

The Aruamu of Papua New Guinea



representative photo

The Aruamu people of Papua New Guinea live in the Madang Province, Bogia district, between the Ramu river and Bogia town.

Traditionally, they have practiced animism. They also recognize a distant and tricky creator-spirit god, whom they call Rangai.

Although Christianity was introduced to the region in the 1950s, many Aruamu Christians found it difficult to shake off their traditional animistic beliefs. Then in the late 1970s, some Aruamu men gave their hearts to Christ during an open-air crusade in the region and began sharing the Gospel among their people. Small, passionate evangelical churches were born, and today several different churches and denominations are actively working among the Aruamu.

In 1979 Aruamu believers began praying for help translating the Bible into their heart language. God answered that prayer, and the Aruamu New Testament was dedicated in 2005. Now, the Aruamu Literacy Committee and translation team are ready to move forward with a translation of the Old Testament.

A team of seven mother tongue translators are ready to work hand-in-hand to translate the Old Testament Scriptures into their heart language. These Scriptures will encourage churches in their worship and believers in their walk with God, and it will be a tool for evangelizing the community at large.

Primary Religion:

Animism

Disciples (Matt 28:19):

Yes

Churches:

Yes

Scripture Status (Matt 28:20):

New Testament

Population (date):

8,000 (UBS 1990)



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Have They Heard The Gospel?

History of Christianity

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Religious Practices and Ceremonies

Baptism, Christian conventions, retreats
They also celebrate Christmas, Independence Day, Easter, funerals, bride price exchanges, end of school year, and “singsings” (music and dancing in traditional costumes to celebrate an event).

Is the Word of God Translated?

The New Testament was dedicated in 2005.
Old Testament portions are in progress.

Other Forms of Gospel Presentations

Recordings:	Yes, Audio Bible, Online NT, Scripture MP3 files
Literature:	New Testament, Shell Books, extensive literacy
Films/videos:	No
Radio:	No
Bible Stories:	Unknown

Language of wider communication

Tok Pisin

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Group Description

Population all countries

World Population	8,000 (United Bible Society)
World Population (Date)	1990

Geography & Environment

Location	Papua New Guinea: Longitude 146 E; Latitude 4 S
Climate	Tropical: rainy and dry seasons
Geological type	Mountain slope; coastal; elevation 600 ft.

Alternate Language Names

	Ariawiai, Makarub, Makarup, Mikarew, Mikarew-Ariaw, Mikarup
Percent Monolingual	10%-20%
Other Mother Tongues	Tok Pisin

Linguistically Related Languages

Akukem [spm] and Kire [geb]

Neighboring Languages

Sepen, Monumbo, Lilau, Kire

Literacy

Adult Literacy Percentage	5%-25% in the Aruamu language
Comment	50%-75% literacy in the language taught in school.
Active Literacy Program	Yes; fluency workshops in churches

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Economics

Subsistence Type	Hunter-gatherers; slash and burn agriculturalists
Occupation	Gardens; hunting
Income Sources	Cocoa beans; copra; string bags; carvings; drums
Comment	Average annual income: \$300-\$400

Community Development

Health Care (Quality)	Poor
Comment	There are two government clinics
Life Expectancy	45 years
Comment	Leading cause of death: malaria, tuberculosis, pneumonia
Diet (Quality)	Fair
Comment	Root crops, greens, pigs, fish, small game
Water	Fair, spring water, stream water
Shelter Description	On stilts--bamboo woven with thatch roof. One family.
Energy/Fuel (Quality)	Fair
Comment	Wood; kerosene for lamps
Clothing	Used western clothing
Transportation	Walking; a few old trucks

Society & Culture

Family	Nuclear family; matrilineal
Neighbor Relations	<p>The Aruamu people of Papua New Guinea love to do things together — plow their gardens, hunt and fish, even build houses together in their remote jungle homeland.</p> <p>They highly value generosity. If one clan kills a pig, they will share part of that pig with a neighboring clan. However, if one clan shares a pig with another clan, they expect the gift to be reciprocated.</p> <p>This reciprocation can have a dark side. Offense demands payback. Some retaliations have been known to escalate for years. Nevertheless, for the most part, selfishness is perceived as a sin and generosity a virtue. Those who earn prestige among the Aruamu do so through giving.</p>

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Judicial / Punishment System	Provincial court system
Social Habits/Groupings	Clans and church relationships; nuclear family, matrilineal
Cultural Change Pace	Medium
Recreations	Chew betel nut, soccer, talk, visit
Media	Radio and newspaper in Melanesian Pidgin
Local Language Broadcasting	None
Attitude To Change	Somewhat receptive
Comment	Regard outsiders with suspicion

Children and Youth:

Labor and tasks (6-12 yr olds)	Watch siblings, collect firewood, gardening, carry water, cook
Youth Problems (Teens)	Teen pregnancy, banana wine, marijuana, all-night parties
Youth Greatest Needs (teens)	Positive social activities

Education--Group Description

Teacher To Pupil Ratio	Primary schools: 1:30;
Comment	50% of eligible secondary students are enrolled in school
Number of schools	Primary: 6; enrollment: 500 (full to capacity) Secondary: 3; enrollment: 30
Language Of Instruction	English
Early Years	English

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Status of Christianity

Church Growth

Pastors:	60
Lay Leaders:	80
Bible Schools:	0
Christian Clinics/Hospitals:	0
Christian Literacy Center:	1; also fluency workshops in churches

Religion and Response

Translation status	New Testament complete; OT portions in progress
Spiritual Climate and Openness:	Open but not anxious to change
Attitude toward Christianity	Somewhat receptive to Christianity

References

- Ethnologue, 2015
- The Seed Company, People and Language Detail report, 2012
- People Profile, 2003