

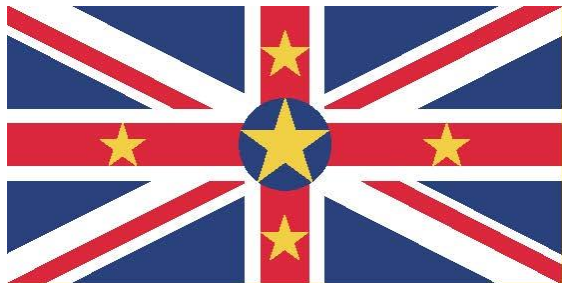
Industry-based Training models in Niue

The current state and potential for application

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Introduction

This brief is a summary of the national findings for Niue from the *Construction Sector Industry-based Training in the Pacific* research commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and carried out by the Skills Consulting Group. The focus of the research was on the current state of industry training in 6 Pacific Island Countries (PICs) and its likely impact on the implementation of industry training in the Pacific construction sector.

The findings for Niue are summarised in four areas:

- The models of industry training currently being delivered in Niue and its construction sector.
- The level and scope of skills demand in Niue which drives the need for Industry Training.
- The barriers to implementation of industry training in Niue.
- The development needs for Niue to enable successful industry training models.

The research was carried out between May and August 2021 using a combination of desk-based and field research. Field research involved semi-structured interviews with stakeholders of industry training in the selected PICs. These included government representatives; education and training providers; employers and industry representatives; and community and voluntary organisations where appropriate.

Industry Training in Niue and its Construction Sector

There is no formal industry training in Niue. Formal and accredited provision of construction skills training is limited to Niue High School (NHS).

NHS offers two-year basic multi-skills certificate based on a UNITEC qualification. This offers a practical pathway for students from NHS into the construction industry. The programme contains theoretical and practical off-job components but no on-job learning. The impact of the certificate has not been evaluated in the three years it has been offered, but, the Niue government is looking to extend the programme and provide further construction learning pathways. It is not known whether these will have workplace learning components.

NHS also offers another accredited construction skills programme: the building, construction, and allied trade skills (BCATS) programme from New Zealand. This is a pre-trades preparation course offered through New Zealand secondary schools; it is quality assured by the Building and Construction Industry Training Organisation (BCITO) and accredited by NZQA. As NHS teaches the New Zealand secondary school curriculum, this programme integrates well into the Niue curriculum.

In the absence of higher-level construction qualification pathways, these programmes are intended to prepare learners for construction programmes in New Zealand - a common destination for

INDUSTRY TRAINING

A mode of learning where learners develop competence mostly through the workplace, however, develop some complementary knowledge sets, skills, or competence outside of the workplace.

training. Due to the close relationship and travel arrangements with New Zealand, learners frequently develop their construction skills in New Zealand and use a range of New Zealand qualifications, including industry training programmes. Other common destinations for training include Fiji and Samoa; often through Australia Pacific Training Coalition (APTC) short-term programmes for ad hoc development.

On-job training is provided by employers as a matter of course, however Niue lacks the industry training policies and systems required to organise and accredit work-based learning.

Outside of the construction sector, workplace experience programmes, such as the Youth Employment Scheme, are being offered through the Niue Chamber of Commerce.

Construction Skills Landscape

All stakeholders indicated that the Niue construction sector labour market has strong demand for both skilled and semi-skilled workers. This is against the background of skills gaps across all sectors. However, a more robust, quantitative assessment is needed to provide insight into the scale of demand for skilled labour.

Undersupplied and oversupplied skills identified by stakeholders are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Identified undersupplied and oversupplied construction skills in Niue.

SKILLS UNDERSUPPLIED	SKILLS OVERSUPPLIED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plumbers. • Qualified builders/carpenters - currently many informal operators. • Electrical trades. • Painters. • Landscapers. • Heavy diesel mechanics. • Water and Electrical engineers. • Mechanics. • Welders. • Crane operators. • Automotive trades. • Drain laying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No oversupplied skills identified.

Barriers to the Successful Implementation of Industry Training Models in Niue

The key barriers to establishing a successful industry training system in Niue are the limited resources and capacity as well as labour mobility challenges.

Limited Resources

Niue does not have sufficient resources to fully establish their own industry training system. The government has not established overarching institutional supports for industry training and is dependent on international funding. Though participants in this research, including government, were strong advocates of industry training as a mode of learning, it was recognised that the resources to establish the system are not currently available.

Limited Capacity

Institutional and human resource capacity is also limited in Niue which means it cannot fulfil the range of industry training functions necessary for a successful system. For example, there is no qualifications authority in Niue. General education in Niue follows a contextualised New Zealand curriculum, partially for these reasons. Participants also described a limited number of skilled trainers available within industry; recognising that many technically skilled individuals may exist in the workforce, however, they often have no formal qualification against which their skills might be recognised. Of the already limited number of skilled individuals, only a small proportion of these individuals have their skills formally recognised. The establishment of industry training models in Niue would need to recognise the capacity for core functions such as regulation, quality assurance, and accreditation to be completed in Niue.

Opportunities for training in Niue may also be variable. Construction activities in Niue are dependent to a large degree on the limited availability of construction projects and contracts. This means that learning opportunities in Niue may be fragmented: being delivered inconsistently over time and presenting varying opportunities for skills formation. This is always likely to limit the scope of construction-based industry training.

Labour Mobility

Niue's close relationship and travel arrangements with New Zealand, along with significant expected wage differentials, form a strong migration pathway from Niue to New Zealand. This pathway encourages learners to not only train in New Zealand but to work in New Zealand after training. Having a sustainable industry training system in Niue requires skilled workers in Niue to train learners but also for learners to choose the local training system over that in New Zealand or others in the region. To establish a successful industry training system in Niue, labour mobility and its impacts should be evaluated to develop a sustainable system.

Regarding labour mobility, participants described a trend of older, experienced workers wishing to return to Niue. This may prove to be a source of workplace training expertise over time, but this has not been quantified.

The Development Needs for Industry Training Models in Niue

Based upon the availability of resources; the status and capacity of Industry Training; and the current approach to skills formation, Niue was classified in the research as an 'Adaptive and Informal Training System'. These types of systems were found to have basic work-based learning systems and limited availability of formal training, generally limited to secondary school. This meant that they were reliant on the informal sector for industry skills formation.

Niue has no formal work-based learning providers apart from the local secondary school, Niue High School. In the absence of tertiary work-based learning providers, Niue High School has taken on some responsibility for skills delivery by offering work-based learning certificates in construction skills. Without higher-level work-based learning provision in Niue, skills delivery is largely based on informal and non-formal learning through employer in-house experience and training.

The development priorities for these types of training systems are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Development priorities for Adaptive and Informal Training Systems.

DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES FOR 'ADAPTIVE AND INFORMAL TRAINING SYSTEMS'
<p>Policy and Coordination</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work with local education ministries to develop flexible regional Work-Based Learning and Industry Training policies. 2. Bring community (including employers) and informal sector perspectives formally into policy formation and evaluation.
<p>Regulation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Develop partnerships with regional dual training frameworks and systems to gain economies of scale and to; 4. Access regulatory expertise in the monitoring and evaluation of local provision and the implementation of regional industry training frameworks and systems.
<p>Workforce Development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Identify local skills development needs to enable the alignment of local and regional modular programmes and qualifications to the local labour market.
<p>Financing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Provide financial aid for local skills-based training (which means accepting dependency in the longer term).
<p>Delivery</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Support and build on new technologies such as new and cheaper satellite communications, online learning, and massive open online courses to build blended learning solutions.

Many of the key challenges that Niue faces to developing an industry training system are related to its smaller relative economic and geographic size. Resources and capacity are limited in Niue and what exists is already fully utilised. A necessary first step in developing industry training should be the mapping of the capacity of its current education system, particularly its ability to adapt to change, but most importantly, the skills needs of its construction sector, now and in the next few years. This will provide a clear picture of the current resource and capacity limitations under which Niue operates, and the regional support which will be required in the short and longer term for the implementation of industry training.

Regional support may include building on the existing flow of Niuean workers into New Zealand. This could consist of facilitating partnerships between Niue and NZ employers to offer Work-based Learning in NZ and Niue under one programme and an aligned accreditation framework. The impact of such a programme could be leveraged through the adoption of modern online learning systems as satellite communication systems become widespread and cost effective in the next few years.

It should be noted that Niuean government stakeholders emphasised that a national framework would be their preferred outcome. This could take the form of Niue aligning its industry training programmes with NZ to allow the recognition of skills obtained in NZ and enabling learners to build on their NZ experience within Niue.

A key step to the development of industry training in Niue will be the introduction of accreditation of prior learning to capture competence gained in the informal sector. This, in combination with:

- A modular qualification framework which recognises NZ and other accreditations, and
- Developing employers' capacity for supporting learners in terms of both the range of learning opportunities provided and the mentoring required by learners to progress.

It would also be important for Niue to establish a basic system of building standards as these tend to underpin and drive standards of competence in the construction sector.

Lastly, scalable learning methods are likely to be necessary to address the limited capacity within Niue. Online, modular, or other similar delivery mechanisms may be options to deliver off-job components of industry training programmes. As these are expensive to develop and maintain, this may require long-term support and partnering with better resourced providers, such as those within NZ.

References

There are no sources in the current document.