

# Kiribati

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 in Kiribati are not available.<sup>2302</sup> However, an estimated 2,000 school-aged children are reported to be out of school for reasons that are undocumented.<sup>2303</sup> 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>2304</sup>

Education is free and compulsory for children ages 6 to 14 years.<sup>2305</sup> Basic education includes primary school for grades one through six, and Junior Secondary School for three additional grade levels.<sup>2306</sup> In 1999, the gross primary enrollment rate was 128 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate is unavailable.<sup>2307</sup> Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. Recent primary school attendance statistics are not available for Kiribati. School quality and access to primary education is still a challenge, particularly in the outer islands.<sup>2308</sup>

## 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,<sup>2309</sup> and children under 16 years are prohibited from industrial employment or jobs aboard ships.<sup>2310</sup> The Constitution prohibits forced labor.<sup>2311</sup> The Penal Code

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<sup>2302</sup> LABORSTAT, *Kiribati: 1A- Total and economically active population, by age group (Thousands)* [Database], Geneva, 06/10/04; available from <http://laborsta.ilo.org>.

<sup>2303</sup> UN, *United Nations Common Country Assessment: Kiribati*, Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, 2002 [cited May 20, 2004], 29; available from <http://www.undp.org.fj/documents/Kiribati%20CCA%20small.pdf>.

<sup>2304</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 UNDP, *Pacific Human Development Report 1999*, Suva, Fiji Islands, June 1999, 42-43,80; available from [www.undp.org.fj/Pacific\\_Human\\_Dev\\_Report\\_1999.htm](http://www.undp.org.fj/Pacific_Human_Dev_Report_1999.htm).

<sup>2305</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Kiribati*, Washington, D.C., February 24, 2004, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27773.htm>.

<sup>2306</sup> *Kiribati Education Policy: National Development Strategies 2002-2003*, [online] [cited May 20, 2004]; available from [http://www.janeresture.com/kiribati\\_edupolicy/index.htm](http://www.janeresture.com/kiribati_edupolicy/index.htm).

<sup>2307</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Selected Statistics for Kiribati* [Global Education Database], October 13, 2004; available from <http://quesdb.cdie.org/ged/index.html>.

<sup>2308</sup> ADB, *Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific: Relevance and Progress*, 2003 [cited May 20, 2004]; available from [http://www.adb.org/documents/books/MDG\\_Pacific/mdg.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/MDG_Pacific/mdg.pdf).

<sup>2309</sup> ILO, *Compilation of annual reports by the International Labor Office*, ILO, [Annual Review Database] 2003 [cited May 20, 2004]; available from [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/declaris/Show\\_ARHTML](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/declaris/Show_ARHTML).

<sup>2310</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Kiribati*, Section 6d.

<sup>2311</sup> *The Constitution of Kiribati*, Chapter II, Section 6 (2); available from [http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/paclawmat/Kiribati\\_legislation/Kiribati\\_Constitution.html](http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/paclawmat/Kiribati_legislation/Kiribati_Constitution.html).

criminalizes the procurement of minors under 15 years of age for the purpose of sexual relations and establishes a penalty of 2 years imprisonment for such offenses.<sup>2312</sup> The Penal Code also bans parents or guardians from prostituting children under 15 years old.<sup>2313</sup> Child labor laws are enforced by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Employment.<sup>2314</sup>

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

The Government of Kiribati continues to work within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework to support national priorities and initiatives that include promoting the healthy growth and development of Kiribati’s children.<sup>2315</sup>

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 focuses on improving quality and relevant education and expanding the coverage of social services, particularly for people living in the outer islands.<sup>2316</sup> AusAID and NZAID are also assisting the country to enhance policy and programs initiatives in the education sector. Bilateral assistance for education programs includes developing curriculum materials, advancing teacher training, and facilitating access to basic education.<sup>2317</sup>

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments	
Ratified Convention 138	
Ratified Convention 182	
ILO-IPEC Member	
National Plan for Children	
National Child Labor Action Plan	
Sector Action Plan	

<sup>2312</sup> *Kiribati Penal Code*, (1977), Articles 141-143; available from [http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/paclawmat/Kiribati\\_legislation/Consolidation\\_1977/Kiribati\\_Penal\\_Code.html](http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/paclawmat/Kiribati_legislation/Consolidation_1977/Kiribati_Penal_Code.html),

<sup>2313</sup> *Kiribati Penal Code*.

<sup>2314</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Kiribati*, Section 6d.

<sup>2315</sup> UN, *Kiribati: United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2003-2007)*, Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, [online] 2002 [cited May 20, 2004]; available from <http://www.undp.org/fj/documents/UNDAF%20KIRIBATI%2024%20JUNE.doc>.

<sup>2316</sup> ADB, *Country Strategy and Program Update (2003-2005): Kiribati*, July 2002 [cited May 20, 2004], 6; available from [http://www.adb.org/Documents/CSPs/KIR/2002/CSP\\_KIR\\_2002.pdf](http://www.adb.org/Documents/CSPs/KIR/2002/CSP_KIR_2002.pdf).

<sup>2317</sup> AusAID, *AusAID Pacific Program Profiles 2003-2004- Kiribati*, Australian Government, 2003 [cited May 7, 2004], 22; available from [http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/pac\\_prog\\_prof.pdf](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/pac_prog_prof.pdf), NZAID, *Strategy for the New Zealand Development Cooperation Programme with Kiribati 2002-2007*, [cited May 11, 2004]; available from <http://www.nzaid.govt.nz/programmes/docs/nzaid-kiribati-strategy-0207.pdf>.