



Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General
30 January 2020

Original: English
English, French and Spanish only

Committee on the Rights of the Child

Eighty-third session

20 January–7 February 2020

Agenda item 4

Consideration of reports of States parties

Replies of the Cook Islands to the list of issues in relation to its combined second to fifth periodic reports*

[Date received: 17 October 2019]

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

GE.20-01415(E)



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A. Reply to paragraph 1 of the list of issues (CRC/C/COK/Q/2-5)

1. Pending the withdrawal of the reservations and declaration, there is internal consideration for the Government to formally follow through with the withdrawal process once the key Government stakeholders have come to an agreement. In practice, progress has been made in ensuring that children regardless of their background are not discriminated especially in adoption cases where inheritance rights are concerned.

2. On the implementation of the Family Protection and Support Act, awareness and capacity development programs are underway. In 2019, the Ministry of Internal Affairs conducted a specific training on the Family Protection and Support Act bringing together lawyers and representatives from Government ministries including Justice, Crown Law Office, Internal Affairs, Education, Health, Police as well as NGO stakeholders. The aim of the training was to raise awareness on the Act and also strengthen stakeholder knowledge on their different roles in implementing the Act.

3. In August 2019, the Government through the Ministry of Internal Affairs with support from the Pacific Community Regional Rights Resource Team developed a draft implementation plan for the Family Protection and Support Act. A joint technical team met with several stakeholders. The Government is now working jointly with the Pacific Community on a revised plan that incorporates feedback from the stakeholder consultations. This plan will also include next steps and time-line on the implementation. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is aiming to have the finalized Plan by November which will then be submitted for endorsement.

4. The first care orders under the Family Protection and Support Act were issued this year, in 2019. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has established three types of Uipa'anga Kopu Tangata (UKT) which are family group conferences aimed at bringing families together in cases concerning child protection, juvenile justice and truancy. The UKT concerned with child protection has a registered chairperson who is a member of a community, has background in social work and went through a process of selection by the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

5. The Cook Islands Police Force have introduced the Police Safety Order, which aims to protect children and women who are victims of domestic violence. This is also aligned to their functions under the Family Protection and Support Act. Since January 2018, 50 Police Safety Orders have been served on offenders where majority are males and primarily cases relating to family violence.

6. Key stakeholder meetings are conducted on a monthly basis by the Ropi'anga Tuatau Committee which consists of representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Police, Ministry of Education, Correction Services, Ministry of Health and NGO service providers such as the Cook Islands Family Welfare Association and Child Welfare aimed at strengthening inter-agency relations, streamlining response and intervention; and encouraging stakeholders to take a more collaborative approach in responding to cases concerning children. These interventions also include triage cases.

B. Reply to paragraph 2 of the list of issues**Te Pito Manava o te Anau – Cook Islands National Policy Framework for Children (2017–2021)**

7. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has a dedicated Child Policy Coordinator who was recruited in 2018 with funding support from UNICEF Pacific Office. In 2019, the Government absorbed this position in its operational budget till 2021. The Child Policy Coordinator takes the lead coordination role at the national level on the implementation of the Policy. To strengthen stakeholder coordination, the Government established the National Children's Policy Stakeholders Committee which consists of representatives from ministries of Health, Education, Police, Justice and Internal Affairs. In the past year, the Committee has met on a regular basis and the Government is committed to continuing collaborative approaches through such inter-sectoral mechanisms.

8. Awareness programs have been delivered to the communities on the main island Rarotonga, as well as outer islands in the Northern and Southern groups. Media awareness through local radio stations, televisions and newspapers have been carried out both in English and local Cook Islands Maori. Community information and educational materials have also been developed and disseminated through pamphlets and banners.

Cook Islands National Advisory Committee for Children's Rights (CINACCR)

9. The Cook Islands National Advisory Committee for Children's Rights was endorsed by Cabinet in 2017 and is made up of Heads of Ministries and chaired by the Secretary for Internal Affairs. The Ministry of Internal Affairs is also the Secretariat for the Committee. While there is no specific funding for the Committee, line-ministry budgets are utilized for the Committee initiatives. The Committee is the leading national mechanism for the implementation and reporting on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Committee meets every quarter.

National Youth Policy (2015–2020)

10. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has a dedicated Youth desk who takes the lead on the Ministry's initiatives relating to youth from ages 15–24 years. This role includes the implementation of the National Youth Policy. The Cook Islands National Youth Council works closely with the Ministry of Internal Affairs Youth desk on the implementation of the National Policy on Rarotonga (Main Island) and the outer islands. The Youth Council has two representatives in each island who lead the work in the respective communities.

11. A number of workshops were facilitated in 2019 by the Ministry of Internal Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of Health focusing on suicide prevention and mental health (1 in Rarotonga and 1 in Atiu (outer island), youth resilience which is linked to objective 6 of the National Youth Policy and is an ongoing initiative by the Government. It is also the main focus of the implementation work for 2018–2019. Youth parliament is one of the areas that is being promoted by the Government to assist youth in understanding the process and encouraging young people to participate in the electoral process. The next Youth Parliament will take place in 2020. Some of these initiatives are also being implemented in the outer islands. Music programs funded by the Government's social impact fund has now been introduced as a capacity building program for the island of Mitiaro (outer island) with plans to expand to other islands. The Ministry of Internal Affairs conducted various training of trainers with youth leaders who are now implementing the programs with youth on the island and includes the playing of instruments such as the keyboard.

12. The Te Kopapa Reo Maori (TKRM) under the Ministry of Culture recently introduced a workshop in October 2019 focusing on the revival and sustainability of the Cook Islands language in Rarotonga to strengthen the knowledge and use of Cook Islands Maori. This will be an ongoing initiative held over four months. The TKRM will be leading this initiative in Rarotonga supported by stakeholders such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs due to Priority 3 of the National Policy which focuses on empowering youth through community, cultural, spiritual and personal development). The Ministry of Education and other key ministries also support this initiative. Collaboration with stakeholders such as the Ministry of Health, Police, Corrective Services, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Internal affairs is continuing.

Disability Inclusive Development Policy and Action Plan (2014–2019)

13. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has a dedicated disability desk with one officer who takes the lead on the Ministry's initiatives relating to persons with disabilities. This role includes the implementation of the National Inclusive Development Policy. The disability desk works closely with the Cook Islands Disability Council on awareness programs and capacity development for island committees responsible for caring for persons with disabilities and elderly persons.

14. In 2018, the Government undertook a review of the current Policy led by Ministry of Internal Affairs and provided the opportunity to receive feedback from stakeholders on progress made, as well as recommendations on the way forward.

15. The Building Code for the Cook Islands has been reviewed and the new Code is yet to be passed by Parliament. In preparation for the new Code, a survey was carried out in 2018 by the Ministry of Internal Affairs on Rarotonga (main island) and the Southern group. The survey looked at infrastructure of buildings on Government premises and schools, to determine reasonable access by persons with disabilities. The outcome of the survey was shared with other Government ministries. In particular, the Office of the Prime Minister who monitors progress against the Cook Islands National Sustainable Development Plan 2016–2020 (NSDP).

16. Infrastructural changes have taken place with the provision of building ramps and parking spaces for persons with disabilities in public place. The Government has also set disability access as a requirement for new government buildings, new hotels and other tourist accommodations places.

C. Reply to paragraph 3 of the list of issues

17. The NSDP incorporates aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). The Child Rights based approach is implemented through Te Pito Manava o te Anau – Cook Islands National Policy Framework for Children 2017-2021, Cabinet Minute (17) 0317 which aligns to the NSDP. These Goals are monitored through an annual Indicator Report.

18. It contributes to the achievement of NSDP goals:

- (a) Goal 1: Improve welfare, reduce inequity and economic hardship;
- (b) Goal 2: Expand economic opportunities, improve economic resilience and productive employment to ensure decent work for all;
- (c) Goal 7: Improve health and promote healthy lifestyles;
- (d) Goal 8: Inclusive, equitable and quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities;
- (e) Goal 9: Accelerate gender equality empower all women and girls and advance the rights of youth, the elderly and the disabled;
- (f) Goal 14: Preserve our heritage and history, protect our traditional knowledge, and develop our language, creative and cultural endeavours;
- (g) Goal 15: Ensure a sustainable population, engaged in development for the Cook Islands by Cook Islanders; and
- (h) Goal 16: Promote a peaceful and just society and practice good governance with transparency and accountability.

19. On the issue of the independent monitoring mechanism, the human rights function remains with the Office of the Ombudsman as per the Cabinet Directive (CM (07) 694). Through the mid-term budget process, the Office has secured funds for two investigation officers for the 2021/2022 financial year which will support the investigation of human rights-based complaints and infringements. The Office will also be carrying out public awareness campaigns as part of its strategic plan in the coming financial year. The Office will also be looking at investigating any complaints with human rights infringements using the Ombudsman’s mandate under the Ombudsman Act.

20. The Government is supporting staff training on National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs). Government officials have attended three NHRI trainings in 2019. This provided the opportunity for officials to learn from other countries in the Pacific region. One of these trainings was conducted in the UK, whereby Pacific delegates including representatives from the Cook Islands had the chance to dialogue with representatives from the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission; and the United Kingdom Equality and Human Rights Commission. The Cook Islands representatives also had a one-day dialogue with the New

Zealand Human Rights Commission in Auckland. The Ministry of Internal Affairs conducted awareness programs on NHRIs in the Southern group of islands (Aitutaki and Mangaia) in April 2017. There are plans to conduct similar programs in the Northern group. The delay in carrying out awareness in the Northern group is a result of the human resource constraints.

D. Reply to paragraph 4 of the list of issues

21. The Marriage Amendment Bill is currently still under review and the Government is working towards finalizing this review, to be tabled in Parliament. While there is no confirmed time-line for this process, the Government is doing its best to ensure that domestic legislation is consistent with international human rights standards including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

22. The Crimes Bill is currently with the Select Committee who are due to report at the next sitting of Parliament (which will most likely will be in December). It covers children in a number of areas including:

(a) Lack of capacity – children under 10 years cannot be convicted of an offence, children between 10 and 14 years may be convicted but only if they know that their conduct is wrong (burden of proof for this rests with the prosecution and it is ultimately a question of fact);

(b) Special sexual offence provisions involving children (subpart 11 – sexual offences and subpart 13 – child abuse and other indecent material).

23. There is no explicit provision on the assault of the child in the current Crimes Bill. However, the general assault provisions cover this action and the vulnerability of the victim is taken into account by a Court in sentencing. There is still a defense of lawful correction of a child but the defense is more restrictive than what is presently available.

24. The Cook Islands Act of 1915 is yet to be amended. However, some progress has been made in practice when it comes to inheritance rights for adopted children. While the application for adoption is filed with the Ministry of Justice, all welfare adoption assessment reports are done by the Child and Family Service Unit in the Ministry of Internal Affairs. In 2016, assessment questions were amended to include discussion with family members (adoptive family) on the inheritance rights of the adopted child. The decision to include this discussion was informed by court decisions in the past that relate to inheritance rights but were never captured in the assessment process. The assessment process also takes into consideration the best interests of the child and undertakes private discussions with the adopted children (consent of the guardian) to hear their views. Land Courts have jurisdiction over all adoption cases.

E. Reply to paragraph 5 of the list of issues

25. The 2012 Education Act explicitly prohibits corporal punishment. Part 8, 109 (1) and (2) states a person at an education institution, or at an educational institution activity, must not:

(a) Verbally abuse a student, or

(b) Use physical force, by way of correction or punishment, against a student.

26. The Ministry of Education provides regular awareness programs concerning the effects of corporal punishment for staff and school communities, and are delivered in various forms including support from:

(a) The Student Wellbeing and Pastoral Care Advisor;

(b) Health and Wellbeing Advisor; and

(c) Guidance counselling programs.

27. The lead Coordinator position for the Te Kakaia program in the Ministry of Education has been vacant since 2018, due to challenges in recruitment. However, the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Advisor ensures the scope of Te Kakaia is considered when working with families, parents and their children.

F. Reply to paragraph 6 of the list of issues

28. The Vaka constables are still active and they come under the Police Prevention Division. Dedicated officers are working in the three main districts on Rarotonga (main islands) namely Vaka Takitumu, Vaka Te Au O Tonga and Vaka Puaikura and have volunteers who are sworn officers to perform certain duties in the villages.

29. The Ministry of Internal Affairs has established three types of UKT which are family group conferences aimed at bringing families together in cases including child protection. For the past three years, awareness programs have been conducted jointly by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Police and Education in schools around the country focusing on the child protection issues. The Government is committed to continuing these outreach programs.

G. Reply to paragraph 7 of the list of issues

30. There are eight privately-run child-care services on Rarotonga. The Government is in the early stages of planning for the provision of this support. A feasibility study was done in December 2018 by the Government and recommendations will now be used to inform the Government's support plan including the development of national standards on childcare.

H. Reply to paragraph 8 of the list of issues

31. In the Cook Islands, the use of communication is vital in delivering health services to the Pa Enua (outer islands). Nurse Practitioners are encouraged and advised to discuss difficult childhood illnesses/problems with the Pediatric team based in Rarotonga through the use of email, phones, and Med Tech which is the database used by the Ministry of Health.

32. For the reduction of pneumonia cases, the single most cost-effective strategy is immunization and encouraging exclusive breastfeeding within the first 6 months of a child's life. For interventions on diarrhea, public health measures on hygiene and sanitation with use of safe drinking water have been implemented. The Ministry of Health encourages exclusive breastfeeding for the first 6 months of a child's life and continuation to a minimum of 2 years of age. This has contributed to combatting diarrheal diseases which are rare in the Cook Islands.

33. On early pregnancies, the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department of the Hospital Health Services and to a large extent, the Public Health Division play a big role in raising awareness and responding to cases relating to teen pregnancies. The Ministry of Health works closely with the Cook Islands Family Welfare Association (CIFWA). Dissemination of information on contraceptives including long-term contraceptive devices like the Jadelle (an implant under the skin), assists in making informed decisions. Access to sexual and reproductive health education during adolescent years in school also aims to reduce teen pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

34. The Government is also making progress on the implementation of the Cook Islands Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2021 and the National Suicide Prevention Strategy 2016-2020. The Ministry of Health takes the lead at the national level on the implementation of both strategies. Awareness programs relating to mental health have been carried out throughout the country. The Ministry of Health has a dedicated Mental Health Unit which provide counselling services; and out-patient support. There is also a local psychologist based in an outer island but provides ongoing support to the team on

Rarotonga (main island). This same unit also responds to cases relating to attempted suicide. The Ministry of Health works closely with Te Kainga an NGO, dedicated to mental health and suicide prevention support.

I. Reply to paragraph 9 of the list of issues

35. The Education Master Plan 2008–2023 presents a strategic direction for education focusing on equitable access to quality learning for all learners.

36. Equitable access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) programs without parental/caregiver supervision, is available from age three. While not compulsory, ECE is highly valued by parents, families and the community. All ECEs are significantly resourced and supported through funding and support provided by the Ministry of Education.

37. There are a number of scholarship opportunities available to all Cook Islanders. Specific Pa Enea (outer islands) scholarships support students and their families when choosing to continue with senior level education on Rarotonga.

38. There are opportunities for vocational training available to all Cook Islanders. Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute has a presence on all southern Pa Enea. Through a blended modality approach, vocational training is delivered in the northern Pa Enea.

39. The Ministry of Education, Level 2 Disaster Risk Management Plan, responds to the Cook Islands National Disaster Risk Management Plan (2017). This applies to all students and staff bound by the Education Act. Each school has its own Disaster Risk Management policy, aligned to the Ministry's work-plan and national development plans. These are regularly reviewed by each school and relevant stakeholders and monitored through quality assurance reviews.

J. Reply to paragraph 10 of the list of issues

40. To date, there has been no concrete discussion amongst key Government stakeholders to increase the minimum age for criminal responsibility to ensure consistency with international standards. The use of the UKT system to come to a non-custodial settlement has been helpful; as well as the implementation of the Police Safety Orders/Bail conditions which takes into consideration the best interests of child victims and witnesses ensuring that children are protected in criminal proceedings. The courts in the Cook Islands are also applying the Convention on the Rights of the Child in its deliberation of cases, especially in sentencing.

K. Reply to paragraph 11 of the list of issues

41. No new laws specific to children have been introduced since the submission of the State Party report in 2018. However, the Government is working on finalizing the Crimes Bill, Marriage Amendment Bill and the Immigration Bill. Updates on the Crimes Bill and the Marriage Amendment Bill have been provided in part 1 of the response. The Immigration Bill will largely bring immigration rights for minors in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

L. Reply to paragraph 12 of the list of issues

Total Budget Appropriation for New born Allowance & Child Benefit Payment

<i>POBOCs</i>	<i>Total Appropriation</i>	<i>Actual</i>
<hr/>		
July 2016–June 2017		
Child Benefit	2 654 907	2 719 674
New Born allowance	200 000.00	243 000 (Min Internal Affairs Variance Report June 2017)

<i>Total Budget Appropriation for New born Allowance & Child Benefit Payment</i>		
<i>POBOCs</i>	<i>Total Appropriation</i>	<i>Actual</i>
July 2017–June 2018		
Child Benefit	4 036 832	4 117 334
New Born allowance	200 000.00	226 000 (Min Internal Affairs Variance Report June 2018)
Ministry of Internal Affairs (Social Policy & Services Division)		
<i>Total Operational Budget</i>	<i>2017–2018</i>	<i>2018–2019</i>
Personnel	261 924.00	336 719.00 (2017-18 Cook Islands Budget) Book 2; Ministry Statement pg. 125
Operating	32 837.00	32 837.00 (2018-19 Cook Islands Budget) Book; Ministry Statements Pg. 120)

M. Reply to paragraph 13 (a), (b) and (c) of the list of issues

42. Information related to this paragraph will be shared later.

N. Reply to paragraph 13 (d) of the list of issues

43. Response (Source: Ministry of Health) – Within a 6 month’s period from January to June 2019, there were only 2 children out of all the children seen with anaemia. This is due to a good “deworming” program by the Public Health Division of the Ministry of Health.

O. Reply to paragraph 13 (e) of the list of issues

44. Response: (Source: Ministry of Health): Obesity – 20% of children who presented in a 3 month period to the Pediatric clinic are considered obese. Results are not a true indication of the extent of childhood obesity due to the fact that data and information collected should be uniform in all entry points of care; be it Outpatients Rarotonga, Pediatric clinic, Tupapa Outpatients, within community clinics and Outer Island hospitals.

45. Find below obesity statistics in children, from the Ministry of Health:

- 2010 – 23.6%
- 2012 – 26.9%
- 2015 – 28.7%
- 2017 – 31.6%

P. Reply to paragraph 13 (f) of the list of issues

46. Information related to this paragraph will be shared later.

Q. Reply to paragraph 13 (g) of the list of issues

47. Sexually Transmitted Infection’s in children are rare; 3 out of 40 children screened (since July 1st, 2018) had Chlamydia.

R. Reply to paragraph 13 (h) of the list of issues

48. Source: Ministry of Health: In the last three years, the Ministry of Health reported an average of five cases of attempted and suicide every year. The Ministry of Health 2017 data

show that 173 cases relating to mental health were seen by the Mental Health Unit. In 2018, the number of cases increased by 36 bringing it to a total of 209 cases altogether.

S. Reply to paragraph 13 (i) of the list of issues

49. Source: Global Youth Tobacco Survey (Cook Islands Fact Sheet 2016).

TOBACCO USE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21.5% of students, 29.7% of boys, and 13.9% of girls currently used any tobacco products. • 20.7% of students, 28.1% of boys, and 13.9% of girls currently smoked tobacco. • 17.5% of students, 23.5% of boys, and 11.9% of girls currently smoked cigarettes. • 3.0% of students, 3.8% of boys, and 2.4% of girls currently used smokeless tobacco.
ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7.2% of students, 7.4% of boys, and 7.0% of girls currently used electronic cigarettes.
CESSATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost 8 in 10 (76.3%) current smokers tried to stop smoking in the past 12 months.
SECONDHAND SMOKE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49.5% of students were exposed to tobacco smoke at home. • 51.7% of students were exposed to tobacco smoke inside enclosed public places.
ACCESS & AVAILABILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19.0% of current cigarette smokers bought cigarettes from a store, shop, or street vendor.
MEDIA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost 6 in 10 (58.4%) students noticed anti-tobacco messages in the media. • More than 3 in 10 (34.2%) students noticed tobacco advertisements or promotions when visiting points of sale. • Almost 2 in 10 (16.6%) students had something with a tobacco brand logo on it.
KNOWLEDGE & ATTITUDES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42.8% of students definitely thought other people's tobacco smoking is harmful to them. • 72.7% of students favored prohibiting smoking inside enclosed public places.

T. Reply to paragraph 13 (j) of the list of issues

50. Source: Ministry of Education – EMIS.

2019 Student Enrolments by Education Level, Region and Gender

Level / Region	Total	Total		Rarotonga		Southern Group		Northern Group	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
ECE	443	216	227	138	156	53	52	25	19
Primary	1,871	973	898	672	650	203	174	98	74
Junior Secondary	1,202	602	600	409	413	141	137	52	50
Senior Secondary	617	301	316	234	246	58	59	9	11
Total Secondary	1,819	903	916	643	659	199	196	61	61
National	4,133	2,092	2,041	1,453	1,465	455	422	184	154

2018 Student Enrolments by Education Level, Region and Gender

Level / Region	Total	Total		Rarotonga		Southern Group		Northern Group	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
ECE	485	242	243	149	169	65	50	28	24
Primary	1,893	1,001	892	685	626	214	181	102	85
Junior Secondary	1,173	612	561	413	388	141	125	58	48
Senior Secondary	608	279	329	216	267	54	54	9	8
Total Secondary	1,781	891	890	629	655	195	179	67	56
National	4,159	2,134	2,025	1,463	1,450	474	410	197	165

2017 Student Enrolments by Education Level, Region and Gender

Level / Region	Total	Total		Rarotonga		Southern Group		Northern Group	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
ECE	516	268	248	179	177	64	54	25	17
Primary	1,838	960	878	638	613	225	181	97	84
Junior Secondary	1,155	600	555	398	390	143	118	59	47
Senior Secondary	589	278	311	224	244	43	57	11	10
Total Secondary	1,744	878	866	622	634	186	175	70	57
National	4,098	2,106	1,992	1,439	1,424	475	410	192	158

U. Reply to paragraph 13 (k) of the list of issues

51. While Te Kura Uira (the Cook Islands distance learning program) has been on target for many years with Mathematics and English delivered at 3 Schools (Tukao, Tongareva and Mitiaro), it became apparent that schools have not been actively participating. A number of ongoing issues challenging the success of the program were identified, and included:

- (a) Ongoing issues with access, with Schools unable to connect and get online;
- (b) Access and timetabling issues, acknowledging the number of interruptions impacting the programs delivery;
- (c) Little evidence of completed work due to the above.

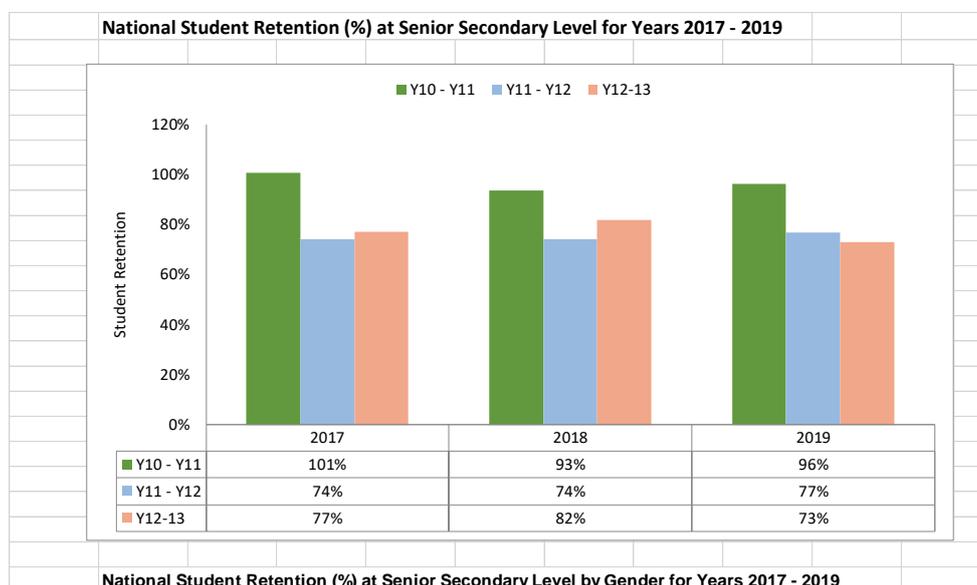
52. In order for the Ministry to review the Program and give consideration to 're-thinking' Te Kura Uira, the Program has been rested for 2019. Learning and development for the 'Te Kura Uira' cohort of children is delivered by classroom teachers within the school and those teachers are supported by Ministry Advisors.

53. The evaluation report 'Technology enabled learning for Remote Island Schools: A sustainable model that provides access to quality, relevant education for isolated learners', remains an internal piece of research for the Ministry.

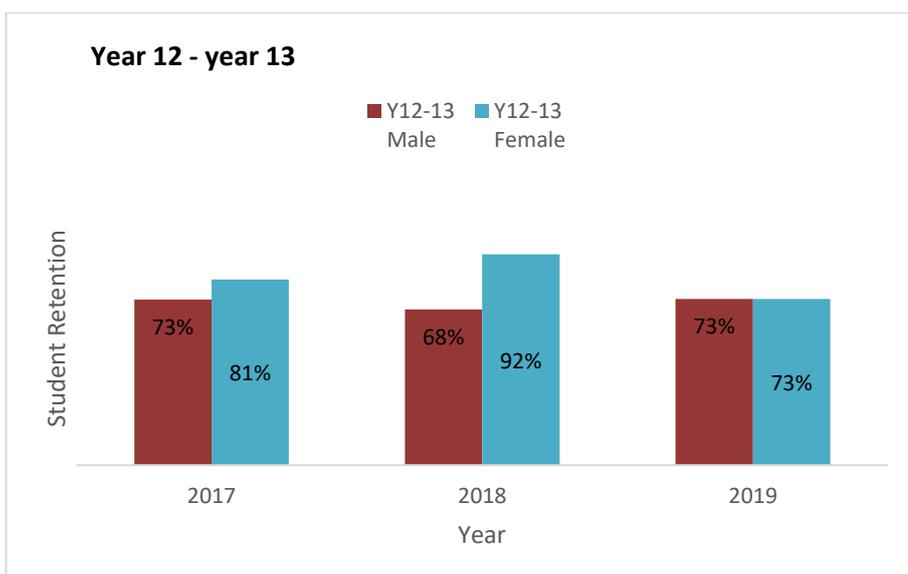
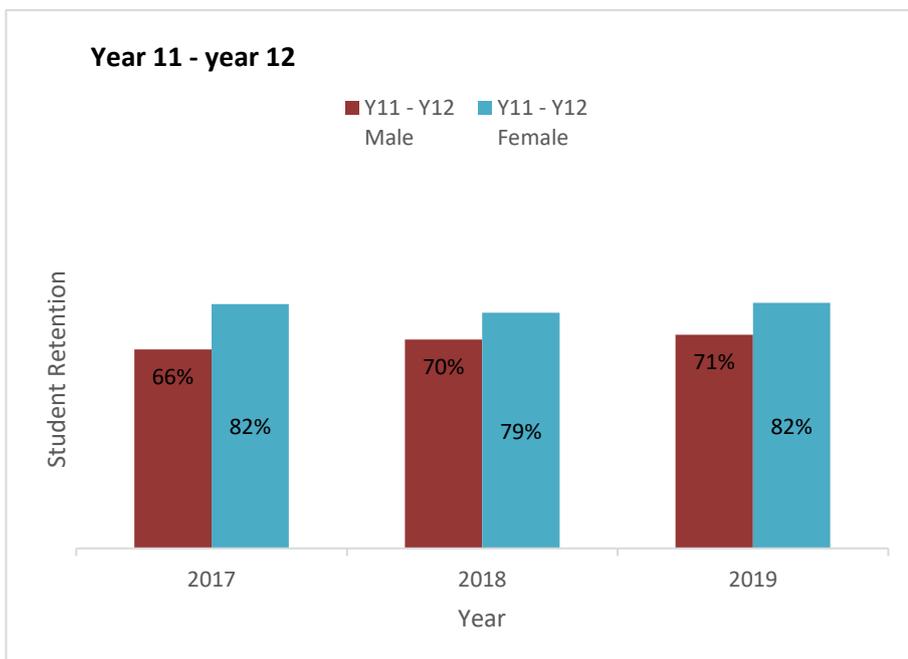
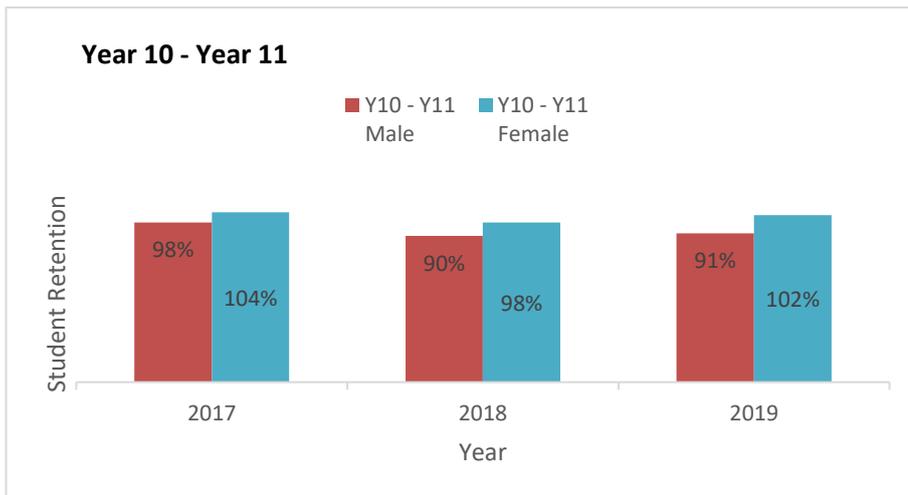
54. Three action points or recommendations have been presented for improving access to quality education for remote island learners and the Ministry will work to implement within the next 2–3 years based on development of learning resources, staffing and training opportunities.

V. Reply to paragraph 13 (l) of the list of issues

55. Source: Ministry of Education:



National Student Retention (%) at Senior Secondary level by gender for years 2017–2019.



Year	Enrolment				Retention %		
	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12	Year 13	Y10–Y11	Y11–Y12	Y12–13
2017	275	263	191	135	101%	74%	77%
2018	289	257	195	156	93%	74%	82%
2019	262	278	197	142	96%	77%	73%

Year	2017	2018	2019
Y10–Y11Male	98%	90%	91%
Y11–Y12Male	66%	70%	71%
Y12–13Male	73%	68%	73%
Y10–Y11Female	104%	98%	102%
Y11–Y12Female	82%	79%	82%
Y12–13Female	81%	92%	73%

56. As a result of schools strengthening their pastoral care systems and broadening scope of programs available, the rate of early leaving exemptions for 15 year-olds is low. Because this rate is low the Ministry of Education does not officially report data on the number of out-of-school children, however, this cohort is closely supported by the Ministry of Education. The monitoring of retention rates for senior secondary is showing there is a higher proportion of students who are staying in school longer.

57. The Education Act 2012 increased the minimum leaving age from 15 to 16 years which has had an impact on retention rates particularly from Year 11 to Year 12. The change towards 100% retention from Year 10–11 suggests that students are now moving through secondary school with their appropriate age cohort. In Years 12–13 there is a higher proportion of girls choosing to stay in school longer than boys.

58. Established Dual-Pathways programs for accredited schools include:

- (a) Apii Enuamanu (Atiu) – Hospitality L1&2, BCATs L1,2,3 & Pre-Trades Building cert (L3&L4) and Electrical L2;
- (b) Mangaia School – Hospitality L2, BCATs L1&2;
- (c) Apii Niua (Pukapuka) – BCATs L1.

59. Dual pathways can only be delivered in NZQA accredited schools (as they must lead to a qualification). With the exception of Mauke, where cohort size is impacting on ability to deliver this outcome, this is highly realistic and the courses delivered are based on requests from the Pa Enea schools themselves. Efficiencies are created by utilizing tutors for DP's and community education, outside of school hours.

60. The focus of all schools in the Pa Enea is on mainstreaming Lifeskills into existing programs while utilizing community expertise. Niua School remains actively engaged in the Life Skills program. Apii Tauhunu established program for Y7-&11 students.

61. Lifeskills programs are selected by the school in consultation with their community. Lifeskills are about individual island communities and apart from ensuring some level of validity the Ministry does not wish to impose which lifeskills are important to which community. Lifeskills budget is separated from the schools operating grant and uses the expertise of local community. The Ministry celebrates this as it engages local communities to work together with schools.

W. Reply to paragraph 13 (m) of the list of issues

62. It is important to note that compulsory-school aged children do not benefit from Te Reinga Akataunga'anga, the Cook Islands Tertiary Support Program. This program is a

scholarship opportunity for school leavers and adult learners wishing to engage in Tertiary education.

63. The revised scholarship and study support program of the Cook Islands Government, administered by the Ministry of Education was developed in the later part of 2016 and implemented from 2017. It has allowed many more Cook Islanders access to initial tertiary studies both domestically and abroad. On the basis of giving everyone a start, further support is then secured through achieving worthy results.

64. Using a model of “reverse scholarship”, student loans will be repaid pro-rata by the scheme when the learner returns to the Cook Islands at the end of their study. By aligning specific requirements to the NSDP, the scholarship program has opened the doors to a much broader range of study being undertaken.

65. Current scholarship numbers, as of 2019: (a) 28 Study Starter Pack Scholarships, for 1st year students; (b) 17 International Full Scholarships, for students in their second year of study; (c) 4 In-Country Study Grants and (d) 2 Domestic Full Scholarships – a total of 51 Scholarship recipients.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
2012	11	19	30
2013	6	6	12
2014	5	13	18
2015	3	21	24
2016	7	22	29
2017	5	24	29
2018	21	13	34
2019	39	12	51

<i>Year</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
2012	8	12	20
2013	4	5	9
2014	8	20	28
2015	3	4	7
2016	3	6	9
2017	2	14	16
2018	1	2	3

X. Reply to paragraph 14 (b) of the list of issues

66. Cook Islands does not have formal institutions.

Y. Reply to paragraph 14 (c) of the list of issues

67. There have been no cases in the past three years.

Z. Reply to paragraph 14 (d) of the list of issues

68. Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs – Child & Family Unit:

Adoption statistic 2016–2019

	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Year</i>
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Reports	8	7	5	6
Male			3	4
Female			2	3
Outer Island	4	4	3	1
Overseas	0	1	1	1
International	0			1
Case Granted by Court	7	7	5	6
Case not granted by Court	1	0	0	0

AA. Reply to paragraph 15 (a) of the list of issues

69. The Ministry of Education does not report on this indicator. 2016 Census information responding to this indicator would be collected and reported by the National Statistics Office.

AB. Reply to paragraph 15 (b) of the list of issues

70. Source: Ministry of Education: The Cook Islands provides an inclusive education system. It is important to note that the enrolment rates provided below include all learners and not disaggregated by disability. Refer to pages 27–31 for specific data on those students receiving learning support.

Enrolment Rates in Primary Education by Gender for Years 2017–2019

<i>Year</i>	<i>Gross Enrolment (%)</i>			<i>Net Enrolment (%)</i>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
2017	110	103	107	100	100	100
2018	104	102	103	100	100	100
2019	112	110	111	100	100	100

AC. Reply to paragraph 15 (c) of the list of issues

71. Source: Ministry of Education.

Junior Secondary Education Enrolment Rates by Gender for Years 2017–2019

<i>Year</i>	<i>GER</i>			<i>NER</i>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
2017	105	97	101	97	90	93
2018	107	97	102	103	92	97
2019	108	111	109	101	104	102

Senior Secondary Education Enrolment Rates by Gender for Years 2014–2019

<i>Year</i>	<i>Gross Enrolment (%)</i>			<i>Net Enrolment (%)</i>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
2017	63	76	69	58	69	63
2018	64	79	72	58	72	65
2019	79	85	82	72	76	74

Total Secondary Education Enrolment Rates by Gender for Years 2014 – 2019

<i>Year</i>	<i>Gross Enrolment (%)</i>			<i>Net Enrolment (%)</i>		
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
2017	86	88	87	80	81	81
2018	88	90	89	83	84	83
2019	96	100	98	89	93	91

AD. Reply to paragraph 15 (d) of the list of issues

72. The Cook Islands provides an inclusive education system; therefore, no special schools are in operation.

2019 Inclusive Students by Region, School Status, Gender and Needs							
School Status	Government						
Student Needs	Rarotonga		Southern Group		Northern Group		Grand Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Physical	-	-	4	3	-	-	7
Learning	8	26	5	9	-	3	51
Multiple	1	2	1	1	-	-	5
Medical	1	9	-	2	-	-	12
Total	10	37	10	15	-	3	75
School Status	Private						
Student Needs	Rarotonga		Southern Group		Northern Group		Grand Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Physical	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Learning	2	5	-	1	-	-	8
Multiple	3	2	-	-	-	-	5
Medical	5	11	-	-	-	-	16
Grand Total	10	18	-	1	-	-	29
School Status	Government and Private						
Student Needs	Rarotonga		Southern Group		Northern Group		Grand Total
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Physical	-	-	4	3	-	-	7
Learning	10	31	5	10	-	3	59
Multiple	4	4	1	1	-	-	10
Medical	6	20	-	2	-	-	28
Grand Total	20	55	10	16	-	3	104

2019 Student Learning needs

Year Level	Student Needs				Grand Total
	Physical	Learning	Multiple	Medical	
ECE			3	1	4
Year 1				2	2
Year 2		3	1	1	5
Year 3	2	2		4	8
Year 4		2		3	5
Year 5		6	1	1	8
Year 6	1	12	2	3	18
Year 7	1	6	2	3	12
Year 8		15		2	17
Year 9		10		5	15
Year 10	1	3		1	5
Year 11			1	1	2
Year 12	1				1

<i>Year Level</i>	<i>Student Needs</i>				<i>Grand Total</i>
	<i>Physical</i>	<i>Learning</i>	<i>Multiple</i>	<i>Medical</i>	
Year 13	1			1	2
Grand Total	7	59	10	28	104

2018 Total Students by Level and Student Needs

<i>Year Level</i>	<i>Physical</i>	<i>Learning</i>	<i>Multiple</i>	<i>Medical</i>	<i>Grand Total</i>
ECE	-	-	1	2	3
Year 1	-	-	-	3	3
Year 2	2	-	-	4	6
Year 3	-	8	-	2	10
Year 4	-	2	1	-	3
Year 5	1	2	-	6	9
Year 6	1	3	2	3	9
Year 7	-	17	-	2	19
Year 8	-	12	-	5	17
Year 9	1	2	-	2	5
Year 10	-	1	1	1	3
Year 11	1	3	-	1	5
Year 12	1	1	-	1	3
Grand Total	7	51	5	32	95

2018 School Status Government

<i>Student Needs</i>	<i>Rarotonga</i>		<i>Southern Group</i>		<i>Northern Group</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	
Physical	-	-	4	3	-	-	7
Learning	2	21	5	14	-	3	45
Multiple	1	1	1	-	-	-	3
Medical	2	11	1	3	-	1	18
Grand Total	5	33	11	20	-	4	73

2018 School Status Private

<i>Student Needs</i>	<i>Rarotonga</i>		<i>Southern Group</i>		<i>Northern Group</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	
Learning	2	3	-	1	-	-	6
Multiple	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
Medical	6	8	-	-	-	-	14
Grand Total	9	12	-	1	-	-	22

2018 School Status Government and Private

<i>Student Needs</i>	<i>Rarotonga</i>		<i>Southern Group</i>		<i>Northern Group</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	
Physical	-	-	4	3	-	-	7

<i>Student Needs</i>	<i>Rarotonga</i>		<i>Southern Group</i>		<i>Northern Group</i>		<i>Total</i>
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	
Learning	4	24	5	15	-	3	51
Multiple	2	2	1		-	-	5
Medical	8	19	1	3	-	1	32
Grand Total	14	45	11	21	-	4	95

AE. Reply to paragraph 15 (e) of the list of issues

73. Source: Ministry of Education.

2018 Teacher Aides by Region, School Status and Teaching Status										
Teaching Status	Rarotonga			Southern Group			Northern Group			Grand Total
	Govt	Private	Total	Govt	Private	Total	Govt	Private	Total	
One on One	21	13	34	4	1	5	1	-	1	40
Group	2	1	3					-		3
School Support	4	1	5	8		8	2	-	2	15
Vacant		4	4	6		6		-		10
Grand Total	27	19	46	18	1	19	3	-	3	68

2018 Teacher Aides by Region, School Status and Teaching Status (less vacancies)										
Teaching Status	Rarotonga			Southern Group			Northern Group			Grand Total
	Govt	Private	Total	Govt	Private	Total	Govt	Private	Total	
One on One	21	13	34	4	1	5	1	-	1	40
Group	2	1	3					-		3
School Support	4	1	5	8		8	2	-	2	15
Grand Total	27	19	46	18	1	19	3	-	3	58

2019 Teacher Aides by Region, School Status and Teaching Status										
Teaching Status	Rarotonga			Southern Group			Northern Group			Grand Total
	Govt	Private	Total	Govt	Private	Total	Govt	Private	Total	
One on One	19	25	44	9	1	10	1	-	1	55
Group	5	2	7	6	-	6	2	-	2	15
School Support	1	1	2	2	-	2	-	-	-	4
Grand Total	25	28	53	17	1	18	3	-	3	74

AF. Reply to paragraph 15 (f) of the list of issues

74. Refer to table above.

AG. Reply to paragraph 15 (g) of the list of issues

75. As previously mentioned in part 3(l), the Ministry of Education does not officially report data on out-of-school children as the rates are low and individual cases effectively managed by the Ministry of Education.

AH. Reply to paragraph 15 (h) of the list of issues

76. The Ministry of Education does not collect data or report on this indicator.

AI. Reply to paragraph 16 of the list of issues

77. Police Statistics (2016–2018):

(a) Assault on a child x 3 – went through Police Diversion scheme;

(b) Indecent act on a child x 3 (1 x sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment and 1 x sentenced to 3 and a half years' imprisonment and 1 x sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment);

(c) Manslaughter – 9 year-old child x 1 (offender sentenced to 6 years imprisonment).

78. Children in conflict with the law who have been:

(a) Arrested – 30;

(b) Referred to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Committee – no cases have been referred to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Committee as the Committee has been inactive since 2017;

(c) In pretrial detention: 7 male juveniles;

(d) Serving a sentence in detention, including data on the length of the sentence x 2 – (1 x male juvenile for numerous offences and he was sentenced to 11 and a half months' imprisonment and 1 x male juvenile for 3 cases of arson and 3 x burglary and he was sentenced for 8 years and 6 months' imprisonment;

(e) Serving a sentence in detention facilities for adults; the 2 males above;

(f) Legal aid provided by the Ministry of Justice for criminal cases is not being used;

(g) Only Criminal matters are heard in the Children's Court jurisdiction – some families do seek the assistance of lawyers but the majority proceed without lawyers, however are assisted by the Child & Family service officers at the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Police Prevention Team.

AJ. Reply to paragraph 17 of the list of issues

79. Refer to Part 1, Question 3. More information to be provided at the constructive dialogue.

AK. Reply to paragraph 18 of the list of issues

80. The NSDP indicators are monitored and reported to the National Sustainable Development Commission (NSDC) and Cabinet on an annual basis. To date, the Government has put together two indicator reports.

81. The Population and Household Census 2016 and the Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) 2016 have been officially published.

82. The National Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Policy 2019 has been endorsed.

83. Medium Term Fiscal Priority 2019-2024 incorporates the Medium-term Goal priorities which determine the budget allocations to specific priority areas. Goal 9 Gender and the Vulnerable was prioritized as the Goal needing the most attention for budgeting purposes.

AL. Reply to paragraph 19 of the list of issues

84. The Children's policy, National Youth Policy, Disability inclusive Policy, Gender quality and women's empowerment Policy, Family and Protection Support Act, 9, the National Health Strategy provides a framework for identifying priority areas affecting children.

85. Te Pito Manava o te Anau – Cook Islands National Policy Framework for Children 2017–2021 adopts an outcomes approach, based on five national outcomes for children. These outcomes are that children:

(a) Are active and healthy, physically and mentally (aligned to the Convention Articles 6; 22; 31; 33; and 23);

(b) Are achieving their full potential in all areas of learning and development (aligned to the Convention Articles 28; 29; 14; and 23);

(c) Are safe and protected from harm (aligned to the Convention Articles 9; 10; 19, 36, 34; 39, 11, 35; 20, 25, 21; 37; 40; and 17);

(d) Have economic safety measures and opportunity (aligned to the Convention Articles 27; 18; 26; and 28);

(e) Are connected, respected and contributing positively to their world (aligned to the Convention Articles 2; 12; 16; 30; 13; 15; and 42).

86. Each of these outcomes have subsequent interrelated strategies for implementation.
