

In 2016, Kiribati made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government provided employers, workers, and government officials with training on the new Employment and Industrial Relations Code and Occupational Safety and Health Act. Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Kiribati perform dangerous tasks in construction and street vending. Existing laws do not identify hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children. The Government has not established a coordinating mechanism or adopted a national policy to combat the worst forms of child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Kiribati perform dangerous tasks in construction and street vending.⁽¹⁾ Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Kiribati. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		112.4

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2014, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016.⁽²⁾
Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2015.⁽³⁾

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity




Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Cutting toddy palm trees for toddy (1)
	Fishing and harvesting clams (1)
Services	Construction, portering, and seafaring (1, 4)
	Street vending and working in kava bars (1, 4, 5)
	Domestic work (4)

Although education is free and compulsory for all children until age 16, children face barriers to accessing education due to associated costs and the lack of schools in remote areas.^(1, 4, 6)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Kiribati has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

Convention	Ratification
 ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
 UN CRC	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
 Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The Government has established laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Kiribati's legal framework to adequately protect children from child labor.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Section 115 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code (7)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Section 117 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code (7)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Sections 244 and 249 of the Penal Code; Sections 118(1)(a, c, d) and 122 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code (7-9)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Section 43 of the Measures to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act; Section 118(1)(b) of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code (7, 10)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Sections 136, 141, and 142 of the Penal Code; Sections 118(1)(f) and 118(1)(g) of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code (7, 8)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Section 142 of the Penal Code; Sections 118(1)(h) and 118(1)(i) of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code (7, 8)
Minimum Age for Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	N/A†		
State Voluntary	N/A†		
Non-state Compulsory	Yes	18	Sections 118(1)(e) of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code (7)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Section 7 of the Education Act (11)
Free Public Education	Yes		Section 11 of the Education Act (11)

† No standing military (12)

Kiribati has not identified by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. The Employment and Industrial Relations Code does not specify the activities and hours of work per week that are acceptable for children engaged in light work, or the conditions under which light work can be undertaken.(7) Kiribati's laws prohibiting child trafficking are insufficient because they do not specifically prohibit trafficking children domestically.(7, 10)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5). However, gaps in labor law and criminal law enforcement remain and some enforcement information is not available.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor and Human Resources Development	Enforce labor laws, including those related to child labor.(13)
Kiribati Police Force	Enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. Investigate cases of human trafficking and sexual exploitation of children through a special Domestic Violence and Sexual Offenses Unit.(14)
Child Protection Officer, Ministry of Women, Youth and Social Affairs (MWYSA)	Remove children from harmful situations, including as a result of sexual exploitation and harsh or exploitative labor.(13, 15)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2016, labor law enforcement agencies in Kiribati took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$360,000 (16)	Unknown (16)
Number of Labor Inspectors	7 (13)	7 (13)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown (16)	Unknown (16)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown (16)	Unknown (16)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	Yes (17)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (16)	Yes (16)
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown (16)	Unknown (16)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (16)	Unknown (16)
Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown (16)	Unknown (16)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (16)	Unknown (16)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (16)	Unknown (16)
Number of Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (16)	Unknown (16)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown (16)	Unknown (16)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown (16)	Unknown (16)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Unknown (16)	Unknown (16)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown (16)	Unknown (16)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	No (13)	No (13)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Unknown	Unknown (16)

The Ministry of Labor has no dedicated labor inspectors, but it has seven labor officers, six of whom are based in the capital city, Tarawa, and are tasked with conducting inspections.(13, 14) There are not enough officers to provide inspection services.(13)

In 2016, the Government trained about 50 employers, workers, and government officials on the new Employment and Industrial Relations Code and Occupational Safety and Health Act.(16)

Criminal Law Enforcement

Research did not find information on whether criminal law enforcement agencies in Kiribati took actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown (16)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	Unknown (16)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (18)	Unknown (16)
Number of Investigations	0 (13)	Unknown (16)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (13)	Unknown (16)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (13)	Unknown (16)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (13)	Unknown (16)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Unknown	Yes (16)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that the Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Key Policies Related to Child Labor[‡]

Policy	Description
Children, Young People, and Families Welfare System Policy	Focuses on strengthening the welfare system, in part by implementing services to prevent the abuse, violence, neglect, and exploitation of children and young people, including in hazardous labor.(19) During the reporting period, trainings for welfare officers were conducted and outreach programs on counseling and parenting were provided to improve parent, caregiver, and community skills to create an environment that protects children from violence, abuse, and exploitation.

[‡] The Government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.(20, 21)

Although the Government has adopted the Children, Young People, and Families Welfare System Policy, research found no evidence of a policy that focuses on combating the worst forms of child labor.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2016, the Government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

Table 9. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Pacific Sub-Regional Child Labor and Trafficking Program	ILO-supported program that expands the work and lessons learned from its TACKLE program in Fiji to Kiribati, Samoa, and Solomon Islands.(4) Activities include facilitating meetings, conducting research, raising awareness, providing trainings, and building government capacity to address child labor.(22)
Safenet [†]	MWYSA-coordinated program that allows government, churches, and NGOs to provide assistance to victims found in exploitative and violent situations.(13)
Hotlines [†]	MWYSA-supported 24-hour hotline for children to report violations, request information, or obtain access to services.(14) Domestic Violence and Sexual Offenses unit operates two 24-hour phone-line services for reporting exploitation and abuse.(23)

[†] Program is funded by the Government of Kiribati.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Kiribati (Table 10).

Table 10. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.	2011 – 2016
	Ensure that the law specifies the activities and number of hours of work per week that are acceptable for children engaged in light work, as well as the conditions under which children can engage in light work.	2015 – 2016
	Ensure that the law specifically prohibits the trafficking of children domestically.	2015 – 2016
Enforcement	Collect and publish data on the enforcement of child labor laws, including the number of labor inspections conducted, child labor violations found, and penalties imposed. Collect and publish data on the enforcement of criminal laws prohibiting the worst forms of child labor, including the number of violations found, prosecutions initiated, and convictions completed.	2012 – 2016
	Establish a mechanism for child labor complaints.	2015 – 2016
	Employ an adequate number of labor inspectors and ensure they receive sufficient resources to investigate child labor violations.	2010 – 2016
Coordination	Establish a mechanism to coordinate the Government's efforts to combat child labor, including its worst forms.	2013 – 2016
Government Policies	Ensure that policies seeking to prevent and respond to child exploitation also address the worst forms of child labor.	2014 – 2016
Social Programs	Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children by alleviating school fees and increasing access to schools in remote locations.	2014 – 2016

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