



# Australian Volunteers Program Kiribati

The Australian Volunteers Program is proud to support organisations in Kiribati to support their development goals and continues a long and rich history of Australians volunteering in Kiribati.

Funded by the Australian Government, the Australian Volunteers Program seeks to develop long-term, mutually respectful partnerships with organisations across the Pacific, Asia, and Africa to contribute to locally-led change and the realisation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The program aims to:

- Support partner organisations to progress their development objectives
- Increase program participants' cultural awareness and build stronger connections across countries
- Increase key stakeholders' appreciation of the value of volunteering

Australian volunteer Policy Adviser Patrick Chan and Council Clerk Akoia Teabi together at Betio Town Council. Photo: Darren James

## Our work in Kiribati

Our team in Kiribati works closely with our partners to understand their priorities and objectives. Together with our partners, we identify how the program can support them and how that support might change over time.

The program provides support across a range of development priorities in Kiribati, including:

- Health
- Education and special education
- Law, justice and governance
- Disability inclusion
- Gender equality
- Environmental resilience
- Sport

In Kiribati, our partner organisations currently include government agencies and civil society organisations.

The program supports partners through volunteer assignments undertaken in-country or remotely. We work with partner organisations across Kiribati, with current partner organisations based in South Tarawa, North Tarawa and Kiritimati Island.

The program facilitates opportunities for partner organisations to connect with each other, exchange knowledge and share experiences. For example, partner organisations participate in online and face-to-face workshops that focus on specific sectors or topics such as disability inclusion, gender equality and safeguarding.

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Volunteer Logistics and Procurement Co-ordinator Michelle Sheehan travelling with colleagues from the Facilities Management Unit, Ministry of Education, Tarawa. Photo: Darren James

2

Australian Volunteer Julie Lamb working with colleagues at the Kiribati School and Centre for Children with Special Needs. Photo: Darren James

"

Counsellors at the centre have enhanced their capacity thanks to the training the Australian Volunteer provided. She assisted staff with developing their ability to draft reports and look into issues more deeply. She also helped us with mentoring and debriefing to help solve issues and to try to respond to client cases better."

Teretia Tokam, Executive Director - Kiribati Women and Children Support Centre

1



2



Since 2018  
the program  
in Kiribati has  
supported

**25+**  
partner  
organisations

**35+**  
Australian  
volunteers

**25+**  
in-country  
volunteer  
assignments

**25+**  
remote  
volunteer  
assignments

**11**  
small  
grants

## Small grants

Through the Impact Fund, we provide small grants of up to AUD\$10,000 to our partners to support their vital work and progress towards achieving their development objectives.

The Impact Fund has supported over 200 partners to deliver hundreds of projects. Projects have been across a range of thematic areas including gender equality, disability and social inclusion, climate action, organisational strengthening, and COVID-19 response and recovery.

## Australian organisations

We also partner with Australian organisations who share our commitment to locally-led change. We support existing partnerships between overseas partners and Australian organisations and identify opportunities for new partnerships. Australian partners contribute to skills and knowledge exchange and support volunteer recruitment.

3

Boats on the water in South Tarawa. Photo: Darren James



“  
I love the work that we do in supporting our partners to meet their development goals, matches the need of our partners.”

Abitara Tekeke, Country Program Manager – Australian Volunteers Program, Kiribati

## About our volunteers

Our program is all about people – volunteers, partners and the communities in which they live and work.

We value volunteers who are open to mutual learning and skills exchange, and who are committed to contributing to partners' priorities in support of locally-led change.

We are committed to ensuring that international volunteering is inclusive and accessible to Australians from a range of backgrounds, with diverse perspectives, identities and abilities. We recognise the

unique strengths and skills that people with diverse backgrounds and experiences offer, and we work with volunteers to remove barriers they may face.

Each volunteer assignment requires specific skills and experience. Australian volunteers work in a broad range of sectors including community and social development, health, science, engineering and architecture, skilled trades, education, disaster and emergency management, gender equality and child protection.

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Ryan West, volunteer Legal Advisor, and colleague Ruuta Neeru, Law Clerk, at the Office of the Peoples lawyer, Betio, South Tarawa. Photo: Darren James

5

Tekauno sells decorative handicrafts from a community market shack by the main road in Banreaba village. Photo: Darren James



### In-country

International volunteering is an incredible experience. It's an opportunity for volunteers and partners to share their skills and culture, while making a tangible difference to communities.



### Remote

Through remote volunteering Australians are supporting organisations overseas to achieve their development goals anywhere, anytime.



### Hybrid

By combining remote and in-country phases, hybrid volunteering offers our partners and volunteers flexibility while still allowing for genuine connections and meaningful skill sharing.

# Spotlight on Kiritimati Urban Council

Kiritimati Urban Council, a partner of the Australian Volunteers Program since 2020, governs Kiritimati Island (also known as Christmas Island), which is the largest of the atolls and islands comprising the Republic of Kiribati.

At 388 square kilometres, Kiritimati represents over 70 per cent of the total land area of Kiribati. Kiritimati Urban Council identified a need to develop a master plan for land use on Kiritimati Island, and approached the Australian Volunteers Program for support.

Australian Volunteer Peter Malavisi completed two remote assignments with the Kiritimati Urban Council. While there were challenges in working remotely, Peter developed a strong relationship with officers in the Council, and his support and flexibility were appreciated by his colleagues. Peter's support has enabled the Council to develop a master plan to guide the development of land, including designated office and commercial areas for Kiritimati. This will support the Council's long-term development objectives for the island, and Kiribati more broadly.

Peter also supported the Council to successfully apply for a small grant under the program's Impact Grant fund scheme. The grant of \$10,000 AUD assisted the Council to strengthen food security on Kiritimati Island. The Council conducted a workshop in collaboration with the agriculture department to promote the importance of strengthening food security and planting crops such as breadfruit, pawpaw, pandanus, and taro. The Council reported that its residents are continuing to plant these crops, recognising them as the most sustainable way to ensure food security.

Both the assignments and the funding helped the Council to develop its staff capacity. It assisted staff to initiate policy changes to support sustainability through new processes and approaches. The support also led to increased recognition of Kiritimati Urban Council and its work by other stakeholders, including NGOs, and community and religious-based agencies and facilitated collaboration on other grant proposals to international agencies, such as the UN.



## The Australian Volunteers Program is guided by principles that ensure we



Support locally-led change



Grow strong relationships and partnerships



Value volunteering



Evolve good practice and embrace innovation



Enhance diversity and inclusion



Ensure accountability and value learning

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