

3.7 HOUSING

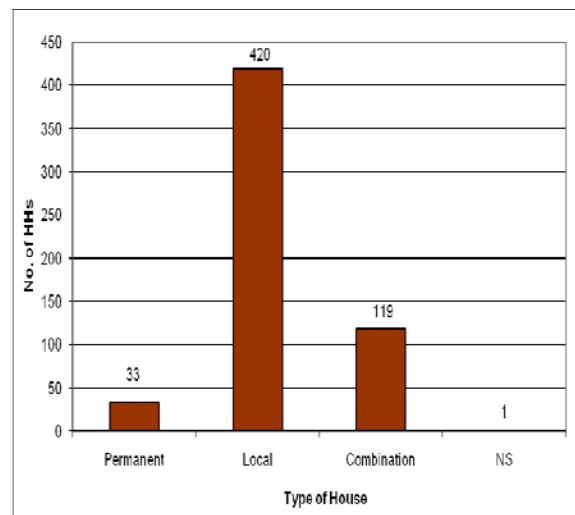
3.7.1 Total number of residential houses, type and status

In 2005, a total of 573 households were recorded in the census. The majority, 420 (73%) of these households were made from local materials, 119 (21%) were made from a combination of local and permanent materials while the rest 33 (6%) were of permanent material only (further charted right).

Permanent materials are normally expensive and more so when one is importing them from an outer thus the low number of permanent households on the outer islands including TabNorth. Local homes are normally built from materials such as pandanus wood for the frames, pandanus or coconut interwoven leaves for roofing and coconut fiber for lashing. Pandanus trunks for posts and coconut frond stalks for floorings and walls are a common feature of local houses.

In other cases, rocks hewn out of the reef or lagoon to replace the pandanus trunks as posts for the house. A common type of traditional house is one with an elevated floor about three or four feet above the ground with no walls. In terms of modern permanent buildings, most of them are owned either by the Island Council, Government, Churches or other companies such as the Copra Board Society. However, a small number of permanent homes are owned by individuals most notably Government employees and seamen.

Figure 11: Types of houses



Even though there is a high need for more permanent structures with galvanized roofing because of the high incidence of drought on the island, the high cost of permanent materials limits the island community from taking up such undertakings. On the other hand, it has been local experience that local houses are a lot cooler than permanent houses with walls plus, maintenance requirements will always be available and free for the taking when required.

Generally, a household will consist of several structures for sleeping, cooking,

a dining and working house, a canoe shed and a toilet. In neighboring Onotoa, a storehouse for coconuts is also constructed for that sole purpose only and in earlier times, a bleaching house where young girls were kept away from the sun so that their skin might become as light as possible, either for marriage or to make them more attractive when they danced. Sleeping quarters are normally placed off the ground to avoid dirt and other ground insects as well as to safeguard family members from attacks at night. However, it is common to see households comprising sleeping quarters and a cooking house only, not only in TabNorth but throughout the outer islands.



However cool and inexpensive local materials are for residential houses, it tedious work getting prepared for maintenance especially maintenance of the roof or thatch. Pandanus thatches normally last 4-6 years in dry climate and shorter in wet islands such as Butaritari and Makin while coconut thatched roofs last a lot less. There is thus a long term need for the women to keep preparing and storing pandanus leaves for the next roof maintenance. Preparing such thatches involves having to collect the pandanus leaves, soaking them for a week in the lagoon or freshwater pond, flattening

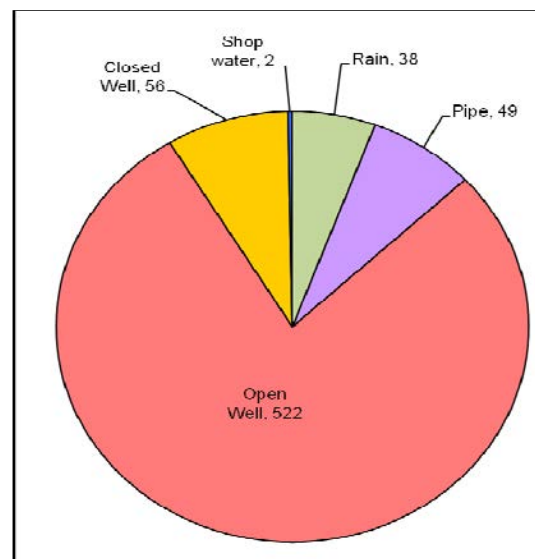
individual leaves on a stake and stacking them in batches. A month or so before maintenance, coconut midribs are cleared of the fronds and measured before the pandanus leaves are sewn onto the sticks using a special utensil to create holes in the leaves and held together by coconut frond ribs. Coconut roof thatches. On the other hand are easier to make as whole coconut fronds are collected, soaked for a day or two in a freshwater pond or the lagoon and woven to form individual thatches. Then more string made out of coconut fibre is required to lash the thatches onto the roof frames. Again, making coconut fibre string is a quite a lengthy process. Consequently, considering the lengthy processes required to prepare for local home maintenance, people do dream of constructing permanent homes all the time.

3.8 WATER AND SANITATION

3.8.1 Water Supply Sources

The main water sources for drinking and sanitary purposes are rainwater and groundwater respectively. The groundwater drawn out from open wells is also used for drinking purposes, but due to the close proximity of some open wells to pit latrines and pig pens, people are often advised to boil water before drinking which has now become a common practice in TabNorth and the country as a whole. All the outer island communities with the exception of Banaba depend to a great extent on wells dug into the underground water table and to a smaller extent on rainwater for their livelihood. As confirmed in the above chart, 522 (91%) of the 573 households on the island depend on open wells for their water supply, 56 (10%) on closed wells, 49 (9%) on piped water, 38 (7%) on rainwater while the rest 2 (0.4%) are using bottled shop water as their main source of water.

Figure 12

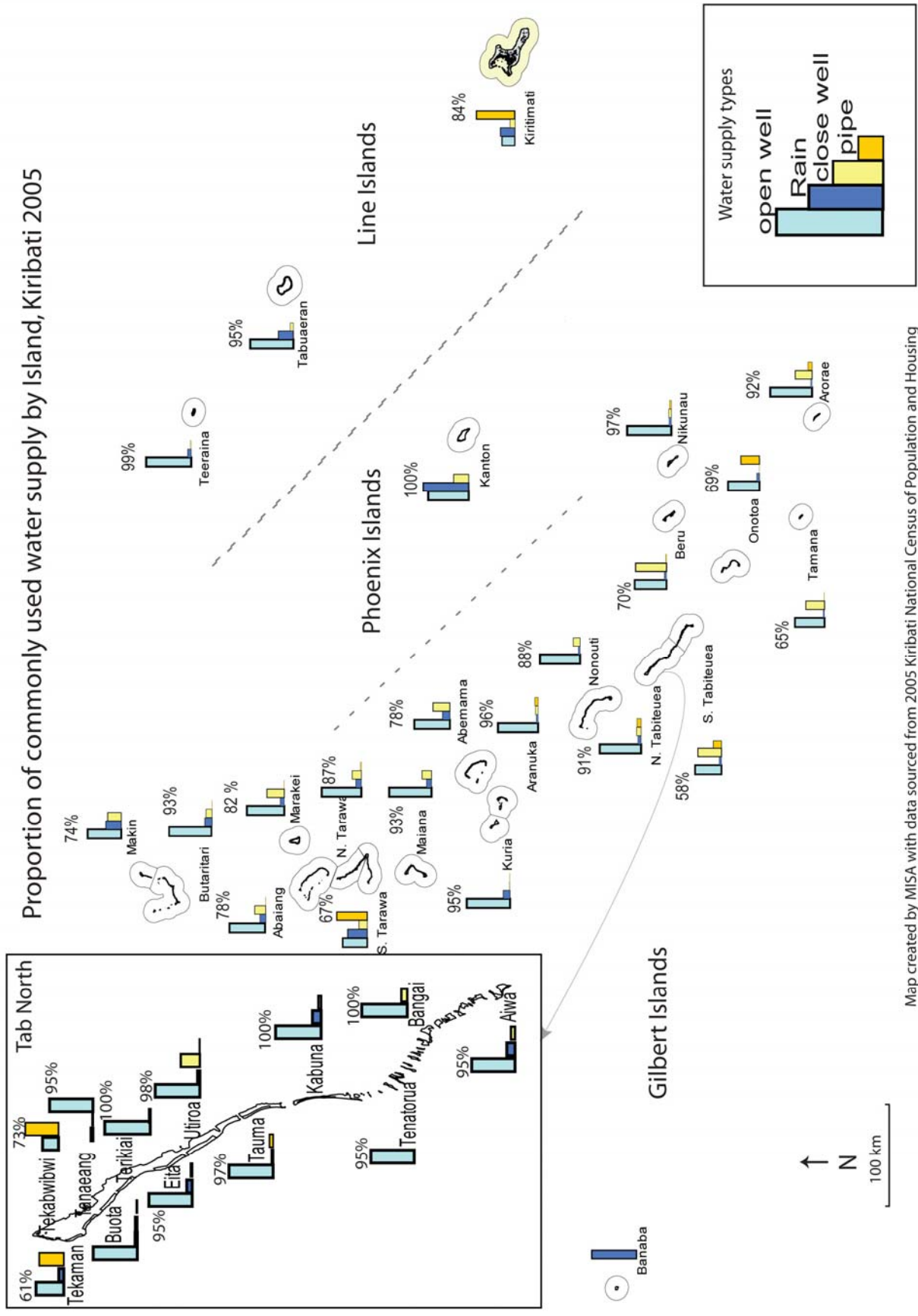


Open wells are those without lids and thus left open all the time while closed wells comprise those that have lids or have been closed off. With the introduction of pumping and piping systems, wells are closed once pumps and piping systems have been installed. Rainwater consumption is dependent on the number of rainwater catchments available on the island which are quite a few with most owned by the council, schools, clinics and churches. Relying on shop water is not a normal practice on the outer islands especially when shopwater is rarely ordered by the shops. However, the construction of main southern Gilbert hospital in TabNorth brought construction experts from Taiwan, believed to be the 0.4% depending on shop water for source of water.



Water is and will always be available from the underground water table but it is more a matter of the quality of the water that becomes an issue to those on the island. As familiar by now, located in a dry zone, TabNorth suffers from long periods of drought and thus brackish wells that in turn results in people having to go farther and sometimes far to get potable drinking water.

Like most of the outer islands, TabNorth has benefited from various water development projects in the form of poly-tanks, rainwater catchments, hand pumps and several solar pumps. A system for the village of Tekabuibui was installed in the late 1990s that has however broken down completely due to lack of maintenance. Still, the Ministry of Works & Energy continues to carry out water assessments and install systems presently in all schools on the outer islands including TabNorth.



Map created by MISA with data sourced from 2005 Kiribati National Census of Population and Housing

3.8.2 Status of Water Supply

The amount of water supply from the wells is dependent on the amount of rainfall that falls and the capability of the soil to retain the water. Being a dry island, water becomes an issue during drought times when the freshwater lens sitting atop the seawater in wells are depleted without rains restoring the lens. Data collected from a 1991 hydrology on Onotoa by the Atoll Project of the National Research Council's Pacific Science Board in Hawaii indicated that a well placed toward the center of the wider (>1000 feet) parts of the island has a good chance of producing a continuous supply of potable ground water. On the other hand, wells in narrower parts of the island are apt to be brackish.



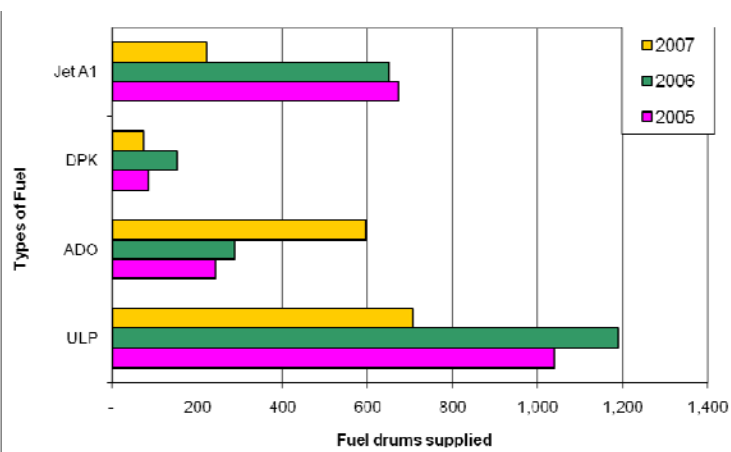
As long as the underground water table exists, there will always be a continuous supply of water that will either be fresh, brackish or in between. The Ministry of Works & Energy has been carrying out water assessments on the outer islands to determine the electrical conductivity and thus freshness of water at certain locations on the islands most notably, the schools and medical facilities. No matter how long the droughts, there is always bound to be a freshwater site that can withstand these long drought periods which the people get their potable drinking water from. Apart from threats of seawater flooding in the village of Kabuna, the rest of TabNorth have not suffered from similar floodings that would otherwise have posed a threat to their underground water supply.

3.9 Energy

The traditional form of fuel is firewood, mainly in the form of coconut husk, dry coconut leaves and common wood. In the olden days dried coconut meat was burned to provide lighting in the homes at night, while woven coconut leaves were used in night fishing. Nowadays people are resorting to the use of modern technology to provide energy to meet their private and public needs. The new technologies however use fuel that is imported from overseas through the Kiribati Oil Company Limited (KOIL).

Figure 13

KOIL imports fuel from overseas and distribute it to all the islands in Kiribati. Kerosene, benzene and diesel provide energy for cooking, lighting and transport. These imported forms of fuel power trucks, motorbikes, generators, outboard engines, cooking stoves, lanterns, pressure lamps and other electrical appliances such as electric saws. In TabNorth's case, it is also a refueling point for Air Kiribati on their weekly flights to each paired island in the southern Gilbert group



such as Arorae/Tamana and Onotoa/TabSouth. As such, Jet A1 fuel also gets sent to the island.

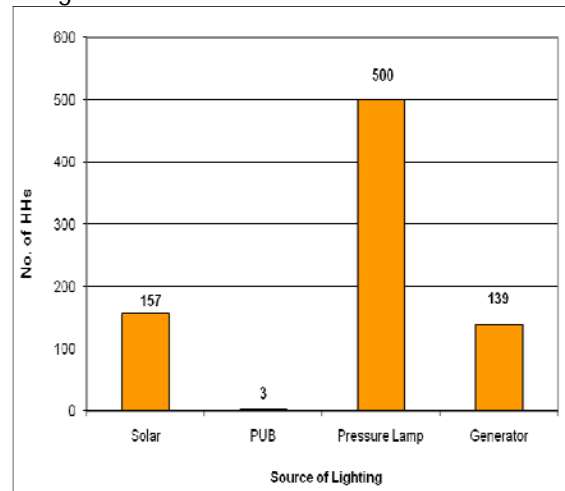
In terms of volume, unleaded petroleum (ULP), commonly known as benzene, has been the most commonly used fuel on the island, followed by kerosene (DPK) and diesel (ADO). The total number of fuel drums sent by KOIL to TabNorth between 2005 and 2007 (charted above) totaled 5,917. Given that the fuel drums each contain 200 liters of fuel, the total volume received by TabNorth 2005-2007 was 1,183,400 liters. The supply increased by 10% in 2006 only to decrease again the following year in 2007. It is anticipated that the proportion of unleaded fuel will increase as the use of automotive machines and equipment (portable generators, outboard engines, motorbikes, etc.) increases by the island community.

To reduce dependency on fossil-based fuel Government has been promoting the use of solar energy on the outer islands, through its company – the Kiribati Solar Energy Company Limited (KSECL). Over the last 3 years KSECL, with funding from the European Union, has installed more than 2000 stand alone solar photovoltaic systems throughout the country. The objective of this *"Outer Island Electrification Project"* is to enhance economic activity and improve children performance in school through the provision of affordable and efficient lighting, as well as to provide an alternative environment-friendly energy source that does not pollute the air.

3.9.1. Lighting

The main source of light for the people on TabNorth and outer islands is the pressure lamp further depicted in the chart right. It shows that out of the 573 households, 500 (84.6%) use the pressure lamp as their main source of light. 157 (27%) use solar as their main source of light, 3 (0.5%) are using the Public Utilities Board as their source while the rest 139 (24%) are using generators.

Figure 14



Pressure lamps are normally owned by the majority of households on the outer islands as it is not only used as a source of light for the homes but is also

mobile enough to be moved to required places and also as a light during night fishing expeditions known locally as 'te kibee'. In this form of fishing, the fisherman will walk the length the reef when the tide is out and catch trapped fish in the reef flat crevices and gaps. Where before this kind of fishing required two people, one to carry plaited coconut fronds to provide the source of light, the pressure lamp allows only one person to carry the lamp and fish at the same time without needing another to carry extra loads of coconut fronds.

	SOLAR HOME SYS		MANEABA SYSTEM			TOTAL
	Operational system	NOT Operational system	M200	M300	M600	
Makin	75	1			5	81
Butaritari	75	0			2	77
Marakei	288	35	5	2	2	332
Abaiang	82	17		6	3	108
Tarawa Ieta	199	83	4	3	3	292
Maiana	87	1		2	2	92
Kuria	75	1		2		78
Abemama	75	0		3		78
Aranuka	73	2		3		78
Nonouti	140	70	2		3	215
Beru	75	0			1	76
Nikunau	74	1			2	77
Tab North	119	1		3		123
Tab South	75	1			1	77
Onotoa	80	1	3	4		88
Tamana	74	1			2	77
Arorae	75	0			1	76
Banaba	77	1	1		2	81
	1818	216	15	28	29	2106

Kerosene is the normal energy source for these kinds of pressure lamps, lanterns and other simple innovated bottle lights common throughout the rest of the Kiribati islands. Generators on the other hand are powered by benzine or what is universally known as unleaded petrol and seldom run daily.

However, just as the world is always turning and changing, so is the ways of life on the outer islands. It is now common to see generators run daily.

The promotions and provision of a solar system to the outer islands in 2000 has enabled the North Tabiteueans the opportunity to gain an alternative means of electricity for light and other electrical appliances. According to records, a total of 123 solar systems have been installed on the island. 119 of these were installed in private homes while 3 were installed church group mwaneabas. One of the 119 installed in homes was found later as not operational. (*KSECL 2007*).

CHAPTER 4: TE RAOI – SOCIAL CAPITAL, COMMUNITY LIFE AND GOVERNANCE

4.1 Local Institutions and Social Change

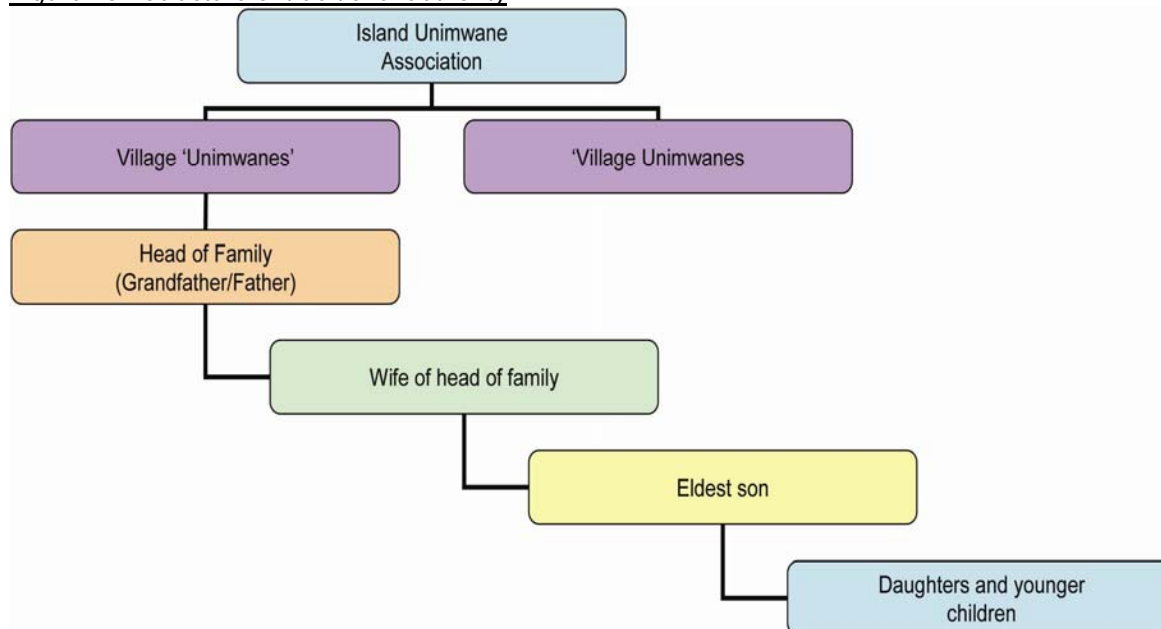
4.1.1 The Maneaba System and Unimwane Association



The *mwaneaba* was and remains the most important institutional symbol and foundation of community life in Kiribati. Its importance is related to its function as the center of social life, where matters pertaining to the social, economic and political life of the community are discussed and resolved with the leadership of the *Unimwane*.

Beside the traditional function as a community hall, court of judgment/reconciliation, and sanctuary for all, the purpose of the *mwaneaba* over the years has considerably widened to include shelter for the sick, storage facility for copra, fundraising venue, and more. Despite the additional uses invented for this culturally important structure, the system of governance and leadership that developed with and revolves around the *mwaneaba* has remained largely intact. This was the result, first of colonial support, and later on of Government's recognition of the importance of traditional leadership vested in the *Unimwane*. In all Island Councils including TabNorth, there is a seat for a representative of the Unimwane Association, who embodies the highest traditional authority on the island.

Figure 15: Structure of traditional authority



4.1.2 Women Organizations

The AMAK ('Aia mwaea ainen Kiribati), is the mother organization for all women groups in the country and is therefore the initial body to register under for general women issues such as capacity building in skills. Existing in TabNorth are women groups belonging to the different churches such as the 'Reitan Ainen Kiribati (RAK) and 'Itoi Ni Ngaina' as well as independent ones such as the 'Irekenrao'. The umbrella organization for TabNorth women groups is called 'Ueen Tabiteuea Meang', literally 'Flowers of TabNorth'.

Ueen Tabiteuea Meang's Roles include:

1. Representation of the women on Tab North in any island or national activity
2. Provision of a neutral platform for the different groups of women to discuss collective activities or general issues – RAK, Irekenrao, village women groups
3. Promotion of skill learning (sewing, cooking) and income generating activities to meet AMAK requirements (fees, crafts and participation/representation)



Ueen Tab North is represented by 3 members from each of the different women organizations on the island which vary from church groups to village groups. It meets once a month at agreed locations with members having to provide their own transport as Council does not support their meeting activities. The Council however only gives out a \$250 fee to this women's group during independence celebrations to support their activities for the week long celebrations.

During these monthly meetings, the women normally discuss women matters and most of the times, the contributions to AMAK as required from them. They also try to promote and carry out an income generating or skill activity during these meetings such as:

1. Vegetable gardening to be carried out by all the different women groups
2. Bingo games with string, oil, mats or other as winnings
3. 'Karekare'- pillowcases & .50c

Generated income is saved in their passbook for times of need. Most of the time, the money is spent on transport costs or sent to AMAK as the island women's contribution when required from AMAK. The women have not had any financial support as yet from AMAK but we do send in out \$1.00/member fee to them every year.

A lot of support is given to the Island Council such as in clean up activities at the Council area during the independence celebration week or in the provision of other council requirements such as mats for the MISA mwaneaba. The only support the council gives them is in the form of funds during the national women's day

4.1.3 Youth Associations

Youth groups on most of the outer islands are mostly church groups whose main objective is to assist and support their church communities in fundraising activities or any other activity that may come up from time to time. Even though they do play football and volleyball, it is not as an organized effort to keep themselves trained but more to entertain and pass the time. Tab North however, has an Island Youth Association membered by youth representatives from all over the island that is chaired on a rotational basis. Most



youth groups in Tab North are governed by the village community and thus unanimity therefore village approvals have to be sought before final decisions can be made by the youth themselves. However, there are some groups such as that in the most northern village of Tekabuibui that have been given responsibility of managing themselves by village members. Youth members are normally between the ages of 14-40 but varies from island to island and village to village.

As an example, if the Island Youth Association (IYA – umbrella) or Council etc required certain contributions from youth groups, 'Ueen te Tongo' youth of Tekabuibui could decide and respond on the spot whereas other youth groups have to raise it up in their villages first – their participation or response dependent on the approval of the village elders.

As members of the IYA, individual village youth groups give support to the IYA and Island Council through contributions of funds and others as required. On the other hand, the island council provides a \$250 cash support to the IYA specifically during Independence which is then allocated as prizes for the different games/sports that the youth participate in. The Island Council also allows and encourages its island youth to take part in national youth events such as the national championships carried out every two years.

Youth roles on the island include:

1. Encouraging and supporting village
2. Participation in health and sport activities in the village, on the island and in the national arena
3. Assisting and supporting village/community activities and needs
4. Assisting and supporting island and council needs

Some of the normal youth activities (some income generating while others skill and health development) especially those that are not attending school or have completed some form of schooling:

1. Aiai (rotational giving and receiving of a decided amount of toddy)
2. Crab hunting
3. Land cleaning
4. Land planting
5. Volleyball
6. Football
7. Óreano' (traditional game)

8. Village and island assistance as required

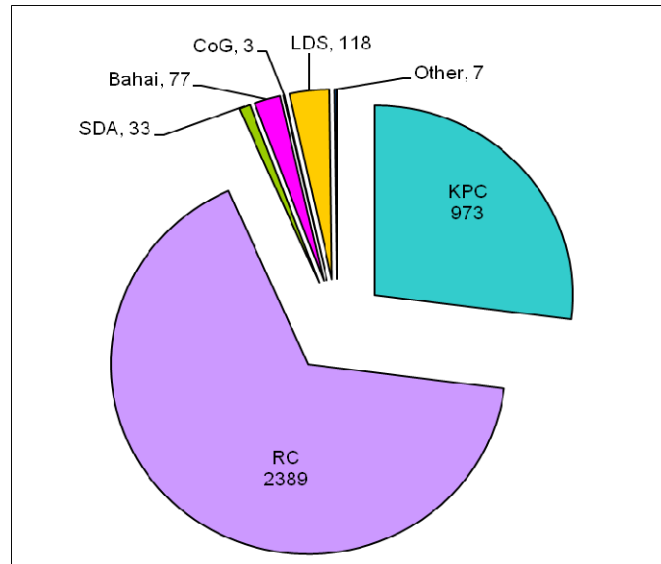
The group is informed from the village when their assistance is required such as the renewal of the 'mwaneaba' or when there is a village team visit by government officials etc. At these times, the youth normally assist by being the main workers in the mwaneaba renewal or by fishing and hosting most of the work required for feeding or entertaining the guests or visiting officials.

4.2 Religion

4.2.1 Main religious denominations

Chapter 2 also discusses the composition of population by religious denomination. According to the 2005 population census 973 (27%) of TabNorth's 3600 inhabitants are KPC followers, 2389 (66%) are RC members, 33 (1%) are Seventh Day Adventist members, 77 (2%) are followers of the Bahai faith, 118 (3%) are of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon), 3 (0.1%) follow the Church of God while the rest 7 (0.2) belong to other churches not included in the census data. However, some of the other religions that now exist in the country include the Assemblies of God, Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostal and Islam.

Figure 16: Main religious groups



4.3 Political Authority and Governance

4.3.1 Traditional political system – description and status

The traditional ruling system used to differ between the southern and central/northern group of islands. Where the central and northern islands traditional ruling systems were based mainly on the chiefly ruling system, the southern was based on the 'mwaneaba' system and thus councils of 'unimwane'. In the mwaneaba system, the council of Unimwane meets in the mwaneaba to discuss and address all kinds of social, economic and political issues. In this system the council of Unimwane, that consists of the head of each *kainga* (extended family), is the most powerful and sole decision-making body in the community. The decisions made by the Unimwane are believed to be the best because they are the outcome of careful deliberation among the oldest, wisest and most experienced members of the community. As such these decisions are given weight by the support of the village community.

To be an unimwane on the island requires that the male has either turned 60 or is respected enough by the village community to be given the title 'unimwane'. Since their control on island development had been relinquished to the island council, their concentration now lies more in managing individual villages and the traditions. Each village actually has individual associations called 'Rau n te kaawa', literally 'village peacekeepers'. These village peacekeeping groups decide how complaints brought up from village community members should be resolved to ensure that appropriateness and peace is maintained. Depending on the weight of the crime or complaint brought up, the decisions most of the time result in either having to pay a certain amount of money or being ostracized from the village. Decisions that come

out of these traditional meetings are taken on and supported by village members thus, penalties also have to be fulfilled as to not fulfill the penalty could, in extreme cases, endanger one's life. Sale of fermented toddy has been banned in all villages by the unimwane since most drinking sprees ended in fights and other inappropriate conducts. The village of Utiroa initially would not support the banning of fermented toddy but eventually, they had to as drinking misconducts and crimes had steadily occurred, threatening the peace of the village. Visitors are not exempt from these penalties were they to misbehave. All one requires is to take a complaint(s) to the chairperson of the peacekeeping group where the offence occurred after which, evidence is gathered, complaint confirmed and witnesses found before a meeting to judge the crime is gathered. Even though, one can take up the complaint to the Island Council or police, the cases in the end are turned over to 'peacekeepers' as they have been found to be more efficient.

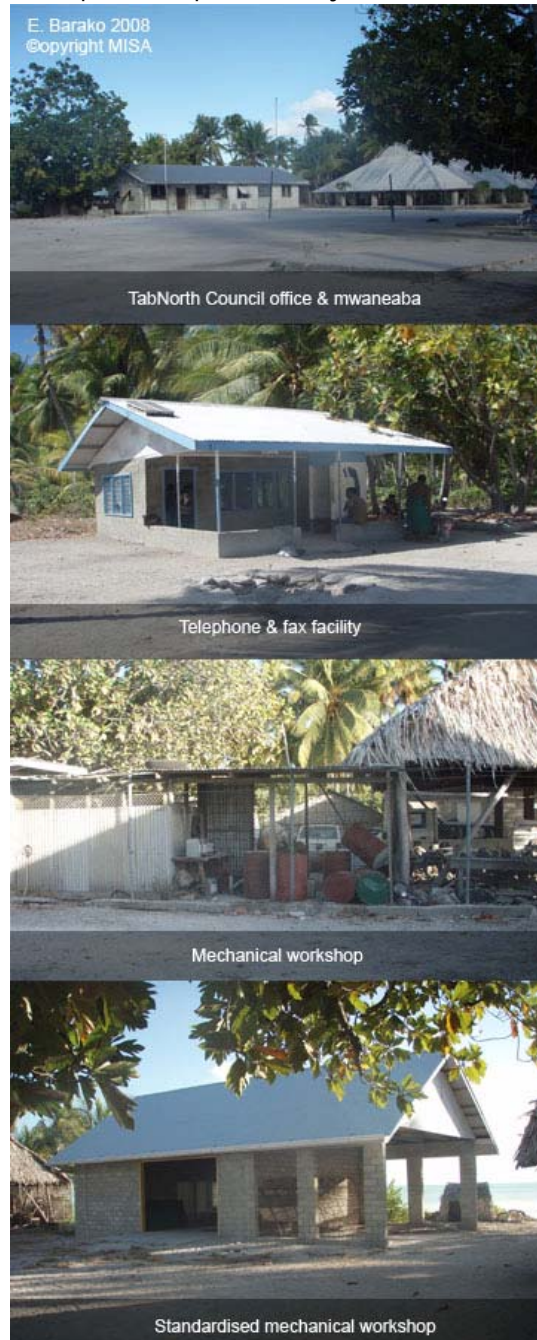
The chiefly system of the central and northern Gilberts gradually disappeared because it was incompatible with Christian beliefs and the democratic form of Government that was initially introduced during colonial times. On the other hand, the Unimwane (mwaneaba) system, due to its similarity with the western democratic model, was encouraged and has continued to be the dominant traditional form of authority that has been taken up throughout the country.

4.3.2 *Local government system*

The government system in Kiribati is made up of the central government, based in South Tarawa, and Island Councils based on each island. Tabiteuea North Island Council was established on 12th April, 1967 under a warrant that outlined the purpose, responsibilities, authority, powers and laws which governed the existence of Councils. The functions of the Island Council were spelled out in the Local Government Ordinance 1966 which has been revised a few times, the most recent being in 2006.

The Island Council is made up of representatives from each village/ward who are elected every 4 years. There are also nominated and ex-officio members who, together with elected members meet every month to discuss matters pertaining to the operation of the Island Council and issues affecting the various wards and the island as a whole. Among its core functions as stipulated in the Local Government Act 2006, the Island Council is also responsible for the following general areas:-

- Agriculture, livestock and fisheries,
- Buildings and village planning,



- Education,
- Forestry and trees,
- Land,
- Relief of famine and drought,
- Markets,
- Public health,
- Public order, peace and safety,
- Communications and public utilities,
- Trade and industry

All Island Councils have management and support staff that are seconded by central government and stationed on the outer islands. These staff include the Council Clerk, the Treasurer, the Assistant Treasurer, the Island project Officer, and the Assistant Social Welfare Officer. In addition to this administrative and support team who work directly with Councils, there are also other government personnel who are placed on the islands to assist in other important areas, such as police officers, agricultural assistants, fisheries assistants, medical assistants, and teachers.

The revised Local Government Act 2006 is aimed at transferring to Island Councils more autonomy and responsibility, to enable them to shoulder the burden of running the country with increased confidence and sense of stewardship. But the revision of the Act is just a part of the wider plan to improve services to people on the outer islands. In addition central government is committed to undertake, among others, the following:

1. improve key development infrastructures (transport, communication, health, education, etc.) through sustained development financing,
2. promote participatory planning and decision-making especially in relation to matters pertaining to the island as a whole,
3. streamline operation and output of Island Councils through human resource development and stricter management where appropriate,
4. develop new income generation initiatives, and secure new employment opportunities overseas, etc..

While Island Councils may welcome new initiatives of central government to assist them and their people, it may take a long time to build the financial capability of Councils so that they could operate with minimum support from central government.

Central Government still provides support to the Island Councils through what is known as "Support Grant". According to sources from the Local Government Division of the Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs, central government provided a total of \$1.24 million to Island Councils in 2007. From this grant TabNorth was given \$82,291.70 (7% of the total grant) to assist its recurrent budget.

Known for the egalitarian nature and straightforwardness, the Tab North Island Council is the best and most functional outer island council in the country. Considering that it is a big island compared to other islands, the nature of the people has been taken and adopted into the council system thus, work is transparent and done according to job descriptions. Funds are strictly controlled and kept track of by the councilors while income generating options are always found resulting in the Island Council savings every year.

4.3.3 Interface between Local Government and Traditional Political System

The leadership role of the *Unimwane* is well appreciated and continues to be respected by the society and hence central government. The modern legal system is indeed crucial to the maintenance of peace and order in Kiribati, but there are many instances where modern law fails to provide a solution to certain situations, and this is where the community under the leadership of the *Unimwane* intervenes to provide the solution. To avoid confrontation between central government and the traditional leaders, it is therefore resolved that the *Unimwane* association must be represented in local government, not as an elected councilor but as a nominated member who assists, advises and in many instances instructs Council the best decisions that goes with the tradition.

Councils and other institutions cannot disengage themselves from the *Unimwane* who basically hold the power in his hands when it comes to community support and/or resources. 'Marewen TabNorth', the island *Unimwane* association is not only strong and influential in decision-making but are also quite clear of their responsibilities as opposed to the responsibilities of the TabNorth Island Council. Although the *Unimwane* association is represented by a single member on the Council, such a member has the full support of the Unimwane Association of TabNorth as well as the island community.

Where the TabNorth Island Council role is to develop and manage the island according required by Government and the constitution, the 'unimwane' role in island management is to:

1. Promote sustenance of island traditions and 'rikia' (responsibilities)
2. Maintain peace in villages and the island as a whole
3. Prevent bad customs such as 'prostitution'
4. Assist in island traditional administration as required from time to time

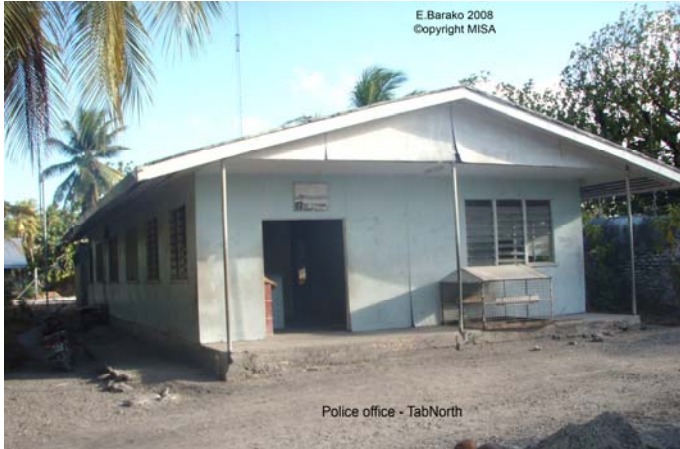
Three unimwane representatives from each village including those of the islets make up this association. The association meets once every 3 months in each of the villages on a rotational basis. However, due to the isolation of the islets of Tenaatoorua, Bangai and Aiwa, members generally agreed that representatives need not be present in meetings until their presences or input were required at which point, table members would make contact. Unlike some outer islands such as Abaiang and Tamana, both unimwane and women groups are supported by the island councils through provision of free or cheaper meeting transport.

Each of the villages still have their own village mwaneabas, made from local material, with the traditional sitting places, customs and roles maintained. The unimwane are also trying to promote the old ways of life such as in working the land, preserving the food and eating traditional food only. However, some admit that they too are getting addicted to imported flour, rice and sugar.

4.4 Crime and Justice System

A Court Clerk from the Judiciary in Tarawa is also stationed on TabNorth to administer the court system on the island. Duties of the Court Clerk include recording minutes of the magistrate court proceedings, executing the order of the court, collecting court fees, and processing claims and appeals to the High Court located in South Tarawa. There are ten magistrates on TabNorth, including the presiding magistrate who sits in all court sessions. The Chief Justice who is stationed in Tarawa visit the outer islands from time to time, to preside on cases which are beyond the ability of the magistrate court to resolve especially appealed cases.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter the modern justice system sometimes fails to correct a situation, perhaps due to insufficient cause or because an act has not violated any law. This is where traditional authority may intervene to solve the issue, in many cases to the relief the whole community and the formal legal system. There are times when such traditional solutions undermine laws and other legal procedures but realistically, the legalities take too much time, effort and sometimes money for a solution to be reached. They are not as responsive and most of the time carry little weight when compared to traditional systems that are very responsive and carry a lot of weight since the decisions of the 'unimwane' are backed up by the whole island community as enforced by the young and mature men.



There are also three police officers on the island who are responsible for keeping the peace and order on the island and are supported by supported by 12 village wardens located in the twelve villages of the island. These village wardens are responsible for keeping the peace in their respective villages but can seek assistance from the other villages and the residing police officers as and when required and vice versa for the police stationed at the TabNorth Island Council station. There is a jail on the island that is used to for crimes

particularly drunks who most of the time are violent and aggressive. At one point in time, a prison was set up on TabNorth that accommodated criminals from the southern Gilbert group of islands. However, this prison is not used anymore even though it still stands, a shadow of the past.

The highest most re-occurring crimes on the as further portrayed in the following chart are those of:

- i) Drinking and disorderly
- ii) Driving without a driving license
- iii) Straying pigs
- iv) Untidy premises
- v) Driving vehicles without license plates

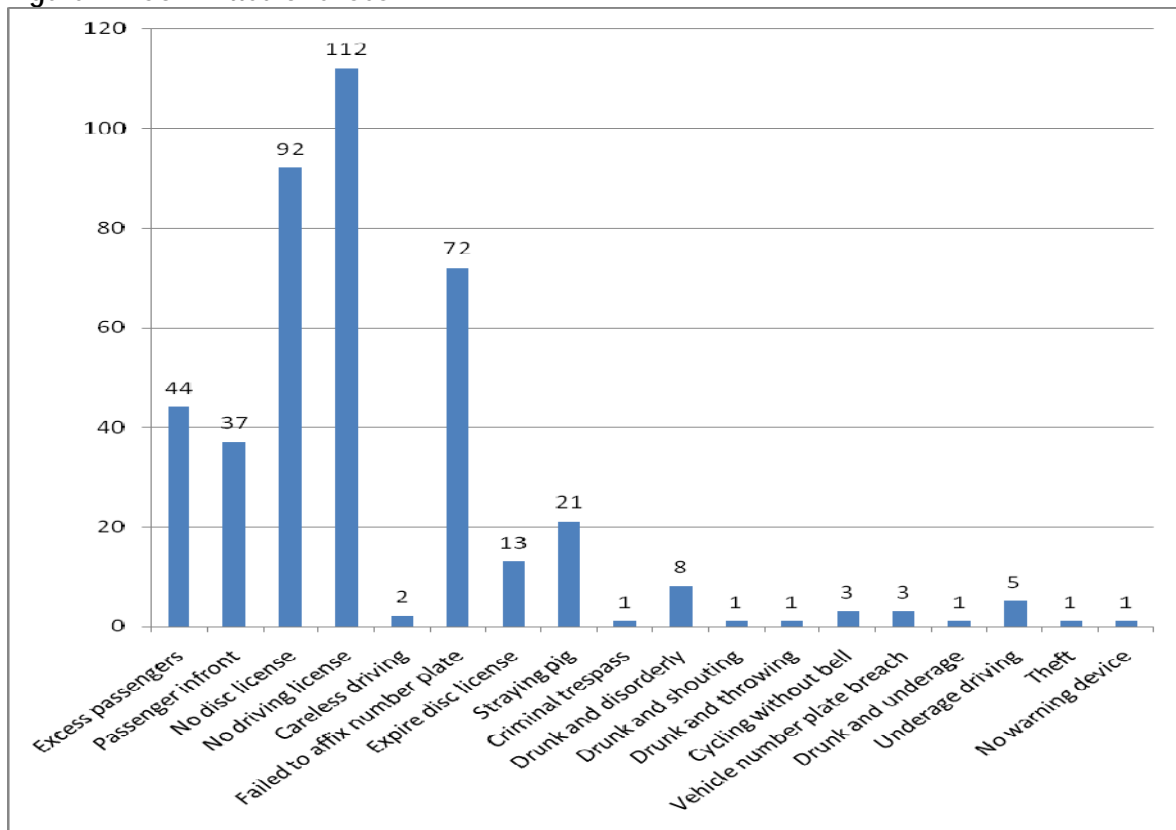
The rest of the crimes are common throughout the country particularly the outer islands as the urban islands (Tarawa and Kiritimati) have electricity, better roads and use of other vehicles such as cars, trucks and motorbikes, and are so overpopulated that there is a much higher assortment and risk of crimes.

Of interest is the crime concerning stray pigs as in most outer islands including urban Tarawa, stray pigs are under the watch of the Island Councils while untidy premises are under the watch of welfare groups. The fact that both stray pigs and untidy premises are considered crimes on the island has inspired the people to manage their pigs and household premises properly. However, these are not serious crimes but still liable to fines or risking a pig being auctioned off.

There is only one single Island Magistrate who presides over two courts, namely, the Island Lands Court and the Magistrate Court that deals with criminal and civil cases. This however has not stopped people from getting lawyers from South Tarawa to appeal their cases in the lower court before appeals are made

to the higher court. Appealed court cases on the island are accumulated and reported to central court headquarters in Betio. The High Court Judge then visits the island to further judge appealed cases.

Figure 17: Committed offenses



Source: OCS TabNorth

Police data on the island showed that a count of 418 various offences were committed in 2008 of which 384 (91%) were all related to motorbikes. 11% were those that had driven motorbikes with excess passengers (more than 1), 9% had had passengers in front instead of at the back as normal, 22% had no disc licenses (normally shows that the Island Council license that allows to run on the road, 27% had driven motorbikes even though they had not acquired driving licenses, 17% had failed to attach number plates on the motorbikes, 13% had had expired disc licenses while others were drunk while driving and too young to drive. Like cycling without bells or without a light, these motorbike offences are generally the normal offences on the outer islands.

The numbers however vary from island to island and at the end of the day, it is up to the Island Council and Police to enforce these road regulations. The highest number of offences committed was from those who had driven without driving licenses as most do not have the patience to go through months of learning before getting an official approval for them to drive on the public road particularly when it only takes a couple of days to be learn how to drive and there is hardly any traffic on the outer islands. Disc licenses require renewal every year of which the cost also varies from island to island.

Stray pigs, drunk and disorderly, criminal trespass and theft make up the rest 9% of the offences committed during the year 2008.

CHAPTER 5: TE TABOMOA – ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND UTILITIES

A. ISLAND ECONOMY

5.1 Subsistence Economy

A subsistence economy is one where people perform traditional activities to meet their individual and group needs for security, and have no reason to accumulate wealth except to ensure their future survival. In such a system, the concept of wealth does not exist hence there is a high degree of reliance on renewal and reproduction within the natural environment. The nature of the subsistence economy is reflected in the social organization of families, who join together to form large kinship groups (*kaainga*) which survive according to a set of rules and roles. Each member of a *kaainga* performs a different set of activities which are assigned on the basis of gender and age. It is important for the survival of the group that each member fulfils the roles and responsibilities assigned to him/her.

Typical subsistent activities include fishing, toddy cutting, cultivation and harvesting of food crops mainly coconut, pandanus, breadfruit and bwabwai, weaving mats, making thatches, rolling string, fetching water, collecting firewood, making fish traps and hooks, cleaning and washing, cooking and house construction amongst others. Most of these activities are performed by the adult members of the family, while it falls upon the younger members to collect firewood and fetch water, clean the dishes, the



compound, and assist the adult members to do the easy part of their chores. Unfortunately, subsistence living is slowly disappearing and being replaced by a cash economy where most subsistence activities are now not only catered towards subsistence living but also to generate income to pay for the basic necessities that are now found in the shops/stores.

Most of the fishing is done for subsistence but where there is a surplus, it is either given freely to relatives or sold to others. Due to the increasing dependence on imported

goods which are sold to the general public by small stores, the importance of cash as a medium of exchange is well appreciated by the population. However the lack of infrastructure prevents most people from engaging seriously in selling surplus produce like fish in order to make money. Furthermore, as a subsistence economy everyone is expected to be well skilled and knowledgeable in many things in order to survive in the harsh island environment. While some people may be more skilled in one thing compared to others, the concept of specialization which is a strong feature of cash-based economies is absent on the islands.

The customs of borrowing (*tangobwai*), or asking (*bubuti*), are still very much practiced but are however limited to those called family or close relatives. This contrasts to the northern custom of borrowing where the people are more interdependent and out-going compared to those in the southern islands. The sharing of wealth and property is still highly practiced especially among close relatives.

5.2 Production

5.2.1 Copra cutting

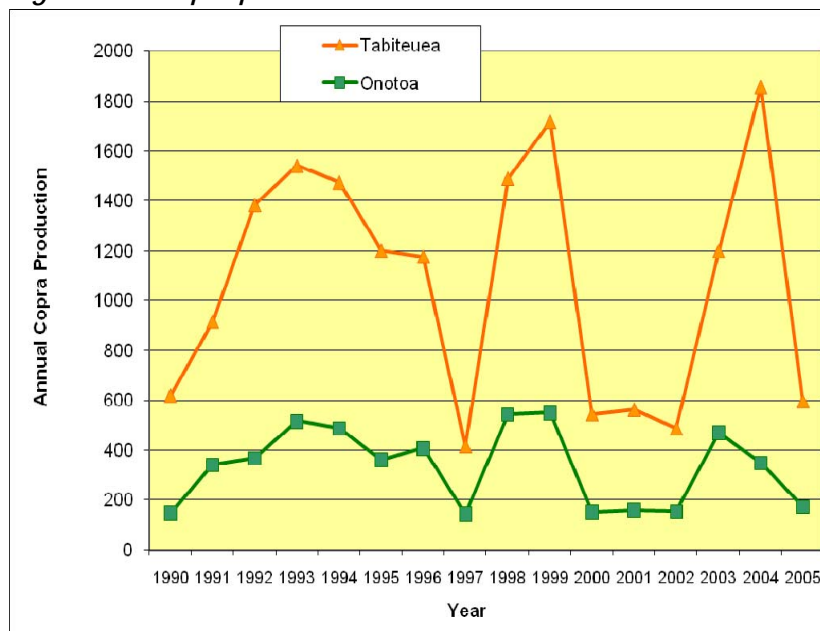
Copra production remains the most important commercial activity on TabNorth that has provided a reliable and sustainable source of income for many of the islanders. It was the major source of income before seaweed farming was introduced and recently, sea cucumber export.

The volume of copra produced and the total earnings derived from copra cutting for all the islands vary from year to year due to a lot of reasons including, fluctuations in the world copra prices, change in economic activities and particularly climate change for southern islands such as TabNorth. Like the other outer islands of Kiribati, other than fishing, copra cutting is the mainstay of the people on the island. Seasons of drought and rain are greatly reflected in the copra production for the islands that has been fluctuating over the years.



The following chart describes the annual copra production for Tabiteuea for the past 16 years, showing that in general there have been great fluctuations in production. These are the result of several factors among which are the changes in copra price and climatic conditions that affect production. As an example, production soared to a record high of nearly 1,855 tons in 2004 when a new Government came to power and increased the price of copra to AUD\$0.60 cents a pound. In contrast, the sharp decline of production in 1993 was caused by a nationwide drought which lasted for more than a year. Unfortunately, copra production data for Tab North by itself is not available and is therefore presented as production for the whole of Tabiteuea, including Tabiteuea South.

Figure 18 : Copra production 1990-2005



At \$0.60 cents per pound the total revenue from copra was approximately \$245,700 in 2000, \$253,800 in 2001, \$220,050 in 2002, \$599,500 in 2003, \$927,500 in 2004 and \$358,800 in 2005. Accordingly the copra production in 2005 that brought in an income of \$358,800 would in effect have generated an average annual household income for Tabiteuea (North and South) of \$429.70. In turn, this annual average means that in 2005, the households on Tabiteuea were able to generate \$1.28 from copra alone.

Source: Statistics Office, MFED, 2007

There is a discernible relationship between price and production, just as there is between climate and production. It could therefore be concluded that in general that copra production have been fluctuating over the years due to the changes in both climate and copra prices. However, there are also other

factors relating to the changes in production but would require further research to see how they have affected the production.

Table 14: Tabiteuea Copra production and revenue 2000-2005

Year	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Production	546	564	489	1199	1855	598
Copra price	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.5	0.5	0.6
Income	\$245,700.00	\$253,800.00	\$220,050.00	\$599,500.00	\$927,500.00	\$358,800.00
Income/HH	\$294.25	\$303.95	\$263.53	\$717.96	\$1,110.78	\$429.70
Income/Day	\$0.88	\$0.91	\$0.79	\$2.14	\$3.32	\$1.28

Source: National Statistics Office, 2007

The total copra production of Tabiteuea over the span of 5 years (200-2005) was 5251 tons and assuming that each of the North and South produced the same amount, would have given each an average production of 2625.5 tons. This still outweighs production from nearby Onotoa whose production for the same years totaled 1469 tons. The highest production for the Tabiteuea came about in 2004 when it reached a tonnage of 1,855. This increase is most probably due to the increase copra prices that a the new elected Government had set. The lowest production occurred in 1997 when the production was 418 tons. However, the nationwide lowest production for the same year was from the island of Tarawa (North Tarawa), whose productions have been the lowest throughout the years.

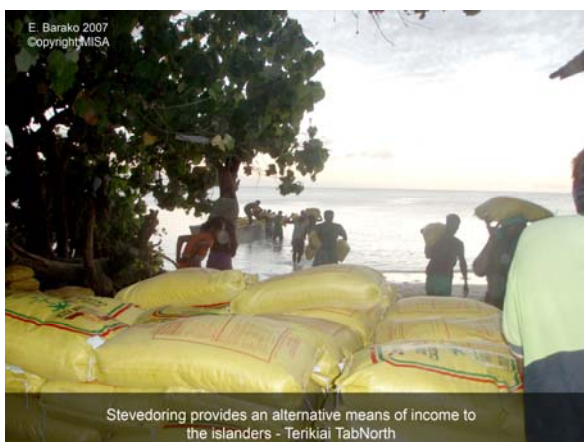
Copra production is done on a large scale and is well organized by a special government agency, the Copra Board, who oversees its nationwide operation.



5.3 Employment

The Island Council serve as the biggest employer for the islanders, employing about 70 islanders as village wardens, village nurse aides, pre-school teachers, drivers, hotel keepers, and office assistants. Depending on the need, Council may

from time to time engage contractors to undertake short carpentry or auto-mechanical jobs. Seasonal employment is usually available when Government or large Council projects are undertaken, especially those which require the service of casual laborers. The most common projects which generate jobs for the young men of TabNorth include construction of buildings and road and other large infrastructure.

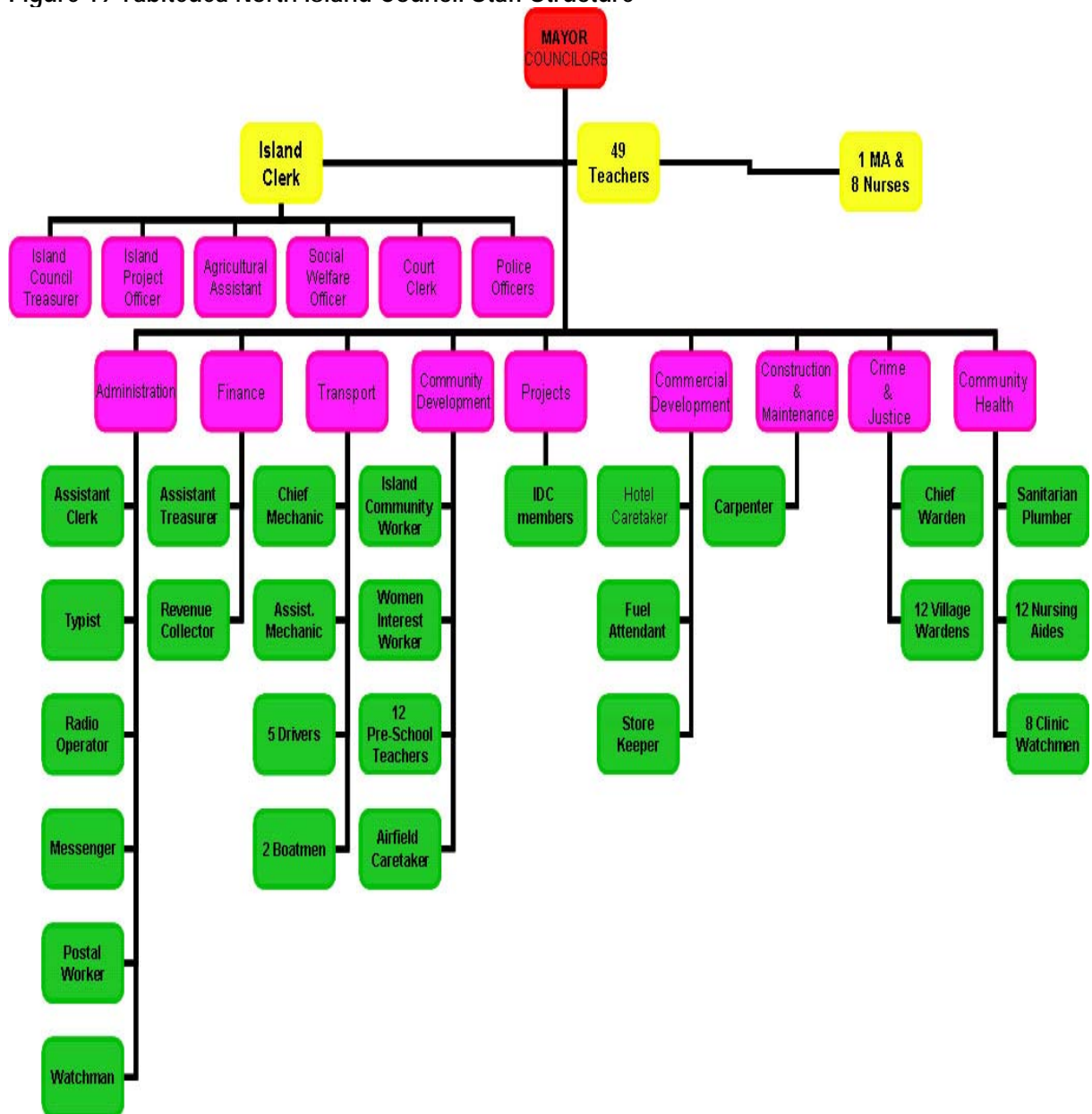


Manual labor is also regularly needed in the stevedoring of visiting supply boats, which make monthly or more regular runs to the island carrying food, fuel, timber, and other general goods. On their return, they are loaded with copra, empty fuel drums and some local produce like fish jerky, dried sea worms and mats. Stevedoring provides an alternative way to earn income.

Apart from a handful number of jobs offered by the Island Council in its limited service, the opportunity for paid employment for the islanders is otherwise non-existent. There are government employees stationed on the island in the form of teachers and medical staff, but the number is small and the jobs they do are not available to the islanders. Even in South Tarawa jobs are very difficult to find due to the small size of the private sector.

To solve the high unemployment problem in the country Government is now increasing its effort to look for and exploit overseas employment markets especially the Pacific-rim countries of Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the United States. Casual work such as fruit picking, elderly homecare attendants, peacekeeping and sailors are some of the employment markets being explored. To this end, Tab North, like the rest of the islands in the country can only await the outcomes and decisions of the Government as they come and go. Sailors/seamen are annually recruited from all over the country including Tab North requiring that young men pass the required test to undergo further training at the Marine Training Centre (MTC) or Fisheries Training Centre (FTC) in Tarawa for their preparation to board German and Japanese ships. The lack of opportunities to generate income in order to be self-reliant is a far off goal as all Island Councils including TabNorth Island Council rely heavily on central Government to support their administration, provided annually in support grants.

Figure 19 Tabiteuea North Island Council Staff Structure



Source: Island Council Estimates 2007

5.4 Trade and Commerce

Commercial/cash trading is an introduced concept in Kiribati society and has become an important part in the lives of the people of Tabiteuea North and the rest of the islands in the country. As small islands with undeveloped infrastructure, under-utilized resources, and a dualistic economy characterized by a high dependency on imported consumables, the size of trade and commerce on TabNorth is rather small but important. The most common form of imported items consists of food, tobacco and fuel, which are normally shipped to Makin on boats. Among the imported food rice, flour, sugar and tinned food make up the bulk of the supply.

Tariffs are an important source of revenue for TabNorth Island Council as with the rest of the outer island councils. To carry out any business activity involving trade on the island requires that one purchase a business license from the Tab North Island Council of which the cost varies depending on the type of business to be carried out. The most common business licenses on record are those of wholesaling, retailing, hawkers and fishing. The following table describes the kinds of business licenses that the TabNorth Island Council provides and receives each year for the different business and tax activities on the island.

Table 15: Types of council revenue

	Revenue Description	Tariffs Per Annum
1	Body taxes	\$2.00 (re-introduced in 2009)
2	Airport taxes	\$15.00/trip Government employees from TabNorth \$4.00/trip Local adults from TabNorth \$3.00/trip school children from TabNorth
3	Seaport tax	\$1.00/trip from TabNorth
4	Registration fees: Pushbikes Dogs Groups	\$2.00 \$4.00 \$45.00
5	Store licenses	\$60.00 private retailing \$600.00 Wholesale bulk stores - BKL \$60.00 Fuel depots \$600.00 Fuel Wholesaling
6	Hawkers	\$5.00/day Food-stands during independence or other \$10.00 Local cigarettes and candy \$10.00 ice-blocks \$20.00 Door to door sales
7	Entertainment	\$45.00 Film shows \$20.00 DJ hire
8	Marketing of fish	\$45.00
9	Rentals: Trucks/Cars Motorbikes Boats Venue	\$45.00 \$20.00 \$45.00 \$10.00
10	Bakery	\$45.00
11	Second hand clothing	\$45.00
12	Beverages	\$3.00 Local brew (fermented toddy) \$40.00 Beer/Liquor Wholesalers \$60.00 Beer/Liquor Retailers
13	Agents: Sea cucumber	\$100.00

	Shark fin Floats	\$100.00 \$30.00/business trip
14	Construction contractors	\$50.00 Locals \$100.00 Foreigners
15	Money lending business	\$45.00
16	Mechanical workshop	\$100.00

The island council is also engaged in other commercial activities however, revenue from the table generates a big portion of its yearly income. Despite the income generated, it is not enough on its own for the annual administration and development of the island and thus the TabNorth Island Council also relies heavily on central government to assist in their annual budgets. These funds known as support grants vary from island to island, depending on not only the population but also other factors relating to the council workforce sizes and workload that the council has to carry.

5.5 Cooperative and Local Finance

In 1995, the Village Bank project was initiated by Government to serve as a micro credit facility for village communities in the outer islands. The objective of the project is to enable families to have easy access to a credit facility from which they could borrow enough money to start a small business or other income generating activities. Funding for this project was provided by Government and shared among the islands and its village communities on a population basis. In the

villages, a committee, consisting of a chairman, a secretary and a treasurer, is established to manage and administer the Village Banks funds. The Island Project Officer (IPO) based on each Island Council provides fund distribution, auditing and monitoring services to this project to ensure proper use of funds and sustainability. The operations of the Village Banks are governed under the Village Bank Act.

The table below illustrates the distribution of funds that have been made to TabNorth's Village Banks under this project. Altogether TabNorth has received to a total of \$60,216.59 (total of the first, second, and third shares) between 1995 and 2007. A team from the Rural Planning Division of the Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs visited TabNorth recently as part of a national exercise to review the performance of the Village Banks. Based on this review Government will be able to decide what step(s) need to be taken next.

TabNorth village banks, like those on the rest of the islands suffer from poor performances while others are doing well thus a continued review and regular monitoring to assist the communities.



Table 16 : Village Bank share per village

BANK NAME	GOK FUND OF \$1 MILLION						UNDP \$90,000		
	1ST 75% SHARE			2ND 25% SHARE			3RD SHARE		
	PAID	DATE	DW NO:	PAID	DATE	DW NO:	PAID	DATE	DW NO:
Tekabwibwi	\$1,608.33	10/06/99	86/99	\$536.11	1/06/04	56/04	\$212.05	22/10/01	384/01
TTB	\$4,381.31	10/06/99	86/99	\$1,460.44	1/06/04	56/04	\$577.70	22/10/01	384/01
Nikiniiri	\$5,435.05	10/06/99	86/99	\$1,811.68	1/06/04	56/04	\$716.65	22/10/01	384/01
Menuma	\$7,736.62	10/06/99	86/99	\$2,578.87	1/06/04	56/04			
Tenatorua	\$1,525.14	10/06/99	86/99						
Tanaeang	\$6,821.54	12/08/99	114/99	\$2,273.85	1/06/04	56/04			
Terikiai	\$3,549.42	12/08/99	114/99	\$1,183.14	1/06/04	56/04	\$468.00	22/10/01	384/01
Eita	\$8,332.81	12/08/99	114/99						
Tekakibabo	\$1,594.46	01/10/99	128/99				\$210.25	22/10/01	384/01
N.Tewenei	\$582.33	01/10/99	128/99				\$76.75	22/10/01	384/01
Tetokantake	\$2,745.25	01/10/99	128/99						
Buroon Tauma	\$2,592.74	01/10/99	128/99	\$864.25			\$341.85	22/10/01	384/01
	\$46,905.00			\$10,708.34			\$2,603.25		

Source: RPD, MISA 2007

5.6 Remittances

With limited employment and income-generating activities, many people on TabNorth depend to a great extent on remittances sent to them by relatives working in Tarawa or overseas. Remittances from I-Kiribati phosphate miners working in Banaba and Nauru had dwindled to nothing when phosphate mining on Banaba went awry and Nauru ran out mining areas. The general flow of seafarer's remittances into the country is continuous and has increased over the years with more engaged in seafaring employment. There are now two major employers of seafarers from Kiribati; 1. South Pacific Marine Services (SPMS) and; 2. The Kiribati Fishing Services (KFS).

In the year 2000 the nearly 2,000 seamen working on foreign ships made remittance payments in excess of AUD10 million (USD7.6 million). At the end of 2005, 1,200 of the seamen were working for German shipping companies and making annual remittances of around USD5 million. NZAID supports the Kiribati Marine Training Center to ensure the competitiveness of Kiribati seamen in the international labor market. Seafarers are employed as general deck workers on German ships through SPMS while Japanese fisher employees are employed on Japanese fishing vessels through KFS. The seafarer's salaries are paid straight into the individual accounts in Kiribati or family accounts. Money is also sent back to churches depending on individual seafarer obligations. Families are dependent on decisions made by their seafarer husband or son on how much remittance they will receive (M. Borovnik 2006).

Whitley (1980) reported that the amount of remittance sent back to Kiribati in 1974 was AU\$800,000 with an additional AU\$200,000 brought back in the form of leave pay at the end of contracts. Remittances grew to \$1.3 million in 1979, \$9.7 million in 1998 and \$12.29 million in 2003 (MFED 1987). Of this \$12.29 million, 86% came from those employed by SPMS while 14% came from those employed by KFS.

Remittances sent to parents and wives differ. Parents usually receive more money from their son when he is not married yet but once married, the son generally sends more money to his wife and family than his parents. There is also a tendency for smaller amounts being sent to the outer islands as most families tend to move to South Tarawa especially the wife and children while the parents are more happy

to stay back home. Remittances can be sent directly to families or they can be given after a special request (bubuti) to other extended family members for sudden needs such as 'botaki's (feasts) or for school fees. These kinds of requests usually vary and directed to straight to the members of the family employed by SPMS or KFS. A lot of these remittances have also been invested in homes (permanent buildings), cars, motorbikes businesses, home equipment (TV, media players, instruments) and to a big extent, school fees.

Overseas remittances to outer island folk are sent by the ANZ bank as initially sent by family workers on German, Japanese sea vessels or other parts of the globe. However, there are also local remittances sent in from relatives working for the Government of Kiribati and whereas remittances from seamen are sent every month in a fixed amount, Government employed relatives send money whenever they can or when requested from relatives on the outer islands.

Transfer of money in and out of the island is done through telmo thus does not come or go in the form of cash. However, there are those bring in and take out cash but the main contributors to the flow of cash on the outer islands other than the Government and Council are the floats, big companies and wholesalers such as Boobootin Kiribati Limited (BKL) and Taotin Trading Company (TTC). TTC have their own shipping vessels that call at most islands supplying its branches on the island and taking back the cash profits leading to cash flow difficulties on the island. Councils are now putting in cash flow systems where such big earning companies have to also telmo out their earnings instead of shipping the hard cash back to headquarters.

Compiled telmo data from the telecommunication centre at the TabNorth Island Council showed that a total amount of \$420,701.86, averaging around \$35,000.00 a month. The amount of telmos include:

1. Remittance from overseas and government/company employed relatives
2. Government employee salaries on the island
3. Copra funds
4. Sea cucumber funds
5. Other