



**Kingdom of Tonga**

# **TONGA POPULATION CENSUS, 1996**

## **INTERNAL MIGRATION**



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# **PREFACE**

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This is the third publication presenting results from the most recent Population Census of the Kingdom of Tonga in 1996. This bulletin contains information and an analysis of the M-Series or Internal Migration. Internal Migration refers to the movement of the Tongan Population within Tonga. A comparison is made of the place of birth, place of usual residence and place of enumeration, in order to determine movers and non-movers in the Tongan population. The analysis begins by looking at in and out migration in each Division, followed by a look at the rural to urban migration, and finally an analysis of the age and sex breakdown of migrants into and out of the Greater Nuku'alofa area. The information presented in this bulletin will assist planners and policy makers understand the internal movement of the Tongan population within Tonga.

The analysis of internal migration contained in this bulletin was conducted by Mrs Vilimaina L. Rakaseta, Population Advisor of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) Noumea, with assistance from Mrs Mele P. Finau, Principal Statistician. The Department is grateful to the Demography Programme of the SPC for allowing Mrs Rakaseta to assist in this important undertaking.

Comments and queries regarding the information and statistics contained in this bulletin will be welcomed by the Department.

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## 1 Migration by Division

The 1996 census data reveal a significant level of mobility among the Tongan population. As shown in Table 1 some of the interesting features of the different kinds of mobility are:

- Firstly, about 1 in every 5 or 20 per cent of the population had their place of birth different from their usual place of residence. However, this disguises the differences by division (Table 1). The Niuas revealed the highest rate followed by Ha'apai. Distance is obviously an important factor in the decision to migrate from or to return to the two divisions.
- Secondly, there is a significant proportion of in-migration and out-migration from the same divisions. For example, Tongatapu accounted for 70 per cent and 17 per cent of the in-migrants and out-migrants respectively. Similarly, Vava'u accounted for 11 per cent and 26 per cent of in-migrants and out-migrants respectively.
- Thirdly, except for Tongatapu and 'Eua, all other divisions lost more people than they gained. Not surprisingly, Tongatapu gained the most, with net in-migration of 11,251 persons. The majority of these gains were from Ha'apai and Vava'u.

**Table 1: Non-movers, In-migrants, out-migrants and net migrants by division, 1986-96**

Division	Non-migrants	In-migrants	Out-migrants	Net-migrants
Tongatapu	49,225	14,821	3,570	<b>+11,251</b>
Vava'u	13,458	2,337	5,489	<b>-3,152</b>
Ha'apai	7,194	1,093	6,640	<b>-5,547</b>
'Eua	3,126	1,711	1,350	<b>+361</b>
Niuas	1,626	581	1,672	<b>-1,091</b>
Abroad	408	423	2,245	<b>-1,822</b>
Not stated	16	1	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>75,053</b>	<b>20,967</b>	<b>20,967</b>	<b>0</b>

Non-movers were defined as those who still resided at their place of birth and were counted there as their usual place of residence during the census night. In and Out Migrants were those who moved from their place of birth and resided at a different place which they identified as their usual place of residence.

## 2. Rural to Urban Migration

The incidence of rural-urban migration is significant in Tonga as shown by the 1996 census results. Twelve per cent of the population born in Tonga and usually residing in Greater Nuku'alofa at the time of the census, were rural born.

Table 2 shows where in-migrants into Greater Nuku'alofa are coming from and where out-migrants from Greater Nuku'alofa are going to. Seventy eight per cent of the in-migrants into Greater Nuku'alofa come from the rural areas of Tongatapu, Vava'u and Ha'apai. The largest proportion, however, come from Ha'apai (31 per cent), followed by Vava'u (26 per cent) and Rest of Tongatapu (21 per cent). This is to be expected given their larger population sizes (relative to other divisions) and the close proximity of Rest of Tongatapu and Ha'apai to Nuku'alofa, the main employment and education centre in Tonga.

**Table 2: Migration to Greater Nuku'alofa, place of birth and place of usual residence, 1996**

	<b>In-Migrants</b>	<b>% distrib.</b>	<b>Out-Migrants</b>	<b>Net-migrants</b>
Rest of Tongatapu	2,462	21.09	1,437	1,025
Vava'u	3,001	25.71	647	2,354
Ha'apai	3,654	31.31	353	3,301
'Eua	739	6.33	381	358
Niuas	789	6.76	129	660
Abroad	1,026	8.79	118	908
Not stated	1	0.01	1	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,672</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>3,066</b>	<b>8,606</b>

Exposed Population = Non-migrants + Out migrants

$$\text{Migration rate} = \boxed{37.34}$$

$$\text{Migration Rate} = \text{Net-Migrants/Exposed Population} \times 100$$

Migration rate for Greater Nuku'alofa area was 37.34 per cent. Those who were born abroad and those who did not state their place of birth were excluded from the calculation of the migration rate for Greater Nuku'alofa.

Of the out-migrants from Greater Nuku'alofa, however, almost half (47 per cent) were migrating to other areas of Tongatapu. The second most popular destination was Vava'u (21 per cent). Out-migration to 'Eua and Ha'apai although still significant, was much smaller when compared to Tongatapu and Vava'u. People migrated to Vava'u to work in hotels and other infra-structure on the islands.

### 3. Age and sex breakdown of migrants into and out of Greater Nuku'alofa

In-migrants outnumber out-migrants in each age group but there is a wide variation between the groups. While the number of in-migrants among the youngest age group (<15) is around two times the number of out-migrants, this is nowhere near the magnitude of the oldest age group (50+), which is seven times the number of out-migrants (Table 3).

The distribution of in-migrants differs from out-migrants. Although in-migrants are equally distributed among all age groups, the out-migrants, on the other hand, reveal declining proportions as age increases. The net effect is that the bulk of the net in-migrants are the oldest age groups, 35 years and over.

**Table 3: Migration to Greater Nuku'alofa by sex and age group, 1996**

	Non-Migrants	In-Migrants	% distrib.	Out-Migrants	Net-migrants	
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,670</b>	<b>11,672</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>3,066</b>	<b>8,606</b>	<b>41.5</b>
0-14	9,104	2,237	19.2	1,206	1,031	
15-24	3,806	2,458	21.1	628	1,830	
25-34	2,087	2,232	19.1	485	1,747	
35-49	1,414	2,314	19.8	397	1,917	
50+	1,259	2,431	20.8	350	2,081	
<b>Male</b>	<b>9,141</b>	<b>5,538</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,475</b>	<b>4,063</b>	<b>38.3</b>
0-14	4719	1,154	20.8	615	539	
15-24	1954	1,206	21.8	307	899	
25-34	1126	1,085	19.6	226	859	
35-49	715	1,024	18.5	167	857	
50+	627	1,069	19.3	160	909	
<b>Female</b>	<b>8,529</b>	<b>6,134</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,591</b>	<b>4,543</b>	<b>44.9</b>
0-14	4385	1,083	17.7	591	492	
15-24	1852	1,252	20.4	321	931	
25-34	961	1,147	18.7	259	888	
35-49	699	1,290	21.0	230	1,060	
50+	632	1,362	22.2	190	1,172	

Another interesting aspect of the characteristics of migrants is their gender make-up. Although there are roughly equal proportions of migrants in each age group among both males and females, there are however, gender differentials in their age patterns. While females predominate in the oldest age groups (35 and over), males on the other hand, predominate in the youngest age groups (under 25 years). This may suggest that males migrate to Greater Nuku'alofa for education purposes while women migrate for employment reasons. This assumption cannot be true as 15-24 year-old females still account for 20 per cent of in-migrants while older men also account for similar proportions. Education and employment are the overriding factors for migration to Greater Nuku'alofa of the young and adult males. For older females however, other factors could be in play as discussed below.

Females outnumber males in the number of out- as well as in-migrants. Among the possible reasons for this are: women from outer islands joining their husbands upon marriage and secondly, mothers accompanying their children who come to Nuku'alofa for further education. These mothers usually stay on in Nuku'alofa while the fathers stay back in the islands to look after the plantations. Mothers usually return to the islands once their children have completed their education.