



# Kiribati Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Awareness Program



## Project Goal

To address factors which result in the high incidence of waterborne disease in South Tarawa, the capital of Kiribati.

Vulnerability to climate change, remoteness and a lack of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure create a challenging environment for Kiribati. The climate of Kiribati is hot and humid year around, with seasonal rainfall varying from year to year. This can lead to periods of extended drought within the country.

Kiribati also has issues with non-communicable disease (NCDs) such as diabetes and heart disease. Heat related illness can seriously complicate NCDs and will be exacerbated by increasing mean temperatures due to climate change. Improved access to, and use of, safely managed water supplies will help tackle heat related illness. Increasing the availability of safe drinking water will also reduce dehydration rates resulting from diarrhoea and dysentery.

## Project timeline: June 2021 to May 2026

The project will be managed and overseen by Plan International Australia in partnership with Live & Learn Kiribati and Live & Learn Australia, with funding from the Asian Development Bank in partnership with the Government of Kiribati.

Despite a good base knowledge of the importance and health implications of hygiene practices in South Tarawa, practice remains poor. Live & Learn, working with local and international experts, intends to improve practices through the methods of behaviour change and by creating future strategies on WASH, climate and disaster resilience.





The Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Awareness Program aims to reach the entire population of South Tarawa from Betio in the South West, extending into North Tarawa, as far as Buota. This is a key element of the larger South Tarawa Water Supply Project that is specifically carried out by Live & Learn.

Many past WASH investments in Kiribati have focused solely on large-scale infrastructure, but have been unable to maintain deeper engagement with existing community structures and systems. This can jeopardise the sustainability of future operation. The more recent third phase of the Kiribati Adaptation Project and South Tarawa Sanitation Improvement Sector Project have made conscious and important efforts to shift this dynamic. As a result, they have achieved successes in reducing open defecation and changes in other WASH indicators. This project builds on these successes, and focuses on sustainability through stronger community engagement.

### **WASH behaviour change**

This project primarily focuses on community behaviour change across a broad range of WASH behaviours; specifically those related to sanitation, hygiene, menstrual health, safe use of water solid waste management and climate change. This broad spectrum of WASH related behaviours will be addressed by building on the already existing strategies and approaches of previous WASH projects in Kiribati.

Resources will be developed by Live & Learn to help local organisations and WASH champions deliver awareness messages in communities. These resources will provide information, education and communication materials, and targeted messages.



### **Mobilising Civil Society Organisations**

The WASH Awareness Program will be delivered in a collaborative and empowering manner. The overall approach is localised, involving Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). This will make sure that the project heavily considers and responds to the Kiribati context. Local CSOs will have the capacity to deliver effective behaviour change messages as well as monitor those changes against National Health Indicators. Contributing to ongoing resilience in Kiribati in the face of climate change and WASH challenges is possible by supporting local actors to make lasting change.

