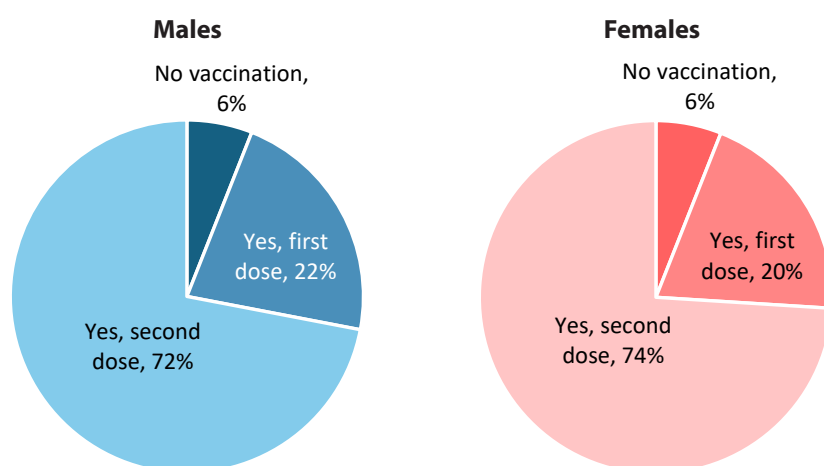


Figure 43. COVID-19 vaccination status of usual residents aged 12+ years, by and sex

At the national level, among the 6% of people who reported not being vaccinated, the availability of the COVID-19 vaccine was not as significant compared to not trusting the vaccine, concerns about side effects or more general nonbelief in vaccines, with no significant sex differentials apparent (**Figure 44**).

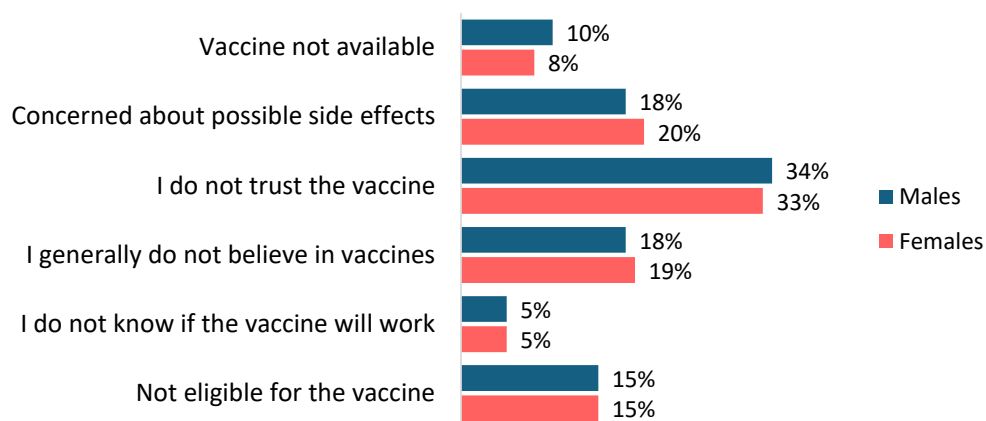


Figure 44. Reason for not getting the COVID-19 vaccination of usual residents aged 12+ years, by sex (%)

5.5. CHILDBEARING

From the Census we can estimate completed family size, and how many babies a woman will have on average in her lifetime. There were 447 women aged 50+ years who had given birth to 10 or more children, and the average number of children born is lowest in Tongatapu and highest in Onga Nua, especially for older women (**Table 31**). According to the Census data, in age group 25–29 years 47% of females residing in private households had ever given birth to a live baby, even if the baby died soon after birth. A small number of females aged 15–19 years (137 or 3% of this age group) reported that they had given birth (**Figure 45**). The median age at which mothers had their first baby was 24 years of age.

Table 31. Average number of children ever born to females aged 15+ years, by age group and Island Division

Age group	Island and average number of children ever born					Average
	Tongatapu	Vava'u	Ha'apai	'Eua	Ongo Niua	
10–19	0.03	0.04	0.01	0.03	0.00	0.03
20–29	0.31	0.47	0.33	0.29	0.29	0.33
30–39	0.98	1.39	1.02	1.22	1.70	1.05
40–49	1.75	2.20	1.96	1.86	2.53	1.84
50–59	2.49	2.88	2.25	3.17	2.95	2.57
60–69	2.99	3.23	2.77	3.39	2.90	3.03
45–49	3.08	3.66	3.77	3.23	2.90	3.21
50–54	3.34	3.84	3.5	3.77	4.74	3.46
55–59	3.56	4.26	3.61	3.97	4.04	3.70
60–64	3.82	4.48	4.32	3.58	3.68	3.94
65–69	3.93	4.78	4.49	4.17	6.95	4.15
70–74	4.25	5.00	3.98	5.9	4.67	4.45
75+	4.74	5.74	4.05	5.46	6.60	4.91
Total	2.04	2.61	2.27	2.33	2.85	2.15

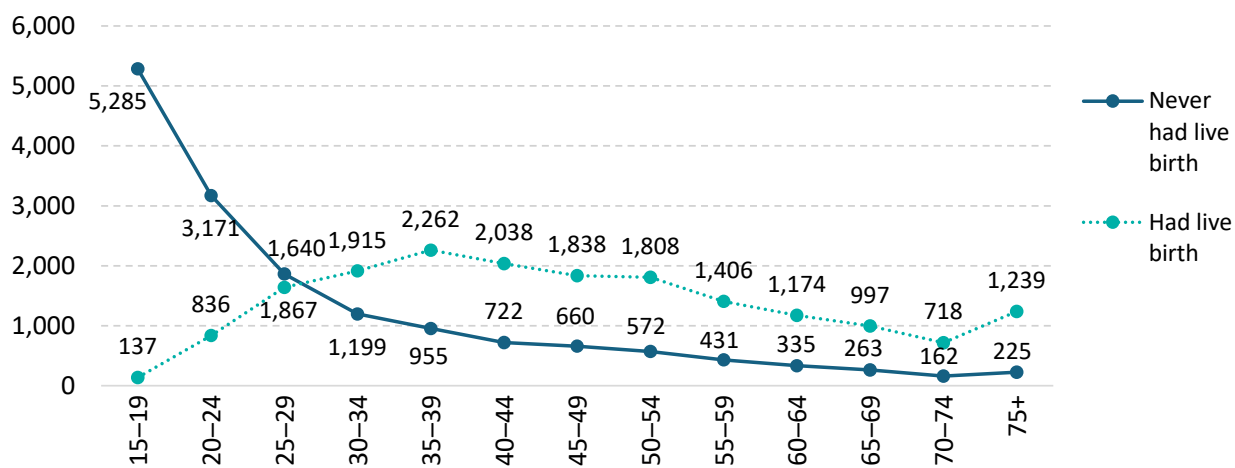


Figure 45. Females aged 15+ years with and without live birth, by age group



6. Disability

People aged 5+ years were asked if they had had any difficulty across the functional domains of seeing, hearing, walking or climbing steps, remembering or concentrating, self-care (washing all over or getting dressed) and communicating. These are the Washington Group standard set of Census questions determining disability status.

The Washington Group definition of a person living with disability is someone who has a lot of difficulty or who cannot do one or more of the six functioning domains. In Tonga, 1,898 female and 1,439 male respondents met these criteria, with overall disability prevalence rates of 4% for females and 3% for males aged 5+ years. The number and prevalence of persons living with disability obviously increases with age, especially for those aged 50+ years, more for females than males (**Figure 46**).

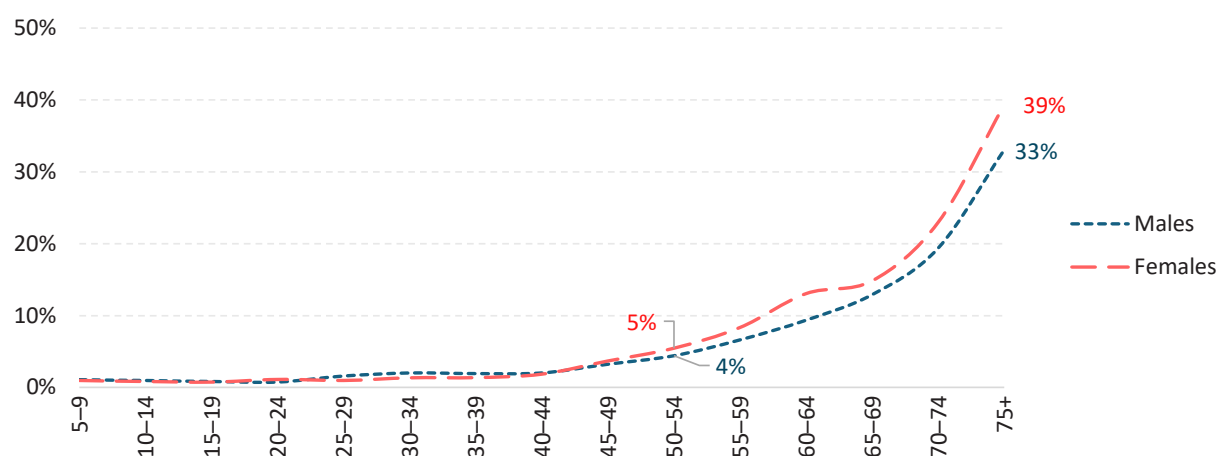


Figure 46. Share of usual residents aged 5+ years with disabilities, by age group and sex

Note: People with disabilities are defined according to the Washington Group disability status: persons who have a **lot of** difficulty or **cannot do at all** for one or more of 6 functioning domains (seeing, hearing, walking or climbing steps, remembering or concentrating, self-care (washing all over or getting dressed) and communicating).

Box 4. A broader definition of disability

Broadening the definition of disability to include people with some difficulty for one or more of the functioning domains, a more likely scenario in Tonga given that functioning is respondent reported and likely to be under-estimated, results in an overall prevalence of 14% (12,027 people aged 5+ years): 13% of males and 15% of females. The gender differences are smaller in the age groups over 65 years compared with the Washington Group definition, with a second slightly smaller 'peak' in prevalence for females in the age group 50-54 years compared with males (**Figure 47**).

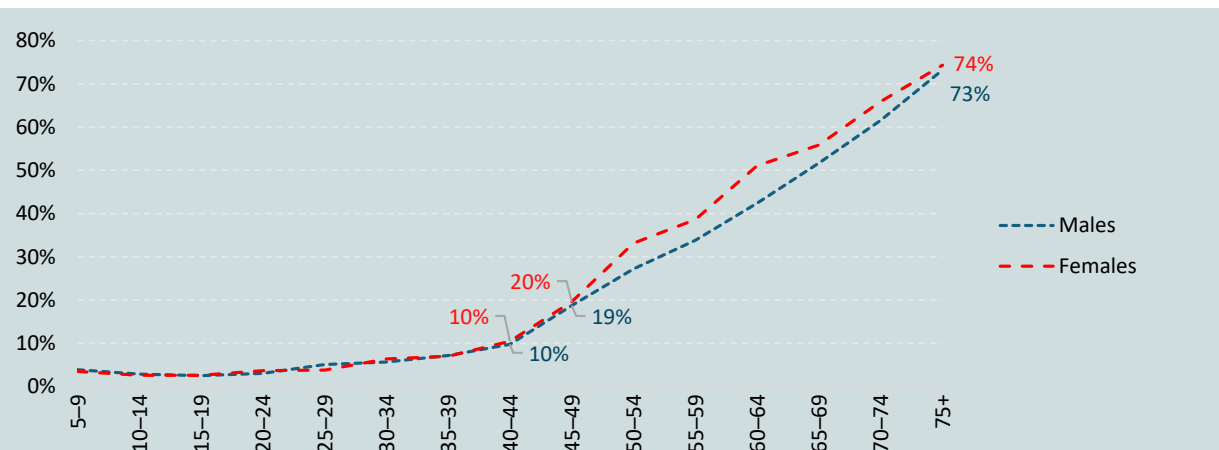


Figure 47. Share of usual residents aged 5+ years, according to a broadened Washington Group disability status (persons who have some difficulty or more for one or more of 6 functioning domains), by age group and sex

At the national level, the general trend is that all forms of ability decrease with age, with a slightly higher proportion of females than males reporting difficulties. At functioning domain level, there is an increase in the proportion of men aged 55–59 years and women aged 45–49 years reporting with difficulties remembering or concentrating.

Of the 33,335 young people aged 5–18 years, 304 or 1% reported having at least “a lot, or cannot do at all” functional difficulty seeing, hearing, walking, in cognition, self-care, or communication (167 males and 137 females). There were 92 males (55% of males with disabilities) and 90 females (66% of females with disabilities) currently attending school, with 45% of males and 34% of females not currently or never attending school.

Table 32. Summary of school attendance of usual residents aged 5–18 years, by sex and disability status

	Males			Females			Total
	With disabilities	Without disabilities	Total	With disabilities	Without disabilities	Total	
Never attended	45	565	610	35	458	493	1,103
Ever attended	122	16,531	16,653	102	15,477	15,579	32,232
Not currently	30	1,155	1,185	12	604	616	1,801
Currently attending	92	15,376	15,468	90	14,873	14,963	30,431
Total	167	17,096	17,263	137	15,935	16,072	33,335

Note: 3 persons did not state their school attendance.

Disability and medical reasons are the two main reasons for the 122 school age children and young people who are not currently or had never attended school (85% of males and 72% of females) suggesting an unmet need for this group for learning, education and training, with males living with disabilities more likely to be out of school than females. There were 126 males and 88 females in this group, with a higher proportion of females reporting reasons beyond disability and medical reasons than males (**Figure 48**).

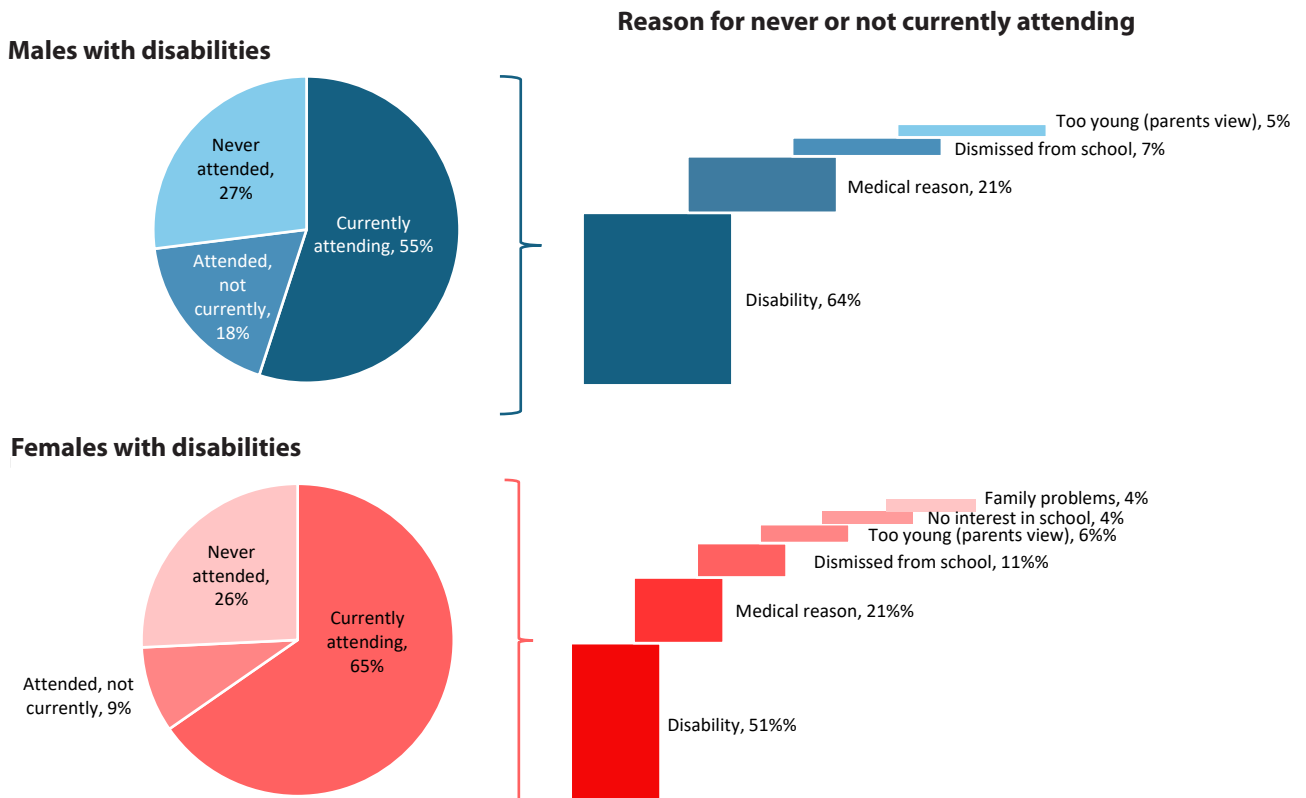


Figure 48. School attendance and reason for not attending school of usual residents aged 5–18 years with disabilities, by sex

Note: Reasons for not attending less than 3% are not representing on this figure.

Figure 49 provides an overview of the labour force status for the 3,102 persons with disabilities aged 15+ years, 1,793 females (58%) and 1,309 males (42%). Males with disabilities were more likely to be employed (28%) than females (21%). People with disabilities are more often outside the labour force than people without disabilities. More than seven out of 10 persons with disabilities are outside labour force, 71% of males and 78% of females, compared with 43% of males and 55% of females without disabilities. A quarter (26%) of males and 17% of females are outside the labour force because of long-term illness, injury or disability, with 37% of females, were mainly performing household duties compared to 19% of males.

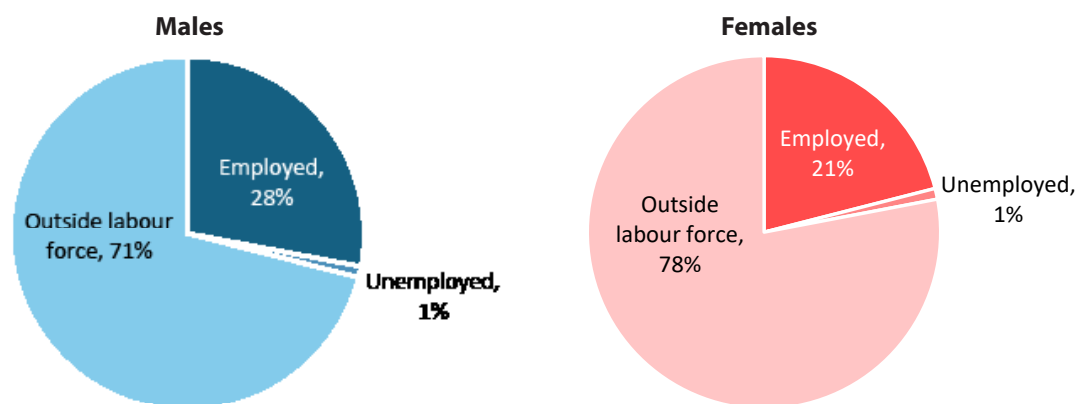


Figure 49. Labour force status of usual residents aged 15+ years with disabilities, by sex

Persons with disabilities were less likely to have used the Internet in the last 3 months; 56% of males without disabilities used the internet, compared with 29% of males with disabilities

and 61% of females without disabilities used the internet compared to 30% of females with disabilities (**Figure 50**).

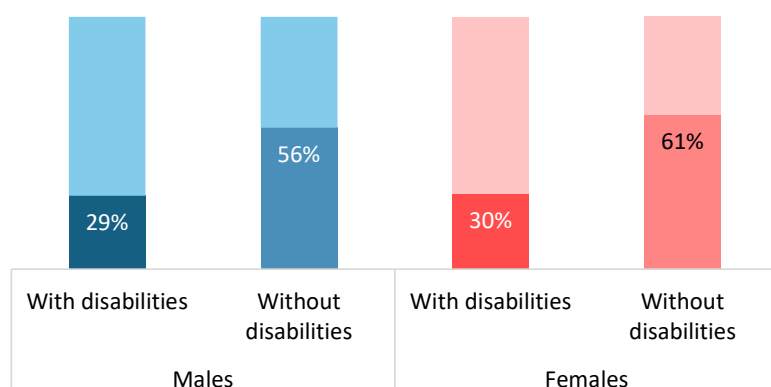


Figure 50. Proportion of usual residents aged 10+ years who used the Internet in the last 3 months, by disability status and sex

There were 3,003 persons with disabilities aged 21+ years (58% of which are females) with 82% of females and 78% of males registered to vote in the election (**Figure 51**). A significant proportion (53% of males and 38% of females) did not register to vote because of their disability, with 36% of females reporting that they were ‘very old’ as their reason for not registering to vote (**Table 33**).

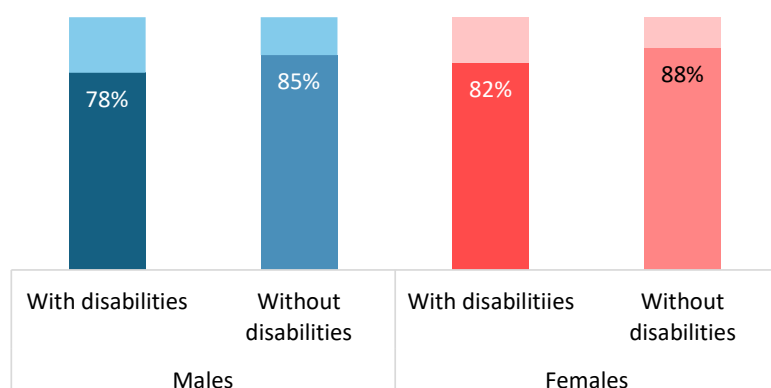


Figure 51. Proportion of usual residents aged 21+ years registered to vote, by disability status and sex

Table 33. Proportion of usual residents aged 21+ years with disabilities not registered to vote, by reason and sex

	Males	Females
Was away overseas	3%	2%
Very old	16%	36%
Sick	10%	8%
Physically disabled	53%	38%
Not Interested	4%	5%
Don't know where to register	6%	4%
Not a citizen	4%	3%
ID problem – missing, none, expired, etc.	1%	2%
Other reasons	3%	3%

7. Wellbeing (deprivation)

The TSD, through its census and survey programme, is part of a national multi-stakeholder programme exploring the dimensions of poverty beyond traditional definitions and measures of household income and expenditure to inform Government social protection policy.

The Census included two questions on deprivation for persons aged 15+ years: if they have enough money to replace worn-out clothes and if they have enough money to buy presents for friends or family once a year. Slightly more females than males said that they had enough money to replace worn out clothes, 67% of females and 65% of males, and across all age groups except those aged 70+ years (**Table 34**). Both males and females in the 15–19 years age group were the most likely not to be able to afford to replace their clothing (36% of males and 35% of females aged 15–19 years).

Table 34. Number of usual residents aged 15+ years who can and cannot afford to replace clothes, by age group and sex

Age group	Money for clothing						Total
	Yes		No, does not want to replace them		No, cannot afford to replace them		
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	
15–19	2,459	2,458	1,109	1,084	1,972	1,880	10,962
20–24	2,200	2,681	700	680	662	645	7,568
25–29	1,892	2,628	456	532	299	347	6,154
30–34	1,743	2,337	403	481	239	296	5,499
35–39	1,797	2,405	410	518	217	294	5,641
40–44	1,697	2,053	397	444	227	263	5,081
45–49	1,591	1,799	413	461	219	238	4,721
50–54	1,687	1,772	453	415	234	193	4,754
55–59	1,347	1,314	400	339	174	184	3,758
60–64	912	1,051	298	306	167	152	2,886
65–69	682	814	247	296	116	150	2,305
70–74	508	577	168	209	83	93	1,638
75+	646	891	231	400	142	173	2,483
Total	19,161	22,780	5,685	6,165	4,751	4,908	63,450

Note: 6 people do not state whether or not they are deprived of money to buy clothes.

Slightly more females than males said that they had enough money to buy presents for family or friends, 69% of females and 67% of males. The 15–19 age group for males and females had the highest proportions not being able to afford presents: 42% of males and 43% of females (**Table 35**).

Table 35. Number of usual residents aged 15+ years who can and cannot afford buying presents, by age group and sex

Age group	Money for presents						Total
	Yes		No, does not want to		No, cannot afford to		
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	
15–19	2,305	2,330	897	875	2,338	2,217	10,962
20–24	2,173	2,616	592	551	797	839	7,568
25–29	1,929	2,669	327	397	391	441	6,154
30–34	1,783	2,392	269	339	333	383	5,499
35–39	1,843	2,478	302	363	279	376	5,641
40–44	1,775	2,112	257	313	289	335	5,081
45–49	1,715	1,889	247	306	261	303	4,721
50–54	1,802	1,859	304	279	268	242	4,754
55–59	1,459	1,394	252	210	210	233	3,758
60–64	989	1,126	185	194	203	189	2,886
65–69	747	906	143	165	155	189	2,305
70–74	545	649	106	106	108	124	1,638
75+	700	1,000	139	218	180	246	2,483
Total	19,765	23,420	4,020	4,316	5,812	6,117	63,450

Note: 6 people do not state whether or not they are deprived of money to buy presents.

Overall, more people could not afford presents (11,929) than clothing (9,659) and 12,915 did not have enough money to replace worn out clothes or give presents. A large proportion of these males and females (respectively 68% and 77%) are outside the labour force (**Figure 52**), mainly males working in own farming or gardening, raising animals or livestock, fishing and handicrafts, students of both sexes and females mainly doing household duties were most likely not to have sufficient money. Employed people who cannot afford to buy clothes or a gift in the year are people temporarily absent from work or business.

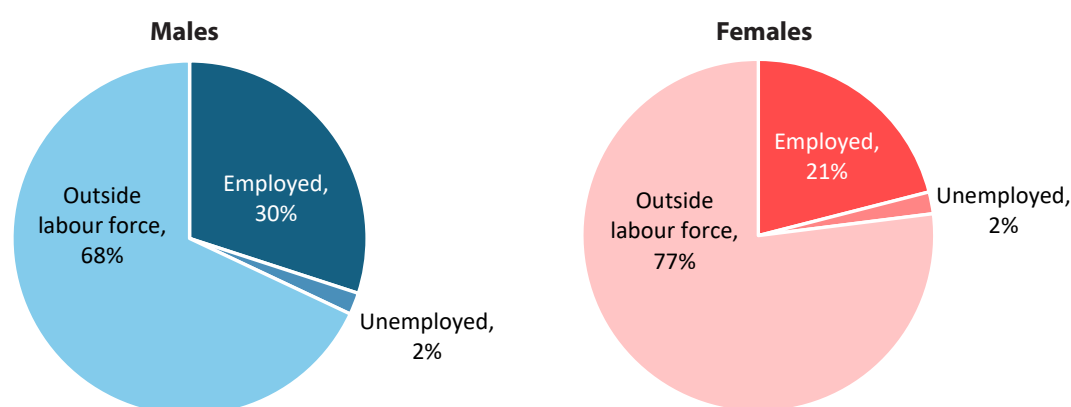


Figure 52. Labour force status of usual residents aged 15+ years with not enough money to replace clothes or give presents, by sex



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8. Access to Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

In many countries, fewer women than men use the Internet and computers, with smaller differences in younger age groups than older ones (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017). Tonga was the first Pacific country to liberalise its telecommunications sector. At the time of the Census, Tonga Communications Corporation and Digicel Tonga were the only active licensed telecommunications operators. Since 2002, access to basic telecommunications has increased significantly. Retail tariffs for voice services in Tonga are among the lowest in the region and Tonga's level of penetration of mobile services is among the highest (about 60%). Broadband internet access, however, remains extremely limited in terms of penetration, primarily because of its high cost and poor performance (Asian Development Bank).

8.1. MOBILE PHONE USE

Overall, 62% of people aged 10+ years had a working cell phone from at least one provider, 63% of females and 62% of males. Up to the age of 50 years, proportions of male and female with cell phones are similar, but more males aged 50+ years had a cell phone than females.

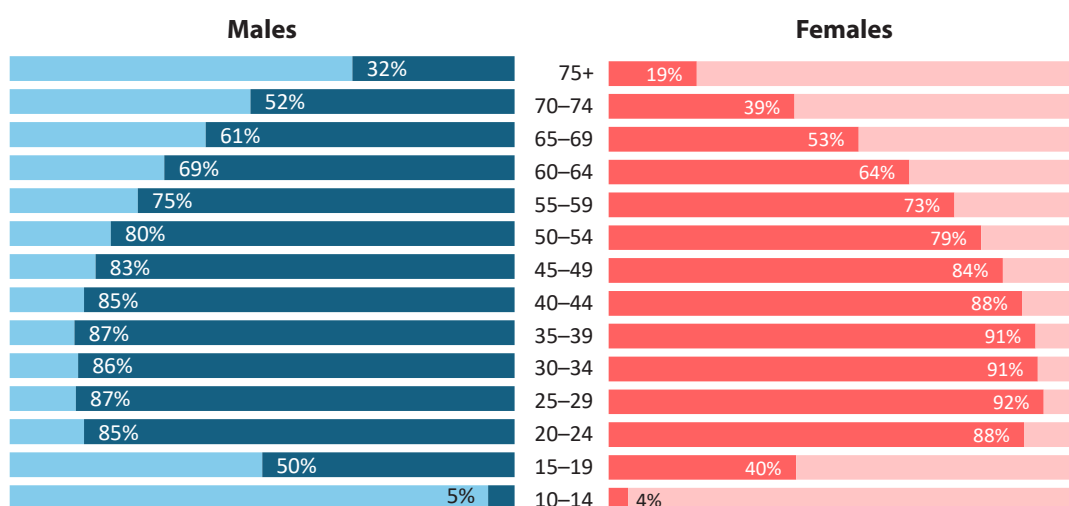


Figure 53. Proportion of usual residents aged 10+ years with or without a working cell phone, by age group and sex

Males aged 15–19 years were more likely than females to use a cell phone, however, a slightly higher proportion of females than males aged 20–49 years used a cell phone (**Figure 53**). Overall, the highest proportion of cell phone users were in Tongatapu, and the gender differences in the older age groups were less pronounced in 'Eua, while females in Vava'u aged 20–69 years were more likely than males to use cell phones, as opposed to the national distribution (**Table 36**).

Table 36. Proportion of usual residents aged 10+ years using a cell phone, by island division, age group and sex

Age group	Island									
	Tongatapu		Vava'u		Ha'apai		'Eua		Ongo Niua	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
10–14	5%	5%	4%	4%	3%	3%	5%	2%	9%	4%
15–19	50%	42%	49%	34%	51%	33%	45%	33%	52%	29%
20–24	85%	88%	85%	88%	85%	88%	87%	88%	87%	93%
25–29	87%	93%	82%	90%	93%	92%	89%	87%	97%	93%
30–34	87%	92%	84%	91%	83%	88%	86%	89%	78%	79%
35–39	89%	91%	80%	90%	84%	88%	92%	85%	77%	88%
40–44	87%	88%	80%	86%	85%	87%	86%	90%	68%	93%
45–49	85%	84%	78%	85%	76%	79%	84%	83%	70%	67%
50–54	82%	79%	75%	79%	76%	73%	76%	83%	76%	47%
55–59	77%	74%	70%	74%	68%	68%	66%	71%	69%	52%
60–64	72%	64%	63%	69%	62%	54%	62%	60%	50%	45%
65–69	62%	53%	63%	50%	61%	57%	49%	49%	64%	60%
70–74	54%	39%	52%	40%	50%	48%	40%	41%	29%	17%
75+	33%	19%	29%	18%	36%	20%	24%	20%	29%	10%
Total	63%	64%	58%	60%	58%	60%	59%	58%	59%	53%

Overall, 91% of cell phone users access the Internet, 90% of males and 93% of females, with a slightly higher proportion of females than males aged 30-69 years using their mobile phone for the internet (**Figure 55**).

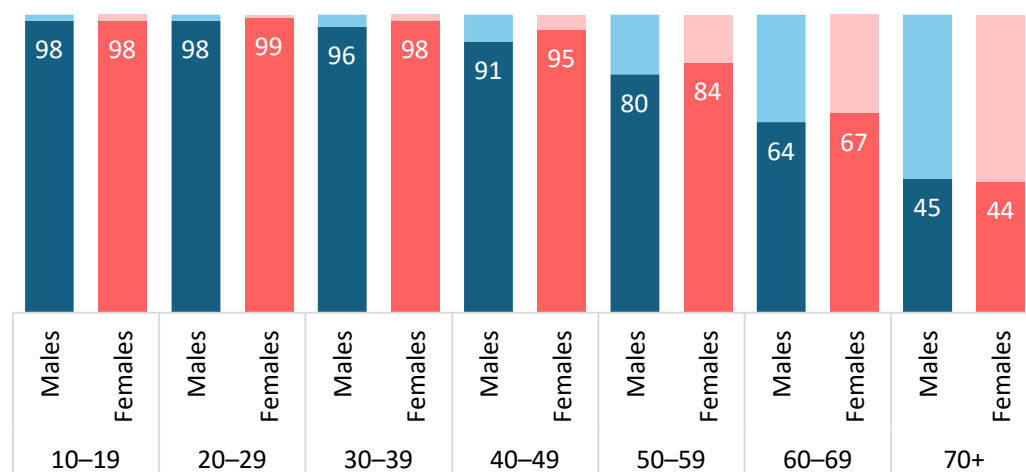


Figure 54. Proportion of usual residents aged 10+ years, using a mobile phone for the Internet, by sex and age group (%)

8.2. INTERNET ACCESS

The Census asked people aged 10+ years if they had used the Internet in the last 3 months, with 55% of males and 60% of females reporting Internet use, substantiating the higher

proportion of females than males using their cell phones for the Internet. Internet usage was higher for females than males aged 25-59 years, while males aged 15–19 years were more likely than females to have used the Internet (similar to cell phone use for this age group). The Census data shows that for both males and females, use of cell phones and the Internet is not universal, especially for females in younger and older age groups (**Figure 55**).

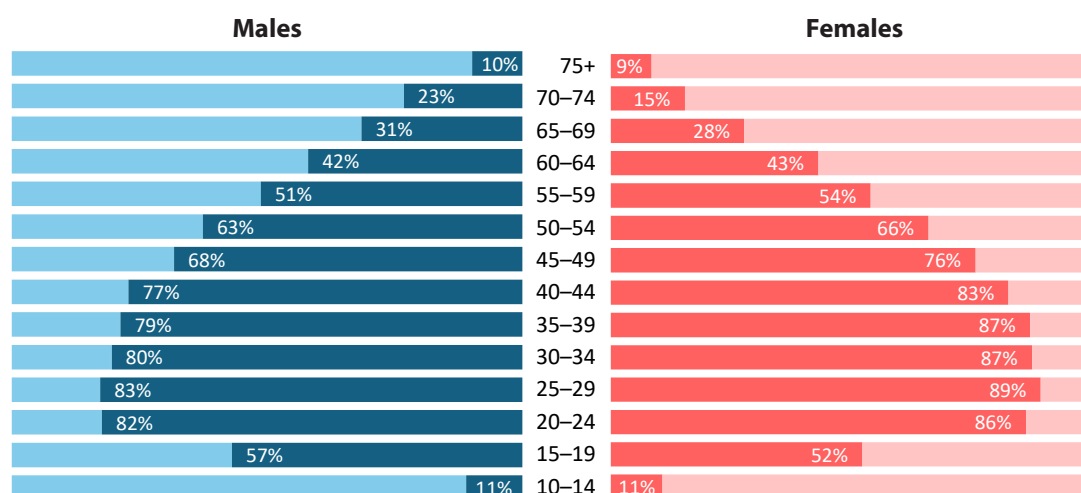


Figure 55. Proportion of usual residents aged 10+ years, using Internet in the last 3 months, by age group and sex

Males and females are using internet from the same location and almost for the same purposes. Most males and females access the Internet from their homes, and while females have a lower employment rate than males, the gender difference is not significant in Internet access from ‘employment facilities’ (i.e. place of work) (16% of males and 14% of females). Most people in Tonga use the Internet for social media (91% of males and 93% of females) and communication (62% of males and 63% of females), with females share of Internet use for education slightly higher than males and the use for work or business slightly higher for males (**Figure 56**).

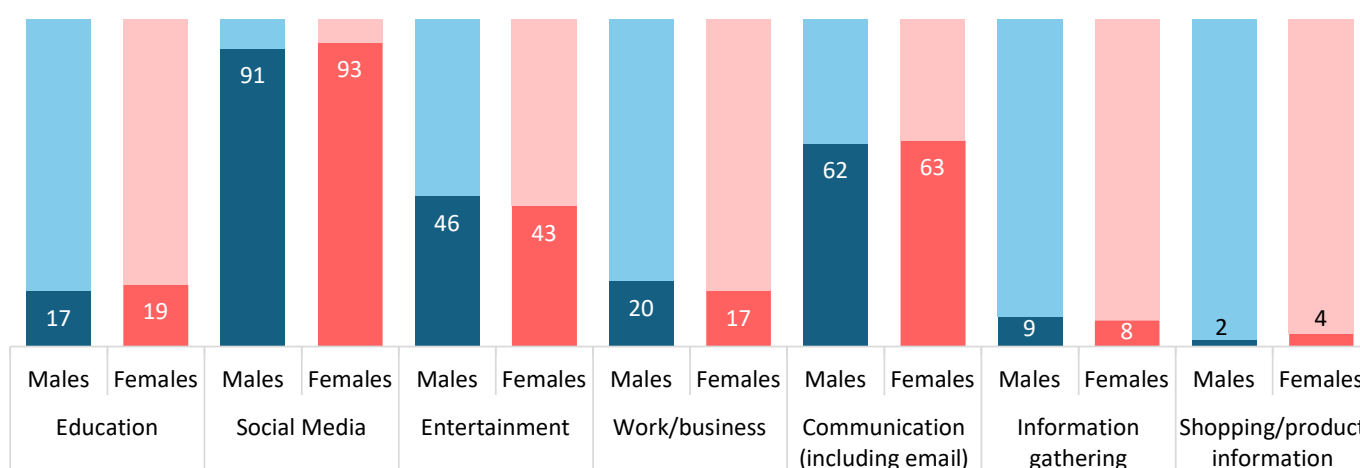


Figure 56. Proportion of usual residents aged 10+ years, using internet, by sex and type of use

Internet use in the last 3 months is related to highest level of schooling completed, with 85% of males and 89% of females with tertiary education using the internet, compared to

57% of males and 60% of females with secondary education as the highest level completed. Females comprised almost two-thirds or 62% of internet users who had completed tertiary level, in line with the Census finding that 60% of people who had attended tertiary education in Tonga are women (**Table 37**).

Table 37. Number of usual residents aged 10+ years who used the internet in the last 3 months, by highest level of schooling completed

Internet use and highest level of education attended	Sex		Total
	Males	Females	
No school, pre-school or primary			
Didn't use internet	5,283	4,882	10,165
Used internet	1,274	1,263	2,537
Total	6,557	6,145	12,702
Secondary			
Didn't use internet	9,639	10,095	19,734
Used internet	12,692	15,331	28,023
Total	22,331	25,426	47,757
Technical and Vocational			
Didn't use internet	574	305	879
Used internet	2,358	1,488	3,846
Total	2,932	1,793	4,725
Tertiary/University			
Didn't use internet	606	669	1,275
Used internet	3,409	5,471	8,880
Total	4,015	6,140	10,155
Total	35,835	39,504	75,339

When age group is combined with internet use and highest level of schooling attained, over two times more females than males aged 20–29 years with tertiary level education used the internet.

Figure 57 illustrates Internet use by age group and highest level of education attended, showing that Internet use increases for higher levels of education, especially for females with tertiary level attendance, noting the smaller numbers of females than males with Technical or Vocational education.

A higher proportion of economically active females than males used the Internet in the last 3 months, with 90% of females working for pay using the Internet compared with 81% of males working for pay as their current main activity. Females comprise 64% of those who stated that looking for work was their main activity, however 84% of females looking for work had used the Internet, compared with 78% of males. There were 1,243 males and 792 females reporting that their main activity was 'working in any kind of business activity', with 86% of females using the internet compared with 78% of males (**Figure 58**).

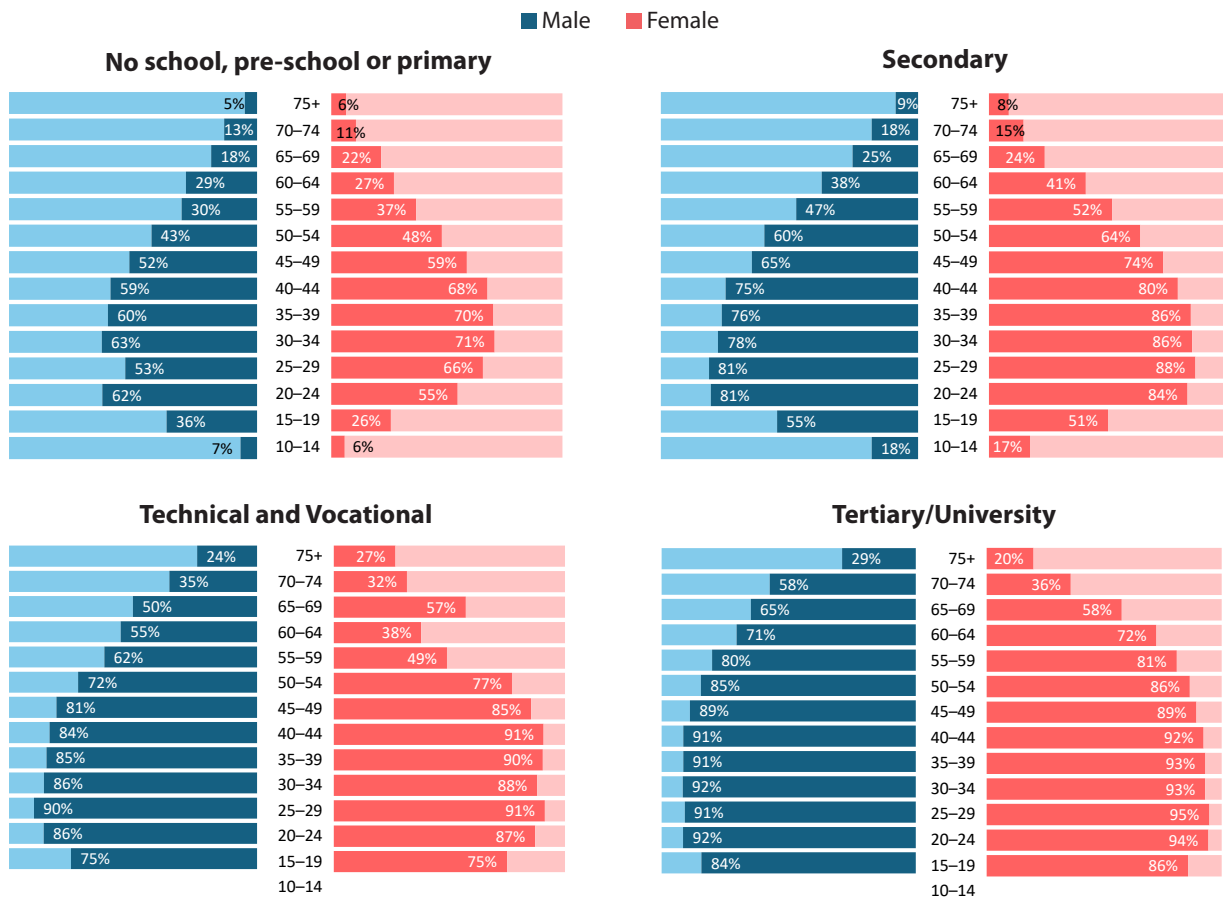


Figure 57. Proportion of usual residents aged 10+ years using Internet in the last 3 months, by age group, highest level of schooling attained and sex

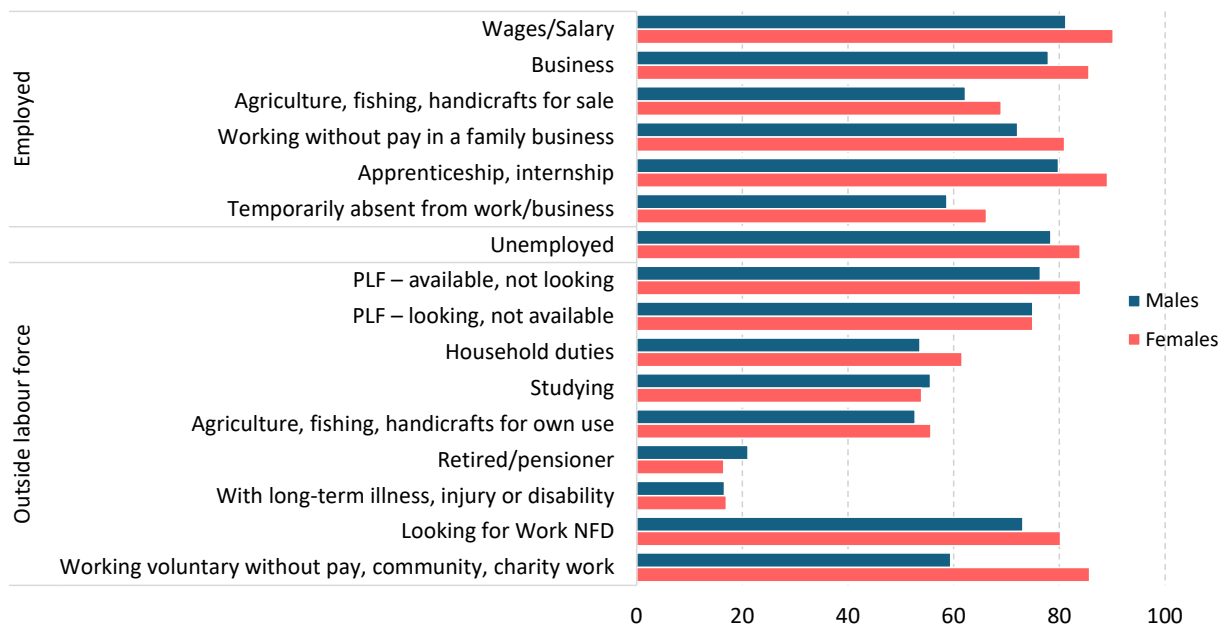


Figure 58. Proportion of usual residents aged 15+ years, using internet in the last 3 month, by the main current activity and sex

Note: 6 people did not state their main activity.

9. Voter registration

Voting in national and local government elections is one important dimension of civic engagement, which enables people to shape the society they live in and more broadly support sustainable development and decision making. Civic engagement is particularly important to subgroups which are under-represented in formal political structures, such as women and young people, as it affords these groups the opportunity to voice their unique concerns. It is currently unclear if a gender gap in voting still exists. Differences exist, in fact, between the results of voter surveys, generally finding that more men than women vote, and analysis of official voting numbers for men and women in developed countries, indicating that more women vote (Stockemer & Sundstrom, 2023). Census data can be used to explore respondent reported civic engagement of women and men to see if this is the case in Tonga. This can then be validated by the Tongan Electoral Commission voter data.

Tonga is a constitutional monarchy with two levels of government, local and national. Local government elections are held every 3 years. The legislative assembly is a unicameral Parliament appointed every four years in a first-past-the-post system with universal suffrage of all adults aged over 21 years with some exceptions.⁵ The 17 People's Representatives are voted for by the general population and nine Noble Members are elected to represent the 33 hereditary Nobles of Tonga. The King retains important powers, including the authority to veto legislation, dissolve the parliament, and appoint judicial officials⁶.

The right to identity is a fundamental human right, including birth certification and other forms of identity. Birth certificates are mandatory for all new school entrants and are required for a range of life events such as marriage, to obtain a passport and registration for the National Identity Card. Tonga's modern e-society and e-governance is based on identities validated and verified by the government. The mandatory National Identity Card was introduced in Tonga in 2010 for residents aged 14+ years, and Electoral Regulations require registered voters to produce these identity cards – or another form of identification satisfactory to the Returning Officer – at polling stations.

Overall, 86% or 43,815 of usual residents in private households were registered to vote, 24,159 females (88% of the females) and 19,656 males (85% of the males) (**Figure 59**). Females comprise 55% of registered voters and males 45%, possibly because more males than females were not in Tonga during the Census due to migrant labour, other travel and border closures.

.....
5 The Constitution Section 64 Qualification of Electors defines those entitled to vote "being a male or female can read and write and is not insane or imbecile and is not disabled [as a convict]".
[NATLEX - Tonga - Constitution of the Kingdom of Tonga \[Official Revised Edition of 1988\].](#)

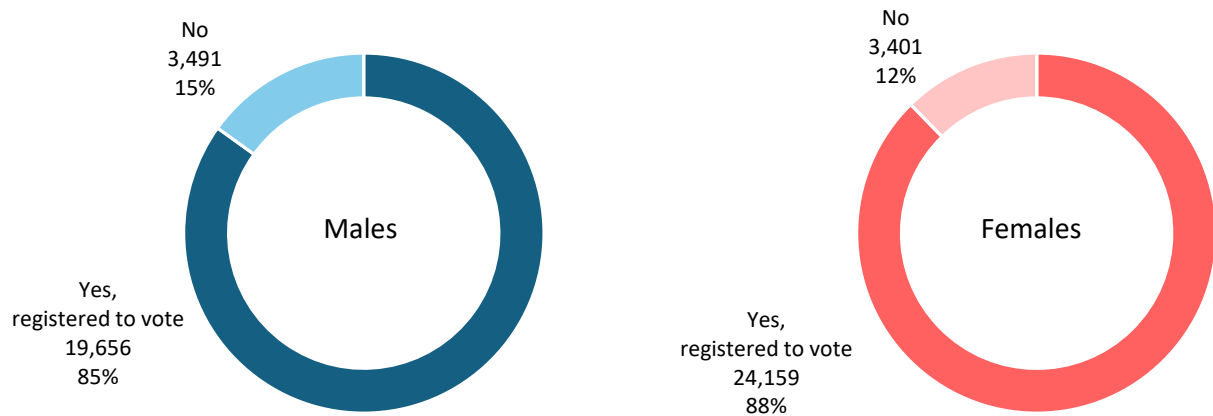


Figure 59. Usual residents aged 20+ years, registered or not to vote, by sex

More males than females were not registered to vote because they were not interested (31% of males, 28% of females not registered), while slightly more females than males did not know where to register (**Figure 60**). Other reasons cited include not being a citizen, being physically disabled, sick or very old.

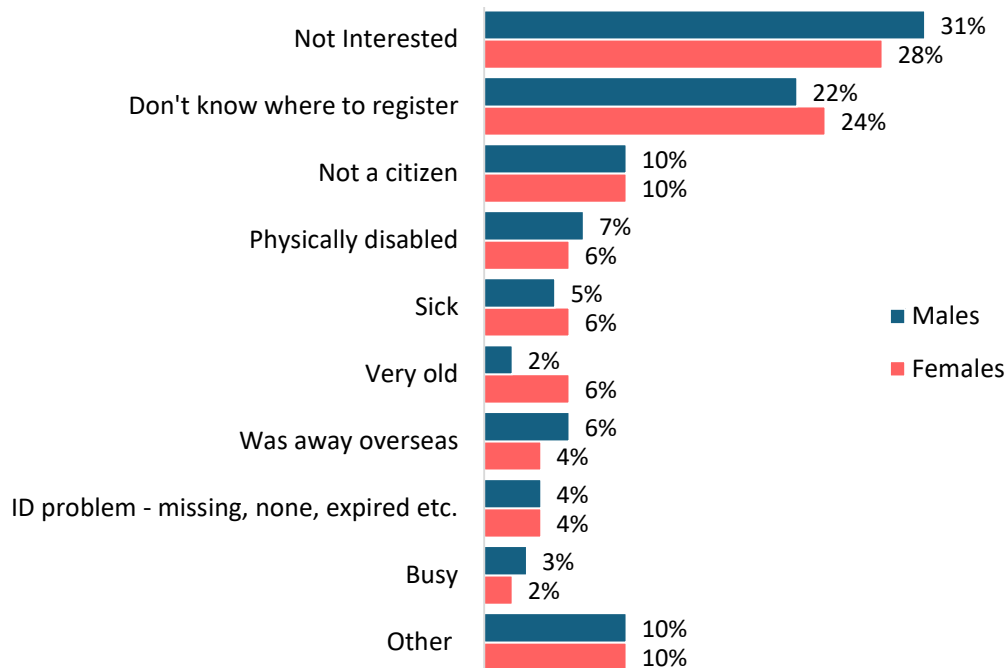


Figure 60. Usual residents aged 20+ years, reasons for not registering to vote and sex

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10. Household amenities and housing

The Census provides important background information on access to safe drinking water, sanitation and use of renewable energy for cooking and lighting. This information is useful in assessing the work and health burden of women and men, boys and girls (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2017). For example, the gender division of labour in Tonga means that women are mostly responsible for managing household water, sanitation and hygiene as well as cooking and food preparation and looking after dependents (children, older persons, persons living with disability and other chronic conditions) while men are responsible for providing the food and other assets through work for pay or profit.

It is difficult to analyse gender equality from Census housing conditions and household data because the Census doesn't measure intrahousehold (i.e. within the household) usage of things like utilities and economic assets owned by the household such as vehicles and cell phones, as well as the dwelling and land itself. In Tonga, women do not have land and property rights, and those outside marriage choose to lease or rent land and housing.

In Tonga, women cannot register land under their own name, but once they have leased a piece of land, they have the same rights as landowners. In fact, when women lease a piece of land - it is the same as owning that piece of land until the lease expires, or they can decide to transfer the lease to one of their children or someone else. A higher proportion of female household heads than male household heads own their house outright without a loan, and the overall quality of housing is high with most constructed from modern and permanent materials. Female household heads were slightly less likely to be crowded (more than two people per room) than male household heads (**Table 38**). Overall, 88% of households had access to improved sources of drinking water, with a significant proportion of households relying on drinking water from their own water tank. Almost all households – 95% - rely on non-renewable energy for cooking, mostly propane gas (LPG), where available, and firewood or coconut shells and the main form of renewable energy used for cooking is biogas. Renewable energy is not widely used for lighting, with only 3% of households mainly using solar energy.

A higher proportion of male household heads than female-headed ones had transportation assets: 56% of male household heads owned a car compared to 52% of female household heads, 11% owned a truck compared to 5% of female household heads and 38% owned a van compared to 27% of female-headed. Approximately 60% of households had a battery powered radio, 57% of male household heads and 55% of female headed ones, with 97% of households having access to mobile phones and 58% a television screen, implying that most households have at least one means of accessing information (**Table 39**).

Table 38. Household characteristics, by sex of the households

	Male-headed	Female-headed	Total		Male-headed	Female-headed	Total
Percent of population living in private households:							
Dwelling tenure				Sanitation facility			
Own the house outright (no loan)	70%	75%	72%	Improved facility	99%	99%	99%
Owned with a mortgage or loan	7%	7%	7%	Flush to piped septic tank	89%	91%	89%
Rented (With any payments)	3%	3%	3%	Pour to piped septic tank	5%	5%	5%
Occupied without payment	16%	14%	15%	Pit latrine with slab	4%	3%	3%
Occupied without payment (from employer)	4%	1%	3%	Composting toilet	1%	0%	1%
Floor – main material				Not improved facility			
Concrete/cement/bricks	84%	84%	84%	Flush or pour-flush to elsewhere	1%	1%	1%
Wood	15%	14%	14%	Pit latrine without slab or open pit	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%
Metal/iron/aluminium	1%	1%	1%	Bucket, hanging toilet or hanging latrine	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
Traditional materials	1%	0.3%	0.5%	No facilities or bush or field	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
Other	0.3%	0.3%	0.3%	Cooking fuel – main source			
Roof – main material				Renewable			
Metal/Iron/Aluminium	91%	91%	91%	Bio Gas	5%	5%	5%
Wood	7%	7%	7%	Solar power	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Concrete/Cement/Bricks	2%	1%	2%	Non-renewable			
Traditional materials	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	Propane gas (LPG)	79%	82%	80%
Other	0.1%	-	0.04%	Electricity	4%	4%	4%
People per room				Kerosene			
Less than 2	62%	64%	62%	Wood and coconut husks/shells	11%	8%	11%
2 or more	38%	36%	38%	Other	0.1%	0.2%	0.1%
Source of drinking water				Lighting – main source			
Improved source of drinking water				Renewable			
Piped water supply (Tap water)	6%	6%	6%	Solar	3%	3%	3%
Own water tank	67%	65%	67%	Non-renewable			
Neighbor/Community/Church water tank	15%	15%	15%	Public power supply (electricity)	95%	96%	95%
Not improved source				Own generator			
Bottled water (purchased water)	11%	13%	12%	Kerosene/Petroleum	0%	0%	0%
Boiled water	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	Other (candle, torch etc.)			
Other	0.1%	0.05%	0.1%		1%	1%	1%

Table 39. Household ownership of goods/assets by sex of the households

	Male-headed	Female-headed	Total
Percent of private households			
Telefoni Mopaila (Mobile phone)	97%	97%	97%
Telefoni Laine (Landlines)	19%	22%	20%
Tepileti (Tablets)	20%	21%	21%
Komipiuta pe Lepitopu (Desktop/Laptop computers)	40%	37%	40%
Misini CD pe DVD (CD/DVD players)	47%	44%	46%
Letio Fakamaka (Battery powered radio)	57%	55%	57%
Televisone (Television screen)	59%	57%	58%
Tikatele 'Uhila (Electric Kettle)	67%	67%	67%
Fakapaku 'Uhila (Electric frying pans)	34%	34%	34%
'Aisi Fakamokomoko (Refrigerator)	54%	57%	55%
'Aisi Poloka (Freezer)	65%	65%	65%
Misini Tuitui (Sewing Machine)	19%	23%	20%
Misini Fo (Washing Machine)	85%	85%	85%
'Ea Koni (Air Conditioner)	3%	2%	3%
Sitou (Stove)	92%	92%	92%
Hita Vaimafana (Water heater)	12%	10%	11%
Tangike filita vai (Plastic water tank)	54%	51%	53%
Tangike Sima Vai (Cement water tank)	34%	34%	34%
Sola (Solar System)	5%	4%	5%
Senoleita (Generator)	11%	7%	10%
Pasikala (Bicycles)	17%	12%	16%
Popao (Canoes)	1%	0.5%	1%
Vaka (Boats)	5%	2%	4%
Misini vaka Tu'u loto (In-board Engine)	1%	0.4%	1%
Misini vaka Fakapipiki (Out-board Engine)	4%	1%	3%
Ka (Cars)	56%	52%	55%
Loli (Truck)	11%	5%	10%
Veeni (Van)	38%	27%	35%
Paiki (Motorbikes)	1%	1%	1%
Pasi (Bus)	0.4%	0.1%	0.3%

As noted above, remittances are an important source of income for female household heads, with just over half or 52% of female household heads reporting remittances as the main source of household income, compared with 33% of male household heads (**Figure 61**). This is possibly due to their spouse being temporarily absent and participating in a temporary labour scheme. male household heads were more likely to report 'regular salary' as the main source of household income.

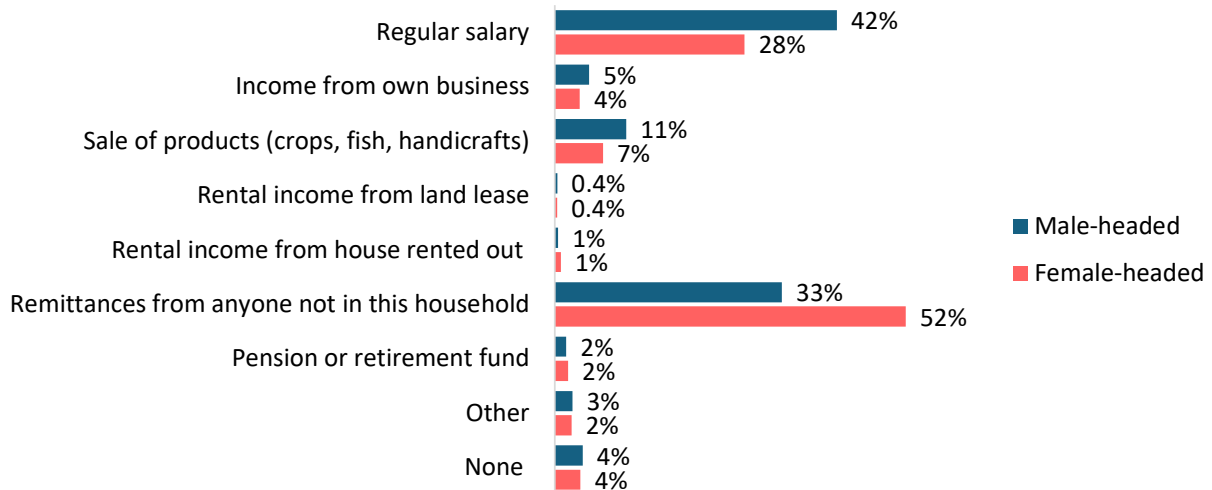


Figure 61. Main source of household income by sex of the household head

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