



PACMAS

Pacific Media Assistance Scheme

Kiribati

STATE OF MEDIA &
COMMUNICATION
REPORT
2013



International
Development

Australian Broadcasting Corporation





Kiribati bird's eye view Tarawa, Kiribati. Photo by PACMAS.

The study was undertaken by Jo Tacchi and Heather Horst at RMIT University, Australia; Evangelia Papoutsaki at UNITEC, New Zealand; and Verena Thomas and Joys Eggins at the University of Goroka, Papua New Guinea. The research data for this report were collected by a team of researchers who conducted both desk-based research and interviews in person, by telephone and/or email while in Kiribati and New Zealand. Researchers for Kiribati included Marion Muliaumaseali'i and Jessica Noske-Turner; Marion Muliaumaseali'i completed interviews in Kiribati in October 2012. This report also benefits from the verification and survey documents completed by members of the Panel of Expertise.

Any opinions represented in this report are those of the authors and research participants and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Australian Government or the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

The findings are presented in three sections:

1. Country Context
2. State of Media and Communications
 - Media and Communications Platforms
 - Media and Communications Landscape
3. Summary of Findings

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Kiribati Country Context

Kiribati gained independence from Britain in 1979, but remains a member of the Commonwealth. Kiribati consists of 21 inhabited low-lying coral atoll islands across 3.5 million square kilometres of ocean. Over 40 per cent of the population lives on the atoll of Tarawa. The vast distances between the islands means that some people have little access to any electronic communications, a situation made especially difficult due to the fact that a large proportion of the media is located on the main island.

Kiribati's media industry is small compared to other Pacific countries of a similar population. Around the world Kiribati is best known as a 'disappearing nation' and i-Kiribati politicians have campaigned vigorously in global climate change forums. However, engaging locally about the issue can be complex.

Kiribati is recognised by the United Nations as a Least Developed Country and receives a large part of its income from external sources (e.g. seamen workers remittances, foreign aid and fishing licenses); Kiribati's GDP was \$US 146 million in 2010¹. It's also important to note reported diplomatic competition between China and Taiwan, with both governments offering development assistance funding.

Key Insights

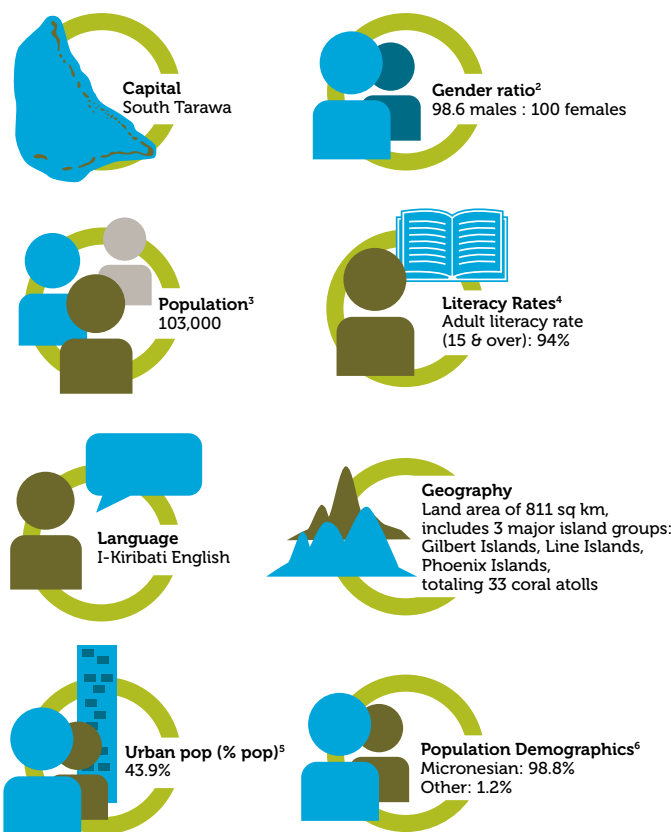
Communication spaces

Kiribati is typical of small island communicative ecologies: face to face exchanges, or the 'coconut wireless' phenomenon, remains central to everyday life, especially for people located on the outer islands who are often beyond the reach of mass media. Maintaining contact with outer islands is important to NGOs working in Kiribati, and the Kiribati government. Equally important are the spaces where people congregate and the informality of these daily interactions, especially around certain times of the day and in certain locations, which ensures that everyone is informed of each other's activities. The main Kiribati communication hub is the Bairiki Village on Kiribati's main island of Tarawa, where over 40 per cent of the population lives. It is big enough to house markets and community performances and has a well-maintained road near government buildings.

Unintended consequences of climate change action

As a low-lying atoll island, Kiribati is especially vulnerable to rising sea level, high tides and storms. The current leader, President Anote Tong, is active in international discussions about climate change politics. The cornerstone of his long term policy is 'migration with dignity', which is essentially a plan for moving all i-Kiribati off

Table d.1 Basic Country Data



1 United Nations. 2011. World Statistics Pocketbook Country Profile: Kiribati, <http://unstats.un.org/>. Accessed 20 April 2013

2 UNDATA. 2013. Kiribati. <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Kiribati>. Accessed 27 April 2013

3 2012 projection, UNESCAP. 2012. Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific 2012 – ESCAP Statistics Division. <http://www.unescap.org/stat/data/syb2012/country-profiles/Kiribati.pdf>. Accessed 20 April 2013

4 UNESCO. 2009. UNESCO Country Programming Document: KIRIBATI, 2008 – 2013. Apia: UNESCO Apia Office, Cluster Office for the Pacific States. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001832/183241e.pdf>. Accessed 20 April 2013

5 UNDATA. 2013. Kiribati. <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Kiribati>. Accessed 27 April 2013

6 2000 census, http://www.pacificweb.org/DOCS/Other%20P.I/Kiribati/KIR2000_tbl.pdf

Kiribati. However, local engagement with this issue is complex. Recent research by former Broadcasting and Publications Authority (BPA) journalist Taberannag Korauaba argues that President Tong's 'doomsday' mantra about Kiribati has led journalists and citizens to 'turn off' in relation to climate change issues. Christian narratives can serve as barriers to understanding and 'believing in' climate change, complicating the matter further. *'Kiribatians believe in the religious story of Noah in the Bible where God promises to never flood the land again. The fact that Kiribati has never been hit by a cyclone or hurricane further cements this belief amongst the islanders'* (KIRIBATI09).

Contracting media environment

Kiribati's local media industry is small in relation to other Pacific countries of a similar size. Over the last few years, the public service media has been steadily contracting. The BPA has reduced the frequency of its newspaper (*Te Uekara*) from twice a week to once a week, and has closed the only TV station. The BPA's radio station, Radio Kiribati, has not been operational for several months due to a damaged transmitter and lack of funds to repair it. Diminished funding is often cited as the primary reason for changes in the media environment in Kiribati.

State of Media and Communications

Media and Communications Platforms

Although the media environment in Kiribati is generally described as 'free'⁷, the government has applied regulatory powers to exert some control, including ordering the suspension of one independent newspaper. A lack of funding for government media outlets has crippled the public service media, with the TV station currently non-operational, and publication of the newspaper reduced to once a week.

Aside from the government-owned media, the only other media outlets are an FM radio station, a newspaper (*Kiribati Newstar*) owned by Sir Ieremia Tabai, and the *Te Mauri* newspaper produced by the Protestant Church. The *Kiribati Independent*, initially operating from New Zealand as a news website and later as a print publication, has struggled to maintain operations due to problems with government regulators.

Television

TV Kiribati Ltd, established in 2004, is a government-owned company that relies solely on sponsorship and advertising revenue. It is the only television service in the country, but when transmission failed to reach all parts of Kiribati, it ceased operating in mid-2012 due to financial issues⁸. Its future is uncertain as the government considers the station's long-term viability.

Table d.2 Media and Communication Platforms: Television

| Platform | Organisation | Ownership/ Funding | Language/ Content | Sector |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Television | Kiribati Television (currently not operating due to financial issues) | Operated by TV Kiribati Ltd, owned by government but funded through sponsorship and advertising | Limited local content in local language; foreign content | Government |

7 See for example Freedom House. 2013. Kiribati <http://www.freedomhouse.org/country/kiribati>. Accessed 20 April 2013, and Perrottet, A and Robie, D. 2011. Pacific media freedom 2011: a status report http://www.pjreview.info/sites/default/files/articles/pdfs/PJR17_2_pacific%20media%20freedom2011.pdf Accessed 20 April 2013

8 KIRIBATI: State television closes suddenly with 'financial problems' <http://www.pmc.aut.ac.nz/pacific-media-watch/kiribati-state-television-closes-suddenly-financial-problems-8238>. Accessed 20 April 2013

Radio

Radio Kiribati, operated by the government's Broadcasting and Publications Authority (BPA), is the only form of mass media that reaches all islands. Radio Kiribati is also the primary communication platform in an emergency. During the limited transmission hours (7am-8.30am, noon-1.30pm and 5pm-9.30pm), Radio Kiribati airs hourly news bulletins, plus a range of local content including current affairs, drama and comedies, NGO, church and government department programs, women's programs, and music. The limited hours of transmission are attributed to an inability to fill a full day's worth of programming. Chronic funding issues have affected its ability to operate effectively (e.g. lack of backup transmitters and generator, outdated equipment). The BPA also runs an FM frequency which reaches Tarawa only.

The only commercial radio station, Newair FM89, plays music.

Table d.3 Media and Communication Platforms:Radio

| Platform | Organisation | Ownership/ Funding | Language/ Content | Sector |
|----------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Radio | Radio Kiribati | Operated by Broadcasting and Publications Authority (BPA), owned by government but funded through sponsorship and advertising | Range of local news, current affairs, dramatic content and music. Additional content produced by churches, NGOs, and government departments. Limited hours of transmission. | Government |
| | FM96 | Operated by the Broadcasting and Publications Authority (BPA), owned by government but funded through sponsorship and advertising | Tarawa only; content as above. | Government |
| | Newair FM89 | Owned by Jeremia Tabai and shareholders | Music | Commercial |



Figure 1: Two DJs at FM 89 Radio Station in Kiribati

Newspaper and Newsletters

The BPA produces *Te Uekara* on a weekly basis. Like other BPA media, *Te Uekara* receives no government funding and relies entirely on advertising and sponsorship. Financial struggles are cited as the reason why this publication dropped from twice a week to once a week. *'Before we used to publish twice a week, on Tuesday and Friday, but due to some financial problem we had to cut it and put in only one publication'* (KIRIBATI07). Its reach is further constrained by a reduction in distribution due to the costs and logistics of transport, resulting in the paper no longer being distributed to outer islands. The paper covers gender issues, sport, and local, regional and international news. Although *Te Uekara* used to include both English and i-Kiribati, it now publishes exclusively in the local language. *'Before we used to have English in this paper but we see that it is not profiting because only few people buy those papers so we have to concentrate mainly in local language newspaper'* (KIRIBATI07).

The locally-owned *Newstar*, established in 2000, generates some income through charging for advertisements. The paper has three female reporters (who share one computer) and an editor who works on a laptop. *The Kiribati Independent*, published from Auckland in New Zealand, is reported to have resumed publication in early 2013 after having been ordered to close in 2012. The Ministry of Communications claimed the paper breached the Newspaper Registration Act⁹. The editor and publisher of the newspaper, Taberannag Korauaba, is a former BPA journalist who was fired in 2005 for refusing to reveal the source used in a corruption report¹⁰. In 2000, the Kiribati Protestant Church started publishing *Te Mauri*, a weekly (local language) newspaper. The government's Press Unit produces a newsletter, RMAT (*Tongorong Man Ami Tautaeaka*), which includes news from most government departments¹¹.

| Platform | Organisation | Ownership/ Funding | Language/ Content | Sector |
|------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Newspaper | Te Uekara | Operated by the Broadcasting and Publications Authority (BPA), owned by government but funded through advertising | Publishes 2000 copies weekly in i-Kiribati. Covers local, regional and international news and topics. Not distributed to outer islands. | Government |
| | Kiribati Newstar | Owned by Jeremia Tabai and shareholders | English language Weekly. 1000 copies. | Commercial |
| | Kiribati Independent | Founded by editor and owner, Taberannag Korauaba, with funding from Pacific Micronesian Foundation Charitable Trust Inc. | Reportedly recently restarted publication. Local language. Linked to news website, the Kiribati Independent www.thekiribatiindependent.co.nz/ | Commercial |
| | Te Mauri | Owned and operated by Kiribati Protestant Church | Publishes weekly in Kiribati language | Church |
| Newsletter | RMAT | Produced by the government's Press Unit | Includes news from government departments | Government |

Online and Mobile Media

Local use of online and mobile media is constrained by two issues: affordability and access. Although mobile technology is available and widely used by business people on Tarawa, internet access is limited on the outer islands due to costs (the highest in the Pacific), and lack of infrastructure. In 2011, only 10 people out of 100 used the internet.

Some local businesses have set up Facebook pages to take advantage of free global advertising, including Kiribati Tourism and Kiribati Housing Corporation. The Office of the President has a climate change page with links to YouTube and Twitter, which target international audiences. Perhaps the most relevant social media tool from a media industry perspective is a Google+ group set up by the Ministry of Environment and Conservation to connect with media groups and the public in order to receive news updates and other important information. Both the ministry and media practitioners find it an effective way to communicate.

9 Australian Network News. 2013. <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-01-28/an-kiribati-newspaper-resumes-publication/4486902>. Accessed 27 April 2013

10 Freedom House. 2008. Kiribati. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2008/kiribati> Accessed 27 April 2013

11 Korauaba, Taberannag. 2012. Media and the politics of climate change in Kiribati: A case study on journalism in a "disappearing nation". Masters in Communication Thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology Communication Studies. <http://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10292/4503/KorauabaT.pdf?sequence=3> Accessed 27 April 2013

There are some online news and community spaces maintained from outside Kiribati. *Kiribati Independent* is published online from New Zealand with philanthropic support. *The Kiribati Community Online* site is maintained in the USA.

Table d.5 Media and Communication Platforms: Online and Mobile Media

| Platform | Organisation | Ownership/ Funding | Language/ Content | Sector |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Online | Google+ group connecting local media practitioners | Set up by the Ministry of Environment and Conservation | Networking | Government |
| | Kiribati Climate Change | Maintained by the Office of the President, Republic of Kiribati | Website with news and videos, links to twitter, Facebook. Targets international audience. | Government |
| Online | Local businesses use Facebook pages | Examples include Kiribati Tourism, Kiribati Housing Corp | Targets international audience | Commercial |
| Online | Kiribati Independent | Set up by Taberannang Korauaba with funding from Pacific Micronesian Foundation Charitable Trust Inc. | Published from New Zealand since 2011. The founder is motivated by concerns for how climate change issues are covered http://www.thekiribatiindependent.co.nz/ | Independent/ Commercial |
| | Kiribati Community Online | Published from USA, seeks advertisers | Forums and community news in English. http://www.kiribatonlinecommunity.com/ | Independent/ Community |

Other Communication Platforms

Traditional methods of communication (eg. face-to-face) or village meetings remain important, especially on the outer islands where household radios are rare. Government departments and NGOs report that visiting villages and communicating directly with people is still the most effective means of communication. On the main island of Tarawa, face-to-face communication is also important since there is only one road and it takes less than an hour to get around the whole island. Everyone is aware of each other's activities and news spreads quickly. Drama and role-plays are popular ways to communicate messages, especially in church settings. The Kiribati Climate Change Action Network (KIRICAN) uses this method by working with young people to create messages based on climate change issues, which are then performed in public spaces and church gatherings.

As mentioned earlier in the report, public areas promote communication. The village of Bairiki (considered the main hub on Tarawa), is one of the few areas on the island that has a public space large enough to hold the markets and community performances. This area, serviced by a well-maintained road, is also where the main government offices and houses are located.

There are two local video producers active in Kiribati, the Nei Tabera ni Nai company owned by Linda Uan and John Anderson who produces cultural films¹⁵. The Kiribati Catholic Church also records ordination ceremonies, birthday parties, weddings and so on. These videos can be hired or sold.

12 Korauaba, Taberannang. 2012. Media and the politics of climate change in Kiribati: A case study on journalism in a "disappearing nation". Masters in Communication Thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology Communication Studies. <http://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10292/4503/KorauabaT.pdf?sequence=3> Accessed 27 April 2013

13 Korauaba, Taberannang. 2012. Media and the politics of climate change in Kiribati: A case study on journalism in a "disappearing nation". Masters in Communication Thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology Communication Studies. <http://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10292/4503/KorauabaT.pdf?sequence=3>, p21 Accessed 27 April 2013

Table d.6 Media and Communication Platforms: Other Communication Platforms

| Platform | Organisation | Language/Content | Sector |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Multi-media production | Nei Tabera ni Nai, owned by Linda Uan and John Anderson | Produces videos | Private |
| | Kiribati Catholic Church | Films weddings, birthday parties and other ceremonies. Videos are bought or hired | Church |
| Other | Face-to-face communication in villages | Primary mode of communication with outer islands for NGOs and government | Community |
| Performance | Drama performances | Frequently used within churches and by NGOs, especially when engaging with youth | Church & Community |
| Public spaces | Bairiki village on Tarawa | Main public space in Tawara, used for markets and performances, close to government buildings | Community |

Media and Communications Landscape

This section of the report focuses on Kiribati's media and communication sector across four areas: policy and legislation, media systems, capacity building and content. It provides an overview of the state of media across four Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS) program components, as explored through the six PACMAS strategic activities: Broadcast Technicians, Pacific Emergency Broadcast Systems (PEBS), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVETs), Media Associations, Climate Change and Non-Communicative Diseases (NCDs). Media systems include a focus on broadcast technicians and PEBS; capacity building includes TVETs and Media Associations; and content looks at climate change and NCDs. It provides an overview of media and communication across these areas and aligns them with PACMAS program components.

Policy and Legislation

Relevant legislation includes the Broadcasting and Publications Authority Act 1997, the Newspaper Registration Act 1989 (with amendments in 2002 and 2004), the Telecommunications Act 2004 and the Radio-communications Regulations 2005. Freedom of speech is guaranteed in the constitution (Section 12) and this is generally respected in practice, although there are no specific references to freedom of the media. There is no freedom of information legislation or specific community media legislation. No local codes of ethics were reported to have been developed or to be in use.

The Ministry of Communication, Transport and Tourism Development (MCTTD) is responsible for media and telecommunications administration, development and licensing. The Broadcasting and Publications Authority Act established the BPA under the MCTTD. The Kiribati government has used the Broadcasting and Publications Authority Ordinance and the Newspaper Regulations Act to control independent newspapers and broadcasters: '[it] still allows government control over the independent media and gives politicians wide powers over broadcasters. Independent newspapers have to register with the government, which has the power to withhold licenses and has done so in the past'.¹⁴

There have been few reported instances of abuse or threats towards media professionals. Some incidents of concern to media freedom include a journalist losing his job in 2006 for refusing to reveal his sources and a refusal to allow opposition politicians to speak on government radio in 2007.¹⁵ Government power over media is also a concern for BPA staff, who feel unsupported and fear losing their jobs.

Telecommunications are governed under the Telecommunications Act 2004, which allows for market competition. The industry is regulated by the government through the Telecommunications Authority of Kiribati. To date, the government-owned Telecom Services Kiribati Limited (TSKL) is the sole provider.

Media Systems

Media systems take into consideration technical skills, support and infrastructure. It also explores emergency broadcast systems and experience from past disasters and crises in Kiribati.

14 Robie & Perrottet. 2011. Pacific Media Freedom 2011: A status report. Pacific Journalism Review http://www.pjreview.info/sites/default/files/articles/pdfs/PJR17_2_pacific%20media%20freedom2011.pdf p161-162 Accessed April 2013

15 Freedom House. 2008. Kiribati. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-press/2008/kiribati> Accessed 27 April 2013

PACMAS Strategic Activity: Technicians

The BPA has a chief engineer who has a diploma and an assistant engineer who was employed as a school leaver and given on-the-job training. The BPA does not have any access to back-up systems including generators or spare transmitters. In the case of power failures it must simply shut down transmission. This has caused severe interruptions to service, and the BPA reports being off air for several months when it had trouble with a transmitter. Due to lack of funding, equipment cannot be upgraded or maintained.

There are no formal networks for technicians in Kiribati, although there have been discussions between the CEO of Telecom Services Kiribati Ltd (TSK) and BPA technicians about forming an association. Other organisations in Kiribati also rely on the BPA technicians, including the Catholic Communications Centre (CCC), which calls on the BPA's chief engineer to help with technical issues. The CCC also relies on the BPA for assistance regarding new equipment and advice on new technology. The BPA usually charges for these services. NewAir FM has its own chief engineer who was trained in Fiji and looks after all of NewAir's technical needs.

PACMAS Strategic Activity: Emergency Broadcast System

Kiribati introduced a National Disaster Act in 1993 but it was never implemented. The Disaster Risk Management Office (DRMO) has reviewed the act, and the Office of the President endorsed the National Disaster Management Plan (NDMP) in October 2012. This plan is not yet comprehensive and includes a directive to liaise with the Applied Geoscience and Technology Division (SOPAC), of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) to help further develop the plan.

Although no official plan is yet in place, most interviewees seemed to agree on the general principles. They reported that the Met Office would notify the DRMO of any serious weather warnings, who would then contact the Office of the President and the National Disaster Management (NDM) Committee. Communication protocols are then enacted and radio is identified as the main avenue of communication prior, during and post-disaster. In such cases, Radio Kiribati comes under the control of the NDM Committee, which makes all announcements and coordinates the flow of information. In addition to the radio, police use loudspeakers while driving around the islands (including outer islands). Police have access to VHF radios to communicate with headquarters.

A tsunami warning in 2010 exposed the inadequacy of the emergency response plan. The initial alert came from staff at the bank who were listening to the radio and alerted the police: *'Police became the main coordinators during the [2010] tsunami warning. Due to no NDM plan in place at the time all activities were ad hoc'* (KIRIBATI09). Research participants admitted they were not organised when the warning came through, noting that there is no warning siren/alarm in place on any of the islands. Technicians at the BPA have not had any training or drills for emergency broadcasting procedures and there is no emergency procedure manual. In addition, key infrastructure and generators are not available, including for Radio Kiribati, the primary communication platform in an emergency. There are efforts to seek donor partnerships to assist with overall funding to implement the plan. The location of key infrastructures is also an important consideration, given the low elevation of the islands. During the tsunami warning the people of Tarawa are expected to seek refuge in the three-storey sports stadium, the tallest structure on the island.

There are also barriers to communicating emergency preparedness due to a conflict between disaster information and religious beliefs: *'Religious beliefs about God's promise to Noah to never flood the earth creates a casual attitude towards any attempts to educate the community on emergency preparedness'* (KIRIBATI09). There is also a sense of complacency among the public, as Kiribati has never experienced a cyclone or hurricane. This makes it difficult to engage the community. *'Most people haven't experienced any type of disaster ... [it] makes our job very difficult as well, they're not usually responsive to the warnings that we give'* (KIRIBATI09). Following the recently endorsed NDM Plan, the DRMO was planning to develop a Tsunami Response Plan by the end of 2012. This plan would include an early warning system, develop formal partnerships with telecommunications companies and other stakeholders, seek donor partnerships and funding for implementation of the plan, improve the understanding of roles and responsibilities among the NDM Committee, and improve emergency preparedness among government departments.

Capacity Building

Capacity building includes an understanding of the level of qualifications among existing media and communication practitioners.

Few journalists have qualifications, with estimates from both the BPA and commercial media organisations revealing that fewer than 10 per cent of journalists have any formal qualification. All journalists at Newstar have been hired as school leavers. The situation is similar for technicians. The chief engineer for the BPA has a diploma from Fiji and 30 years' experience but the assistant engineer was employed straight from secondary school and has on-the-job training. Resources and expertise are often not available locally and, when overseas training is available, usually only one person is able to go as staff shortages create pressure on those left behind. For this reason, there is a preference for in-house training: *'I prefer someone coming over rather than sending someone out there ... it is very costly and it consumes a lot of time ... but if they can be made [by] someone here ... who can offer that ... here then that is very simple ... I think that's one way we can help media'* (KIRIBATI04).

A BPA technician was sent to Fiji for training in the past under the Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association (PITA), but no one has been sent abroad for training since. The main funding sources for regional training for BPA journalists are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). There are avenues for applying for specific training through the Head Office, as one journalist explains: *'We have to apply then our application has to be taken to our ministry, the mother ministry. The mother ministry will select priority needs for training and luckily we have been selected as being priority'* (KIRIBATI07). Journalists interviewed identify a need for training in the area of communication of climate change and NCD issues. Both journalists and technicians are proactive in searching for new information online when they cannot get help or information locally. Outside the mainstream media industry, funding for training is also a barrier. NGOs such as KIRICAN do not have funding for media and communication training and rely on their networks for help with shaping their messages.

PACMAS Strategic Activity: Media Associations

The Kiribati Media Association (KIMA) was revived in October 2012. There have been mixed feelings about the association, as journalists' faith was undermined by an incident in 2006 where the media association failed to offer support to a BPA journalist who was fired for refusing to reveal his source: *'As journalists, we have to protect our sources no matter what. That's one of the issues that I've seen'* (KIRIBATI07). This and other issues have caused some journalists to question their ability to continue doing their job. While there is a sense of relief that KIMA is starting up again, many have lost confidence in KIMA's capacity to support them in practice as journalists.

PACMAS Strategic Activity: TVETS

There are no local institutions offering relevant courses for either media professionals or technicians. The Kiribati Technical Institute offers IT courses and business administration.

Content

Media content focuses on communication platforms and programs and ways to address issues related to climate change and NCDs. Climate change and NCDs are two core areas of focus for the PACMAS program.

In addition to news bulletins, Radio Kiribati airs a weekly current affairs program, sports programs, a women's program, radio drama and comedies. These programs are locally produced. Government departments, NGOs and churches also regularly produce content. Research participants stated that both commercial and government media cover a range of development themes including gender, health, education, environment, disability, youth and disaster resilience.

Several churches produce content which airs on Radio Kiribati. The Kiribati Catholic Church produces a daily five minute devotional program, a fortnightly Bible reflection and church news program together with a 45-minute church service. The Kiribati Protestant Church also regularly airs short devotional radio programs, a Bible study program and pre-recorded church services. In addition, the Catholic Communication Centre regularly films community events such as weddings and birthdays and makes the videos available.

Among NGOs and government agencies, decisions about communication are often based on production capacity, cost of air-time, and reach: *'Again, our problem is limited to capacity [to] promote and design the necessary ... materials that people can understand and then getting that message into ... radio, TV, etc. But our budget is limited, hence, our time on air. Radio is probably the only media used by people in remote areas. ... to propose or develop programs is costly.'* (KIRIBATI11)

PACMAS Strategic Activity: Climate Change

Climate change awareness programs are aired on the radio and journalists include climate change stories in their reporting. Journalists describe their approach to climate change stories as involving a focus on personal stories. They also source the internet for stories relevant to island life.

Although the political leaders of Kiribati have campaigned effectively in international arenas, local awareness of climate change is said to be low. To some extent, there is an element of information fatigue: *'They know it's affecting the weather patterns and sea levels but they do not see it as an immediate threat, and therefore take it lightly. I think how we relate the message needs to improve'* (KIRIBATI11). A recent research thesis shows that both journalists and citizens are turning off in relation to climate change issues in Kiribati¹⁶. Its author, Taberannag Korauaba, argues that journalists need to take on a deliberative role to encourage active discussion about climate change responses. A keen interest in climate change reporting issues led Korauaba to establish the *Kiribati Independent* newspaper as an alternative news source and to develop a guide for journalists reporting on climate change (in the local language).

Journalists are well connected to the Ministry of Environment and Conservation, which established a Google+ group to maintain a communication network of media professionals. The ministry uses this group to circulate up-to-date information and reports, workshops and press releases. It also updates its website regularly with climate change issues. This network is now used beyond the initial purpose of connecting journalists for disseminating information about climate change. *'Rather than doing something like a forum with the media, we prefer doing online forums with them so that we can save more money and time. This method has been going on for a year now and is very efficient ... Whenever we have a press release or workshop, we contact the media community and invite them to come and see what we have on display and cover what we are doing'* (KIRIBATI11).

A major challenge to effectively communicating climate change themes, identified by media practitioners and organisations, is translating technical climate change terms. Because much of the media uses the local language, translating scientific terms causes confusion. Climate change reporting and understanding is also challenged by faith-based scepticism¹⁷.

PACMAS Strategic Activity: NCDs

I-Kiribati have the second highest rate overall of Non-Communicable Disease risk in the Pacific (only Nauruans are at greater risk)¹⁸. The main NCDs according to the NCD Office in Kiribati are chronic lung disease, heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Of particular concern is the increasing rate of diabetes among young people: *'Diabetes is affecting younger groups now ... Diabetes usually affects those in their 40s and 50s but recently 48 per cent of the population aged 30+ are affected by diabetes type 2'* (KIRIBATI10). Smoking is a major concern with an increase in rates among young people. The high rate of lung cancer is attributed to the custom of buying cigarettes as a gift when visiting friends and other villages: *'Tobacco is not grown here in Kiribati but somehow from their old age it's been brought up and slowly engraved in the culture in Kiribati... So when you visit a community you have to bring tobacco products as a kind of token of appreciation for accepting you to come'* (KIRIBATI10). The use of solid fuel for cooking is also a major contributor to lung disease, affecting people even more than smoking.

The Kiribati Development Plan 2012-2015 includes curative and preventative initiatives towards NCD awareness and promotes a healthy and active lifestyle. The Tobacco Bill was going through the parliamentary process at the time of writing this report. This is the first bill specific to NCD policy. Kiribati's NCD Office has a health promotions team that creates and produces awareness material and provides updates to the media.

The NCD Office also monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of campaigns by talking to the community a few weeks after new campaign messages are promoted. Radio and print materials (pamphlets, newspaper articles) and face-to-face communication are the primary tools for advocacy and awareness. Some local initiatives

16 Korauaba, Taberannag. 2012. Media and the politics of climate change in Kiribati: A case study on journalism in a "disappearing nation". Masters in Communication Thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology Communication Studies. <http://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10292/4503/KorauabaT.pdf?sequence=3> Accessed 27 April 2013

17 Korauaba, Taberannag. 2012. Media and the politics of climate change in Kiribati: A case study on journalism in a "disappearing nation". Masters in Communication Thesis submitted to Auckland University of Technology Communication Studies. <http://aut.researchgateway.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10292/4503/KorauabaT.pdf?sequence=3> Accessed 27 April 2013

18 Secretariat of the Pacific Community. 2010. NCD Statistics for the Pacific Island Countries and Territories, Healthy Pacific Lifestyle Section. New Caledonia: Public Health Division Secretariat of the Pacific Community

include physical activity competitions, walk to work campaigns and adaptation of WHO approaches to include traditional medicine in the treatment of diabetes.

Cross-Cutting Issues: Disability, Gender and Youth

The cross-cutting issues explore how gender, youth and disability engage with and are represented within the media and communication environment in Kiribati.

Disability was not perceived by interviewees to be a prominent issue with the exception of the NCD Office, which touched on this area when discussing Kiribati's high rate of amputees as a result of diabetes. This is likely to become a more significant issue in the future with the rise in the occurrence of diabetes.

There are some gender differences in the way health issues are affecting i-Kiribati. Men have much higher rates of smoking, although the number of young women smoking is increasing. There has been an increase in pregnancies amongst young unmarried women. Women in general are the main advocates for countering NCDs and are more likely to participate in relevant initiatives. The Kiribati Association of NGOs (KANGO) has worked on several gender-related initiatives in the past, although at the time of writing this report, they were not actively working in this area.

The Catholic Communications Centre invites youth to create radio programs, including talk shows on youth issues. KIRICAN is also actively involved with young people as part of their advocacy campaigns. Drama is used to communicate the impacts of climate change through song, dance and folktales. This has led to some youth action and activism and, recently some young people initiated a 'clean up the environment' project as their contribution to the KIRICAN awareness campaign.



Figure 2: Pelenise Alofa, the head of KIRICAN, during a downpour: Photo by Marion Muliaumaseali'i, October 2012

Summary of Findings

The media and communication environment in Kiribati faces challenges on many fronts. The main findings across the four PACMAS components are summarised below.

Policy and Legislation

- The Ministry of Communication, Transport and Tourism Development (MCTTD) is responsible for regulation of media and telecommunications. Within the MCTTD the Broadcasting and Publications Authority (BPA) is responsible for public service media.
- The Kiribati government has used licensing laws to control the media and media professionals.
- The Telecommunications Act of 2004 allows for competition but so far services are provided by a government-owned monopoly.

Media Systems

- There is some informal cooperation among technicians in Kiribati across government media, telecommunications and church media.
- There is a lack of funding to fix major technical faults, and this has led to the shutdown of radio services for several months at a time in the past.
- The current Disaster Management Plan is not comprehensive and requires further development, especially in relation to communications.

Capacity Building

- Few journalists, technicians and other media staff have formal qualifications.
- In-house training is preferred due to costs and access.
- The government does have a process for applying for funding for training.
- The national media association, Kiribati Islands Media Association (KIMA), was recently revived, but journalists don't have confidence that they would be supported if they were pressured by the government.

Content

- Churches, NGOs and government departments produce content for mass media, though skills and fees are a concern for some.
- There is some 'message fatigue' in relation to climate change issues.
- Many people are not receptive to messages about climate change due to the conflict between science and their religious beliefs.
- There are some basic campaigns and promotional activities addressing NCD related issues.



Research Partners





Further information:

<http://www.pacmas.org/>

<http://www.abcinternationaldevelopment.net.au/>