



IN BRIEF



GENDER EQUALITY BRIEF FOR NAURU

Women's Human Rights

Nauru's 1968 [Constitution](#) states that all people in Nauru are entitled to fundamental rights and freedoms regardless of race, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed, or sex, although such rights [may not always be protected in practice](#).

Nauru is a [matrilineal society](#) in which, traditionally, women are the custodians of family land, and land ownership is inherited through the maternal side of a family. Within this traditional role, women play an important part in decision-making regarding the use of land. However, the Nauru Island Association of Non-Government Organisations [consider that](#) women's dominant role in landownership and decision-making has significantly diminished in modern times. In 2013, [34% of households were headed by women](#).

Women hold the same rights as men to apply for passports and to migrate. The [net migration rate was -1.0% for women](#) and -1.2% for men between 2006 and 2011, suggesting that more Nauruan men than women are emigrating.

The [minimum age of consent to sexual activity](#) in Nauru is 17 for both boys and girls. Under the [2016 Crimes Act](#), reasonable belief that a victim was of legal age to consent is, however, considered to be a viable defence for crimes against victims between the ages of 13 and 16. [Data from 2007](#) states that 55% of Nauruan women between the ages of 20 and 49 report having had sexual intercourse by age 18, with 12.9% reporting having sexual intercourse by age 15. The rates are higher among the 15-24 age group, where 64.2% report having sexual intercourse by age 18, and 14.8% before age 15. Further, the [2016 Crimes Act](#) criminalises rape and sexual offences within marriages and *de facto* relationships, and states that evidence of physical resistance is not necessary to prove non-consent.

Under the [Births Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2017](#) the legal marriage age for girls was raised from 16 to 18, in line with the legal marriage age for men. Data collected for the [2011 Census](#) found that 13.4% of the female population were married between the ages of 15 and 19, compared to 3.6% of the male population of the same age group. The average age at marriage was 22.6 for

women and 24.4 for men. There is [a lack of protection](#) – for example relating to property division or maintenance – in Nauruan law for *de facto* couples. There is currently a review being conducted of all Family Law legislations in Nauru.

Legal Marriage Age in Nauru

Internationally accepted age:



Average marriage age in Nauru:



Source: [Births Deaths and Marriages Registration Act 2017](#)

Nauru is a signatory to the 2011 [Joint Statement on Ending Acts of Violence Related Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#) at the UN Human Rights Council. Nauruan law [does not prohibit discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity](#). Same-sex sexual activity in Nauru was [decriminalised in 2016](#), when the 1899 Criminal Code was repealed by the 2016 Crimes Act.

A regional processing centre for asylum seekers and refugees arriving in Australia has been periodically operational in Nauru since 2001, and the human rights of women in detention in Nauru has previously been noted as an area of concern by a number of international agencies.¹ UNICEF [noted in 2017](#) that women and children living in detention in Nauru were at high risk of physical and sexual violence. As of [31 July 2021](#), there were 78 refugees, 13 non-refugees and 16 people currently within the refugee application process living in Nauru. All refugees now live within the community, and the regional processing centre, which housed 1,233 people at its peak in 2014, has reportedly been empty since 2019.

1 According to Australian Border Force (2019) and Parliament of Australia (2016), under agreements with Australia dating back to 2001, Nauru has periodically run a regional processing centre for asylum seekers who attempt to enter Australia by boat. In the most recent period of offshore transfers between September 2012 and September 2014, 4,183 asylum seekers who arrived in Australia were transferred to offshore processing centres in Nauru and Papua New Guinea.

Governance and Participation in Public Life

Nauru has a unicameral Parliament consisting of 19 members. Citizens over the age of 20 vote in general elections every three years, with the most recent election taking place in 2019.

There were [five female and 55 male candidates](#) in the 2019 election, with women therefore accounting for 8% of election candidates. [Two women were successfully elected](#), resulting in 10.5% female representation in legislature. Female candidates therefore had a success rate of 40.0% compared to a success rate of 30.9% for male candidates.

The Electoral Commission [reports](#) that out of 86 candidates who have formally declared their intention to be nominated to contest the 2022 Parliamentary Elections, 12 are candidates are female. Women therefore represent 14% of candidates in the 2022 Parliamentary Elections.

Female Representation in National Parliament in Nauru



Source: [Pacific Women in Politics, Inter-Parliamentary Union March 2022](#)

The political system in Nauru is centred on independent candidates rather than political parties and, as [noted by UNICEF in 2017](#), voting in general elections appears to be significantly impacted by familial ties. There are currently [no Temporary Special Measures in place](#) to improve the representation of women in political and leadership roles. Previous consultations have found opposition to Temporary Special Measures in Nauru: [women reportedly expressed reservations](#) that it would create an unfair advantage for women in politics.

Women are [key members of the community committees](#) of the 14 districts of Nauru, in which elected representatives represent their community at government and civil society consultations and organize community projects. There is no sex-disaggregated data

available from the community committees.

[Matrilineal traditions in Nauru](#) provide women with influence within their homes and communities, although this influence does not extend to all spheres of society. While it is [reported](#) that a large number of public sector agencies have been historically headed by women, women are [reported to face challenges](#) with regards to participation in political and leadership positions.

In a 2021 [analysis](#) of 10 Nauru organisations by the Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, women held 12% of Director positions on the boards of state-owned enterprises. In 2016, an estimated [25% of senior management positions in the public sector](#) in Nauru were held by women.

Nauru's civil service is predominantly female, although a lack of official sex-disaggregated data makes it difficult to analyse the distribution of female workers in senior and leadership positions. Available data can appear contradictory. Pacific Women [noted in 2015](#) that the majority of women in public service are concentrated in lower-level positions, while the Government of Nauru [stated in 2017](#) that the majority of senior key government positions are held by women. According to the Department of Women's and Social Development Affairs, as of September 2021 there were 1,496 members of the Government Civil Service (866 women and 630 men).

In terms of women's leadership in other sectors, the majority of [Nauruan overseas missions, consulates and ambassadors](#) are women. Official data on the gender composition of Nauru's police is not publicly available although [women are known to be well represented within specific agencies](#) of the police force: in 2017, Child Protection Services was comprised of six female and two male officers, while the Domestic Violence Unit was comprised of three female and one male officers. The Nauru Police Force had [103 employees in 2016](#). Nauru's first female Supreme Court judge and female magistrate were [appointed in 2014](#). The Women's and Social Development Affairs department has completed a cabinet submission calling for Gender Parity in the Judiciary.² The Judiciary in Nauru has one resident magistrate, three Supreme Court Judges, and four Court of Appeal Judges, all of whom are currently male.

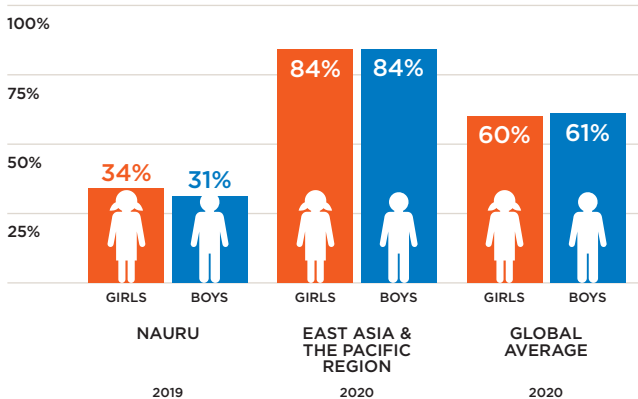
Education

Education is [free and compulsory from age 5 to 18](#). No significant gender biases in education have been observed, while the [2012-13 Household Income and Expenditure Survey](#) showed slight differences in favour of girls. In the [2019 Mini-Census](#), 96% of women and 95% of men over the age of 25 had ever attended school.

In data collected by the 2019 Mini-Census, the Gross Attendance Ratio (GAR) in early childhood education was 57% for girls and 55% for boys in 2019. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) estimated the [Gross Enrolment Ratio \(GER\)](#) in early childhood education to be 34% for girls and 31% for boys in 2020.

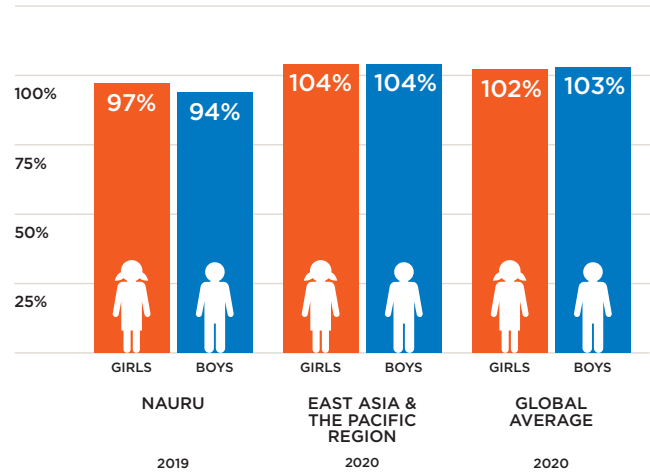
For primary education, the GAR was 100% for girls and 102% for boys in the 2019 Mini-Census. According to the UIS, the GER for primary education was estimated to be 97% for girls and 94% for boys in 2020. In primary education, 9% of girls and 13% of boys were out of school according to the 2019 Mini-Census.

Early Childhood Education Gross Enrolment Rates in Nauru



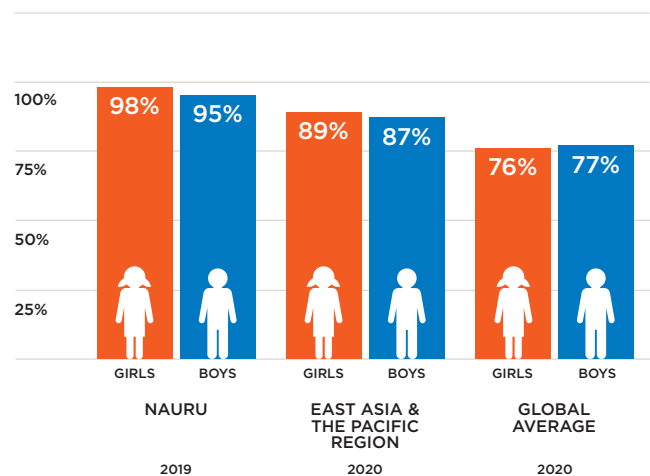
Source: [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#)

Primary Gross Enrolment Rates in Nauru



Source: [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#)

Secondary Gross Enrolment Rates in Nauru



Source: [UNESCO Institute for Statistics](#)

In the 2019 Mini-Census, the GAR for secondary education was 79% for girls and 64% for boys. According to estimates from the UIS, the GER in secondary education was 98% for girls and 95% for boys in 2019. Truancy is a significant problem for the education sector in Nauru, and the [high rate of teenage pregnancies](#) in Nauru is believed to impact the drop-out rate of girls in secondary education.

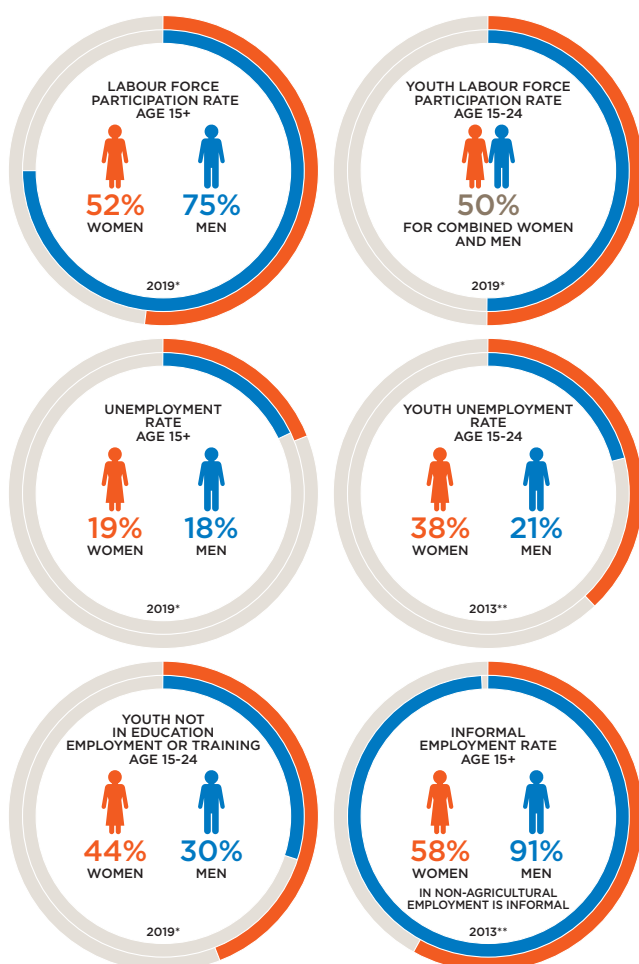
Data from the 2019 Mini-Census found that 95% of women and 92% of men age 25 and over had completed secondary school, while 6% of women and 7% of men aged 25 and over had

achieved post-secondary qualifications including certificates, diplomas, and degrees.

School closures and lack of access to distance learning opportunities are likely to [disproportionately impact girls access to education](#) and subsequent learning outcomes. More country-specific data is required in order to assess the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education of women and girls in Nauru.

Women's Economic Empowerment

Economic empowerment indicators in Nauru



* Source: [2019 Mini-Census](#)

** Source: [Pacific Community \(SPC\)](#)

The [2019 Mini-Census](#) shows that the labour force participation rate was 52% for women aged 15 and over in 2019, compared to 75% for men. The labour force participation rate was 50% among 15-24 year

olds. Sex-disaggregated data on youth labour force participation rates is not available. Data from the 2019 Mini-Census also suggests that the unemployment rate in Nauru has fallen since 2011, with a 19% unemployment rate for women in comparison to 18% for men. In the [2011 Census](#), the unemployment rate was 26% for women and 21% for men. The unemployment rate was 37% among 15-24 year olds in the 2019 Mini-Census. The [most recent sex-disaggregated data on youth unemployment rates](#) from 2013, shows a female youth unemployment rate of 37.5% for women age 15-24, compared to a male youth unemployment rate of 20.9%. In the 2019 Mini-Census, 44% of the female youth population and 30% of the male youth population were not in education, employment or training.

In the [2012-13 Household Income and Expenditure Survey](#), 42% of the female labour force had formal employment in the public and private sectors, compared to 69% of the male labour force. In Nauru, households with formal employment, as well as those with income from property, are the least economically vulnerable groups. In 2013, [57.6% of female employment](#) and 91.2% of male employment in non-agricultural sectors was informal.

The government is the largest single employer in Nauru, accounting for 34% of total employment and 45% of female employment according to the 2019 Mini-Census. In 2019, 54% of Government jobs and 46% of jobs in the public sector were held by women.

In a 2021 [analysis](#) of 10 Nauru organisations by the Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative, women were found to hold 33% of senior management roles, including Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Operating Officer roles.

According to the [2012-13 Household Income and Expenditure Survey](#), 24% of the population in Nauru live below the basic needs poverty line, and an additional 28.3% are vulnerable to falling below the basic needs poverty line. Female-headed households were found to be more likely to experience poverty and economic vulnerability: 7.5% of female-headed households were classified as 'extremely vulnerable' in 2012-13, compared to 5.5% of male-headed households. In the labour force, men who work in both the public and private sector are

more likely than their female counterparts to be classified as 'working poor': 40% of men working in the public sector were below the basic needs poverty line in 2012-13, compared to 22% of women. For those who work in the private sector, 21% of men and 10% of women were below the basic needs poverty line. A [2021 analysis](#) of the data supported by the UNDP and the National Office of Statistics suggests that this is indicative of the over-representation of men among public and private sector employees, and that it may also imply that workers in the public and private sectors do not experience significant levels of gender-based wage discrimination.

Nauru is [not a member state of the International Labour Organization \(ILO\)](#) and, therefore, is not a signatory to any of the ILO's conventions on equality of opportunity and treatment in the labour force. There are parental leave provisions in Nauru for public service employees, but there is no national legislation on parental leave that applies to the private sector. Under the [Public Service Act 2016](#), women in the public sector who have been in service for six months are entitled to 12 weeks' paid maternity leave, while men are entitled to two weeks' paid paternity leave. [Gaps in current legislation](#) mean that women, particularly those in the private sector, have no protection against unfair dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy, and there are no policies to protect the rights of breastfeeding mothers or the safety of pregnant women who engage in physical labour.

Under the Public Service Sexual Harassment Policy, reviewed in 2021, the Government has an obligation to take all appropriate steps to prevent and respond to sexual harassment in the workplace, as well as to protect all employees from any acts of sexual harassment.

Gender roles dictate that women [bear the primary responsibility for childcare](#) and duties within the home, and this increased level of domestic responsibility makes it challenging for women to invest the same amount of time in their careers as men. High rates of young women are engaged in unpaid family work. The [2012-13 Household Income and Expenditure Survey](#) found that 43% of females aged 15-29 were engaged in this type of work, compared to 15.5% of males in the same age range. For 39% of women aged 15-59, home duties

were the only economic activity that they participated in, compared to just 12% of men. Women's earning potential is also impacted by traditional gender roles in the workplace. According to the 2019 Mini-Census, 48% of women were not in the labour force in 2019, and 29% of women reported taking care of the household and family as their primary activity, compared to 7% of men. [Employers may show preference](#) for hiring men in traditionally 'male' roles, such as technical or professional roles, while preferring to hire women for what would be a traditionally considered to be a 'female' role, such as clerical and service jobs.

Health/Sexual and Reproductive Health

In Nauru, [life expectancy at birth](#) was 61.2 years for women and 57.9 years for men in the period 2015-2017. Since 2008, the life expectancy for men has remained relatively stable, while the life expectancy for women has declined by over eight years. Further investigation is required to understand the reasons behind this significant decrease.

Obesity is a significant issue in Nauru, with [82% of men and women classified as overweight or obese](#) in 2012-13. [Previous data](#) from 2007 shows slightly higher levels of obesity among women (80.1%) than men (77.1%). Diabetes prevalence in Nauru is among the highest in the world, at [24.0% in 2019](#), and non-communicable diseases (cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and chronic respiratory disease) [accounted for 30.2% of female deaths](#) and 29.5% of male deaths in 2019. In data from 2018, [52.6% of the female population over the age 15 smoke tobacco](#), compared to 51.7% of the male population, and there are significant health risks in Nauru associated with [phosphate dust pollution](#). Testing for cancer is [often delayed by the limited capabilities of Nauru's health service](#): smear and biopsy tests are analysed in Australia and the results sent back to Nauru, creating a barrier to timely diagnosis and treatment.

The [total fertility rate](#) in Nauru was 3.9 children per woman in 2017. [Official data from the National Bureau of Statistics](#) states that the adolescent fertility rate was 92.3 births per 1,000 women and girls aged 15-19 between 2015 and 2017. From 2008 to 2017, the proportion of total births in which the mother was between the ages of 15 and 19 increased: in the period 2008-2010, an estimated 11.4% of the total births were to mothers aged between 15 and 19; in the period 2015-2017, the figure

rose to 13.4% of total births.

Adolescent fertility rate in Nauru

Sustainable Development Goal target: reduce adolescent fertility rate to	Nauru:
less than 13 live births per 1,000	92.3 live births per 1,000
women aged 15-19 by 2030	2015-2017

Source: [National Bureau of Statistics](#)

Maternal mortality ratio in Nauru

Sustainable Development Goal target: reduce maternal mortality ratio to	Nauru:
less than 70 per 100,000 live births	0 per 100,000 live births
by 2030	2015-2017

Source: [Pacific Community \(SPC\)](#)

Under-5 mortality rate in Nauru

Sustainable Development Goal target: reduce under-5 mortality rate to	Nauru:
less than 25 per 1,000 live births	30.9 per 1,000 live births
by 2030	2019

Source: [Pacific Community \(SPC\)](#)

According to the [2007 Demographic and Health Survey](#) (DHS), 60.3% of married women aged 15-49 had their needs for family planning satisfied with modern methods. Younger women were more likely to have unmet needs for family planning; among 20-24 year olds, 42.5% had their demand for family planning satisfied with modern methods. 23.5% of married women reported unmet family planning needs. In 2017, the [total contraceptive prevalence rate](#) in Nauru was estimated at 36%.

While a lack of recent official data makes it difficult to analyse the current rates of sexually transmitted infections, previous data suggests that infection rates in Nauru are high. In 2015, [8.4% of the population were tested for chlamydia](#), and 21% of the samples tested positive. This was almost double the rate of positive

test results seen in the previous year. More up-to-date data is required in order to accurately assess the current prevalence rates and trends of sexually transmitted infections in Nauru.

Maternal mortality rates are difficult to accurately measure due to the small population size. The [maternal mortality rate](#) was 0 during the periods 2011-2013 and 2015-2017, while in the period 2008-2010, four recorded maternal deaths resulted in a maternal mortality rate of 51. There is a lack of recent data on the number of births attended by skilled health staff in Nauru; in 2007, [97.4% of births were attended by skilled health personnel](#). Anaemia, a significant risk factor in maternal deaths, affected 44% of pregnant women in Nauru in the [2007 DHS](#), and the young age of mothers may be considered to be an additional risk factor for birth and early-childhood complications for both mother and child. The [infant mortality rate](#) was 25.7 per 1,000 live births in 2019, and the under-5 mortality rate was 30.9 per 1,000 live births. For children in Nauru, the [rate of under-5 stunting](#) is higher among girls (26%) than among boys (22%).

Health misinformation in Nauru is believed to be high. Only 13.3% of women and 9.6% of men aged 15-24 [possess a comprehensive knowledge of AIDS](#), and 27.9% of women and 27.6% of men in this age range stated that they would not buy fresh vegetables from a shopkeeper who they know to be diagnosed with AIDS. In addition to this, UNICEF [report](#) that there is limited knowledge on menstrual hygiene management. There is no teacher training in Nauru for the [administration of sex education lessons](#) in schools.

In 2007, [91.9% of women aged 15-49 reported at least one problem in accessing health care](#). A lack of trust may be a barrier to the provision of women's healthcare in Nauru, and the Nauru Island Association of Non-Government Organisations [stated in 2017](#) that many women avoid visiting hospital as they have a low level of trust in the health service, thus delaying tests and diagnosis.

The [2019 Mini-Census](#) shows disability prevalence rates are higher among the female population, with 3% of females and 2% of males classified as having disabilities according to the Washington Group definition.

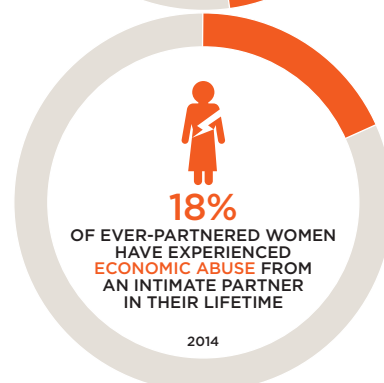
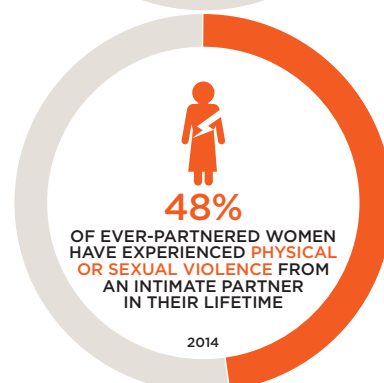
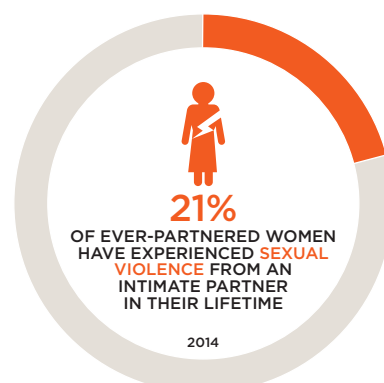
[Mental health facilities and services](#) on the island are limited. According to the [Government of Nauru](#), a draft Mental Health Policy has been developed. Nauru is

a member of the WHO Pacific Islands Mental Health Network and has a Mental Health Toll Free Helpline. There is an outpatient clinic at the Republic of Nauru Hospital in which individuals can seek treatment. The [2011 Global School-Based Health Survey](#) found that a significant number of young adolescents (30% of pupils aged 13-15) reported that they had seriously considered attempting suicide in the previous 12 months, with rates slightly higher among male pupils (32%) as compared to female pupils (29%). The act of attempted suicide was [decriminalized in 2016](#). Further research is required in order to understand how men and women use mental health services in Nauru.

Ending Violence against Women and Girls

The most recent national survey on violence against women is the [2014 Family Health and Support Study](#) (FHSS). In the FHSS, out of the 148 women surveyed, 47% of ever-partnered women reported that they had experienced physical violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime, with 21% reporting that they had experienced physical partner violence in the 12 months prior to the survey. Among ever-partnered women, 21% had experienced sexual violence from an intimate partner in their lifetime, with 10% reporting that they had experienced this violence in the 12 months prior to the survey. In total, 48% of ever-partnered women had experienced physical or sexual violence from a partner in their lifetime, with 22% experiencing such violence in the 12 months prior to being surveyed. Among ever-pregnant women who reported experiencing physical partner violence in their lifetime, 25% reported that they experienced violence during a pregnancy.

Lifetime Prevalence of Intimate Partner Violence in Nauru



Source: [Nauru Family Health and Support Study](#)

In addition to physical and sexual violence, the rates of controlling behaviours experienced by ever-partnered women are high. In 2014, nearly three out of four ever-partnered women (73.3%) reported experiencing controlling behaviours from an intimate partner, including insisting on knowing where she is at all times (57.2%), suspicion that she is being unfaithful (42.0%), and preventing her from seeing friends (41.2%). Approximately 33.6% of ever-partnered women stated that during their lifetime they had experienced controlling behaviour from an intimate partner in which they had to ask their partners permission to seek healthcare.

There is a high prevalence of sexual violence from non-partners. In the 2014 FHSS, 47.3% of respondents reported that they had experienced sexual violence from a non-partner since age 15, and 12.2% reported that they had experienced non-partner sexual violence in the 12 months prior to the survey. 30.4% of respondents reported that they had experienced sexual abuse before age 15.

[Gender-based violence is under-reported](#) in Nauru.

In the [2014 FHSS](#), an estimated 29% of women who had experienced intimate partner violence had never disclosed their experiences to anyone, and only 32% have sought assistance from formal services or authorities such as healthcare or the police. Among women who experienced intimate partner violence but did not seek help, 44% stated that they chose not to seek help because they believe that the violence they experienced was normal or not serious.

[Cultural attitudes regarding gender roles and intimate partner violence](#) act as a barrier to the reduction of violence against women and girls. The opinion that violence within relationships is acceptable or normal is found among women as well as men in Nauruan society.

In the [2014 FHSS](#), 43.9% of surveyed women reported that they believed it is acceptable for a man to hit his wife if she is unfaithful, while 29.0% stated that he is justified in hitting his wife if she disobeys him. Survey results regarding women's attitudes to gender roles in intimate relationships were, however, [disputed by the Nauruan Government](#) in 2017. The Nauruan Government stated that claims that women agree with statements promoting subservience in intimate relationships are a misrepresentation of cultural attitudes in Nauru, and they note that progress has been made in terms of traditional gender roles within families. More up-to-date data is required to accurately assess the current prevalence of such attitudes.

Marital rape is illegal as per the [2016 Crimes Act](#). The definition of domestic violence in the [Domestic Violence and Family Protection Act 2017](#) includes not just physical and sexual violence but also coercive control, economic and financial abuse, stalking, and cruel and degrading treatment. The Domestic Violence and Family Protection Act outlines the processes involved in safety orders, issued by the Nauru Police Force, and protection orders which may be granted by the courts to ensure the safety

of survivors of intimate partner violence. Under the Act, the granting of a protection order must be accompanied by mandatory counselling, which both parties must attend either separately or together.

Without regular and comprehensive data collection, it is difficult to assess how the police and court services have been handling gender-based violence cases in Nauru. The Domestic Violence Unit of the Nauru reportedly dealt with [67 domestic assaults, 4 indecent assaults, and one rape case in 2019](#). The number of safety orders, protection orders, and couples undergoing mandatory counselling is [reported to have significantly increased](#) since the introduction of the Domestic Violence and Family Protection Act, with 15 safety orders issued, 7 protection orders issued, and 7 couples undergoing mandatory counselling between July 2017 and 2019. Between 1 March and 30 September 2021 there were [158 cases of domestic violence](#) recorded by the Nauru Police Force. This data is not disaggregated by victim's gender, although the Minister for Home Affairs [noted in 2017](#) that 100% of the victims of sexual offences that were prosecuted under the Crimes Act 2016 were women and girls.

Women are [at increased risk of violence during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic](#). Factors such as increased time spent at home with violent partners during lockdowns, increased triggers for perpetrators during times of stress, and reduced access to support services have been identified to impact Pacific women's experiences of violence during the pandemic. Further research is required in order to understand the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the rate of gender-based violence in Nauru.

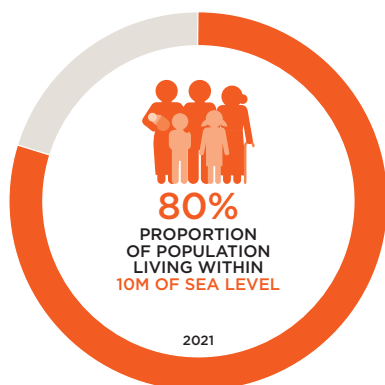
Gender and Protection in Humanitarian Action

There is a [high likelihood of coastal flooding](#) in Nauru, and the population is vulnerable to sea level rise. Phosphate mining has rendered the island's central plateau unsuitable for habitation or agriculture, and Nauru's population and infrastructure is therefore situated almost entirely in the island's coastal zone. 93% of the population live within 1km of the coast, and [80% of the population live less than 10m above sea level](#). The World Health Organisation [stated in 2015](#) that the risk from poor air quality and compromised food security in Nauru is 'extreme', and the risk from extreme weather events, water insecurity, water borne disease, foodborne disease, vector-borne disease, and social issues due to climate factors is 'high.' Nauru is not included within the World Risk Index on disaster risk or the Global Climate Risk Index due to its small size and lack of relevant data.

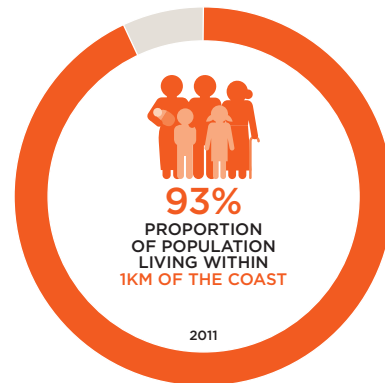
Climate and Disaster Profile of Nauru



Source: [Australian Aid](#)



Source: [Pacific Community \(SPC\)](#)



Source: [Pacific Community \(SPC\)](#)

Main Climate-Related Hazards



Source: [Australian Aid](#)

Nauru's [2015 Framework for Climate Change Adaption and Disaster Risk Reduction \(RONAdapt\)](#) recognises the gender-differentiated impact of disasters on the vulnerability of households and individuals, and states that the empowerment of both men and women is necessary in order to build resilience and future capacities. Within the Framework, an increased focus on gender – including through the introduction of gender budgeting at a national level – is noted as a priority in community development planning.

According to the [Nauru Island Association of Non-Government Organisations](#), while there have been some consultations with communities regarding climate change projects for the urbanized coastal zone, there are no current consultation processes regarding the urgent need for reforestation in the island's central plateau, and women have not been consulted regarding the proposed use of their land for climate change projects.

As an atoll country, Nauru is [particularly susceptible to water and food insecurity](#) due to climate change. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Environment [noted in 2014](#) that women would particularly benefit from improved water security in Nauru, as traditionally women bear responsibility for water management at the household level. It is not clear to what degree women are currently involved in activities to improve water security. There are, however, [reports](#) of women being involved in capacity building for household gardening and community fishery management. The overall proportion of women who participate in climate and humanitarian decision-making, preparedness, and response is not known.

The long-term impacts that COVID-19 will have on the lives of women and girls in Nauru is difficult to predict, particularly due to the lack of regular data collection on key indicators. However, the COVID-19 risk level in Nauru is [deemed to be high](#) when the potential humanitarian impacts of COVID-19 are considered in combination with other pre-existing crisis risks.

Appendix 1: Country Background

Capital	No official capital
Population	11,832 (2021)
GDP per capita (USD)	\$10,580 (2020)
Human Development Index	Not available
Type of Government	Parliamentary republic
Women in Legislature	Two out of 19 MPs (10.5%) are women as of March 2022.
Legal System	Nauru's legal system is a mix of common law – based on the British common law system – and customary law.
Ratified Human Rights Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (Accession 1994) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict (Signed 2000) • Optional Protocol to the CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (Signed 2000). • International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (Signed 2001). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nauru has not signed the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR on the abolition of the death penalty. • International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (Signed 2001) • Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Accession 2011). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nauru has not signed the Optional Protocol to CEDAW. • Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Accession 2012) • Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT) (Signed 2001, ratified 2012; Optional Protocol on CAT (Accession 2013) • Nauru is not a signatory to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, or the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.
Urban vs. Rural Women (%)	100% of Nauru's population is urban in 2019.
Female-Headed Households (%)	20% of households were headed by women in 2012-13.
Women in the Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to the 2019 Mini-Census, the labour force participation rate was 52% for women and 75% for men. • The unemployment rate was 19% for women and 18% for men in 2019.
Women CEOs	• In 2021, 0% of CEOs and 33% of senior management personnel (including CEO, CFO, and COO) were women.
Women on Boards	• In 2021, an estimated 12% of Directors and 20% of Board Chairs were women .

Appendix 1: Country Background (continued)

Nauru is a coral atoll phosphate rock [situated 42km south of the Equator](#). Nauru is the smallest island country in the world, with a total land area of 21km². The island's central plateau, comprising approximately 80% of the total land area, is largely unsuitable for habitation or infrastructure due to land degradation from phosphate mining. The population of Nauru, estimated to be [11,832](#) in 2021, live almost entirely along the island's 19km coastline. Nauru's [Exclusive Economic Zone is 308,480km²](#).

Nauru has a high [population density of 592 persons/km²](#) as of 2021. There is no rural population in Nauru; the whole country is classified as urban due to its high population density. Although Yaren is considered the administrative centre of the country, there is no official capital.

The indigenous Nauruan population is comprised of [12 tribes](#): Eamwitwit, Deiboe, Iruwa, Eamwit, Eamwidara, Ranibok, Emangum, Eano, Irutsi, Iwi, Emea, Eaoru. Country-of-birth [data from 2013](#) indicates that over 90% of the population were born in Nauru, with the largest immigrant populations originating from China, Kiribati, and Tuvalu.

Appendix 2: Country Commitments on Gender

International Commitments

Gender Commitments	Status	Actions
Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)	Signed 1995	<p>The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, produced at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, laid out comprehensive commitments for the global attainment of women's empowerment and gender-equality.</p> <p>Since signing the Declaration, Nauru has made improvements towards gender equality and has introduced new legislation regarding intimate partner violence and sexual violence in recent years.</p>
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)	Accession 2011	<p>As noted in the Concluding observations of the combined initial and second periodic reports, Nauru has made progress in recent years with legislation such as: the Domestic Violence and Family Protection Act 2017; the Public Service Act 2016, which ensures equal pay for equal work and lays out maternity and paternity provisions in the public sector; the Crimes Act 2016 which criminalizes marital rape; and the Education Act 2011, which ensures equal access to education.</p> <p>Progress has also been made in Nauru's institutional and policy framework, for example through the National Women's Policy and the Women's Plan of Action 2005-2015.</p> <p>Nauru has not ratified the CEDAW Optional Protocol and so is not subject to the communications and inquiry procedures through which violations of CEDAW can be investigated.</p>
Pacific Leaders' Gender Equality Declaration	2012 Regional review published in 2016.	<p>In a regional review published in 2016, increases were noted in Nauru in the number of women in senior management in the public sector, from 17% in 2013 to 25% in 2016, as well as the number of seats held by women on state-owned boards, from 12% in 2012 to 14% in 2016. The participation on girls in primary education was also found to be increasing.</p> <p>The number of police reports on domestic violence decreased from 42 in 2013 to 22 in 2016.</p>

Appendix 2: Country Commitments on Gender (continued)

National Commitments

Gender Commitments	Status	Actions
Nauru National Action Plan for Women (2005-2015)	2005	<p>The Nauru National Action Plan for Women outlined 16 areas of concern with corresponding objectives and actions. Achievements during the period 2005-2015 include the ratification of Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the establishment of the child protection division.</p> <p>In 2021 the Department of Women's and Social Development Affairs reviewed the Action Plan and produced recommendations for a Revised National Action Plan. Recommendations stated that Nauruan women and girls should be involved in the process of identifying priorities and actions.</p>
Nauru National Women's Policy 2014-2019	2014. Policy reviewed in 2021.	<p>The National Women's Policy 2014-2019 had six main goals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing women's participation decision-making and leadership roles; • Eliminating violence against women; • Improving women's economic status; • Improving women's health and access to health services; • Improving women and girls' participation in education, and; • Improving government capacity for gender mainstreaming. <p>The policy provided direction for government and community representatives regarding gender priorities.</p> <p>The National Women's Policy was reviewed in 2021 and it was agreed that the thematic areas would remain. Work is currently underway to update the National Women's Policy in 2022.</p>
Domestic Violence and Family Protection Act	2017	<p>The Domestic Violence and Family Protection Act 2017 provides a definition of domestic violence that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical violence • Sexual violence • Coercive control • Economic and financial abuse • Stalking • Persistent cruel, inhumane, degrading or provocative treatment, and • Damage to property. <p>The act outlines the terms and the application procedures for safety orders and protection orders. These orders may be granted by the courts to ensure the safety of survivors of intimate partner violence.</p> <p>Under Part 5 (26) of the Act, the granting of a protection order must be accompanied by mandatory counselling, which must be attended, either separately or jointly, by both parties.</p>
Nauru National Women's Summit	Summits held in 2019 and 2022.	<p>Nauru's first National Women's Summit was held in 2019. The summit produced the Tomano Declaration.</p> <p>The Tomano Declaration included a statement of Nauru's intentions to cooperate with and receive technical assistance from international organisations working on gender issues; to develop a framework for social inclusion; and to improve the capabilities of the Nauru Police Force's Domestic Violence Unit and victim support services.</p> <p>The second Nauru National Women's Summit was held in April 2022. This National Women's Summit produced recommendations tied to Women and Health, Violence Against Women and Girls, and Education and Training of Women.</p>

Gender Commitments	Status	Actions
Other national commitments in development*	Draft policies currently in development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Service Sexual Harassment Policy • Gender Policy • Gender Responsive Pandemic Policy • No Drop Policy • Zero to Three Development Centre Policy • Concept note for Child Day Care Centre • National Action Plan for Gender Based Violence • Service Delivery Protocol for Gender Based Violence.

*Communication from the Government of Nauru Department of Women's and Social Development Affairs (WASDA)