

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

The Government of Kiribati began working with the UN in late 1999 to assess the country's national development through a Common Country Assessment (CCA).²⁴²⁰ The CCA formed the basis for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2003–2007 which was completed in 2002.²⁴²¹ The UNDAF is working with the government to support national priorities and initiatives that include promoting the healthy growth and development of Kiribati's children.²⁴²²

The government is also working with the ADB on the implementation of its 2003–2005 Country Strategy and Program to address key issues that include poverty reduction and human development. Part of its poverty reduction strategy and plan to invest in human capital development will focus on improving quality and relevant education and expanding the coverage of social services, particularly for people living in the outer islands.²⁴²³ AusAID is also assisting the country to enhance policy initiatives surrounding the education sector for the period between 1998 and 2005.²⁴²⁴ The objective of the education program is to develop curriculum materials, advance teacher training, and facilitate access to basic education.²⁴²⁵

The Quality of Life Improvement policy of the government includes a commitment to financially support initiatives that enhance the social, physical, and economic environment for children, such as health and sports programs. As a signatory to the Convention of the Rights of the Child, the government has made progress in reaching the Convention's standards by amending the Film Education Act to protect children from pornography and violent films, funding construction of Early Care and Childhood Education centers, providing teacher materials for centers, instituting vocational training centers, and expanding the education system.²⁴²⁶

The Ministry of Education, Training and Technology is responsible for implementing the National Development Strategies for 2000–2003 to improve the quality of education at each level. One of the primary goals is to increase access to education through the provision of universal education at little or no direct cost to parents throughout Kiribati, including the outer islands of Teraina and Tabuaeran. Increasing the availability of pre-schools, training teachers to adapt to changes in the new curriculum and renovating classrooms are all a part of the national policy to strengthen its education system.²⁴²⁷ UNICEF is also active in Kiribati implementing child and youth advocacy projects.²⁴²⁸

²⁴²⁰ United Nations, *United Nations Common Country Assessment: Kiribati*, Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, 2002 [cited July 2, 2003], Annex 3, 1; available from <http://www.undp.org/fj/documents/Kiribati%20CCA%20small.pdf>.

²⁴²¹ United Nations, *Kiribati: United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2003-2007)*, Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, [online] 2002 [cited July 2, 2003], 3; available from <http://www.undp.org/fj/documents/UNDAF%20KIRIBATI%2024%20JUNE.doc>.

²⁴²² *Ibid.*, 4.

²⁴²³ ADB, *Country Strategy and Program Update (2003-2005): Kiribati*, July 2002, 6; available from http://www.adb.org/Documents/CSPs/KIR/2002/CSP_KIR_2002.pdf.

²⁴²⁴ AusAID, *Country Brief: Kiribati*, [online] October 25, 2002 [cited July 2, 2003]; available from <http://www.ausaid.gov.au/country/country.cfm?CountryId=20>.

²⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁴²⁶ Statement by His Excellency Teburoro Tito, President of the Republic of Kiribati, at the United Nations Special Session on Children, May 10, 2002; available from <http://www.un.org/ga/children/kiribatiE.htm>.

²⁴²⁷ *Kiribati Education Policy: National Development Strategies 2002-2003*, [online] [cited June 18, 2003]; available from http://www.janeresture.com/kiribati_edupolicy/index.htm

²⁴²⁸ UNICEF, *UNICEF's Programme of Assistance to Pacific Island Countries*, [online] [cited July 3, 2003]; available from http://www.undp.org/fj/un/UNICEF/UNICEF_PIC.htm.

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 in Kiribati are not available. However, an estimated 2,000 school-aged children are reported to be out of school for unknown reasons.²⁴²⁹ Some children who are not in school are reported to work in the informal sector, either in small-scale enterprises or in their homes.²⁴³⁰

Education is free and compulsory for children ages 6 to 14 years.²⁴³¹ Basic education includes primary school for grades one through six, and Junior Secondary School for three additional grade levels.²⁴³² In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 84.4 percent, and net primary enrollment rate was 70.7 percent.²⁴³³ Attendance rates are not available for Kiribati. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.²⁴³⁴ School quality and access to primary education is still a challenge, particularly in the outer islands.²⁴³⁵

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

Part IX, Section 84 of the Employment Ordinance, Employment of Children and Other Young Persons, sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years,²⁴³⁶ and children under 16 years are prohibited from industrial employment or jobs aboard ships.²⁴³⁷ The Constitution prohibits forced labor.²⁴³⁸ The Penal Code criminalizes the procurement of minors under 15 years of age for the purpose of sexual relations and establishes a penalty of two years imprisonment for such offenses.²⁴³⁹ The Penal Code also bans parents or guardians from prostituting children under 15 years old.²⁴⁴⁰ Child labor laws are enforced by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Employment.²⁴⁴¹

The Government of Kiribati has not ratified ILO Convention 138 or ILO Convention 182.²⁴⁴²

²⁴²⁹ United Nations, *United Nations Common Country Assessment: Kiribati*, 29.

²⁴³⁰ 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 United Nations Development Programme, *Pacific Human Development Report 1999*, Suva, Fiji Islands, June 1999, 41-42, 80, [hard copy on-file]; available from www.undp.org/fj/Pacific_Human_Dev_Report_1999.htm.

²⁴³¹ United Nations, *United Nations Common Country Assessment: Kiribati*, 28. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2002: Kiribati*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2003, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18248.htm>.

²⁴³² *Kiribati Education Policy*.

²⁴³³ UNESCO, *Education for All: Year 2000 Assessment* [CD-ROM], Paris, 2000.

²⁴³⁴ For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

²⁴³⁵ ADB, *Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific: Relevance and Progress*, 2003 [cited July 3, 2003]; available from http://www.adb.org/documents/books/MDG_Pacific/mdg.pdf.

²⁴³⁶ ILO, *Review of Annual Reports 2002*, 384, 86.

²⁴³⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Kiribati*, Section 6d.

²⁴³⁸ *Constitution of Kiribati*, Chapter II, Section 6 (2); available from http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/paclawmat/Kiribati_legislation/Kiribati_Constitution.html.

²⁴³⁹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Summary Record of the 751st Meeting*, CRC/C/SR.751. (Summary Record), 2002, Articles 141, 43.

²⁴⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Kiribati*, Section 6d.

²⁴⁴² ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited July 2, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.