



KIRIBATI

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Kiribati made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Kiribati's Child Labor Taskforce held its first meeting and sought assistance from the International Labor Organization to prepare an action plan to address child labor. The government also partnered with non-governmental organizations to train youth in job skills who dropped out of school early. In addition, the Ministry of Employment and Human Resources required businesses to submit employment records for inspection to ensure adherence to labor laws, including those related to child labor. However, existing laws do not identify hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children. The law also does not specify the conditions under which light work can be undertaken. In addition, the government has not adopted a national policy to address the worst forms of child labor.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	14.6% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	95.8%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	29.7%

Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Kiribati are subjected to child labor in street work, including vending.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Services

Street work, including vending.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the continued prevention of child labor in Kiribati.

Legal Framework

Determine by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children.

Ensure that the law specifies the activities and number of hours of work per week that are acceptable for children engaged in light work, and the conditions under which children can engage in light work.

Raise the minimum age for work from 14 to 15 to align with the compulsory education age.

Enforcement

Ensure that labor inspectors are inspecting informal sectors where there is evidence of child labor violations, such as street work.

Institutionalize training on child labor laws for labor inspectors and criminal investigators and allocate funding for this training.

Publish criminal law enforcement information, including the number of criminal inspections conducted, the number of investigators, and data on the number of prosecutions, convictions, and penalties imposed.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Government Policies

Adopt a national policy specifically focused on addressing child labor.











Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor in all sectors to inform policies and programs.

Implement social programs to address all relevant forms of child labor, including street vending.

 **LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR**

Kiribati has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Kiribati's laws do not meet international standards regarding the types of hazardous work prohibited for children because specific types of work have not been identified by national law or regulations.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Section 115 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Section 117 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Sections 244 and 249 of the Penal Code; Sections 118(1)(a, c, d) and 122 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Sections 2, 43, and 44 of the Measures to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act; Section 118(1)(b) of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Sections 136, 141, and 142 of the Penal Code; Sections 118(1)(f), 118(1)(g), and 118(2) of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Section 142 of the Penal Code; Sections 118(1)(h) and 118(1)(i) of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Sections 118(1)(e) of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years		Section 7 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Section 11 of the Education Act

† Country has no standing military

The government has not identified by national law or regulations the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. Also, under Article 116 of the Employment and Industrial Relations Code, the laws do 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. In addition, as the minimum age for work of 14 is lower than the compulsory education age of 15, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Kiribati took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of labor inspections in the informal sector and information about criminal investigations hinders enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Employment and Human Resources (MEHR): Enforces labor laws, including those related to child labor. During the reporting period, MEHR required businesses to submit employment records for inspection to ensure adherence to labor laws, including those related to child labor.

Kiribati Police Services: Enforce criminal laws related to forced child labor, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	No
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2023, Kiribati's 4 labor inspectors conducted 43 worksite inspections, including at wholesalers, restaurants, and state-owned businesses. 0 investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted and 0 prosecutions were initiated or perpetrators convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Kiribati established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

** Mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor was created during the reporting period.*

Child Labor Taskforce:* Chaired by the Ministry of Employment and Human Resources. In 2023, the Taskforce held their first meeting and sought assistance from the ILO to prepare an action plan to address child labor.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>The government has established a policy related to child labor. However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including coverage of all worst forms of child labor.</p> <p><i>‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.</i></p>	<p>Children, Young People, and Families Welfare System Policy (CYPFWS): 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. During the reporting period, the government remained active in strengthening child protection activities and in implementing its CYPFWS policy.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Kiribati funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors and in all states where child labor has been identified, including in street work.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Kiribati.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>SafeNet:<i>†</i> Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports, and Social Affairs-coordinated program that allows government, churches, and NGOs to provide assistance to victims found in exploitative and violent situations. The program remained active during the reporting period.</p> <p>Kiribati Institute of Technology (KIT) Foundation Skills Program:<i>†</i> The Foundational Skills Program supports children who leave school early by providing opportunities to develop marketable skills. During the reporting period, KIT partnered with NGOs like ChildFund Kiribati to allow participation by youth who had dropped out of school early. A total of 55 youths participated in courses at KIT in 2023.</p> <p>Hotlines:<i>†</i> Child Protection Officer, Ministry of Women, Youth, Sports, and Social Affairs, and police-supported 24-hour hotlines are available for children to report violations, request information, or obtain access to services. The hotlines remained active during the reporting period.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports