

# Kiribati

In 2011, the Government of Kiribati made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government trained labor officers on child labor and launched the Kiribati Education Improvement Program to provide children with greater protection and educational opportunities. Although Kiribati is commencing a drafting process, there is currently no list of hazardous work prohibited to children. There is also no evidence that cases of worst forms of child labor have been investigated or prosecuted. In addition, the Government did not directly address the exploitation of children engaged in prostitution and street vending.

## Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate		112.0

### Sources:

**Primary completion rate:** Data from 2008, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)

**All other data:** Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis.(2)

## Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Kiribati are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, in particular, selling goods on the street.(3, 4) Children working on the streets may be exposed to many dangers, including severe weather, vehicle accidents and crime.(5) Girls are also engaged in prostitution, and child pornography has been produced as a result in at least one case. Crewmembers of fishing vessels are reported to be common clients of child prostitutes.(3, 6-8)

## Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Employment Ordinance sets the minimum age for employment at 14, and the Employment (Amendment) Act 2008 sets the minimum age for hazardous work at 18.(9, 10) Kiribati does not have a list of work considered hazardous for children but is commencing the process of drafting one.(11)

The Penal Code prohibits forced labor and trafficking in persons.(8, 9, 12) The Penal Code also prohibits the procurement of any girl under age 18, or any male regardless of



age, for prostitution. The Transnational Crimes Act prohibits the sale of children for prostitution.(12, 13) Although the Penal Code prohibits the use of children under 15 for illegal or immoral activities, it lacks specific prohibitions on child pornography and does not cover children ages 16 through 17.(8)

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	No
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	No
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	15
	Free Public Education	Yes

Kiribati has no regular military force.(14)

The Education Ordinance makes schooling compulsory and free until age 15.(15)

## Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The Kiribati National Advisory Committee on Children (KNACC), which is made up of representatives from government agencies and NGOs, is responsible for coordinating efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor—specifically the commercial sexual exploitation of children.(3, 16)

The Ministry of Labor and Human Resources Development (MOL) and the Kiribati Police Force are responsible for enforcing child labor laws.(3) The MOL does not have any labor inspectors; instead, labor officers are tasked with conducting inspections in addition to their other duties. It has suggested that the number of officers is insufficient to conduct inspections outside of Tarawa, the capital city.(3) The MOL conducted trainings on child labor for its officers in November, but no child labor inspections were conducted during the reporting period. Additionally, the Government has not taken any action to arrest, prosecute or convict violators of criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor during the reporting period, nor has it set aside funds from the national budget for addressing child labor issues.(3)

### Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The KNACC drafted a National Children's Plan in 2009 that still awaits Cabinet approval.(3, 16)

The Kiribati Country Program Action Plan, developed with UNICEF Pacific, provides the basis for the Child Protection Program (2008-2012). One goal of the Child Protection Program is to reduce all forms of child exploitation in the Pacific Islands.(16, 17)

The question of whether these policies have an impact on commercial sexual exploitation and street vending does not appear to have been addressed.

### Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government provided staff and office space to support the ILO's efforts to raise awareness of the worst forms of child labor and ILO Conventions 138 and 182.(18)

The Kiribati Education Improvement Program, which began in 2011 and runs through 2020, contributes to the Government's efforts to provide greater protection and educational opportunities to children through policy and legislative review, workforce development, improvement of school curriculum and infrastructure development in the education sector.(3, 19, 20)

The Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs operates a 24-hour hotline for children to report violations of labor laws and obtain information and access to social services.(3)

No programs appear to exist directly addressing trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation or street vending. In addition, research has not found any evidence that the Government has conducted an in-depth study on any worst forms of child labor.

### Based on the reporting above, the following action would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Kiribati:

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Implement child protection legislation that includes a uniform definition of a child and eliminates disparity in the treatment of boys and girls.	2011
	Amend legislation to specifically prohibit child pornography and to directly address the issue of child prostitution.	2010, 2011
	Finalize and adopt the list of hazardous occupations.	2011
Coordination and Enforcement	Increase efforts and budget allocations to investigate and combat the worst forms of child labor.	2010, 2011
Policies	Approve the KNACC-drafted National Children's Plan.	2010, 2011
	Assess the potential impact of existing policies on addressing commercial sexual exploitation and street vending.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Consider a comprehensive study of children's activities to determine the extent to which children are engaged in or are at risk of being engaged in the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
Social Programs	Implement programs to address commercial sexual exploitation and street vending.	2009, 2010, 2011

## REFERENCES

1. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. *Gross intake ration to the last grade of primary. Total.*; accessed 2012; <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx?SPSLanguage=EN>. Data provided is the gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary school. This measure is a proxy measure for primary completion. For more information, please see the “Children’s Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions” section of this report.
2. UCW. *Analysis of Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Statistics from National Household or Child Labor Surveys*. February 2, 2012. Reliable statistical data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics on children’s work in general are reported in this chart, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used, the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the “Children’s Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions” section of this report.
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4. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Concluding Observations: Kiribati*. Geneva; September 29, 2006. Report No. CRC/C/KIR/CO/1. <http://bit.ly/w9qtaq>.
5. International Labour Office. *Children in hazardous work: What we know, What we need to do*. Geneva, International Labour Organization; 2011. [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_155428.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_155428.pdf). While country-specific information on the dangers children face in street work is not available, research studies and other reports have documented the dangerous nature of tasks in street work and their accompanying occupational exposures, injuries and potential health consequences to children working in the sector.
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7. U.S. Embassy- Suva official. E-mail communication to USDOL official. January 18, 2012.
8. U.S. Department of State. “Kiribati,” in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2011*. Washington, DC; May 24, 2012; [http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?dynamic\\_load\\_id=186278](http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?dynamic_load_id=186278).
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16. UNICEF Pacific. *Protect me with love and care: A Baseline Report for creating a future free from violence, abuse and exploitation of girls and boys in Kiribati*. Suva; October 2009. [http://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/UNICEF\\_KIRIBATI\\_REPORT\\_Feb.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/UNICEF_KIRIBATI_REPORT_Feb.pdf).
17. U.S. Embassy- Suva official. E-mail communication to USDOL official. May 2, 2011.
18. U.S. Embassy- Suva. *reporting, February 8, 2011*.
19. AusAID. “Kiribati Education Improvement Program - KEIP” Australia: AusAIDvideo; July 2, 2011; 9 min, 58 sec, video; [accessed February 2, 2012]; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1eGbSAEV2M>.
20. AusAID. *Kiribati-Australia Partnership for Development*, [online] January 12, 2010 [cited February 2, 2012]; <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/country/partnership/kiribati.cfm>.