

KIRIBATI



Capital:
Tarawa



KIRIBATI
(ALSO KNOWN AS
GILBERTESE)
& ENGLISH



AUSTRALIAN
DOLLAR

48.7% OF
POPULATION
ARE UNDER 25

811 SQ KM
IN LAND SIZE

31.3%
KIRIBATI UNITING
CHURCH

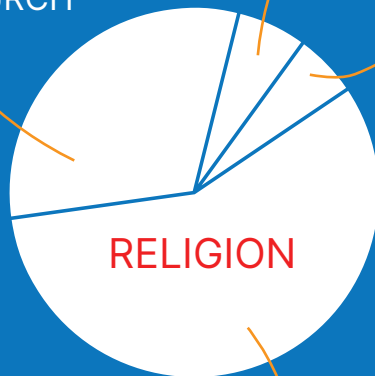
6.1%
OTHER

5.3%
MORMON



FAVOURITE SPORTS:
SOCCER

MAJOR INDUSTRIES:
AGRICULTURE
MINING
FISHING



57.3%
CATHOLIC

POPULATION OF
119,00

KIRIBATI



Students attentive during class time.



Toilet blocks in construction at St. Louis School.

Geography

Covering a total land area of 811 sq km, the widely scattered nation of Kiribati comprises 32 atolls and one raised coral island (Banaba), spread over 3.5 million sq km at the heart of the Pacific Ocean. It is the only nation in the world that is situated on all four main hemispheres. These low-lying coral atolls are the protruding tips of undersea volcanoes and extend only a few feet above sea level, and are surrounded by extensive reefs.

History

Kiribati is a relatively young nation in Micronesia that has been inhabited by Micronesian peoples speaking the same Oceanic language for at least a thousand years. Europeans arrived in the 18th century, and the main island chain was named the Gilbert Islands after a British sea captain. In 1892 the Gilbert Islands consented to become a British protectorate together with the nearby Ellice Islands. Together they became the crown colony of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands in 1916. Kiritimati (Christmas Island) became part of the colony in 1919 and the Phoenix Islands were added in 1937.

The region was occupied by Japan during World War II, with Tarawa Atoll the site of one of the fiercest battles in US Marine Corps history. In the 1960s, some of the country's islands were used by the US and the UK for nuclear testing.

The Gilbert Islands became independent as Kiribati in 1979 and became a member of the United Nations in 1999.

Culture

The folk music of Kiribati is unique in that it has maintained much of its traditional aspects over time. Songs are focussed on the vocals, which take the form of chanting.

Music incorporates a practice known as body percussion. This type of percussion produces a rhythm by clapping hands, snapping fingers, or bouncing feet on the floor. Music is often used in this country to accompany major life events, such as marriage, death, and religious observances.

Dancing in Kiribati is just as traditional, with specific dances identified as originating in this country: Buki, Ruoia, Te Kabuti, Tirere, and Kaimatoa. Although distinct, each of these dances shares the common theme of mimicking the movements of the frigatebird, depicted on the national flag of Kiribati.

AMS Projects in Kiribati – St Louis High School amenities block

St Louis High School is located on the small island of Tarawa in Kiribati. Just under half of Kiribati's population (approximately 40,000 people) live on Tarawa, placing significant pressure on the environment and its limited resource base. This region experiences a high level of poverty and vulnerability and is under threat from rising sea levels. Kiribati's population is also growing quickly and is expected to double by 2025 with half the population under the age of 21.

St Louis High School was established by the Marist Brothers in 1984. With ageing infrastructure, environmental pressures and a growing cohort, St Louis High School requires upgrades particularly to its unhygienic bathrooms. The current toilet block is dilapidated, with toilets that barely flush and no doors on the cubicles.

The new amenities block will directly benefit 564 students between the ages of 12 to 14. There will be two separate toilet blocks, one for boys and the other for girls. This project will help provide the school and students with a high standard of hygiene.

Further reading/resources:

SBS Cultural Atlas (www.culturalatlas.sbs.com.au)

World Atlas (www.worldatlas.com)