

# Kiribati

## Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Kiribati developed the National Development Strategy for 2000-2003 to promote access to education, which includes the provision of universal education at little or no direct cost to parents throughout Kiribati, including the outer islands of Teraina and Tabuaeran.<sup>1390</sup> UNICEF is also active in Kiribati implementing child and youth advocacy projects.<sup>1391</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 in Kiribati are not available. Some children who are not in school are reported to work in the informal sector, either in small-scale enterprises or in their homes.<sup>1392</sup>

Education is free and compulsory from age 6 to 14, which includes primary school through grade six, and Junior Secondary School for three additional grade levels.<sup>1393</sup> In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 84.4 percent, and net primary enrollment rate was 70.7 percent.<sup>1394</sup> School quality and access to education are better in urban areas; schools in small communities on isolated islands are expensive to maintain.<sup>1395</sup>

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The minimum age for employment is 14 years, and children under 16 years are prohibited from industrial employment or jobs aboard ships.<sup>1396</sup> The Constitution prohibits forced labor,<sup>1397</sup>

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<sup>1390</sup> “Kiribati Education Policy: National Development Strategies 2000-2003” at [http://www.janeresture.com/kiribati\\_edupolicy](http://www.janeresture.com/kiribati_edupolicy) on 12/3/01.

<sup>1391</sup> “UNICEF Assistance to Pacific Island Countries, Kiribati,” at [http://www.undp.org/fj/un/UNICEF/UNICEF\\_PIC.htm](http://www.undp.org/fj/un/UNICEF/UNICEF_PIC.htm) on 12/3/01.

<sup>1392</sup> Informal sector economic activities in the Pacific Islands include small-scale agriculture in rural areas and small enterprises or domestic services in urban areas. The informal sector is not widely visible in Pacific island towns, because much of the activity is home-based. This makes it particularly difficult to monitor the extent of child labor practices. See *Pacific Human Development Report 1999: Creating Opportunities*, UNDP Document [hereinafter *Pacific Report*], 42, 80-81, at <http://www.undp.org/fj/phdr/> on 12/3/01.

<sup>1393</sup> Jennifer L. Brush, Deputy Chief of Mission, U.S. Embassy–Majuro, electronic correspondence to ICLP official, December 5, 2001, 6.

<sup>1394</sup> UNESCO, *Education for All: Year 2000 Assessment* (Paris, 2000) [CD-ROM].

<sup>1395</sup> *Pacific Report* at 41.

<sup>1396</sup> *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—Kiribati* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2000) [hereinafter *Country Reports 2000*], Section 6d, at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/eap/index.cfm?docid=718>.

and the Penal Code criminalizes the procurement of girls under 18 years of age for the purpose of sexual relations.<sup>1398</sup> The Penal Code also bans parents or guardians from prostituting children under 15 years old.<sup>1399</sup> The Penal Code prohibits the procurement of girls under the age of 18, and establishes a penalty of two years imprisonment for offenses.<sup>1400</sup> Child labor laws are enforced by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Employment.<sup>1401</sup> Kiribati has not ratified either ILO Convention 138 or ILO Convention 182.<sup>1402</sup>

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<sup>1397</sup> Constitution of Kiribati, Chapter 2, Article 6, at [http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/paclawmat/Kiribati\\_legislation/Kiribati\\_Constitution.htm](http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/paclawmat/Kiribati_legislation/Kiribati_Constitution.htm) on 11/28/01.

<sup>1398</sup> Kiribati Penal Code (1977) [hereinafter Penal Code], Article 136, at [http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/Paclawmat/Kiribati\\_legislation/Consolidation\\_1977/Kiribati\\_Penal\\_Code.html1](http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/Paclawmat/Kiribati_legislation/Consolidation_1977/Kiribati_Penal_Code.html1) on 11/28/01.

<sup>1399</sup> Penal Code at Articles 141, 143.

<sup>1400</sup> Criminal Code, Article 136, as cited in *Human Rights Report: Kiribati*, The Protection Project Database at [www.protectionproject.org](http://www.protectionproject.org).

<sup>1401</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1402</sup> ILOLEX database: Kiribati at <http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/english/newratframeE.htm> on 12/3/01.

*NOTE: Hard copies of all Web citations are on file.*