



The Tairuma of Papua New Guinea

The Tairuma people, whose language is also called Tairuma, which means “peaceful waters,” live in eight villages in the Gulf Province of Papua New Guinea. They have a strong group identity and are proud to be Tairuma and to speak the Tairuma language.

They support themselves primarily by fishing, cultivating vegetable gardens, and processing sago (which is made from the trunk of the sago palm).

They build canoes that are used for transportation as well as for fishing. They also make bracelets called *ma’i ta’e*, necklaces from seashells and bags called “bilums” which are characteristic not only of the province but also of the country in general. They typically carry these bags on their heads.

With regard to religion, Christianity is predominant, although the lack of Scriptures in their heart language hinders spiritual growth and leads to a misunderstanding of spiritual truths.

Their houses are constructed of lightweight materials – primarily of wood with sago palm leaf roofs.

There are schools in the Tairuma villages. There are no Tairuma textbooks. Education in the early grades is in the mother tongue, while older students are instructed in English.

Primary Religion:

Christian

Disciples (Matt 28.19):

9%

Churches:

12

Scripture Status (Matt 28.20):

None in their language

Population (date):

4,100 (2004)



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Item Name	Item Note	
Have They Heard The Gospel?		Profile Summary
Call Themselves Christian (%)	90%	
Believe In Jesus As God & Only Savior (%)	9%	
Believe In The Local Traditional Religion (%)	30-35%	
Have Not Heard Who Jesus is (%)	0%	
Number Of Pastors	12	
Response To The Gospel	The majority of the population claims to be Christian. Approximately 30% hold church membership. Lack of vernacular Scriptures hinders spiritual growth and leads to a misunderstanding of spiritual truths.	
Number Of Churches	12	
Comment (Churches)	Churches are in the following communities: Karaeta - United Church; Baptist; and Lutheran Luluitera - United Church; CLC; and New Apostolic Mei'i - Seventh Day Adventist; and United Church Murua - United Church Siviri - CRC; and United Church Uaripi	
Comment (Churches)	(Not including churches in nearby Kerema Town.)	
Is The Word Of God Translated?	There are no translations of the Scripture for this people group.	
Any Hinderance To Scripture Distribution?	There is a lack of vernacular Scriptures.	
Forms Of Gospel Presentation Available (Summary)	There are no Gospel presentations available in Tairuma. All are available in English, although this people groups' proficiency in English is limited.	
What Kind Of Missionaries Are Needed?	They need missionaries to help translate the Bible into their vernacular language and encourage vernacular literacy because they desire to learn more about the Scriptures.	
Population All Countries		Group Description
World Population For This People	4,100	
World Population (Date)	2004	
Countries Where People Group Lives		Group Description
Country Name	Papua New Guinea	
Geography & Environment		Group Description
Location	Near Kerema Town in the Gulf Province of Papua New Guinea.	
Country	Papua New Guinea	
Ecosystem Type	Semi-tropical	
Geological Type	Coastal	
Elevation	Sea Level	
Longitude	E 145	
Latitude	S 7.9	
Climate	Climate is reported to be tropical.	
Language & Linguistics		Group Description
Primary Language	TAIRUMA	
Alternate Language Names	UARIPI	
Alternate Language Names	TAIRUMA'A	
Alternate Language Names	KEREMA	
Attitude Towards Mother Tongue	Very receptive	
Percent Monolingual (%)	Few, if any.	
Second Languages	Hiri Motu	
Second Languages	Tok Pisin	

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Item Name	Item Note	
Second Languages	Toaripi	
Second Languages	Orokolo	
Second Languages	English	
Comment (Second Language)	English and Tok Pisin are widely spoken by the younger generation, while Orokolo and Toaripi are more commonly spoken by the older generation. Adults' knowledge of Hiri Motu is a bit less than Orokolo and Toaripi.	
Linguistically Related Languages	OPAO	
Linguistically Related Languages	TOARIPI	
Linguistically Related Languages	KEURU	
Linguistically Related Languages	OROKOLO	
Neighboring Languages	KEURU	
Neighboring Languages	KAKI AE	
Neighboring Languages	OPAO	
Literacy		Group Description
Adult Literacy Percentage	62.9%	
Percent Literate For Men	67.7% (2000 Census)	
Percent Literate For Women	57.4% according to 2000 Census. May be less.	
Literacy Attitude	Somewhat receptive	
Active Literacy Program	Yes	
Comment (Active Literacy Program)	There is a program at local elementary schools to teach children to read and write in Tairuma.	
Publications In Vernacular	There are no publications in vernacular for this people group.	
Comment (Literacy)	Is reported to be mostly positive.	
Economics		Group Description
Subsistence Type	Agriculturalists	
Comment (Subsistence Type)	Fishing is also reported to be a type of subsistence.	
Occupation	Agriculture and fishing are reported to be the occupations for this people group.	
Income Sources	Garden produce, fish, and sago are reported as income sources.	
Products / Crafts	This people group produces sago, mats (made of palm leaves, used to sit on at mealtimes and for sleeping), seashell necklaces, bracelets called "pas pas" and bilums (woven bags).	
Trade Partners	It is reported that there are no trade partners for this people group.	
Modernization / Utilities	This people group is reported to have the following: TV, electricity, outboard motors, and electric lights.	
Community Development		Group Description
Health Care (Quality)	Very good	
Comment (Health Care)	There is a hospital located in Kerema Town.	
Diet (Quality)	Good	
Comment (Diet)	The diet of this people group is primarily comprised of rice, sago, bananas, cucumbers, coconut, fish. In the villages near the provincial capital (Kerema) there is bread.	
Water (Quality)	Good	
Comment (Water)	Their water supply comes from rainwater collected in tanks.	
Shelter Description	In general the houses are constructed on wooden posts more than 1 meter high. Their primary construction materials are wood and bark, which is woven to make the walls. Roofs are made of sago palm leaves.	
Electricity	There is adequate electricity in Karaeta, Luluiitera and Siviri, although some people cannot afford it. There is no electricity in Petoe, Mei'I 1&2 or Uaripi.	
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Good	

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Item Name	Item Note
Clothing	It is reported that western style clothing is part of the culture for this people group. One cultural change with regard to clothing is that some women are now wearing pants (although in the culture in general women wear skirts) and use accessories such as backpacks and purses that are not typical of the area.
Transportation	Transportation used by this people group are: Canoes, dinghies with motors, and PMV (trucks that transport people between various destinations in the province). The PMV fare is typically in kina, the national currency of Papua New Guinea.
Infant Mortality Rate	53.15 per 1,000 live births (national average according to http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pp.html#People)
Life Expectancy	64.56 years (National average according to http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/pp.html#People)
Leading Cause Of Death	Malaria and tuberculosis are reported to be the leading causes of death. Also, it is said that many people die because of sorcery. AIDS is also a cause of death, especially for young men.

Society & Culture

Group Description

Family Structures	The nuclear family is composed of the father, mother, and children. It is common to adopt children. Kinship is systematically organized, indicating norms for people's relationships and behavior. There are no rules requiring marriage with people from within the same group. It is common that newly married couples live with the husband's parents. Polygamy is not common, although there are some isolated cases. Patrilineal.
Neighbor Relations	It is reported that neighbor relations among this people group is good.
Authority / Rule	In many villages there is a councilman who is in charge of handling disputes, as well as village appearance and cleanliness. There are also a few plainclothes policemen (no more than 5 per village). There is also a prison in Kerema Town.
Social Habits/Groupings	They have traditional dances, called "singsing" where they use traditional costumes, which include long necklaces and grass skirts.
Cultural Change Pace	Medium
Identification With National Culture	Similar
Self Image	Prestigious
Judicial / Punishment System	Local courts take care of judicial matters.
Celebrations	This people group celebrate Christmas, Easter, and the New Year.
Recreations	The recreations used by this people group for fun and relaxation are: soccer, rugby, playing the guitar, dancing, and singing.
Art Forms	There are some carvings in the churches. Women make bilums (woven bags), although these are not as common in the Tairuma area as in the rest of the country.
Media	None
Local Language Broadcasting	None
Comment (Local Language Broadcasting)	Occasionally Tairuma church services are recorded and broadcast on the radio.
Attitude To Outsiders	Very receptive
Attitude To Change	Very receptive

Youth

Group Description

Labor and tasks (6-12 year olds)	Children 6-12 years of age fetch water, carry firewood, and go fishing with parents.
Youth Problems (Teens)	The greatest problems for teens are poor self image, and peer pressure to follow current trends in popular culture.
Youth Greatest Needs (teens)	The greatest needs are ways to be involved in community projects, spiritual care, and family support.

Education

Group Description

Primary Schools	8
Primary School Enrollment	1,566
Comment (Primary School Enrollment)	It is reported that the teacher to student ratio in primary schools is between 1:17 and 1:43, depending on the school.
Secondary Schools	1

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Item Name	Item Note
Secondary School Enrollment	374 (Total enrollment for local high school, including students from various language groups.)
Language Of Instruction Early Years	Tairuma
Language Of Instruction Later Years	English
Comment (Language Of Instruction)	Education in the early grades is in the mother tongue, while older students are instructed in English.
Comment (Language Of Textbook)	There are no Tairuma textbooks.
Comment (Education)	It is reported that six (6) of the schools at the primary level have less than 10% of students from outside of this people group. Also, the language of instruction in primary schools is in Tairuma (especially in earlier grades) and in English.

Church Growth

Status of Christianity

Reached Status	Engaged
Reached Classification	Evangelized
Total Baptized	>325
Bible Schools	0
Christian Clinics/Hospitals	0
Christian Literacy Centers	0

Religion & Response

Status of Christianity

Attitude To Christianity	Very receptive
Attitude To Religious Change	Very resistant
Comment (Attitude Religious Change)	Very resistant to new churches .
Resistance / Receptivity	People listen to the gospel with politeness, but don't necessarily accept it right away. Many people who claim to be Christians also hold onto traditional religious beliefs.
Spiritual Climate And Openness	Some people desire to know God, while others are nominal.
Recommended Approaches	Work with existing churches.
Current Needs	They need missionaries to help translate the Bible into their vernacular language because they desire to learn more about the Scriptures.
Items For Prayer	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.That many Christians will be raised up who will identify with this group and have a desire to learn about the Tairuma people, their needs, and how they can help them. 2.For Bible translators and literacy works. 3.That Tairuma leaders will be raised up who are willing to prepare themselves to serve and help in the process of Bible translation. 4.For nominal Tairuma Christians to have a deep, meaningful relationship with God.

History Of Christianity In Group

Status of Christianity

Year Began	1800s
By Whom	London Missionary Society (James Chalmers)

Scripture

Status of Christianity

Translation Status	Definite
Available Scripture	None
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Literature	No
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Recordings	No
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Film/Videos	No
Other Forms Of Gospel Available: Radio	No

Missions and Churches

Status of Christianity

Organization Name	Seventh Day Adventists
Organization Name	United Church

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Item Name	Item Note
Organization Name	Salvation Army
Year Started	Started in 1963.
Number Of Adherents	>100
Number Of Congregations	2
Number Of Workers Using Local Language	1