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KIRIBATI LABOUR MARKET MONOGRAPH 2023–2024 REPORT

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Kiribati National Statistics Office (KNSO) and The Pacific Community (SPC)

Pacific Community
Communauté du Pacifique

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ABBREVIATIONS

AUD	Australian dollar, currency used in Kiribati
CPI	Consumer Price Index
EPR	Employment-to-Population Ratio
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDS	General Directorate of Statistics
HH	household
HIES	Household Income Expenditure Survey
ICLS	International Conference of Labour Statisticians
ICSE-93	Revision of the International Classification of Status in Employment 1993
ICSE-18	New International Classification of Status in Employment 2018
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISCO-08	International Standard Classification of Occupations 2008
ISIC Rev.4	International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities Revision 4
KDP	Kiribati Development Plan
KILM	Key Indicators of Labour Market
LFPR	Labour Force Participation Rate
LU	Labour Underutilization
NEET	Youth not in employment, education, or training
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPC/SDD	Secretariat for the Pacific Community, Statistics for Development Division
WAP	Working-age Population

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FOREWORD

This report on the evolving dynamics of Kiribati's workforce based on the Kiribati 2023–2024 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) is a vital contribution to our understanding of the current labour market. The labour force is part of a country's human resources that contributes to the production of goods and provision of services in a country.

As we navigate the challenges of our economic development and climate change, it's crucial to understand the skills, and needs of our citizens through the quality of their work and the regularity of their job. This report provides a roadmap for building a more resilient and prosperous future for the people of Kiribati.

The findings will enhance monitoring and evaluation of the Kiribati Development Plan (KDP), Ministerial Strategic Plans, Budget briefs and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with respect to economic growth and decent work. The key findings presented in this report provide compelling evidence that must inform our policy decisions. I encourage all stakeholders – policymakers, employers, workers, educators, and community leaders – to carefully review the findings outlined in this report and take proactive steps to address the challenges and opportunities identified.

The significance of labour market statistics and indicators is substantial, as their availability improves planning processes in various aspects including employment creation, skills gap identification, and training programs, as well as in determining the supply and demand of labour. The labour market statistics herein are derived based on adopting at the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) that provided new guidelines for measuring and compiling work, employment and labour underutilization statistics.

This is not merely an academic exercise; it is a Call to Action. By embracing the insights presented here, we can create a more equitable and sustainable future for Kiribati. Let us work together to build a workforce that is prepared for the challenges and rewards of the 21st century.

I acknowledge the valuable contributions, technical advice and technical training provided by the staff of the International Labour Organization (ILO), including Mr. Tite Habiyakare, Dr Christian Viegelahn and Mr Quentin Mathys. I would also like to thank Ms Yamei Du, ILO consultant, for her assistance with analysis and writing this report. Moreover, I would like to thank the Director of the ILO's Office for Pacific Island Countries, Mr. Martin Wandera, for providing funding to support the preparation of this report, and ILO's general support to Kiribati National Statistics Office. I also would like to acknowledge the World Bank for funding provided by the Pacstat-K project and to the Pacific Community (SPC), namely Mr. Bertrand Buffière and Mr Winston Fainga'anuku, for the technical support with data collection, cleaning and processing. Last but not the least I am grateful to our HIES team for managing this data collection which allows such valuable information to be available at a high level quality on time.

Aritita Tekaieti
Republican Statistician

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2019 the ILO and Secretariat for the Pacific Community Statistics for Development Division (SPC/SDD) developed a standard labour force module for inclusion in all HIES implemented in the Pacific island countries. The module was approved by the Pacific Statistics Methods Board (PSMB) in May 2019. Kiribati was among the first countries to implement the labour force module, which was in line with the latest international standards on labour force statistics (ILO, 2013) and provided core data on the labour force.

Kiribati has conducted three rounds of Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) in 2006, 2019, and 2023. While the 2006 survey also gathered information on labour market, the 2019 HIES was the first to apply the standardized labour force module. The latest HIES continued to build on this approach, incorporating the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (19th ICLS) to further enhance labour market insights. The HIES 2023–2024 was implemented during a 12-month period from July 2023 to June 2024, covering a representative sample of 2388 households.

1.1. Summary of key labour market indicators

Table 1 presents key figures extrapolated from the Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 1. *Key indicators by sex, Kiribati, 2023*

	Male	Female	Total
Working-age population, aged 15+ years	**37,245**	**40,552**	**77,797**
Labour force	22,110	18,684	40,794
Employment	21,556	17,974	39,530
Unemployment	555	710	1,265
Outside labour force	15,135	21,868	37,003
Of which: Subsistence foodstuff producers	1,390	83	1,473
Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total em-ployment (SDG indicator 9.2.2, %)	6.2	21.8	13.3
Labour force participation rate (%)	59.4	46.1	52.4
Unemployment rate (%)	2.5	3.8	3.1
By age			
15–24	6.2 *	12.1 *	8.4
25+	1.8	2.7	2.2
By disability status			
Without disability	2.5	3.9	3.1
With disability	3.1	0.7	2.1
Composite rate of labour underutilization (%)	40.7	44.6	42.6
Youth not in employment education, or training (NEET) (%)	35.7	39.7	37.7
Informal employment rate (%)	61.6	57.9	59.9
Average monthly wage (AUD)	529	552	538

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. ** Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

1.2. Working-age population and Labour force

The HIES 2023–2024 estimates that the total population amounted to 120,757 persons with 59,314 men and 61,443 women in the country. Approximately two-third (64.4%) of the population were of working age (15 years and above), totalling 77,797 persons. There were slightly more women (40,552 persons) compared to men 37,245 persons) of working-age. Young persons aged 15–24 years and elderly persons aged 65 years and above accounted respectively for 26.2% and 5.7per cent of the total working-age population.

The labour force comprised 40,794 persons, including 18,684 women and 22,110 men that were either employed or unemployed. Overall, the labour force participation rate was 52.4%, with a notable disparity between women and men. Women had a LFPR of 46.1%, lagged behind men's rate of 59.4% by 13.3%age points.

1.3. Employment and wages

Employment in 2023 amounted to 39,530 persons, comprising of 21,556 men and 17,974 women. Across regions, South Tarawa employed the largest concentration of workers (21,313 persons), followed by Northern islands with 6,844, and Southern islands with 5,230.

By sector of economic activities, around two-thirds (63.7%) of total employment were based in the service sector, whereas agriculture and industry accounted for 20.8% and 15.5%, respectively. Men were more likely to be hired in agriculture than women (31.7% compared to 7.7%, respectively), whereas women's employment in industry and services was relatively higher than men. Approximately 22.1% of women worked in industry, compared to 10% of men, while 70.2% of women were employed in services sector, compared to 58.2% of men.

The majority (54.2%) of the employment was classified as wage employment, while 44.6% was self-employment as either an own-account worker or a contributing family worker. Women compared to men were more likely to be self-employed and less likely to be in wage employment, suggesting gender imbalances that limited women's access to more secure and stable forms of employment as wage earners.

Informal employment accounted for 59.9% of all employment. The informal employment rate was higher for working men (61.6%) compared to working women (57.9%). Informal employment was considerably lower in the service sector (43.1%), compared to 84.3% for industry and 93.1% for agriculture.

Over one-third (37.1%) of workers were employed in the informal sector across the country. Women were more likely than men to work in the informal sector (40.6% versus 34.3%, respectively). Young people aged 15–24 years also had a higher rate of employment in the informal sector compared to adults aged 25 and older (42.4% versus 36.3%, respectively).

In 2023, the average wage of salaried employees in Kiribati was AUD 538 per month, with a median wage of AUD 430. Men earned an average monthly wage of AUD 529, which was lower than women's average wage of AUD 552. However, the median wage of women (AUD 422) was 3.2% lower than that of men (AUD 436). Among self-employed workers, the average monthly income was AUD 641, with women earning on average approximately 19.2% less than men (AUD 583 compared to AUD 722). The median monthly income for self-employed workers was AUD 332, with

women's median income (AUD 304) being 24.0% lower than men's (AUD 400).

1.4. Labour underutilization

Labour underutilization – which encompasses persons in time-related underemployment, unemployment and the potential labour force – was estimated at 22,311 in 2023. The composite labour underutilization rate[1] was 42.6% overall, albeit higher for women (44.6%) than for men (40.7%). Two of the five regions recorded a composite labour underutilization rate that exceeded the national average, namely Southern islands (55.9%) and Northern islands (54.7%).

The HIES revealed that unemployment totalled 1,265 persons, marking a general unemployment rate of 3.1%. The unemployment rate for women (3.8%) was considerably higher than that for men (2.5%).

For young people aged 15–24 years, the unemployment rate was significantly higher at 8.4% compared to unemployment of 2.2% among adults aged 25 and above. Furthermore, there was a sizeable gender gap in the youth unemployment, with young women facing an unemployment rate of 12.1% – 5.9%age points higher than that of their male counterparts (6.2%). This highlights the disproportionate challenges young women encountered in accessing employment in the labour market.

Subsistence production work and household care

In Kiribati, 2,607 individuals were primarily engaged in subsistence production work, while 23,703 were engaged in household or family care as their main activities. When combining the subsistence work and unpaid household care, people aged 15 to 24 represented the largest group, with 36.6% participating in these activities.

Women, across all age groups, were more likely than men to be involved in subsistence work and unpaid household care. This disparity was especially evident among women outside the labour force, with 67.1% involved in these activities – 13.3%age points higher than men, at 53.8%. This high level of unpaid work highlights the barriers to women's participation in the formal labour market, limiting their access to paid employment opportunities.

1 *Composite labour underutilization = [(Time-related underemployment + Unemployment + Potential labour force) / (Labour force + Potential labour force)] *100*

Table 2. *Selected indicators of the labour force by sex, Kiribati, 2023*

	Male	Female	Total
Working-age population, aged 15+ years	**37,245**	**40,552**	**77,797**
Labour force	22,110	18,684	40,794
By education (% distribution)			
Less than primary or none	0.1 *	0.4 *	0.2 *
Completed primary	84.1	78.2	81.4
Completed secondary	13.3	18.5	15.7
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	2.1	2.7	2.4
Level not stated	0.3 *	0.2 *	0.2 *
Labour force participation rate (%)	59.4	46.1	52.4
Employment	21,556	17,974	39,530
By economic activity (% distribution)			
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	31.7	7.7	20.8
Industry	10.0	22.1	15.5
Services	58.2	70.2	63.7
By status in employment (% distribution)			
Employees	59.3	48.2	54.2
Employers	1.1 *	1.2 *	1.2 *
Own-account workers	34.9	44.9	39.4
Contributing family workers	4.7	5.7	5.2
Share of informal employment (%)	61.6	57.9	59.9
Labour underutilization	11,161	11,150	22,311
Time-related underemployment	5,295	4,132	9,427
Unemployment	555	710	1,265
Potential labour force	5,312	6,308	11,620
Labour underutilization rate (%)	40.7	44.6	42.6
Time-related underemployment rate	24.6	23.0	23.8
Unemployment rate	2.5	3.8	3.1
Potential labour force rate	19.4	25.2	22.2
Subsistence production as main work	2,217	390	2,607

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. ** Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

Table 3. *Selected indicators of the labour force by region, Kiribati, 2023*

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
Working-age population, aged 15+ years	**41,926**	**13,262**	**5,534**	**10,310**	**6,765**	**77,797**
Labour force	22,078	7,000	3,079	5,379	3,258	40,794
By education (% distribution)						
Less than primary or none	0.1 *	0.3 *	0.3 *	0.3 *	0.6 *	0.2 *
Completed primary	76.6	87.9	85.7	89.1	83.4	81.4
Completed secondary	19.1	11.5	13.3	9.8	13.6	15.7
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	3.9	0.2	0.6	0.5	1.8	2.4
Level not stated	0.2 *	0.1 *	0.2 *	0.2 *	0.6 *	0.2 *
Labour force participation rate (%)	52.7	52.8	55.6	52.2	48.2	52.4
Employment	21,313	6,844	2,984	5,230	3,159	39,530
By economic activity (% distribution)						
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	8.5	28.8	44.2	44.7	25.3	20.8
Industry	15.2	25.1	9.5	12.6	7.7	15.5
Services	76.3	46.2	46.3	42.7	67.1	63.7
By status in employment (% distribution)						
Employees	69.0	32.5	37.3	30.2	57.0	54.2
Employers	1.8 *	0.7 *	0.2 *	0.1 *	0.7 *	1.2
Own-account workers	24.6	56.1	59.8	65.4	40.7	39.4
Contributing family workers	4.5	10.7	2.6 *	4.4	1.6 *	5.2
Share of informal employment (%)	52.3	74.9	66.1	72.5	52.0	59.9
Labour underutilization	11,070	5,153	1,183	3,883	1,022	22,311
Time-related underemployment	3,585	2,569	742	2,162	369	9,427
Unemployment	766	156	95	149	99	1,265
Potential labour force	6,719	2,429	346	1,572	553	11,620
Labour underutilization rate (%)	38.4	54.7	34.5	55.9	26.8	42.6
Time-related underemployment rate	16.8	37.5	24.9	41.3	11.7	23.8
Unemployment rate	3.5	2.2	3.1	2.8	3.1	3.1
Potential labour force rate	23.3	25.8	10.1	22.6	14.5	22.2
Subsistence production as main work	232	967	201	1,099	109	2,607

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. ** Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

2. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Chapter 2 presents the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the Kiribati population. It includes statistics of the total population in the country, population by different age groups, education attainment, and disability incidence by sex and by region.

2.1. Demographic characteristics of the population

In 2023, Kiribati reported a total household resident population of 120,757, amongst whom, 59,314 (49.1%) were men and 61,443 (50.9%) were women. Approximately 6,000 were identified with some disability according to the survey, accounting for 5.8% of the population aged 5 years and above. Most of (59.0%) the population resided in urban areas, totaling 71,218 persons, whereas 41.0% (or 49,539 persons) lived in rural areas.

Looking at the educational attainment, 70.9% of the population completed the primary education, 8.6% completed the secondary schooling, and 1% reached tertiary education or higher. Overall, women had higher education attainment than men at all levels.

In regard to regions, 52.7% of the population resided in South Tarawa, followed by 17.6% in Northern islands and 13.4% in Southern islands. The population in South Tarawa also had the highest educational attainment of secondary and tertiary education, at 11.1% and 1.5%, respectively.

Figure 1 indicates the size distribution of the age groups by male and female. The population pyramid for Kiribati reveals a large base and a narrow top, indicating that the country has a young population. This demographic structure reflects a relatively low proportion of the working-age population at present but also suggests to a rapidly growing labour force in the future.

Table 4. *Population by sex, age, education and disability status, Kiribati, 2023*

	Male	Female	Total
Total population	**59,314**	**61,443**	**120,757**
By 5-year age group			
0–4	8,626	7,730	16,356
5–9	6,965	6,672	13,637
10–14	6,478	6,490	12,967
15–19	5,442	4,714	10,156
20–24	5,015	5,226	10,240
25–29	4,967	5,743	10,710
30–34	4,662	5,046	9,708
35–39	4,305	4,276	8,581
40–44	3,233	3,254	6,487
45–49	2,349	2,438	4,788
50–54	2,030	2,465	4,495
55–59	2,063	2,650	4,713
60–64	1,473	1,997	3,470
65+	1,706	2,743	4,449
By education attainment			
Less than primary or none	4,364	4,214	8,577
Completed primary	42,065	43,597	85,662
Completed secondary	4,421	5,994	10,415
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	546	610	1,156
Level not stated	7,918	7,028	14,947
By geographic location			
Urban	34,476	36,742	71,218
Rural	24,838	24,701	49,539
By disability status aged 5+ years			
With disability	3,220	2,870	6,091
No disability	47,467	50,843	98,311

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 5. *Population by region, age and education, Kiribati, 2023*

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
Total population	**63,641**	**21,297**	**8,567**	**16,210**	**11,042**	**120,757**
By 5-year age group						
0–4	8,848	2,791	1,139	2,137	1,441	16,356
5–9	6,872	2,538	962	1,844	1,421	13,637
10–14	5,995	2,706	932	1,919	1,416	12,967
15–19	6,099	1,494	523	1,088	952	10,156
20–24	6,144	1,852	655	995	594	10,240
25–29	6,015	1,774	661	1,340	920	10,710
30–34	5,000	1,815	694	1,313	885	9,708
35–39	4,191	1,530	833	1,266	760	8,581
40–44	3,513	978	515	792	689	6,487
45–49	2,549	690	330	734	485	4,788
50–54	2,107	932	412	655	389	4,495
55–59	2,310	800	308	840	455	4,713
60–64	1,810	669	179	537	275	3,470
65+	2,187	728	424	750	360	4,449
By education attainment						
Less than primary or none	4,288	1,742	580	1,134	833	8,577
Completed primary	42,994	15,754	6,298	12,355	8,261	85,662
Completed secondary	7,089	1,408	556	779	584	10,415
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	979	54 *	36 *	28 *	59 *	1,156
Level not stated	8,291	2,339	1,097	1,914	1,306	14,947

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. ** Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

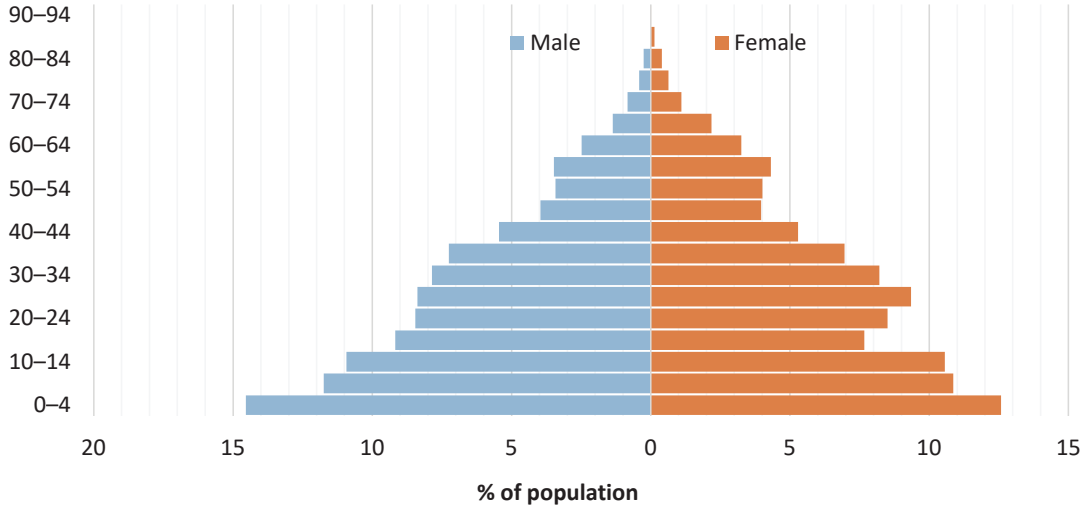

Figure 1. *Population pyramid by age, Kiribati, 2023 (% distribution)*

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

3. WORKING-AGE POPULATION, LABOUR FORCE AND LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATE

Chapter 3 presents statistics of the working-age population, labour force, and population outside of the labour force by sex and by region. This chapter also reveals information about the labour force by age group and by educational attainment.

The working-age population refers to persons who are aged 15 years and above. It comprises all persons in the labour force and those who are outside of the labour force. Persons in the labour force are those who are either in employment (with paid work or as self-employed) or unemployed.[2]

3.1. Labour force status

The HIES 2023–2024 estimates that the working-age population (15 years and older) in Kiribati comprised 77,797 individuals, accounting for 64.4% of the total population. Among them, 39,530 women and men were in employment, resulting in an employment-to-population ratio of 50.8%. Additionally, 1,265 persons were unemployed, while 37,003 were outside of the labour force.

Women at the working-age were less likely to be in employment and more likely to be outside of the labour force compared to men. On average, 44.3% of working-age women were employed, while 53.6% were outside the labour force. In contrast, 57.9% of working-age men were employed, and 40.6% were outside the labour force.

By geographic locality, urban areas had a working-age population of 46,670 individuals, with 50.6% employed and 49.4% either unemployed or outside the labour force. In rural areas, the working-age population totalled 31,127 persons, with 51.2% employed, while 48.8% either unemployed or out of the labour force.

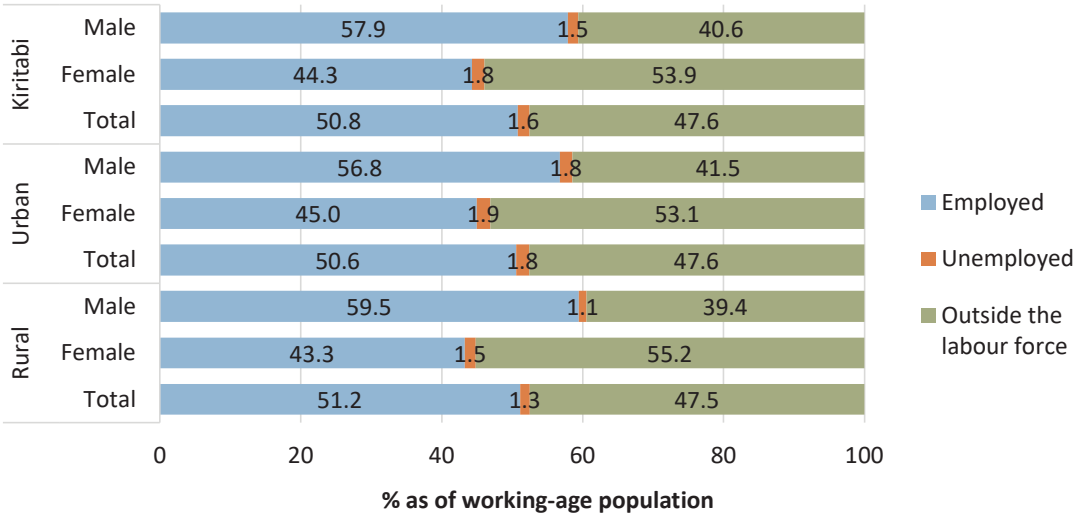

Figure 2. *Working-age population in employment, unemployment or outside the labour force by sex and geographic location, Kiribati, 2023 (% distribution)*

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

2 *For the definition of employment and unemployment used in this report, please see Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 for details.*

Table 6. *Working-age population by labour force status, sex and geographic location, Kiribati, 2023*

		Labour force status			
		Employed	Unemployed	Outside the labour force	Total
Kiribati	Male	21,556	555	15,135	37,245
	Female	17,974	710	21,868	40,552
	Total	39,530	1,265	37,003	77,797
Urban	Male	12,543	387	9,156	22,086
	Female	11,062	465	13,057	24,584
	Total	23,605	852	22,214	46,670
Rural	Male	9,013	167	5,979	15,159
	Female	6,912	246	8,810	15,968
	Total	15,925	413	14,789	31,127

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

3.2. Labour force participation rate

According to the HIES estimates, Kiribati's labour force consisted of 40,794 individuals, including 22,110 men and 18,694 women who were either employed or unemployed. The overall labour force participation rate (LFPR) was 52.4%, a significant increase from the previous HIES estimate of 35.8% (SPC/SDD, 2022). The LFPR also showed a gender imbalance, with men at 59.4% and women at 46.1%. Among those who cited reasons for economic inactivity, more than half were pointed to household care responsibility, particularly among working-age women (see details in Chapter 9).

Table 7. *Working-age population and labour force by sex, Kiribati, 2023*

	Male	Female	Total
Working-age population, aged 15+ years	**37,245**	**40,552**	**77,797**
Labour force	22,110	18,684	40,794
By age group			
15–24	3,686	2,284	5,969
25–64	17,917	15,656	33,573
65+	507	745	1,252
By education attainment			
Less than primary or none	24 *	65 *	90 *
Completed primary	18,605	14,618	33,224
Completed secondary	2,947	3,463	6,409
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	475	506	981
Level not stated	59 *	31 *	90 *
Labour force participation rate (%)	59.4	46.1	52.4
By age group			
15–24	35.2	23.0	29.3
25–64	71.4	56.2	63.4
65+	29.7	27.1	28.1
By education attainment			
Less than primary or none	9.4 *	21.0 *	15.7 *
Completed primary	58.2	43.5	50.7
Completed secondary	66.7	57.8	61.5
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	87.0	83.0	84.9
Level not stated	89.5 *	48.7 *	69.3 *

*Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

The LFPR in Kiribati presented an inverse-U shape (***Figure 3***), with the labour force concentrated among individuals between ages 25 and 45 years. Men had higher LFPR than women across all age groups.

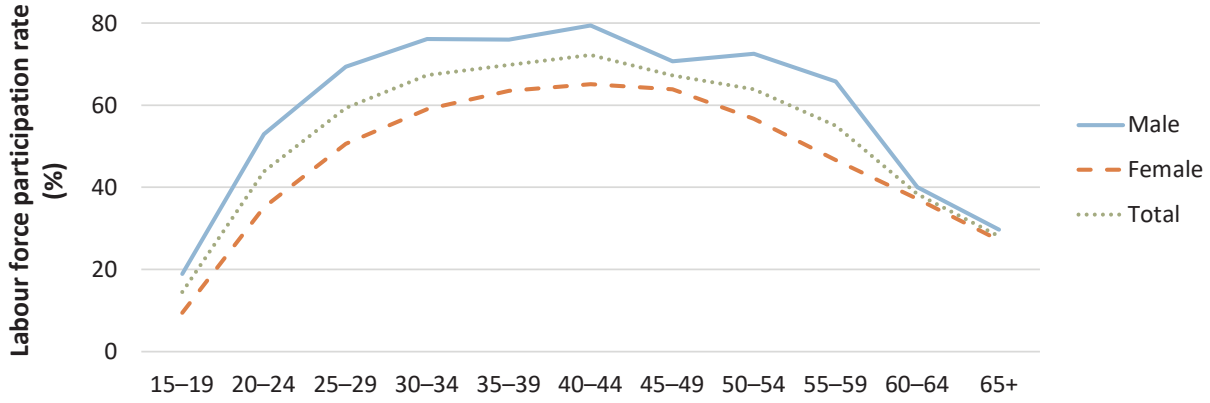

Figure 3. *Labour force participation rate by sex and five-year age group, Kiribati, 2023 (%)*

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

South Tarawa, the region that accounted for more than half of the country's total working-age population, had an LFPR of 52.7%, while the rest of the country had a rate of 52.2%.

Table 8. *Working-age population and labour force by region, Kiribati, 2023*

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
Working-age population, aged 15+ years	**41,926**	**13,262**	**5,534**	**10,310**	**6,765**	**77,797**
Labour force	22,078	7,000	3,079	5,379	3,258	40,794
By age group						
15–24	3,300	1,106	509	665	389	5,969
25–64	18,039	5,725	2,488	4,515	2,807	33,573
65+	739	169	81	199	63	1,252
By education attainment						
Less than primary or none	23 *	22 *	8 *	17 *	19 *	90 *
Completed primary	16,923	6,150	2,639	4,795	2,717	33,224
Completed secondary	4,224	805	408	528	444	6,409
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	863	12 *	18 *	28 *	59 *	981
Level not stated	46 *	9 *	6 *	10 *	20 *	90 *
Labour force participation rate (%)	52.7	52.8	55.6	52.2	48.2	52.4
By age group						
15–24	27.0	33.0	43.2	31.9	25.2	29.3
25–64	65.6	62.3	63.3	60.4	57.8	63.4
65+	33.8	23.3	19.2	26.6	17.4	28.1
By education attainment						
Less than primary or none	11.5 *	15.5 *	9.9 *	19.0 *	35.2 *	15.7 *
Completed primary	50.4	52.8	54.5	51.0	45.0	50.7
Completed secondary	59.6	57.2	73.5	67.8	76.0	61.5
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	88.2	23.1 *	49.6 *	100 *	100 *	84.9
Level not stated	76.4 *	100 *	27.9 *	75.2 *	73.9 *	69.3 *

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

About 60% of Kiribati's labour force resided in urban areas, totaling 24,457 individuals. The LFPR were nearly identical between urban (52.4%) and rural areas (52.5%). However, gender gaps emerged when disaggregating labour force by locality: men had a higher LFPR in rural areas while women had a higher LFPR in urban areas.

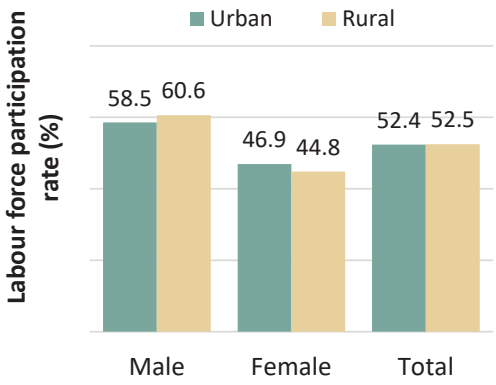

Figure 4. *Labour force participation rate by sex and geographic location, Kiribati, 2023 (%)*

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

3.3. Labour force by educational attainment

In regard to the educational attainment of the labour force, the vast majority of the labour force completed their primary education (81.4%), and 15.7% completed secondary study. Only 2.4% of the labour force had reached the first stage of tertiary education or had completed tertiary education.

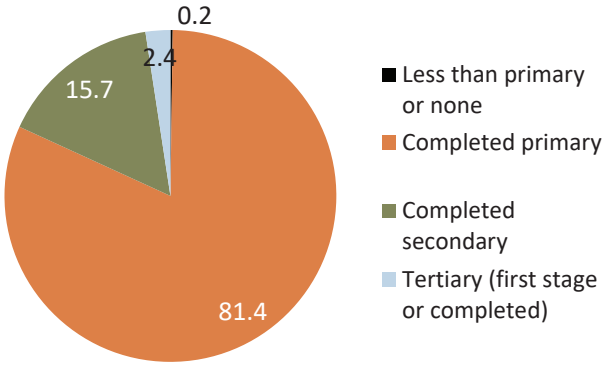

Figure 5. *Distribution of labour force by educational attainment, Kiribati, 2023 (%)*

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

*Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

The share of women in the labour force with primary education was 78.2%, lower than that of men, at 84.4%. In contrast, women had higher shares than men in completing secondary and in reaching tertiary education, at 18.5 and 2.7%, respectively, compared to 13.3 and 2.1% for men.

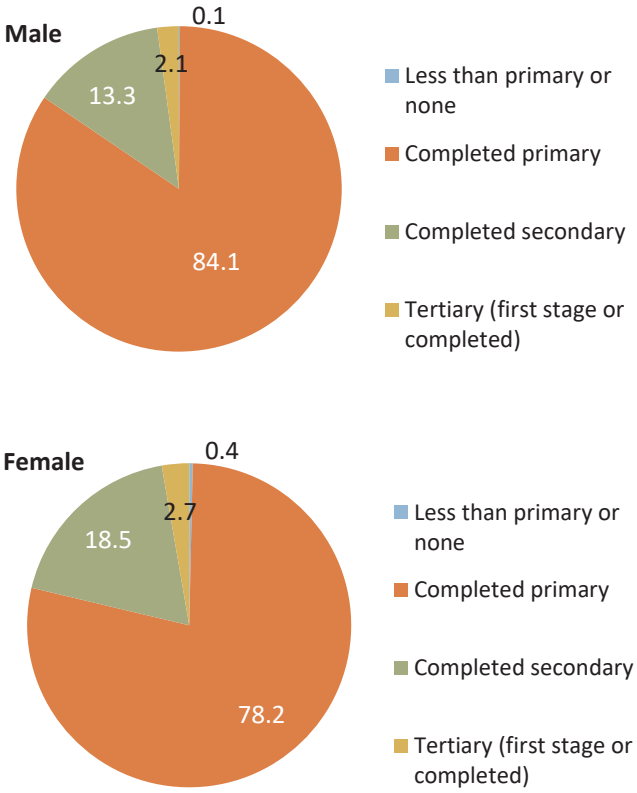

Figure 6. *Labour force by sex and educational attainment, Kiribati, 2023 (%)*

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

*Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

The LFPR varied among persons with different educational attainment. Persons who reached tertiary schooling had the highest LFPR at 84.9%. On the other hand, persons with secondary and primary schooling had a much lower LFPR, at 61.5 and 50.7%, respectively.

Educational qualifications of the labour force also differed widely by region. South Tarawa had the highest share of labour force with tertiary education, at 3.9%, while the rest of the country had less than 1% (see ***Table 8*** for

details). Meanwhile, the LFPR for those with tertiary education in South Tarawa was at 88.2%, compared to 66.4% for the rest of the country.

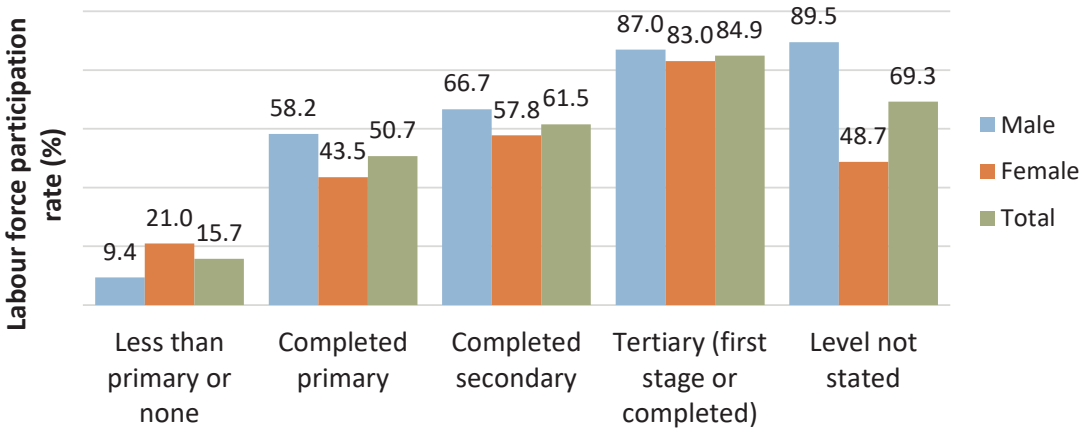

Figure 7. *Labour force participation rate by educational attainment and sex, Kiribati, 2023 (%)*

*Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

3.4. The population outside the labour force

The population outside the labour force is defined as women and men who are neither in employment nor in unemployment, including students, the elderly, and those engaged in unpaid household work or family duties. Shown in ***Table 9***, 37,003 individuals (47.6%) of working-age in Kiribati were outside of the labour force, with more women (21,868 persons) than men (15,135 persons).

By educational attainment, persons with higher education were less likely to be outside of labour force. The share of the working-age population outside of the labour force was the highest among those with less than primary schooling, at 84.3%, and the lowest at among those reached tertiary schooling, at 15.1%.

Table 9. *Working-age population outside the labour force by age group and educational attainment, Kiribati, 2023*

	Number of persons			% of respective working-age population		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Population outside the labour force, aged 15+ years	**15,135**	**21,868**	**37,003**	**40.6**	**53.9**	**47.6**
By age group						
15–24	6,771	7,655	14,427	64.8	77.0	70.7
25–64	7,164	12,214	19,378	28.6	43.8	36.6
65+	1,199	1,998	3,197	70.3	72.9	71.9
By educational attainment						
Less than primary or none	234 *	247	481	90.6 *	79.0	84.3
Completed primary	13,349	18,953	32,302	41.8	56.5	49.3
Completed secondary	1,474	2,531	4,005	33.3	42.2	38.5
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	71 *	104 *	175 *	13.0 *	17.0 *	15.1 *
Level not stated	7 *	33 *	40 *	10.5 *	51.3 *	30.7 *

*Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

4. EMPLOYMENT

Chapter 4 presents the statistics of the employed population by sex and by regions. The employed population is defined as all persons of working-age (15 years and above) who, during a specified period (seven days prior to the survey), were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit. Employment captures persons engaged in jobs in exchange for pay, or in market-oriented activities as self-employed. Persons involved in own-use production of goods, i,e, producing goods only or mainly for household or family consumption, are excluded from employment, as per the latest labour statistics standards from the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ILO, 2013a).

4.1. Employment and its main classifications

The HIES estimates that employment in Kiribati in 2023 totalled 39,530 individuals, including 21,556 men and 17,974 women. The employment-to-population ratio stood at 50.8%, suggesting that half of the population was not directly engaged in market-related activities. Nevertheless, this employment-to-population ratio marks a notable increase from the 32.7% reported in the previous HIES (SPC/SDD, 2022). The rise in the number of employed persons was largely driven by an increase in own-account workers. Men had a higher employment-to-population ratio (57.9%) compared to women (44.3%).

By age group, 83.0% (32,812 persons) of all employment was concentrated among workers aged 25–64 years. Young persons aged 15–24 years and elderly persons aged 65+ years accounted for 13.8% (5,465 persons) and 3.2% (1,252 persons) of total employment, respectively.

Across all five regions, the majority of employed workers were located in South Tarawa, with 21,313 individuals, followed by Northern islands with 6,844, and Southern islands with 5,230.

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Table 10. *Employment by sex and selected characteristics, Kiribati, 2023*

	Male	Female	Total
Employment, aged 15+ years	**21,556**	**17,974**	**39,530**
By age group (% distribution)			
15–24	16.0	11.2	13.8
25–64	81.6	84.7	83.0
65+	2.4	4.1	3.2
By disability status (% distribution)			
With disability	4.0	3.2	3.7
No disability	96.0	96.8	96.3
By economic activity (% distribution)			
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	31.7	7.7	20.8
Industry	10.0	22.1	15.5
Manufacturing	6.2	21.8	13.3
Construction	3.6	0.1 *	2.0
Other industry	0.3 *	0.2 *	0.3 *
Services	58.2	70.2	63.7
Wholesale and retail trade	21.3	31.4	25.9
Hotels and accommodations	1.1	1.3 *	1.2
Restaurants, food and beverage services	2.4	4.0	3.1
Administrative and support services	3.9	0.9 *	2.5
Public administration and defence	13.8	11.9	12.9
Education	2.8	9.1	5.7
Other services	13.0	11.5	12.3

	Male	Female	Total
By status in employment (% distribution)			
Employees	59.3	48.2	54.2
Employers	1.1 *	1.2 *	1.2
Own-account workers	34.9	44.9	39.4
Contributing family workers	4.7	5.7	5.2
By occupation (% distribution)			
Managers	4.4	4.8	4.6
Professionals	6.7	15.6	10.8
Technicians and associate professionals	5.1	4.2	4.7
Clerical support workers	1.7	5.6	3.5
Service and sales workers	19.6	23.0	21.1
Skilled agricultural, forestry & fishery workers	4.9	0.9	3.1
Craft and related trades workers	17.2	29.3	22.7
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	6.0	0.8	3.6
Elementary occupations	34.5	15.6	25.9
(Armed forces occupations)	0	0.1 *	0.1*
Occupation not classified	0	0.1 *	0.0 *
Employment-to-population ratio, aged 15+ years (%)	57.9	44.3	50.8
By age group (EPR)			
15–24	33.1	20.2	26.8
25–64	70.1	54.6	62.0
65+	29.7	27.1	28.1

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

Table 11. *Employment by regions and selected characteristics, Kiribati, 2023*

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
Employment, aged 15+ years	**21,313**	**6,844**	**2,984**	**5,230**	**3,159**	**39,530**
By age group (% distribution)						
15–24	13.9	16.1	15.0	11.6	11.2	13.8
25–64	82.6	81.5	82.3	84.6	86.8	83.0
65+	3.5	2.5 *	2.7 *	3.8 *	2.0 *	3.2

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
By economic activity (% distribution)						
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	8.5	28.8	44.2	44.7	25.3	20.8
Industry	15.2	25.1	9.5	12.6	7.7	15.5
Manufacturing	12.2	22.8	8.2	12.4	6.0	13.3
Construction	2.6	2.1 *	1.2 *	0.1 *	1.5 *	2.0
Other industry	0.4 *	0.1 *	0.0 *	0.2 *	0.1 *	0.3 *
Services	76.3	46.2	46.3	42.7	67.1	63.7
Wholesale and retail trade	31.7	21.0	16.6	14.5	25.0	25.9
Hotels and accommodations	1.0 *	1.2 *	0	0	6.0 *	1.2 *
Restaurants, food and beverage services	4.7	2.0 *	0.9 *	0.9 *	1.1 *	3.1
Administrative and support services	4.4	0.4 *	0	0	0.6 *	2.5
Public administration and defence	13.1	8.7	13.2	13.9	19.1	12.9
Education	5.0	5.9	8.0	6.5	6.2	5.7
Other services	16.3	6.9	7.7	6.7	9.1	12.2
By status of employment (% distribution)						
Employees	69.0	32.5	37.3	30.2	57.0	54.2
Employers	1.8 *	0.7 *	0.2 *	0.1 *	0.7 *	1.2
Own-account workers	24.6	56.1	59.8	65.4	40.7	39.4
Contributing family workers	4.5	10.7	2.6 *	4.4	1.6 *	5.2
By occupation (% distribution)						
Managers	5.1	4.2	4.4 *	3.4 *	3.9 *	4.6
Professionals	11.1	9.4	12.1	11.1	10.0	10.8
Technicians and associate professionals	5.6	2.9	2.9	3.2 *	6.1 *	4.7
Clerical support workers	5.0	1.0 *	1.5 *	1.4 *	3.6 *	3.5
Service and sales workers	27.6	13.0	14.3	10.8	18.9	21.1
Skilled agricultural, forestry & fishery workers	3.6	2.2 *	1.7 *	3.5 *	1.9 *	3.1
Craft and related trades workers	22.5	32.6	13.3	17.4	19.7	22.7
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	4.9	2.4 *	0.7 *	1.8 *	3.2 *	3.6
Elementary occupations	14.3	32.3	49.0	47.4	32.6	25.9
(Armed forces occupations)	0.1 *	0	0	0	0.1 *	0.1 *
Occupation not classified	0.1 *	0	0	0	0	0.0 *
Employment-to-population ratio, aged 15+ years (%)	50.8	51.6	53.9	50.7	46.7	50.8
By age group						
15–24	24.2	32.9	37.9	29.0	22.9	26.8
25–64	64.1	60.7	62.5	59.2	56.4	62.0
65+	33.8	23.3 *	19.2 *	26.6 *	17.4 *	28.1

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

Table 12 highlights the top five occupations in Kiribati, which together accounted for more than one-third (34.7%) of all female and male workers in the country. Men's employment was primarily concentrated in three occupations – crop farm labourers, fishery and aquaculture labourers, and security guards – making up to 35.1% of all male workers. On the other hand, women's employment was predominantly in tobacco preparers and tobacco products makers, shopkeepers, and crop farm labourers, which in total accounted for 26.8% of all female workers.

Table 12. *Top 5 occupations by sex, Kiribati, 2023*

	Male	Female	Total
Total employment, aged 15+ years	**21,556**	**17,974**	**39,530**
The top 5 occupations (% in total employment)			
Crop Farm Labourers	20.7	5.9	13.9
Tobacco Preparers and Tobacco Products Makers	3.0	12.6	7.4
Shopkeepers	2.1	8.4	5.0
Fishery and Aquaculture Labourers	7.3	0.9	4.3
Security Guards	7.2	0.3	4.0

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Note: Occupations in this table correspond to ISCO-08 at the 4-digit level.

4.2. Employment by economic activity

In regard to the distribution of employment by economic activity, around two-thirds (63.7%) of total employment were based in the service sector, whereas agriculture and industry accounted for 20.8% and 15.5%, respectively.

Men were more likely to be employed in agriculture than women, with 31.7% of men employed in the sector compared to 7.7% of women. In contrast, women were more likely to be employed in industry and services. Approximately 22.1% of women worked in industry, compared to 10% of men, while 70.2% of women were employed in services sector, compared to 58.2% of men.

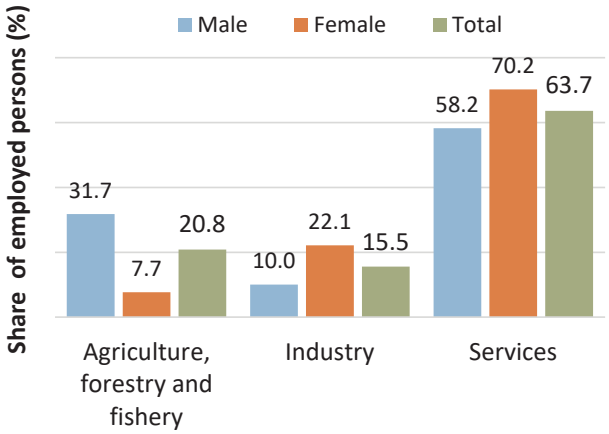

Figure 8. *Employment by economic activity and sex, Kiribati, 2023 (% distribution)*

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 13. *Top 5 economic activities for employment, Kiribati, 2023*

	Male	Female	Total
Total employment, aged 15+	**21,556**	**17,974**	**39,530**
The top 5 economic activities (% in total employment)			
Other retail sale not in stores, stalls or markets	10.6	15.4	12.8
Support activities for crop production	18.9	5.0	12.6
General public administration activities	10.4	10.5	10.4
Other retail sale not in stores, stalls or markets	4.6	10.6	7.3
Marine fishing	11.4	1.8	7.0

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. Note: Economic activities in this table are shown at the ISIC 4-digit level.

4.3 Employment by status in employment

The majority (54.2%) of the total employment was classified as wage employment, while 44.6% was self-employed as either an own-account worker or a contributing family worker. An additional 1.2% was classified as employers owning their own business and engaging at least one person to work for them.

The status in employment also reveals gender disparities. Women were less likely to be in wage employment than men (48.2% compared to 59.3%, respectively), but more likely to be self-employed as own-account workers or contributing family worker (50.6% compared to 39.6%, respectively). Wage employment is typically associated with greater job security and better working conditions, whereas own-account workers and contributing family workers fall into categories often classified as vulnerable employment. Since vulnerable employment was the predominant type of jobs among women, it underlines the challenges among working women in accessing decent work.

Across five regions, the share of wage employment in total employment lagged behind the national average in Central islands (37.3%), Northern islands (32.5%), and Southern islands (30.2%). In addition, more than two-thirds (67.0%) of all employment in these three regions was self-employment, including own-account workers and contributing family workers.

Status in employment varied significantly between rural and urban areas. In urban areas, 69.0% of workers were in wage employment, while 29.2% were in self-employment as own-account workers or contributing family workers. In contrast, in rural areas, only 32.2% of all employment was wage employment, while 67.4% was self-employed.

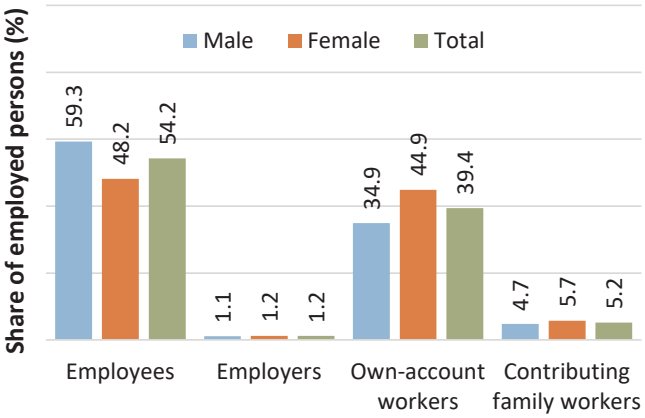

Figure 9. *Employment by status in employment and sex, Kiribati, 2023 (% distribution)*

*Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. Note: 1) The status in employment in this figure is shown in accordance with ICSE-93. 2) * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

Gender disparities were more pronounced in urban areas. Men were far more likely to be in wage employment (79.0%), while women were more over twice as likely as men to be in vulnerable employment (40.5% compared 19.3%). In rural areas, however, the share of working women and men in wage employment and vulnerable employment were more evenly balanced.

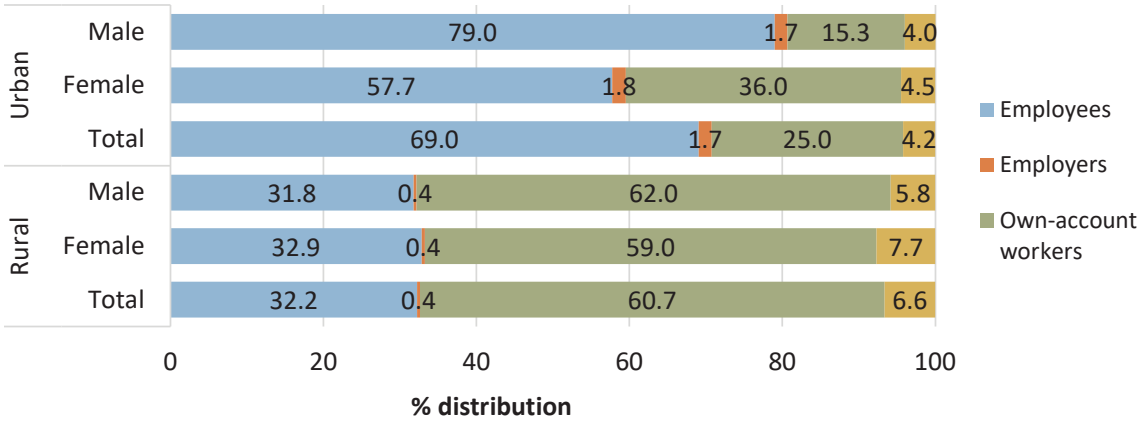

Figure 10. *Status in employment by geographic location and sex, Kiribati, 2023 (% distribution)*

*Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. Note: 1) The status in employment in this figure is shown in accordance with ICSE-93. 2) * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

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In October 2018, the 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) adopted the Resolution concerning statistics on work relationships to replace the ICSE-93 that had been adopted by the 15th ICLS in January 1993. The resolution introduced a new international classification of status in employment (ICSE-18), which expanded the categories of employment status from six in ICSE-93 to ten. The new classification comprises offers a more detailed and meaningful reflection of working relationships in the labour market (ILO, 2023). ***Table 14*** presents the employment in Kiribati, disaggregated by sex and working relationships, in line with ISCE-18.

Table 14. *Employment by sex and work relationships (ICSE-18-A), Kiribati, 2023*

	Male	Female	Total
Total employment, aged 15+ years	**21,556**	**17,974**	**39,530**
Independent workers (% in total employment)			
1. Employers	1.1 *	1.2 *	1.2
11 Employers in corporations	0.2 *	0.2 *	0.2 *
12 Employers in HH market enterprises	0.9 *	1.1 *	1.0
2. Independent workers without employees	28.7	36.6	32.3
21 Owner-operators of corporations without employees	0.2 *	1.4 *	0.8 *
22 Own-account workers in HH market enterprises without employees	28.4	35.2	31.5
Dependent workers (% in total employment)			
3. Dependent contractors	13.7	13.9	13.8
30 Dependent contractors	13.7	13.9	13.8
4. Employees	54.2	45.9	50.4
41 Permanent employees	27.8	28.3	28.0
42 Fixed-term employees	18.0	12.0	15.3
43 Short-term and casual employees	2.7	2.4	2.6
44 Paid apprentices, trainees and interns	0.1 *	0.2 *	0.1 *
49 Employee not elsewhere classified	5.5	3.1	4.4
5. Contributing family workers	2.3	2.3	2.3
51 Contributing family workers	2.3	2.3	2.3
9. Not elsewhere classified	0.1 *	0	0.1 *

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

5. UNEMPLOYMENT AND LABOUR UNDERUTILIZATION

Chapter 5 presents statistics of the unemployed population, labour underutilization, and youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET) by sex and by regions,

Unemployed persons refer to those of working-age who are: a) without work during the reference period (seven days prior to the survey); b) currently available for work (for either paid employment or self-employment); and c) seeking work (ILO, 2013b).

5.1. Unemployment rate

The total unemployment in Kiribati was estimated at 1,265 persons, resulting in an overall unemployment rate at 3.1%, a sharp decrease from 8.6% recorded in the previous HIES (SPC/SDD, 2022). However, unemployment varies by sex, age and region (***Figure 11***). Female jobseekers had a higher unemployment rate (3.8%) compared to their male counterparts (2.5%).

By age groups, the unemployment rate among young people aged 15–24 years was 8.4%, and was significantly higher compared to adults aged 25 and above, whose unemployment was 2.2%. The gender gap in youth unemployment was sizeable at 5.9%age points to the disadvantage of young women, reflecting their disproportionate challenges in finding employment in the labour market.

Table 15. *Unemployment by broad age group and sex, Kiribati, 2023*

	Male	Female	Total
Unemployment, aged 15+	**555**	**710**	**1,265**
By age group			
15–24	228 *	276 *	504
25+	326	435	761
Unemployment rate, aged 15+ (%)	2.5	3.8	3.1
By age group			
15–24	6.2 *	12.1 *	8.4
25+	1.8	2.7	2.2

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

*Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

Table 16. *Unemployment by main age groups and regions, Kiribati, 2023*

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
Unemployment, aged 15+	**766**	**156 ***	**95 ***	**149 ***	**99 ***	**1,265**
By age group						
15–24	340 *	6 *	62 *	60 *	35 *	504 *
25–64	426 *	150 *	32 *	89 *	65 *	761
Unemployment rate, aged 15+ (%)	3.5	2.2 *	3.1 *	2.8 *	3.1 *	3.1
By age group						
15–24	10.3 *	0.6 *	12.3 *	9.1 *	9.0 *	8.4
25–64	2.3 *	2.5 *	1.3 *	1.9 *	2.3 *	2.2

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

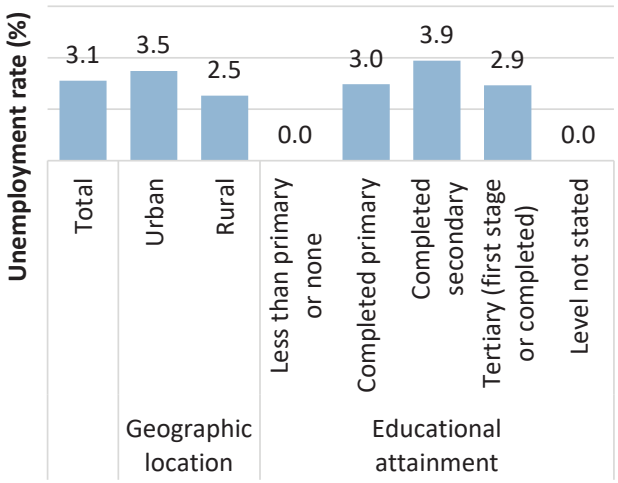

Figure 11. *Unemployment rate by geographic location and educational attainment, Kiribati, 2023 (%)*

*Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

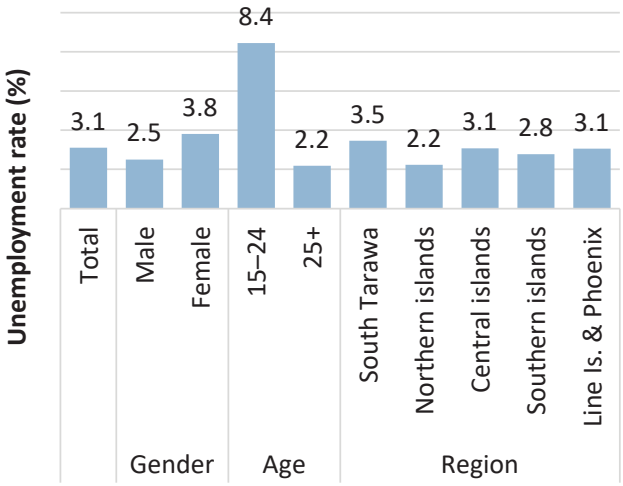

Figure 12. *Unemployment rate by sex, age group and region, Kiribati, 2023 (%)*

*Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

The unemployment rate also differed drastically between urban and rural areas. In urban areas, unemployment was at 3.5%, or 1.0%age points higher compared to rural areas (***Figure 11***). Across regions, South Tarawa had the highest unemployment rate at 3.5%, while the unemployment rates for other regions were all below the national average.

By educational attainment, the labour force with tertiary schooling had the lowest unemployment rate at 2.9%, followed by 3.0% among those with primary education. The unemployment rate among jobseekers with secondary schooling was the highest at 3.9% (***Figure 11***).

5.2. Labour underutilization

Unemployment, time-related underemployment, and potential labour force[3] are three main components of labour underutilization. The broad concept of labour underutilization reveals the total number of persons in labour force who are not being fully utilized, as well as those who are outside of the labour force but can be considered as potential labour supply. It measures the extent to which all available labour resources are being used or not in their full capacity by the economy and signifies the mismatches between labour supply and demand.

In Kiribati, labour underutilization was estimated at 22,311 in 2023. The composite labour underutilization rate was 42.6% overall, albeit higher for women (44.6%) than for men (40.7%). Two of the five regions recorded a composite labour underutilization rate that exceeded the national average – Southern islands (55.9%) and Northern islands (54.7%).

In terms of the components of labour underutilization, time-related underemployment affected 9,427 individuals, representing 23.1% of the workforce. In fact, the average actual hours worked in all

3 *Potential labour force is defined as all persons of working age who were neither in employment, nor in unemployment but who were: (a) unavailable job seekers, that is, carried out activities to seek employment in a recent period but were not currently available to take up employment, or (b) available potential job seekers, that is, did not carry out activities to seek employment in a recent period, but wanted employment and were currently available to take up employment.*

activities was only 29.2 hours a week (see Section 7.1 for further details). This points to significant underutilization of the current labour force and inefficiencies in the labour market, limiting economic productivity and workers' earnings. Additionally, the potential labour force, comprising 11,620 individuals, represents the largest component of labour underutilization, indicating untapped workforce potential. This suggests that factors such as discouragement, household responsibilities, or studying are keeping many women and men out of the labour market (see Section 5.4 for further details).

Table 17. *Labour underutilization by sex, Kiribati, 2023*

	Male	Female	Total
Labour underutilization	11,161	11,150	22,311
Unemployment	555	710	1,265
Time-related underemployment	5,295	4,132	9,427
Potential labour force	5,312	6,308	11,620
LU1: Unemployment rate (%)	2.5	3.8	3.1
LU2: Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment (%)	26.5	25.9	26.2
LU3: Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force (%)	21.4	28.1	24.6
LU4: Composite measure of labour underutilization (%)	40.7	44.6	42.6

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 18. *Labour underutilization by region, Kiribati, 2023*

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
Labour underutilization	11,070	5,153	1,183	3,883	1,022	22,311
Unemployment	766	156	95	149	99	1,265
Time-related underemployment	3,585	2,569	742	2,162	369	9,427
Potential labour force	6,719	2,429	346	1,572	553	11,620
LU1: Unemployment rate (%)	3.5	2.2	3.1	2.8	3.1	3.1
LU2: Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment (%)	19.7	38.9	27.2	43.0	14.4	26.2
LU3: Combined rate of unem-ployment and potential labour force (%)	26.0	27.4	12.9	24.8	17.1	24.6
LU4: Composite measure of labour underutilization (%)	38.4	54.7	34.5	55.9	26.8	42.6

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

5.3. Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET)

Young people who are not engaged in employment, education or training (NEET) are particularly at risk of both labour market and social exclusion because they are neither gaining experience through employment nor improving their future employability through investment in developing their skills.

According to the HIES, 7,683 young people aged 15–24 years were classified as NEET in 2023, accounting for 37.7% of this age

group. With a nationwide unemployment rate of 8.4% among youth, the high NEET rate indicates that many young people faced discouragement or lack access to education, training, or job opportunities.

Young women were more like to be NEET than young men, with rates of 39.7% and 35.87per cent, respectively. Three of the five regions reported NEET rates higher than the national average: Southern islands (46.4%), Northern islands (45.8%), and Central islands (42.8%). Additionally, NEET rates were lower in urban areas (33.5%) compared to rural areas (45.6%).

Table 19. *Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) by sex, Kiribati, 2023*

	Male	Female	Total
NEET, aged 15–24	3,735	3,948	7,683
NEET rate, aged 15–24 (%)	35.7	39.7	37.7

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 20. *Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) by region, Kiribati, 2023*

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
NEET, aged 15–24	4,127	1,531	504	966	555	7,683
NEET rate, aged 15–24 (%)	33.7	45.8	42.8	46.4	35.9	37.7

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

5.4. Population outside the labour force and labour market attachment

In terms of labour market attachment, of 37,003 persons outside of the labour force in 2023, 1.0% were jobseekers but not immediately available to start a new job. Additionally, 30.4% were willing to work and available to do so, but not actively looking for employment. This included, among others, discouraged jobseekers and persons prevented from seeking work by personal or family reasons. Both groups "persons seeking work but not immediately available" and "persons available for work but not seeking" have strong attachment to the labour market, and therefore they make up the potential labour force. In Kiribati, the potential labour force was estimated at 11,620 individuals, accounting for 31.4% of the total population outside of the labour force. There were more women (6,308 persons) than men (5,312 persons) in the potential labour force. Across the five regions, the largest potential labour force was found in South Tarawa with 6,719 individuals.

Regarding reasons for being outside of the labour force, more than half (51.3%) cited personal or family-related reasons, such as in studying or training, family or household responsibility, disability or sickness. Women (55.9%) were more likely than men (44.7%) to be kept out of the labour market for personal or family-related reasons, likely reflecting the disproportionate burden of unpaid household care work carried by women (see Section 9.3 for further details). Additionally, 2.7% reported not willing to work. Among the five regions, the Line & Phoenix had the highest proportion of the population outside the labour force due to personal or family reasons (63.5%) and those not willing to work (4.1%).

Table 21. *Persons outside the labour force by degree of labour market attachment, reasons for being outside the labour force and by sex, Kiribati, 2023*

	Male	Female	Total
Persons outside the labour force	**15,135**	**21,868**	**37,003**
By degree of labour market attachment (% distribution)			
Seeking, not available (Unavailable jobseekers)	1.0 *	1.0 *	1.0 *
Not seeking, available (Available potential jobseekers)	34.0	27.9	30.4
Not seeking, not available, willing (Willing non-jobseekers)	2.2 *	2.1	2.1
Not seeking, not available, not willing	57.8	67.0	63.3
Not elsewhere classified	4.9	2.0	3.2
By reason for being outside the labour force (% distribution)			
Labour market reasons (discouraged job seekers)	3.5	2.1	2.7
Other labour market reasons	1.1 *	0.4 *	0.7 *
Personal and family-related reasons	44.7	55.9	51.3
Does not need/does not want to work	8.5	8.6	8.6
Not elsewhere classified	42.2	33.0	36.7

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

Table 22. *Persons outside the labour force by degree of labour market attachment, reasons for being outside the labour force and by region, Kiribati, 2023*

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
Persons outside the labour force	**15,135**	**21,868**	**37,003**	**4,931**	**3,507**	**37,003**
By degree of labour market attachment (% distribution)						
Seeking, not available (Unavailable jobseekers)	1.0 *	1.0 *	1.0 *	0.6	0.5	1.0
Not seeking, available (Available potential jobseekers)	34.0	27.9	30.4	31.3	15.2	30.4
Not seeking, not available, willing (Willing non-jobseekers)	2.2 *	2.1	2.1	0.4	0.9	2.1
Not seeking, not available, not willing	57.8	67.0	63.3	64.3	80.5	63.3
Not elsewhere classified	4.9	2.0	3.2	3.4	2.8	3.2
By reason for being outside the labour force (% distribution)						
Labour market reasons (discouraged job seekers)	3.5	2.1	2.7	1.1	4.1	2.7
Other labour market reasons	1.1 *	0.4 *	0.7 *	0.3	1.0	0.7
Personal and family-related reasons	44.7	55.9	51.3	53.4	63.5	51.3
Does not need/does not want to work	8.5	8.6	8.6	9.5	11.9	8.6
Not elsewhere classified	42.2	33.0	36.7	35.7	19.5	36.7

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

6. INFORMAL SECTOR AND INFORMAL EMPLOYMENT

Chapter 6 presents statistics of persons employed in the informal sector and persons with informal employment.

Employment in the informal sector contains all jobs in informal sector enterprises, or all persons who, during a given reference period (seven days prior to the survey), were employed in at least one informal sector enterprise, irrespective of their status in employment and whether it was their main or a secondary job. In this report, employment in the informal sector refers to main job only.

Informal employment is a job-based concept. Employees are considered to have informal jobs if their employment relationship is, in law or in practice, not subject to national labour legislation, social protection or entitlement to certain employment benefits. Informal employment can be carried out in formal sector enterprises, informal sector enterprises, or households.

The informal employment rate, defined as the share of informal employment in total employment, is a key indicator highlighting the quality of employment in an economy.

6.1. Employment in informal sector

The HIES estimated that 14,678 workers were employed in the informal sector, representing 37.1% of all employment. Women compared to men were more likely to be employed in the informal sector (40.6% compared to 34.3%, respectively). About 42.4% of employed young people aged 15–24 years were based in the informal sector compared to 35.5% of working adults aged 25–64 years and 56,9% for elderly employed adults aged 65+ years.

Informality is associated with educational attainment. Approximately 42.6% of workers with completed primary education or less were based in the informal sector. In contrast, workers with tertiary schooling had a considerably lower share of employment in the informal sector, at 2.5%. Additionally, 14.1% of workers with secondary schooling were based in the informal sector.

By sector of economic activity, the majority of the employment in agriculture (73.1%) and industry (71.6%) was based in the informal sector, whereas only 17.0% of service jobs were in the informal sector.

Regarding the status of employment, workers in vulnerable employment, namely the own account workers and contributing family workers, were much more likely to work in the informal sector, with 76.9% of vulnerable workers in the informal sector compared to just 4.8% of wage workers.

Across the five regions, South Tarawa had the lowest share of employment in the informal sector, at 23.7%, followed by the Line & Phoenix, at 34.7%. In Northern, Central, and Southern islands, the majority of the workers were employed in the informal sector.

It is also worth noticing that about 1,815 persons were employed in households, making up 4.6% of the total employment. Men were more likely to work in households (at 6.1%) than women (2.8%).

Table 23. *Employment in the informal sector by selected employment characteristics and sex, Kiribati, 2023*

	Number of persons			Share of total employment (%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Employment in the informal sector, aged 15+ years	**7,385**	**7,293**	**14,678**	**34.3**	**40.6**	**37.1**
By age group						
15–24	1,417	901	2,318	41.0	44.9	42.4
25–64	5,803	5,845	11,648	33.0	38.4	35.5
65+	165 *	547	712	32.6 *	73.4	56.9
By education attainment						
Less than primary or none	10 *	30 *	41 *	42.6 *	46.2 *	45.3 *
Completed primary	6,951	6,763	13,714	38.2	48.3	42.5
Completed secondary	383	488	872	13.8	14.4	14.1
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	23 *	0	23 *	4.9 *	0	2.5 *
Level not stated	17 *	11 *	28 *	28.7 *	35.2	31.0 *
By economic activity						
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	4,932	1,082	6,014	72.1	78.2	73.1
Industry	929	3,467	4,396	42.9	87.2	71.6
Services	1,524	2,744	4,267	12.1	21.8	17.0
By status of employment						
Employees	703	322 *	1,025	5.5	3.7 *	4.8
Employers	63 *	34 *	97	26.0 *	15.1 *	20.8
Own-account workers	6,019	6,305	12,324	80.1	78.2	79.1
Contributing family workers	600	632	1,232	58.6	61.5	60.0
By main regions						
South Tarawa	1,765	3,287	5,052	16.0	32.0	23.7
Northern islands	2,008	1,937	3,946	54.5	61.3	57.7
Central islands	1,090	584	1,674	64.5	45.1	56.1
Southern islands	1,750	1,163	2,912	57.6	53.0	55.7
Line Is. & Phoenix	772	323	1,095	36.9	30.2	34.7

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

*Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

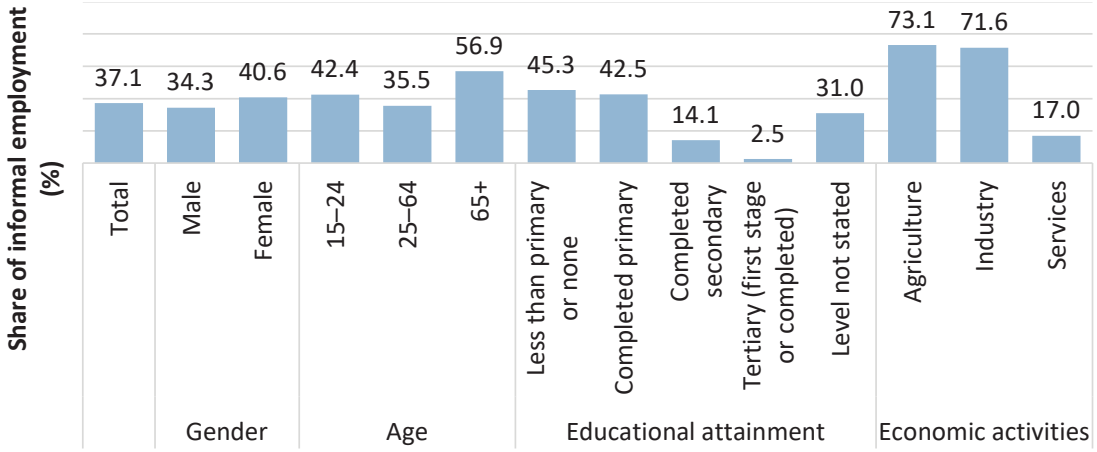

Figure 13. *Employment in the informal sector by sex, age group, educational attainment, and economic sector (% in employment), Kiribati, 2023*

*Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

6.2. Informal employment

The share of informal employment is a key indicator of the quality of employment. Aligning with the international standards, informal employment in the HIES 2023–2024 was defined to include own-account workers, business owners (employers) of informal sector enterprises, all contributing family workers, as well as wage employees who lack access to basic social security benefits or without both paid and sick leave benefits.

In Kiribati, informal employment made up 59.9% of total employment in 2023. Even within the formal sector, nearly one-third (31.5%) of workers informally employed, highlighting the significant share of paid employees in the formal sector without social security benefits. Additionally, almost all employment in the informal and household sectors was informal.

The informal employment rate was higher among working men (61.6%) than women (57.9%). Moreover, informal employment decreased with higher education levels, affecting only 11.3% of workers with tertiary education, compared to 32.5% of those with completed secondary education and 66.7% of those with only primary education or less.

Informal employment was also considerably lower in services (43.1%), compared to 84.3% for industry and 93.1% for agriculture. Likewise, the share of informal employment in three of the five regions exceeded the national average: Northern islands (74.9%), Southern islands (72.5%) and Central islands (66.1%).

Table 24. *Informal employment by selected employment characteristics and sex, Kiribati, 2023*

	Number of persons			Share of total employment (%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Informal employment, aged 15+	**13,282**	**10,398**	**23,680**	**61.6**	**57.9**	**59.9**
By age group						
15-24	2,928	1,568	4,496	84.7	78.1	82.3
25-64	10,103	8,240	18,343	57.4	54.1	55.9
65+	250	591	841	49.4	79.3	67.2
By nature of production unit						
Informal sectors	7,385	7,293	14,678	100	100	100
Formal sectors	4,636	2,627	7,264	36.1	25.8	31.5
Households	1,261	478	1,739	95.7	95.9	95.8
By education attainment						
Less than primary or none	20 *	57 *	78 *	84.1 *	87.4 *	86.5 *
Completed primary	12,193	9,253	21,446	66.9	66.0	66.5
Completed secondary	969	1,035	2,004	34.9	30.6	32.5
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	65 *	43 *	108 *	13.7 *	8.9 *	11.3 *
Level not stated	35 *	11 *	46 *	58.9 *	35.2 *	50.6 *
By economic activity						
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	6,467	1,194	7,661	94.5	86.3	93.1
Industry	1,556	3,622	5,178	71.8	91.1	84.3
Services	5,259	5,582	10,842	41.9	44.3	43.1
By status in employment						
Employees	5,496	2,757	8,253	43.0	31.8	38.5
Employers	92 *	34 *	125 *	37.5 *	15.1 *	26.8 *
Own-account workers	6,670	6,580	13,250	88.7	81.6	85.1
Contributing family workers	1,024	1,028	2,052	100	100	100
By main regions						
South Tarawa	5,700	5,448	11,148	51.6	53.1	52.3
Northern islands	2,854	2,271	5,125	77.4	71.9	74.9
Central islands	1,235	738	1,973	73.1	57.0	66.1
Southern islands	2,358	1,433	3,791	77.6	65.4	72.5
The Line & Phoenix	1,135	508	1,643	54.2	47.6	52.0

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

*Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

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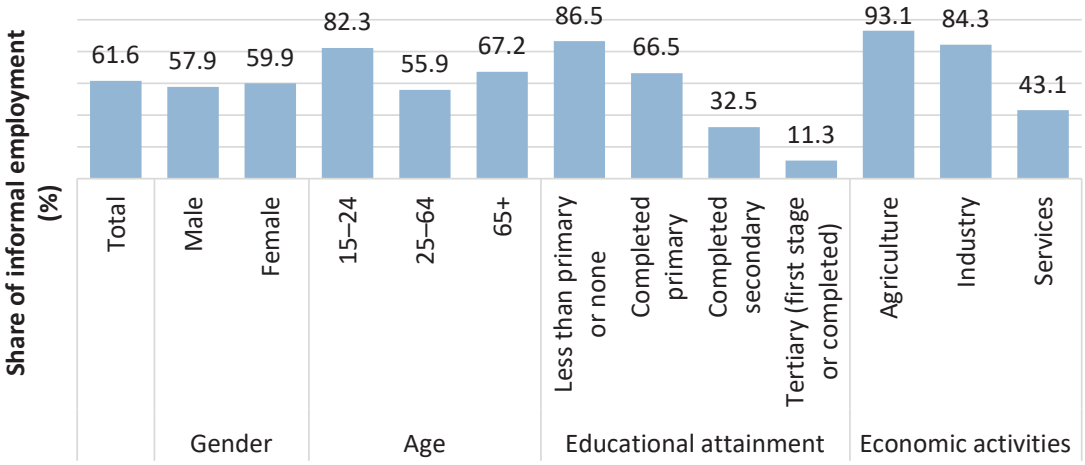

Figure 14. *Informal employment by sex, age group, educational attainment, and economic sector (% in employment), Kiribati, 2023*

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

Table 25 presents the joint distribution of the informal sector and informal employment. About one-third (31.5%) of workers in the formal sector had informal jobs, totalling 7,264 workers. These were essentially workers employed in paid jobs in the formal sector but on an informal basis, such as temporary employment without social protection coverage.

Men in the formal sector were more likely to be informally employed than women. Over one-third of male workers in the formal sector were in informal employment, while about one-fourth of female workers in the formal sector were had informal jobs.

Table 25. *Joint distribution of employment in the informal sector and informal employment, Kiribati, 2023*

	Informal jobs	Formal jobs
Informal sector enterprises	14,678	0
Formal sector enterprises	7,264	15,773
Household sector	1,739	77 *

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

*Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

7. HOURS OF WORK

Chapter 7 presents statistics of working hours of employed persons. It reveals the actuals hours of work per week and the distribution of hours of work per week. Hours actually worked are the time spent in a job for the performance of activities that contribute to the production of goods and services during the week preceding the interview.

The international standard definition of employment includes persons who conducted at least one hour of work during a week. Data on hours of work is therefore useful to calculate time-related underemployment as well as average wages per hour so that the resulting wage data are more comparable across different categories of workers.

7.1. Actual hours

According to the HIES, actual hours worked for all economic activities was 29.2 hours a week. Men worked an average of 31.2 hours, exceeding women's average of 26.8 hours by 4.5 hours. By region, the average actual hours worked fell short the national average in all regions but South Tarawa, where the average reached 35.9 hours a week for all activities. For the main job, the average actual hours worked per week was 27.7 hours, with men working 29.5 hours and women working 25.5 hours.

In urban areas, the average actual hours worked for all economic activities was 36.0 hours per week, compared to 19.2 hours in rural areas. Meanwhile, in urban areas, men worked an average of 40.3 hours per week, while women worked only 31.0 hours. In rural areas, however, women worked slightly longer hours than men, with women averaging 20.0 hours and men averaging 18.7 hours per week across all activities. These differences highlight an overall time-related labour underutilization, particularly in rural areas and among women.

Table 26. *Average actual hours of work per week by sex, Kiribati, 2023*

	Male	Female	Total
Actual hours			
All economic activities	31.2	26.8	29.2
Main economic activity	29.5	25.5	27.7
Secondary economic activity	11.8	9.0	10.5

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 27. *Average hours of work per week by region, Kiribati, 2023*

	South Ta-rawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
Actual hours						
All economic activities	35.9	20.3	20.9	16.7	31.9	29.2
Main economic activity	34.7	18.6	18.5	15.3	29.5	27.7
Secondary economic activity	11.6	8.9	9.2	7.2	25.6	10.5

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

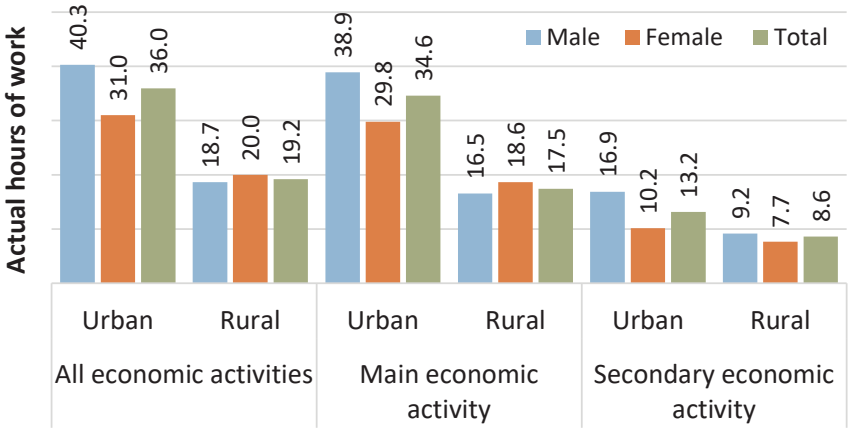

Figure 15. *Actual hours of work per week by sex and geographic location, Kiribati, 2023*

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

7.2. Distribution of hours of work

The distribution of employed persons by actual hours worked per week in all jobs provides information on people who are working excessive hours and people who are time-related under-employed. Excessive hours of work (working more than 48 hours per week) are considered a deficit to decent work as it undermines physical and mental health, while time-related underemployment could indicate reduced productivity and therefore potentially inadequate income from employment.

In Kiribati, the majority (63.3%) of working women and men worked less than 40 hours, while 20.1% worked between 40-48 hours and 16.6% worked more than 48 hours.

Across five regions, excessive hours of work were mostly like to happen in South Tarawa (23.8%) and the Line and Phoenix (16.5%). At the same time, the share of workers with less than 40 hours per week was the highest in Southern islands (86.0%), Northern islands (82.2%), and Central islands (81.6%), marking the high risk of time-related underemployment.

Table 28. *Distribution of employed persons by actual hours worked per week in all activities and sex, Kiribati, 2023*

	Male	Female	Total
By actual hours worked in all economic activities (% dis-tribution)			
Less than 40 hours	59.2	68.3	63.3
40–48 hours	22.3	17.6	20.1
More than 48 hours	18.5	14.2	16.6

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 29. *Distribution of employed persons by actual hours worked per week in all activities and region, Kiribati, 2023*

	South Ta-rawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
By actual hours worked in all economic activities (% distribution)						
Less than 40 hours	50.0	82.2	81.6	86.0	57.4	63.3
40–48 hours	26.2	9.3	14.3	9.1	26.1	20.1
More than 48 hours	23.8	8.5	4.1 *	4.9	16.5	16.6

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

8. EARNINGS: WAGES OF EMPLOYEES AND INCOME FROM SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Chapter 8 presents statistics of wages from the main job of salaried employees and income earned by the self-employed, with disaggregation by sex and region.

In this report, information on employment-generated income, in cash and in kind, was analyzed for both salaried employees and the self-employed in their main job. Where information on earnings in the main job was not recorded on a monthly basis, a conversion to a monthly rate was applied. All amounts are reported in Australian dollar (AUD).

8.1. Average monthly income in the main job

In 2023, the average monthly wage of paid employees in Kiribati was estimated at AUD 538. Across the five regions, average monthly wages in the Line & Phoenix (AUD 594) and South Tarawa (AUD 564) exceeded the national average, whereas average monthly wage was the lowest in Central islands (AUD 393).

The average income of the self-employed in 2023 was AUD 641 per month. Among the five regions, the average income of the self-employed was the highest in the Line & Phoenix (AUD 854), followed by South Tarawa (AUD 758). The average income of the self-employed in other regions was below AUD 500.

Among wage employees, men earned an average monthly wage of AUD 529, lower than women's average wage of AUD 552, reflecting a gender pay gap of -4.3%[4]. By sector of economic activity, men's average monthly wage was higher in agriculture, while women earned more in the industry and service sectors. Across the major occupations, the pay differences favoured women most notably among managers, while men had significantly higher wages in skilled agricultural work and elementary occupations.

In contrast, among self-employed workers, the gender pay gap was 19.2% to the disadvantage of women, with women earning an average of AUD 583 per month compared to men's AUD 722. By status in employment, the largest male-female income inequality was seen among contributing family workers, where women earned 43.1% less than men, followed by a 21.4% gap among own-account workers. Conversely, among business owners (employers), women's income was, on average, 36.3% higher than that of men. However, self-employed women's average month income was consistently lower than men's across all three main sectors of economic activity.

4 *In this report, the gender pay gap is calculated by subtracting the average employment-generated income level for women from that of men, and then dividing the remainder by the average employment-generated income level of men:*

Gender pay gap = (The average income of men – The average income of women) / (The average income of men) *100

A negative value imply that men earn less than women.

Table 30. *Average monthly wages and earnings by sex, main job, Kiribati, 2023 (AUD)*

	Male	Female	Total	Gender pay gap (%)
Average monthly wages in main job of employees	529	552	538	-4.3
By age group				
15-24	396	413 *	401	-4.4
25-64	543	564	552	-3.9
65+	960 *	674 *	887 *	29.8
By economic activity				
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	672	558 *	658	17.0
Industry	501	528 *	504	-5.5
Services	514	552	531	-7.4
By occupation				
Managers	973	1,271	1,089	-30.6
Professionals	683	622	642	8.8
Technicians and associate professionals	634	676	651	-6.7
Clerical support workers	581 *	565	569	2.9
Service and sales workers	411	358	388	12.9
Skilled agricultural, forestry & fishery workers	648	330 *	628	49.1
Craft and related trades workers	450	477 *	453	-6.1
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	512	660 *	519	-28.8
Elementary occupations	464	388	443	16.4
Average monthly income in main job of self-employed	722	583	641	19.2
By age group				
15-24	451	374	413	16.9
25-64	778	626	688	19.6
65+	591	383	452	35.2
By economic activity				
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	525	481	515	8.3
Industry	523	366	399	29.9
Services	1,076	792	889	26.4
By status in employment				
Employers	2,981 *	4,061 *	3,495	-36.3
Own-account workers	653	513	570	21.4
Contributing family workers	454	258	360	43.1
By occupation				
Managers	2,293 *	1,626	1,875	29.1
Professionals	3,095 *	240 *	2,772 *	92.2
Technicians and associate professionals	1,800 *	2,170 *	2,056 *	-20.5

	Male	Female	Total	Gender pay gap (%)
Clerical support workers	1,687 *	1,347 *	1,497 *	20.2
Service and sales workers	633	1,077	918	-70.0
Skilled agricultural, forestry & fishery workers	410	247 *	367 *	39.9
Craft and related trades workers	692	354	433	48.9
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	702 *	466 *	620 *	33.6
Elementary occupations	556	476	526	14.4

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

Table 31. *Average monthly wages and earnings by region, main job, Kiribati, 2023 ((AUD)*

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
Average monthly wages in main job of employees	564	482	393	417	594	538
By age group						
15–24	412	390	230	397	434	401
25–64	584	489 *	412 *	394 *	609	552
65+	850 *	715 *	558 *	1,462 *	765 *	887 *
By economic activity						
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	680	626 *	448 *	338 *	612 *	658
Industry	531	484 *	276 *	498 *	393 *	504
Services	555	477	396	419	603	531
By occupation						
Managers	1,291	807 *	581 *	780 *	699 *	1,089
Professionals	732	530	444	495	701	642
Technicians and associate professionals	755	517 *	389 *	287 *	554	651
Clerical support workers	566	734 *	332 *	433 *	687 *	569
Service and sales workers	382	346	294	302	615	388
Skilled agricultural, forestry & fishery workers	675 *	477 *	466 *	312 *	527 *	628
Craft and related trades workers	457	432 *	430 *	338 *	483	453
Plant and machine operators, and as-semblers	553	443 *	164 *	321 *	501 *	519
Elementary occupations	447	413 *	406 *	286 *	541	443
(Armed forces occupations)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Occupations not classifiable	-	-	-	-	-	-
Average monthly income in main job of self-employed	758	525	541	488	854	641
By age group						
15–24	400	313 *	357 *	510	570 *	413
25–64	837	555	577	490	903	688
65+	444 *	429 *	613 *	391 *	648 *	452

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
By economic activity						
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	755 *	428	548	496	818 *	515
Industry	419	366	358	343	622 *	399
Services	979	804	686	597	941	889
By status in employment						
Employers	3,605 *	4,221 *	1,510 *	1,280 *	1,993 *	3,495
Own-account workers	630	480	552	486	815	570
Contributing family workers	268	553 *	258 *	488 *	420 *	360
By occupation						
Managers	2,252	1,558 *	1,258 *	1,119 *	1,705 *	1,875
Professionals	3,549 *	-	300 *	160 *	240 *	2,772 *
Technicians and associate professionals	1,028 *	10,800 *	-	200 *	-	2,056 *
Clerical support workers	1,710 *	120 *	-	1,280 *	-	1,497 *
Service and sales workers	993	738	682 *	782	1,227 *	918
Skilled agricultural, forestry & fishery workers	280 *	543 *	118 *	427 *	1,960 *	367 *
Craft and related trades workers	477	330	404	351	629	433
Plant and machine operators, and as-semblers	762 *	429 *	280 *	369 *	296 *	620 *
Elementary occupations	632	457	516	494	669 *	526

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

A comparison of average monthly earnings between waged and self-employed workers shows that, overall, self-employed workers earned more. This trend is consistent across gender and geographic locations. By age group, self-employed workers had higher average earnings than waged workers in all groups except those aged 65 and above. Sector-wise, self-employed workers earned more in services, while waged workers had higher earnings in agriculture and industry (***Figure 16***).

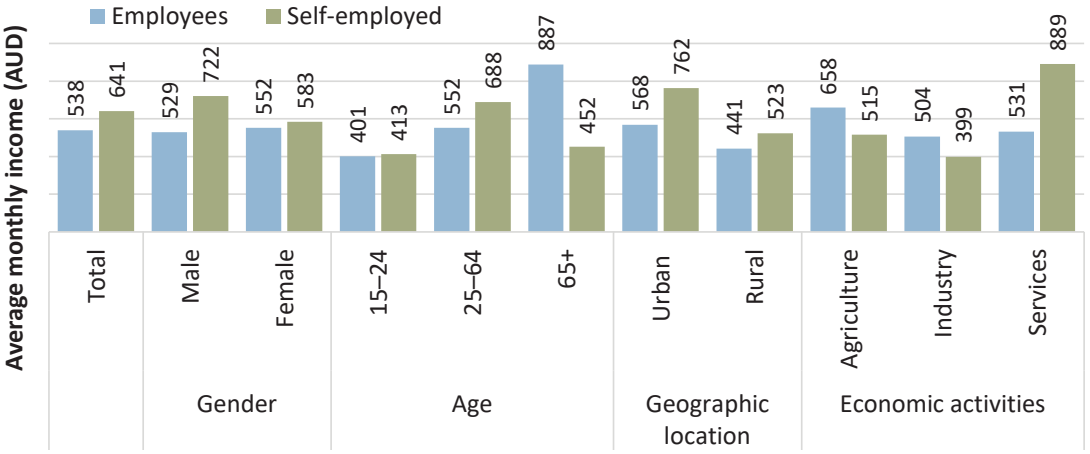

Figure 16. *Average monthly earning (in AUD), main job, by sex, age group, and geographic location, Kiribati, 2023*

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

8.2. Median monthly income in the main job

The median monthly wage of paid employees was estimated at AUD 430 in 2023, with women earning a median of AUD 422 – 3.2% less than men, who earned AUD 436. When looking into each sector, men earned a higher median wage in agriculture, with AUD 500 compared to AUD 480 for women. In contrast, women recorded a higher median wage in industry, earning AUD 472, while men earned AUD 440. For those looking in the service sector, both women and men earned the same median wage of AUD 420. Among the regions, the Line & Phoenix recorded the highest median wage at AUD 500, while Southern islands had the lowest at AUD 280.

The median monthly income of the self-employed was AUD 332. Women earned a median income of AUD 304, which was 24% lower than the AUD 400 median for men. The gender pay gap was consistent with the patter observed in average income, where women earned less than men among contributing family workers and own-account workers. However, female business owners had a higher median income than their male counterpart. Moreover, self-employed women's median income was consistently lower than that of men across all three main sectors of economic activity. Across regions, the highest the median income among the self-employed was found in both the Line & Phoenix and Central islands, each at AUD 400. In contrast, Norther islands had the lowest median income, at AUD 312.

9. MAIN ACTIVITY STATUS AND SUBSISTENCE WORK

Chapter 9 presents statistics on the main activity status of the working-age population, as well as an estimation of persons involved in subsistence work. The results on the main activity status question reflect a self-assessment of the working-age population, i.e. a more social assessment of what people recognize as their main activity status at present.

9.1. Main activity status

A person's main activity refers to the self-reported primary activity or status that they were engaged in during a specific reference period – in this HIES, the week preceding the survey. Among Kiribati's 77,797 working-age population, 26,558 persons (34.1%) reported being mainly engaged in household duties, including 17,693 women and 8,865 men. Meanwhile, 36,453 persons (46.9%) were engaged in work other than household duties, namely, working in farming, fishing or handicraft, working in government, NGO or private sector, and volunteer work.

The share of women primarily engaged in household duties (43.6%) was nearly double that of men (23.8%). Conversely, the proportion of women mainly engaged in work outside household (37.3%) was significantly lower than that of men (57.2%).

Table 32. *Main activities status by sex (% in the WAP), Kiribati, 2023*

	Male	Female	Total
Total working-age population	**37,245**	**40,552**	**77,797**
Main activity status (% in WAP)			
Studying or training	9.1	10.3	9.7
Working in farming, fishing or handicraft	15.5	4.6	9.8
Working in another sector (e.g. government, NGO, store, ho-tels, etc.)	40.1	31.9	35.8
Looking for work	3.8	2.2	3.0
Household duties, chores	23.8	43.6	34.1
Voluntary work (community, village, church, etc.)	1.6	0.8	1.2
Retired or pensioner	3.3	4.7	4.0
Long-term illness, injury or disability	2.7	1.8	2.2

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Among young persons (aged 15–24), 1,246 individuals (6.1%) were looking for work, compared to just 1.9% of adults aged 25 and older. Among young people, household duties were the most common main activity with 35.3% of them engaging in such responsibilities. In contrast, adults were predominantly employed in the government, NGO, or private sector, with 43.4% of them working in these sectors.

Across five regions, the share of working-age population primarily engaged in household or family duties was relatively consistent, ranging from 33 to 35%. However, South Tarawa stood out with the highest proportion of people employed in government, NGO,

or private sectors, at approximately 41.6%, followed by the Line & Phoenix at 32.5%. In the other regions, only 28% of the working-age population primarily engaged in these types of activities.

Table 33. *Main activities status by age group (% in the WAP), Kiribati, 2023*

	15–24	25+	25–64	65+	Total
Total working-age population	**20,396**	**57,401**	**52,952**	**4,449**	**77,797**
Main activity status (% in WAP)					
Studying or training	32.9	1.5	1.6	0	9.7
Working in farming, fishing or handicraft	8.6	10.3	10.8	4.4	9.8
Working in another sector (e.g. government, NGO, store, hotels, etc.)	14.7	43.3	45.5	17.4	35.8
Looking for work	6.1	1.9	2.0	1.0 *	3.0
Household duties, chores	35.3	33.7	34.6	22.7	34.1
Voluntary work (community, village, church, etc.)	1.4	1.2	1.2	0.8 *	1.2
Retired or pensioner	0.0	5.5	2.1	45.7	4.0
Long-term illness, injury or disability	1.0	2.7	2.2	7.9	2.2

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

Table 34. *Main activities status by regions (% in the WAP), Kiribati, 2023*

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
Total working-age population	**41,926**	**13,262**	**5,534**	**10,310**	**6,765**	**77,797**
Main activity status (% in WAP)						
Studying or training	12.6	4.9	8.3	4.7	10.1	9.7
Working in farming, fishing or handicraft	1.6	21.8	18.5	21.4	12.7	9.8
Working in another sector (e.g. govern-ment, NGO, store, hotels, etc.)	41.6	28.5	28.4	27.8	32.5	35.8
Looking for work	3.9	1.7 *	0.4 *	2.0 *	3.6	3.0
Household duties, chores	34.1	35.1	33.1	34.5	32.9	34.1
Voluntary work (community, village, church, etc.)	0.9 *	1.7 *	2.0 *	2.0 *	0.5 *	1.2
Retired or pensioner	3.5	3.7	5.4	4.8	5.7	4.0
Long-term illness, injury or disability	1.7	2.8	3.8	2.8	2.1	2.2

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

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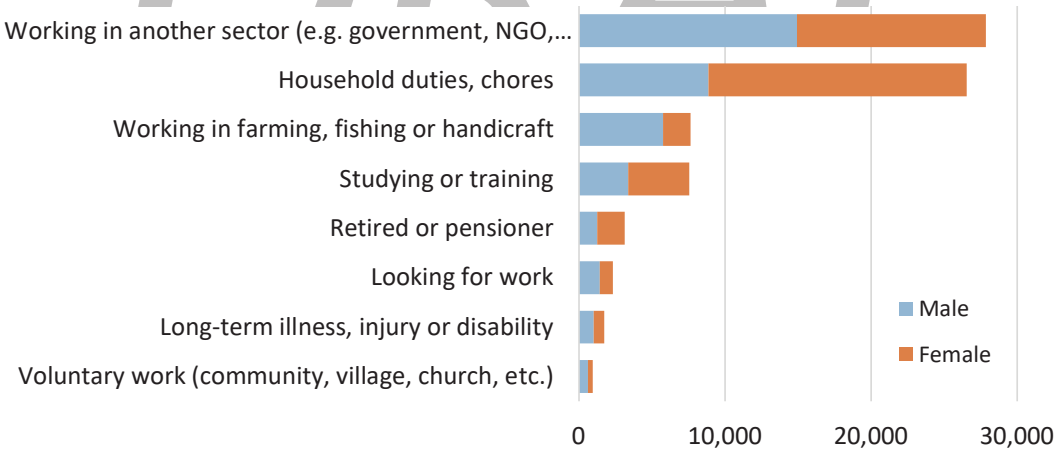

Figure 17. *Main activities status by geographic location, Kiribati, 2023*

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

9.2. Main activities status and labour force status

Table 35 reveals that all main activities can be conducted by persons under all three labour force status, with the exception of those working in non-farm sector – they are considered as employed by definition. Most (77.1%) of persons of working-age working in agriculture, fishing or handicraft as their main activity were employed, while only 11.2% of working-age population who mainly engaged in household duties were employed.

Table 35. Table 35*. Main activity status by labour force status classification, Kiribati, 2023*

	Employed			Unemployed			Outside the labour force			Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Total working-age population	**21,556**	**17,974**	**39,530**	**555**	**710**	**1,265**	**15,135**	**21,868**	**37,003**	**77,797**
Main activity status										
Studying or training	172 *	254 *	426	15 *	0	15 *	3,188	3,941	7,129	7,571
Working in farming, fishing or handicraft	4,290	1,599	5,889	72 *	10 *	82 *	1,395	277	1,672	7,643
Working in another sector (e.g. government, NGO, store, hotels, etc.)	14,946	12,917	27,863	0	0	0	0	0	0	27,863
Looking for work	185 *	113 *	299 *	66 *	59 *	125 *	1,172	736	1,908	2,332
Household duties, chores	1,740	2,682	4,422	372	616 *	988	6,752	14,396	21,148	26,558
Voluntary work (community, village, church, etc.)	66 *	86 *	153 *	29 *	16 *	45 *	514	236 *	750	947
Retired or pensioner	99 *	308 *	407	0	10 *	10 *	1,147	1,583	2,730	3,147
Long-term illness, injury or disability	57 *	14 *	71 *	0	0	0	966	699	1,665	1,736

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

As noted earlier, women were more involved in household care activities than men, regardless of their employment status. Among employed individuals, 14.9% of women cited household duties as their main activities, compared to 8.1% of men. Similarly, among those who were unemployed or outside of the labour force, 66.5% of women were mainly engaged in household duties, compared to 45.4% of men.

Table 36. *Main activity status by labour force status classification (% in WAP), Kiribati, 2023*

	Employed			Unemployed			Outside the labour force		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Total working-age population	**21,556**	**17,974**	**39,530**	**555**	**710**	**1,265**	**15,135**	**21,868**	**37,003**
Main activity status (% distribution)									
Studying or training	0.8 *	1.4 *	1.1	2.8 *	0	1.2 *	21.1	18.0	19.3
Working in farming, fishing or handicraft	19.9	8.9	14.9	13.0 *	1.4 *	6.4 *	9.2	1.3	4.5
Working in another sec-tor (e.g. government, NGO, store, hotels, etc.)	69.3	71.9	70.5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Looking for work	0.9 *	0.6 *	0.8 *	11.9 *	8.3 *	9.9 *	7.7	3.4	5.2
Household duties, chores	8.1	14.9	11.2	67.1	86.7 *	78.1	44.6	65.8	57.2
Voluntary work (com-munity, village, church, etc.)	0.3 *	0.5 *	0.4 *	5.2 *	2.3 *	3.6 *	3.4	1.1 *	2.0
Retired or pensioner	0.5 *	1.7 *	1.0	0	1.3 *	0.8 *	7.6	7.2	7.4
Long-term illness, injury or disability	0.3 *	0.1 *	0.2 *	0	0	0	6.4	3.2	4.5

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

9.3. Subsistence work and household care

The technical term own-use production of work was introduced during the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). It defines all inputs of labour involved in production of goods and services for own final use by their families. The concept captures the type of work that is commonly considered as subsistence production of goods and the provision of services which is also known as household care work.

In the current HIES, subsistence production work encompassed subsistence fishing, farming, food or drink processing for storage, and manufacturing goods. In 2023, an estimated 2,607 individuals in Kiribati were engaged in subsistence production work, representing 3.4% of the working-age population. Men were significantly more likely than women to participate in subsistence production, with 6.0% of working-age men involved compared to just 1.0% of women. While there were no significant differences between the age groups 15–24 and 25–64, the share of individuals aged 65 and above engaged in subsistence production was notably lower, at 1.7%.

Subsistence production work was also more prevalent among people with lower educational attainment. Among those with primary schooling or less, 7.8% were engaged in subsistence production, compared to less than 1% of the working-age population with secondary education or higher.

By geographic locality, people in rural areas were far more like to engage in subsistence production work than those in urban areas, with 7.6% of the working-age population in rural areas participating, compared to just 0.5% in urban areas. Among the five regions, Southern islands had the highest proportion of the working-age population engaged in subsistence production work, at 10.7%, followed by 7.3% in Northern islands. In contrast, South Tarawa recorded the lowest involvement, with only 0.6% of its working-age population engaged in such activities.

Engaging in unpaid household care, on the other hand, was more common among working-age population in the country. In 2023, a total of 23,703 individuals worked in unpaid household care, accounting for 30.4% of the working-age population. Women were nearly twice as likely as men to participate in such activities, with 39.3% of working-age women involved, compared to 20.9% of men.

The largest gender disparity was observed in the 25–64 age group, where the proportion of women engaged in unpaid household care exceeded that of men by 21.1%age points. Within this age group, 90.6% of unemployed women and 82.7% of women outside the labour force were involved in unpaid household care, compared to 64.2% of unemployed men and 57.7% of men outside the labour force.

By educational attainment, people with only primary education had the highest proportion working in unpaid household care, at 31.9%, compared to 10.6% among those with tertiary education. Conversely, by geographic locality, the proportion of the working-age population involved in unpaid household care showed no notable difference between urban and rural areas.

Table 37. *Subsistence production work and household care by sex and selected characteristics, Kiribati, 2023*

	Number of persons			Share of total WAP (%)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Subsistence production work	**2,217**	**390**	**2,607**	**6.0**	**1.0**	**3.4**
By age group						
15-24	623	52 *	674	6.0	0.5 *	3.3
25-64	1,550	306	1,855	6.2	1.1	3.5
65+	45 *	33 *	77 *	2.6 *	1.2 *	1.7 *
By geographic location						
Urban	239 *	15 *	254 *	1.1 *	0.1 *	0.5 *
Rural	1,978	375	2,353	13.0	2.3	7.6
By educational attainment						
Less than primary or none	30 *	4 *	34 *	11.5 *	1.2 *	5.9 *
Completed primary	2,093	377	2,470	6.5	1.1	3.8
Completed secondary	91 *	9 *	101 *	2.1 *	0.2 *	1.0 *
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	3 *	0	3 *	0.6 *	0	0.3 *
By region						
South Tarawa	217 *	15 *	232 *	1.1 *	0.1 *	0.6 *
Northern islands	764	203 *	967	12.0	2.9 *	7.3
Central islands	182	19 *	201	6.8	0.7 *	3.6
Southern islands	957	141 *	1,099	18.9	2.7 *	10.7
Line IS. & Phoenix	96 *	12 *	109 *	2.8 *	0.4 *	1.6 *
Household or family care	7,768	15,934	23,703	20.9	39.3	30.5
By age group						
15-24	2,735	4,054	6,789	26.2	40.8	33.3
25-64	4,776	11,188	15,964	19.0	40.1	30.1
65+	257	692	949	15.1	25.2	21.3
By geographic location						
Urban	5,024	9,116	14,140	22.7	37.1	30.3
Rural	2,744	6,819	9,562	18.1	42.7	30.7
By educational attainment						
Less than primary or none	49 *	63 *	112 *	19.0 *	20.0 *	19.5 *
Completed primary	6,685	14,215	20,900	20.9	42.3	31.9
Completed secondary	1,004	1,565	2,568	22.7	26.1	24.7
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	30 *	92 *	123 *	5.6 *	15.1 *	10.6 *
By region						
South Tarawa	4,613	8,151	12,764	23.4	36.7	30.4
Northern islands	1,441	2,821	4,262	22.7	40.8	32.1
Central islands	346	1,081	1,427	12.9	37.8	25.8
Southern islands	726	2,402	3,128	14.4	45.7	30.3
Line Is. & Phoenix	642	1,479	2,121	18.4	45.0	31.4

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. *Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

When combining the subsistence work and unpaid household care, people between 15 and 24 were the largest group engaged in these activities, with 36.6% of people involved. Women in all age groups were more likely to be engaged in these activities than men (***Figure 18***).

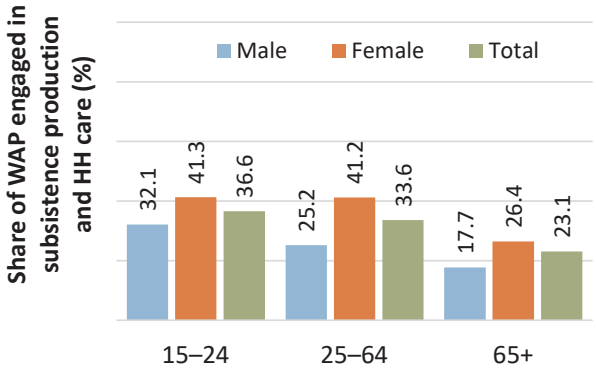

Figure 18. *Subsistence production work and household or family care as main work by age group and sex (% of WAP), Kiribati, 2023*

*Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

Looking at the labour force status, employed men were more likely to be involved in own-use production of work than employed women, a trend observed across all age groups except for those over 65. However, among those who were unemployed or outside of the labour force, women were more likely to engage in own-use production of work compared to men. Notably, among those outside of the labour force, the proportion of women involved in own-use production work was 13.3%age points higher than that of men (***Figure 19***). This significant involvement in unpaid work could restrict women's participation in the formal labour market, limiting their opportunities for paid employment.

Figure 19. *Subsistence production work and household or family care as main work by labour force status and sex (% of WAP), Kiribati, 2023*

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

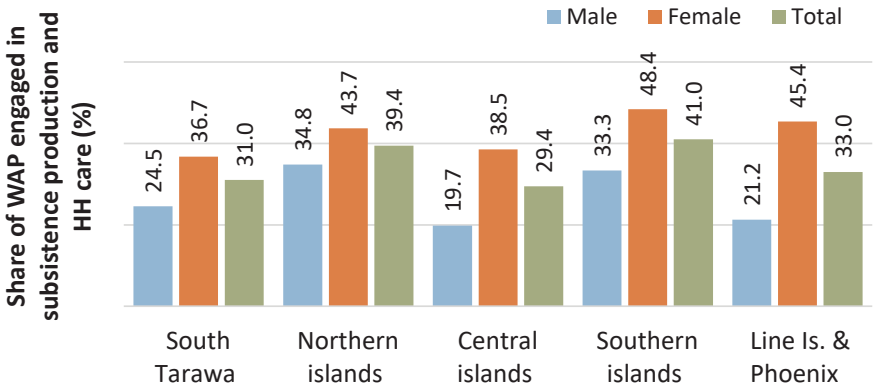

Figure 20. *Subsistence production work and household or family care as main work by region and sex (% of WAP), Kiribati, 2023*

*Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. Notes: * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases.*

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APPENDICES

A.1 Main statistical concepts and definitions

The main concepts and definitions of the Kiribati HIES 2023–2024 were designed in accordance with the international standards on statistics of work, employment, and labour underutilization adopted by the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (19th ICLS, Geneva, 2013).[5]

A1.1. Labour force statistics concepts

Work

Work is defined as:

- "Any activity performed by persons of any sex and age to produce goods or to provide services for use by others or for own use."
- It is "irrespective of its formal or informal character or the legality of the activity."
- It excludes "activities not involving production of goods or services (begging, stealing), self-care (personal grooming, hygiene) and activities that cannot be performed by another person on one's own behalf (sleeping, learning, own recreation)."

Employment

Persons in employment are defined as all of those above a specified age (in the case of Kiribati, aged 15 years and above) who, during a specific reference period (in the case of Kiribati, the preceding week prior to the interview), were engaged in any activity to produce goods or provide services for pay or profit. It excludes persons engaged solely in activities to produce goods or services for own final use such as producing agricultural, fishing and gathering products for own-consumption or cleaning, decorating, gardening and maintaining one's own dwelling or premises, durables and other goods.

Persons in employment comprise:

a) employed persons at work, i.e. who worked in a job for at least one hour;

b) employed persons not at work due to temporary absence from a job, or due to working-time arrangements, such as shift work, flexi-time and compensatory leave for overtime.

Unemployment (U)

The international standard definition of unemployment should satisfy three criteria simultaneously: "without work", "currently available for work" and "seeking work". The "unemployed" comprise all persons of working-age who during the reference period were:

a) without work – not in paid employment nor self-employed;

b) currently available for work – available for paid employment or self-employment during the reference period;

c) seeking work – had taken specific steps in a specified reference period to seek paid employment or self-employment,

The definition of unemployment provides an exception in the case of future job starters. They are considered as unemployed even if they did not carry out activities to seek employment during the specified period.

5 *International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). (2013). Resolution Concerning Statistics of Work, Employment, and Labour Underutilization. In 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians. Geneva: ILO.*

Youth and adult

The term "youth" refers to persons aged 15 to 24 years and "adult" is persons aged 25 years and above.

Time-related underemployment (TRU)

Persons in time-related underemployment are defined as all persons in employment who, during a specified reference period:

a) wanted to work additional hours;

b) whose working time in all jobs was less than a specified hours threshold;

c) who were available to work additional hours given an opportunity for more work.

In the Kiribati LFS, the underemployment threshold was set at 40 hours usually worked per week.

Potential labour force (PLF)

Potential labour force is defined as all persons of working-age who, during the reference period, were neither in employment nor in unemployment but who were considered as:

a) unavailable jobseekers – who were seeking employment but not currently available; or

b) available potential jobseekers – who wanted employment, were currently available for employment but did not carry out activities to seek employment.

Labour underutilization

Labour underutilization (LU) "refers to mismatches between labour supply and demand, which translate into an unmet need for employment among the population" (ILO, 2013b; Resolution I, Para 40). LU comprises three main components: time-related underemployment, unemployment, and potential labour force.

Working-Age Population (WAP)

The working-age population comprises persons who are aged 15 years old and above.

$$WAP\ (aged\ 15+) = LF\ (Labour\ Force) + NLF\ (Not\ in\ labour\ force)$$

Labour Force (LF)

The total labour force is the sum of the total of employed and unemployed populations of the working-age population.

$$LF = E\ (Employed) + U\ (Unemployed)$$

Population outside of the labour force

Population outside of the labour force are persons of the working-age who are not part of the labour force. It also refers to the working-age population who are neither employed nor unemployed.

Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)

Labour force participation rate is defined as the ratio of the labour force to the working-age population (aged 15 years and above), It is a measure of the proportion of the working-age population that actively engages in the labour market, either by working or looking for work.

$$LFPR = \frac{LF}{WAP}$$

Employment to Population Ratio (EPR)

The employment-to-population ratio is defined as the proportion of employed population to the working-age population. A high ratio means that a large share of a country's population is employed, while a low ratio means that a large share of the population is not directly participating in economic activities, as they are either unemployed or out of the labour force.

$$EPR = \frac{(Employed\ \ population)}{(WAP)}$$

Labour Underutilization (LU)

The composite measure of all those who are in unemployment (U), in time-related underemployment (TRU) or in the potential labour force (PLF).

$$LU=U + TRU + PLF$$

Extended labour force (Extended LF)

Extended labour force is the total population in the labour force and potential labour force.

Unemployment Rate (UR or LU1)

Unemployment rate is the proportion of unemployed population to the total population in labour force.

$$UR = \frac{(Unemployed \ \ population)}{LF}$$

Combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment (LU2)

The combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment (LU2) refers to the proportion of the labour force that are either in unemployment or time-related underemployment.

$$LU2 = \frac{(U \ + \ TRU)}{LF}$$

Combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force (LU3)

The combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force (LU3) represents the share of the extended labour force that are in unemployment or the potential labour force.

$$LU3 = \frac{(U+PLF)}{(Extended \ \ LF)}$$

Composite measure of labour underutilization (LU4)

The composite measure of labour underutilization (LU4) represents the share of the extended labour force that are in unemployment, time-related underemployment or the potential labour force.

$$LU4 = \frac{(U+TRU+PLF)}{(Extended \ \ LF)}$$

Informal sector

The informal sector consists of unregistered and/or small unincorporated private enterprises engaged in the production of goods or services for profit. It consists of all economic units (business enterprises) that are not covered or not fully covered by formal requirements by law; or informal arrangements in practice, meaning although the business is operating within the formal reach of the law, the law is not applied or not enforced, or the law discourages compliance because it is burdensome or imposes excessive costs.

Employment in the informal sector contains all jobs in informal sector enterprises.

Informal employment

Informal employment is defined as the type of employment where the diversified set of economic activities, enterprises, jobs, and workers are not regulated or protected by the government, have no explicit or written contracts of employment, no certain employment benefits (such as social protection coverage, severance pay, paid sick and annual leave) or for which labour regulations are not applied nor enforced.

Informal employment comprises all persons with informal jobs, whether carried out in formal or informal sector enterprises, or in households, during a given reference period, which includes:

- Own-account workers (self-employed with no employees) in their own informal sector enterprises;
- Employers (self-employed with employees) in their own informal sector enterprises;

- Contributing family workers, irrespective of type of enterprise;
- Members of informal producers' cooperatives (not established as legal entities);
- Employees holding informal jobs as defined according to the employment relationship (in law or in practice, jobs not subject to national labour legislation, income taxation, social protection or entitlement to certain employment benefits (paid annual or sick leave, etc,);
- Own-account workers engaged in production of goods exclusively for own final use by their household.

Subsistence production

Subsistence production constitutes the subgroup of persons who performed any of the specified activities to:

- produce and/or process storage agriculture, fishing, hunting and gathering products;
- collect and/or process for storage mining and forestry products, including firewood and other fuels;
- fetch water from natural and other sources;
- manufacture household goods (such as furniture, textiles, clothing, footwear, pottery or other durables, including boats and canoes);
- build, or effect major repairs to, one's own dwelling, farm buildings, etc.

that contribute to the livelihood of the household or family. Excluded are persons who engaged in such production as recreational or leisure activities.

Reference period

For the employment section, the reference period is the preceding week prior to the interview.

A1.2. Main classifications used in this report

Status in employment

Status in employment is classified in accordance with the International Classification of Status in Employment of 1993 (ICSE-93), namely:

- Wage and salaried employee – a person who works in any economic unit such as the government department, private business enterprises or organizations, including family businesses, and receives regular pay;
- Employer – a person who runs a business on his/her own or in partnership and engages at least one paid employee on a continuous basis in operating the business;
- Own account worker – a person who runs a business on his/her own or in partnership but does not engage any paid employee on regular basis (self-employed and not employing others);
- Contributing family worker – a person who works in his/her family business without receiving any regular pay.

In October 2018, the 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) adopted the Resolution concerning statistics on work relationships to replace the ICSE-93 that had been adopted by the 15th ICLS in January 1993. The resolution introduced a new international classification of status in employment (ICSE-18), which comprises the following main categories:

- Employer – a person who operates their own business on their own or in partnership with others and who employ one or more persons as an employee on a regular basis.
- Independent workers without employees – a person who operates an economic unit alone or in partnership with others, and does not employ any persons other than themselves, their partners, and

contributing family workers to work in the economic unit on a regular basis as an employee.

- Employee – a person who is employed for pay, on a formal or informal basis, who does not hold controlling ownership of the economic unit in which they are employed.
- Dependent contract worker – a person who has contractual arrangements of a commercial nature (but not a contract of employment) to provide goods or services for or through another economic unit, and satisfy the following conditions:
  - they are not employees of that economic unit, but are dependent on that unit for organization and execution of the work, income, or for access to the market;
  - they are workers employed for profit, who are dependent on another entity that exercises control over their productive activities and directly benefits from the work performed by them;
  - the activity of the dependent contractor would potentially be at risk in the event of termination of the contractual relationship with that economic unit.
- Contributing family worker – a person who assists a family member or household member in either (a) a market-oriented enterprise operated by the family or household member; or (b) a job in which the assisted family or household member is an employee or dependent contractor.

Employment by economic sectors

Economic sectors are defined in line with the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economics Activities (ISIC Rev. 4, of 2008), which classifies economic sectors according to the activity they carry out.

Employment by occupation

The kind of work or group of tasks done during the reference period by the person employed, classified according to the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-08, of 2008).

A.2 Detailed survey methodology

A2.1. Introduction

Kiribati's 2023/24 Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) collected a wealth of information on household expenditure, income, own-account production and consumption. It also collected information on sectoral and thematic areas such as gender, education, health, labour, primary activities, transport, information and communication, and cash transfers and remittances. The data produced via the Kiribati 2023/24 HIES will be used to:

- derive expenditure weights for the revision of the Consumer Price Index (CPI);
- supplement the data available for use in compiling official estimates of various components in the System of National Accounts; and
- gather information on welfare and food security in Kiribati; and

In addition to the above, HIES is a rich source of data covering numerous sectors and themes, including labour, education, health, agriculture, fisheries, transportation, communication, housing, energy, and household income and expenditure associated with these topics

The data will inform indicators under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and guide social and economic policy.

The HIES was implemented over a 12-month period, from June 2023 to May 2024. The survey was implemented over one-year to capture seasonal fluctuations in income, expenditure, consumption, and production patterns.

A2.2. Scope and coverage

The survey scope of the 2023/24 HIES was all occupied private households listed from the 2023 household listing conducted by KNSO. This listing was intended to update the boundaries of PSUs (Enumeration Ares) with location of occupied dwellings for survey purposes. There were no islands or PSU excluded from the random selection in the sample design of the 2023/24 Kiribati HIES.

The sample was designed to produce robust estimates on household's expenditure and income patterns at the island group levels, urban and rural areas and national level. The sample size was computed using the performance of the previous 2019 HIES at the island groups level. A two-stage, stratified sampling approach was adopted where:

- Enumeration areas were used as PSUs randomly selected with probability proportional to their size in the first stage.
- Households were randomly selected using simple random sampling within each selected PSU.

Table 38. *Sample size – initial plan*

	# PSU (EA)	Cluster size (sample list A)	Replace-ment (Sample list B)	Expect-ed total sample size	Total sample size to select
South Tarawa	51	12	6	612	918
Northern group	40	12	6	480	720
Central group	25	12	6	300	450
Southern group	40	12	6	480	720
Line Is. & Phoenix	34	12	6	408	612
National	**190**	-	-	**2,280**	**3,420**

A total of 190 PSUs where selected, with a cluster size of 12 households (list A to interview in priority). The expected sample size was then 2,280 complete interviews.

To achieve this objective, the sample size has been increased by additional 6 households (list B in case of replacement) within each selected PSU to address non-response. The main reason for non-response was the absence or the unavailability of the household members at the time of the interview.

Table 39. *Sample size achieved*

	# PSU (EA)	# valid interviews	Average cluster size	# Valid interviews		# Failed interviewed	# HHs. contacted	Response rate[6]	Completion rate
				List A	List B				
South Tarawa	51	632	12,4	503	129	103	735	68%	103%
Northern group	40	520	13	395	125	88	608	65%	108%
Central group	25	316	12,6	245	71	53	369	66%	105%
Southern group	40	506	12,6	393	113	79	585	67%	105%
Line Is. & Phoenix	34	444	13	363	81	35	479	76%	109%
National	**190**	**2418**	**12.7**	**1,899**	**519**	**358**	**2,776**	**68%**	**106%**

6 *Before replacement procedure (list A only)*

Overall, 2,418 interviews were successfully completed, which is more that was expected. This high completion rate (106%) is due to the following factors:

Replacement procedure: that allowed interviewers to replace non-responding households with households selected in list B

Change of instructions during field work: KNSO did change the procedure and halfway through field work, field teams were supposed to increase cluster size by including replacements.

It resulted in a higher final cluster size (12,7 households compared to 12 expected).

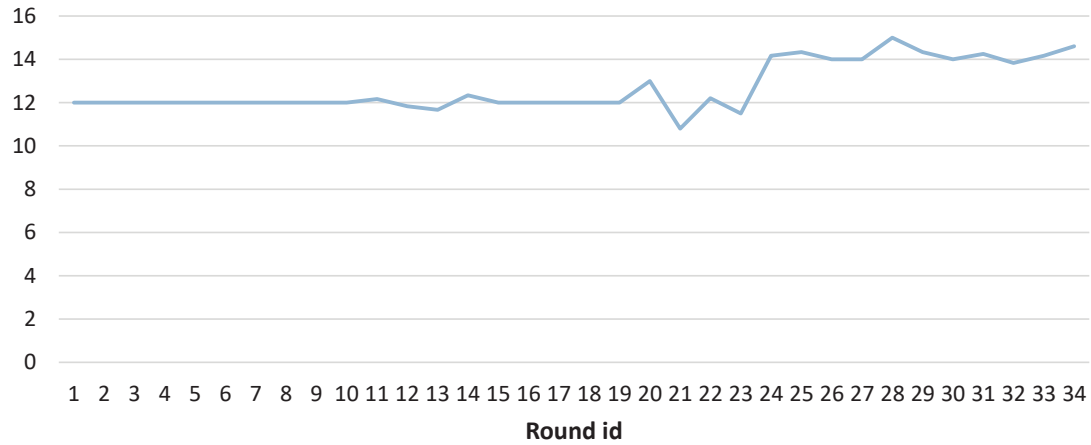

Figure 21. *Cluster size by round*

From round 24 field work instructions changes and fieldworkers were supposed to increase the cluster size by adding to the selected households the replacement ones. From round 24 to round 34, the average cluster size was 14.2.

The fieldwork started in June 2023 and ended in June 2024. During this 12-month period, 34 rounds were completed. A survey round is a 10-day period during which a team was in charge of the completion of one PSU (initially 12 households). The sample within each island group has been spread across the 12-month period to account for seasonality of events.

Table 40. *Number of interviews completed by round and island groups*

Round id	Started	Ended	South Tarawa	Northern	Central	Southern	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
1	05/06/23	14/06/23	60	-	-	-	12	72
2	15/06/23	25/06/23	60	-	-	-	12	72
3	26/06/23	05/07/23	36	-	12	12	12	72
4	06/07/23	16/07/23	24	12	12	12	12	72
5	24/07/23	02/08/23	-	12	12	12	12	48
6	03/08/23	13/08/23	24	12	12	12	12	72
7	14/08/23	23/08/23	24	12		12		48
8	24/08/23	03/09/23	24	-	-	-	12	36
9	04/09/23	13/09/23	36	12	-	-	12	60
10	14/09/23	24/09/23	12	12	12	24	12	72
11	25/09/23	04/10/23	12	13	12	24	12	73
12	05/10/23	15/10/23	12	11	24	12	12	71
13	16/10/23	25/10/23	24	12	10	12	12	70
14	26/10/23	05/11/23	24	12	14	12	12	74
15	06/11/23	15/11/23	12	12	12	12	12	60
16	16/11/23	26/11/23	12	12	12	24	12	72
17	27/11/23	06/12/23	12	12	12	24	12	72
18	07/12/23	17/12/23	12	12	12	24	12	72
19	04/01/24	14/01/24	12	12	12	24	12	72
20	15/01/24	24/01/24	24	12	-	24	12	78
21	25/01/24	04/02/24	12	12	-	24	12	54
22	05/02/24	14/02/24	12	13	12	12	12	61
23	15/02/24	25/02/24	12	21	12	12	12	69
24	26/02/24	06/03/24	14	28	14	14	15	85
25	07/03/24	17/03/24	14	28	15	14	15	86
26	18/03/24	27/03/24	14	28	13	14	15	84
27	28/03/24	07/04/24	14	27	14	14	15	84
28	08/04/24	17/04/24	-	31	14	-	15	60
29	18/04/24	28/04/24	28	29	-	14	15	86
30	29/04/24	08/05/24	28	27	-	14	15	84
31	09/05/24	19/05/24	-	28	-	14	15	57
32	20/05/24	29/05/24	-	28	14	26	15	83
33	30/05/24	09/06/24	14	14	14	28	15	85
34	10/06/24	19/06/24	14	14	14	30	30	102
TOTAL			**632**	**520**	**316**	**506**	**444**	**2,418**

A2.3. Field organization and survey Instruments

The fieldwork was carried out by a total of 6 teams, and each team consisted of 2 interviewers and 1 supervisor. Each interviewer was responsible for 6 interviews per round (from initial plan). This workload increased up to 8 or 9 after round 24.

The questionnaire was administered through face-to-face interviews, with data entry conducted using Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) software. The questionnaire was divided into 2 main sections made of the following modules:

- Individual sections:
  - Demographic characteristics
  - Education
  - Health (including functional difficulties)
  - Communication
  - Alcohol, tobacco and kava
  - Other individual expenses
  - Labour force
  - Food away from home (FAFH)
  - Remittances
  - Social protection
  - Migrant workers
  - Household level modules:
  - Food recall
  - Non-food recall
  - Partaker
  - Dwelling characteristics
  - Assets
  - Home maintenance
  - Vehicles
  - International trips
  - Domestic trips
  - Household services
  - Financial support
  - Other household expenditure
  - Ceremonies
  - Food insecurity
  - Fisheries
  - Livestock
  - Agriculture
  - Handicraft and home-processed food
  - Deprivation
  - Natural disasters & climate change impacts

A2.4. Sampling and weights

Sampling weights were calculated using the following two steps:

1. First set of weights: directly computed using the inverse of the probability of selection of each single household that completed the questionnaire.
2. Final set of weights: calibration of the first set of weights to adjust the weights using:
   - variables that are common to survey and census and to address survey non-response.
   - Population growth from the last 2020 census

Variables used for the adjustments are:

- Age of the household head;
- Sex of the household head;
- Level of education of the household head

A.3 Sample sizes and sampling errors for selected statistics

Table 41. Sample size by sex

	Male	Female	Total
Total sample	**6,282**	**6,324**	**12,606**
Working-age population, aged 15+ years	3,775	3,999	7,774
By age group			
15–24	894	797	1,691
25–64	2,685	2,885	5,570
65+	196	317	513
Labour force, aged 15+ years	2,315	1,814	4,129
By age group			
15–24	321	177	498
25–64	1,936	1,566	3,502
65+	58	71	129
Employment, aged 15+ years	2,267	1,746	4,013
By age group			
15–24	305	152	457
25–64	1,904	1,523	3,427
65+	58	71	129
By education			
Less than primary or none	5	8	13
Completed primary	1,962	1,370	3,332
Completed secondary	258	323	581
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	37	41	78
Level not stated	5	4	9
By employment status			
Employees	1,160	800	1,960
Employers	23	17	40
Own-account workers	998	853	1,851
Contributing family workers	86	76	162
By economic activity			
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	889	182	1,071
Industry	178	377	555
Manufacturing	109	373	482
Construction	63	1	64
Mining and quarrying; Electricity, gas and water supply	6	3	9
Services	1,200	1,187	2,387
Wholesale and retail trade	407	508	915
Hotels and accommodations	34	22	56
Restaurants, food and beverage services	39	54	93
Administrative and support services	55	12	67
Public administration and defence	352	200	552
Education	62	200	262
Other services	251	191	442
By occupation			
Managers	106	76	182
Professionals	143	319	462
Technicians and associate professionals	112	67	179
Clerical support workers	32	84	116
Service and sales workers	381	354	735
Skilled agricultural, forestry & fishery workers	94	17	111
Craft and related trades workers	328	518	846
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	114	12	126
Elementary occupations	956	297	1,253
(Armed forces occupations)	1	1	2
Occupation not classified	0	1	1
Unemployment	48	68	116
By age group			
15–24	16	25	41
25+	32	43	75
Outside labour force	1,460	2,185	3,645
Subsistence work	284	55	339
By age group			
15–24	67	5	72
25–64	210	43	253
65+	7	7	14

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 42. *Sample size by regions*

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
Total sample	**3,975**	**2,571**	**1,384**	**2,314**	**2,362**	**12,606**
Working-age population, aged 15+ years	2,518	1,543	818	1,438	1,457	7,774
By age group						
15–24	687	312	128	242	322	1,691
25–64	1,700	1,123	622	1,070	1,055	5,570
65+	131	108	68	126	80	513
Labour force, aged 15+ years	1,353	831	461	780	704	4,129
By age group						
15–24	189	90	54	81	84	498
25–64	1,120	713	393	670	606	3,502
65+	44	28	14	29	14	129
Employment, aged 15+ years	1,305	814	451	760	683	4,013
By age group						
15–24	169	89	48	74	77	457
25–64	1,092	697	389	657	592	3,427
65+	44	28	14	29	14	129
By education						
Less than primary or none	1	3	2	3	4	13
Completed primary	994	692	401	660	585	3,332
Completed secondary	251	116	45	88	81	581
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	56	2	2	8	10	78
Level not stated	3	1	1	1	3	9
By status of employment						
Employees	903	281	163	243	370	1,960
Employers	24	8	2	1	5	40
Own-account workers	325	469	276	485	296	1,851
Contributing family workers	53	56	10	31	12	162
By economic activity						
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	107	243	203	327	191	1,071
Industry	193	176	44	91	51	555
Manufacturing	156	157	39	89	41	482
Construction	32	17	5	1	9	64
Mining and quarrying; Electricity, gas and water supply	5	2	0	1	1	9
Services	1,005	395	204	342	441	2,387
Wholesale and retail trade	401	163	72	113	166	915

Hotels and accommodations	12	4	0	0	40	56
Restaurants, food and beverage services	59	14	4	8	8	93
Administrative and support services	58	5	0	0	4	67
Public administration and defence	181	75	62	107	127	552
Education	69	67	35	53	38	262
Other services	225	67	31	61	58	442
By occupation						
Managers	68	40	21	29	24	182
Professionals	152	97	57	94	62	462
Technicians and associate professionals	77	25	9	25	43	179
Clerical support workers	66	9	6	12	23	116
Service and sales workers	351	108	63	83	130	735
Skilled agricultural, forestry & fishery workers	47	20	7	25	12	111
Craft and related trades workers	292	230	66	129	129	846
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	65	22	5	13	21	126
Elementary occupations	185	263	217	350	238	1,253
(Armed forces occupations)	1	0	0	0	1	2
Occupation not classified	1	0	0	0	0	1
Unemployment						
By age group						
15–24	20	1	6	7	7	41
25+	28	16	4	13	14	75
Outside labour force	1,165	712	357	658	753	3,645
Subsistence work	14	109	32	157	27	339
By age group						
15–24	5	20	10	37	0	72
25–64	9	84	22	112	26	253
65+	0	5	0	8	1	14
Household or family care	756	491	214	411	455	2,327
By age group						
15–24	214	128	43	79	94	558
25–64	511	336	163	306	349	1,665
65+	31	27	8	26	12	104

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 43. *Sampling errors – employed population*

Employed population, aged 15+ years	Estimate	Standard error	95% Confidence interval	
			Lower bound	Upper bound
Total Employment	**39,530**	**904**	**37,746**	**41,313**
By gender				
Male	21,556	557	20,457	22,655
Female	17,974	581	16,829	19,119
By occupation				
15–24	5,465	391	4,693	6,238
25–54	28,955	689	27,596	30,313
55–64	3,858	202	3,459	4,256
65+	1,252	119	1,017	1,487
By occupation				
Managers, professionals, and technicians	7,907	346	7,224	8,590
Clerical, service and sales workers	9,727	469	8,802	10,652
Skilled agricultural and trades workers	10,181	544	9,108	11,255
Plant and machine operators	1,432	142	1,152	1,713
Elementary occupations	10,241	386	9,479	11,003
Armed forces	25	20	-15	65
Not elsewhere classified	17	17	-16	49
By economic industry				
Agriculture	8,228	379	7,481	8,975
Manufacturing	5,248	419	4,421	6,075
Construction	789	123	547	1,031
Other industry	104	41	23	185
Market services	15,227	622	14,000	16,455
Non market services	9,934	426	9,094	10,773
Not classifiable	-	-	-	-
By status of employment				
Employees	21,431	684	20,082	22,779
Employers	469	82	307	630
Own-account workers	15,578	484	14,624	16,533
Contributing family workers	2,052	283	1,493	2,611
Workers not classifiable by status	-	-	-	-

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 44. *Sampling errors – labour force participation rate*

Labour force participation rate (%)	Estimate	Standard error	95% Confidence interval	
			Lower bound	Upper bound
Labour force participation rate	**52.4**	**0.8**	**50.9**	**54.0**
By sex				
Male	59.4	1.1	57.2	61.5
Female	46.1	1.0	44.1	48.1
By age group				
15–24	29.3	1.6	26.3	32.5
25–54	66.2	1.0	64.3	68.1
55–64	48.0	1.7	44.6	51.4
65+	28.1	2.1	24.2	32.5
By geographic location				
Urban areas	52.4	1.1	50.3	54.5
Rural areas	52.5	1.1	50.3	54.7
By region				
South Tarawa	52.7	1.2	50.3	55.0
Northern islands	52.8	2.1	48.6	56.9
Central islands	55.6	2.6	50.5	60.7
Southern islands	52.2	1.5	49.3	55.0
The Line & Phoenix	48.2	1.2	45.7	50.6
By education attainment				
Less than primary or none	15.7	5.1	8.0	28.6
Completed primary	50.7	0.9	49.0	52.4
Completed secondary	61.5	1.9	57.7	65.3
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	84.9	3.5	76.6	90.6
Level not stated	69.3	12.3	41.8	87.6

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 45. *Sampling errors – unemployment rate*

Unemployment rate (%)	Estimate	Standard error	95% Confidence interval	
			Lower bound	Upper bound
Unemployment rate	**3.1**	**0.3**	**2.5**	**3.9**
By sex				
Male	2.5	0.4	1.8	3.5
Female	3.8	0.5	2.9	5.0
By age group				
15–24	8.4	1.4	6.0	11.7
25–54	2.3	0.3	1.8	3.0
55–64	1.8	0.9	0.7	4.6
65+	-	-	-	-
By geographic location				
Urban areas	3.5	0.5	2.6	4.6
Rural areas	2.5	0.4	1.8	3.5
By region				
South Tarawa	3.5	0.5	2.5	4.7
Northern islands	2.2	0.7	1.2	4.1
Central islands	3.1	1.0	1.6	5.9
Southern islands	2.8	0.6	1.7	4.4
Line Is. & Phoenix	3.1	0.7	2.0	4.6
By education attainment				
Less than primary or none				
Completed primary	3.0	0.4	2.3	3.8
Completed secondary	61.5	1.9	57.7	65.3
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	84.9	3.5	76.6	90.6
Level not stated	69.3	12.3	41.8	87.6

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 46. *Sampling errors – time-related underemployment rate*

Time-related underemployment rate (%)	Estimate	Standard error	95% Confidence interval	
			Lower bound	Upper bound
Time-related underemployment rate	**23.8**	**1.0**	**21.9**	**25.9**
By sex				
Male	24.6	1.1	22.4	26.8
Female	23.0	1.4	20.4	25.8
By age group				
15–24	33.6	2.7	28.5	39.1
25–54	23.5	1.1	21.5	25.7
55–64	16.7	1.9	13.2	20.8
65+	10.7	3.2	5.8	18.8
By geographic location				
Urban areas	16.3	1.3	13.9	19.0
Rural areas	35.1	1.5	32.3	38.0
By region				
South Tarawa	16.8	1.4	14.2	19.8
Northern islands	37.5	2.3	33.2	42.1
Central islands	24.9	2.4	20.5	29.8
Southern islands	41.3	2.9	35.7	47.2
Line Is. & Phoenix	11.7	1.3	9.4	14.4

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 47. *Sampling errors – youth not in employment, education, or training (NEET)*

NEET rate, aged 15-24 years (%)	Estimate	Standard error	95% Confidence interval	
			Lower bound	Upper bound
NEET rate	**37.7**	**1.7**	**34.4**	**41.1**
By sex				
Male	35.7	1.9	32.1	39.6
Female	39.7	2.5	35.0	44.7
By geographic location				
Urban areas	33.5	2.3	29.1	38.2
Rural areas	45.6	2.6	40.5	50.7
By region				
South Tarawa	33.7	2.5	29.0	38.8
Northern islands	45.8	4.5	37.1	54.7
Central islands	42.8	4.4	34.4	51.6
Southern islands	46.4	4.1	38.4	54.5
Line Is. & Phoenix	35.9	2.9	30.3	41.8

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 48. *Sampling errors – potential labour force*

Potential labour force rate (%)	Estimate	Standard error	95% Confidence interval	
			Lower bound	Upper bound
Potential labour force rate	**22.2**	**0.9**	**20.5**	**24.0**
By sex				
Male	19.4	1.1	17.4	21.6
Female	25.2	1.2	22.9	27.7
By age group				
15–24	45.1	2.2	40.7	49.5
25–54	17.1	0.9	15.4	19.0
55–64	11.6	1.9	8.3	15.9
65+	5.5	2.0	2.7	11.1
By geographic location				
Urban areas	22.5	1.2	20.1	25.0
Rural areas	21.7	1.2	19.5	24.1
By region				
South Tarawa	23.3	1.3	20.8	26.1
Northern islands	25.8	2.2	21.7	30.3
Central islands	10.1	1.5	7.5	13.5
Southern islands	22.6	1.7	19.5	26.1
Line Is. & Phoenix	14.5	1.3	12.1	17.3

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 49. *Sampling errors – informal sector*

Informal sector employment, aged 15+	Estimate	Standard error	95% Confidence interval	
			Lower bound	Upper bound
Population employed in the informal sector	**14,678**	**608**	**13,478**	**15,878**
Population employed in the formal sector	**23,036**	**672**	**21,710**	**24,363**
Population employed in HHs	**1,815**	**167**	**1,487**	**2,144**
Informal sector employment				
By sex				
Male	7,385	325	6,743	8,026
Female	7,293	383	6,538	8,048
By age group				
15–24	2,318	316	1,694	2,942
25–54	9,962	397	9,178	10,746
55–64	1,686	143	1,404	1,967
65+	712	92	530	894
By geographic location				
Urban areas	5,563	388	4,796	6,329
Rural areas	9,115	450	8,228	10,002
By region				
South Tarawa	5,052	385	4,293	5,810
Northern islands	3,946	400	3,157	4,734
Central islands	1,674	121	1,434	1,914
Southern islands	2,912	144	2,629	3,195
Line Is. & Phoenix	1,095	68	960	1,229
By education attainment				
Less than primary or none	41	16	9	72
Completed primary	13,714	532	12,664	14,764
Completed secondary	872	132	611	1,132
Tertiary	23	23	-23	69
Level not stated	28	19	-8	64

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 50. *Sampling errors – informal employment*

Informal employment, aged 15+ years	Estimate	Standard error	95% Confidence interval	
			Lower bound	Upper bound
Population with formal employment	**15,849**	**555**	**14,754**	**16,945**
Population with informal employment	23,680	803	22,096	25,264
Informal employment				
By sex				
Male	13,282	476	12,342	14,222
Female	10,398	474	9,464	11,333
By age group				
15–24	4,496	369	3,767	5,224
25–54	15,926	559	14,824	17,029
55–64	2,417	167	2,087	2,747
65+	841	103	638	1,044
By geographic location				
Urban areas	12,105	601	10,919	13,292
Rural areas	11,575	520	10,550	12,600
By region				
South Tarawa	11,148	596	9,973	12,323
Northern islands	5,125	479	4,181	6,069
Central islands	1,973	125	1,728	2,219
Southern islands	3,791	127	3,541	4,042
Line Is. & Phoenix	1,643	62	1,520	1,766
By education attainment				
Less than primary or none	78	29	20	135
Completed primary	21,446	710	20,045	22,846
Completed secondary	2,004	188	1,633	2,374
Tertiary	108	40	29	186
Level not stated	46	25	-4	96

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

A.4 Additional statistical tables

Table 51. *Key indicators of the labour market (KILM) by sex and age group*

	Male	Female	Aged 15–24	Aged 25–64	Aged 65+	Total
Labour force participation rate (%)	**59.4**	**46.1**	**29.3**	**63.4**	**28.1**	**52.4**
Employment-to-population ratio (%)	**57.9**	**44.3**	**26.8**	**62.0**	**28.1**	**50.8**
Employment	21.6	18.0	5.5	32.8	1.3	39.5
By education (% distribution)						
Less than primary or none	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.2	1.4	0.2
Completed primary	84.5	78.0	82.3	81.2	86.5	81.5
Completed secondary	12.9	18.8	16.7	15.7	7.9	15.6
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	2.2	2.7	1.0	2.6	3.0	2.4
Level not stated	0.3	0.2	0	0.2	1.2	0.2
By status in employment (% distribution)						
Employees	59.3	48.2	48.6	56.3	42.3	54.2
Employers	1.1	1.2	0.2	1.3	2.2	1.2
Own-account workers	34.9	44.9	29.6	39.8	51.4	39.4
Contributing family workers	4.7	5.7	21.6	2.5	4.2	5.2
By economic activity (% distribution)						
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	31.7	7.7	30.5	19.5	18.0	20.8
Industry	10.0	22.1	16.4	14.6	21.5	15.5
Services	58.2	70.2	53.1	65.9	60.5	63.7
Economic activity not classified	0	0	8.7	28.2	25.9	0.0
By occupation (% distribution)						
Managers	4.4	4.8	0.9	5.1	7.3	4.6
Professionals	6.7	15.6	1.5	12.3	11.1	10.8
Technicians and associate professionals	5.1	4.2	2.3	5.2	1.6	4.7
Clerical support workers	1.7	5.6	3.4	3.6	0.6	3.5
Service and sales workers	19.6	23.0	27.4	20.4	13.2	21.1
Skilled agricultural, forestry & fishery workers	4.9	0.9	4.7	2.9	0.7	3.1
Craft and related trades workers	17.2	29.3	22.3	21.9	44.1	22.7
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	6.0	0.8	1.3	4.0	4.7	3.6
Elementary occupations	34.5	15.6	36.3	24.5	16.9	25.9
(Armed forces occupations)	0	0.1	0	0.1	0	0.1
Occupation not classified	0	0.1	0	0.1	0	0
Average actual hours of work per week	31.2	26.8	30.7	35.9	24.1	29.2
Informal employment rate (%)	61.6	57.9	82.3	55.9	67.2	59.9
Unemployment rate (%)	2.5	3.8	8.4	2.3	0.0	3.1

	Male	Female	Aged 15–24	Aged 25–64	Aged 65+	Total
Youth unemployment rate, aged 15–24 (%)	6.2	12.1	8.4			8.4
Composite rate of labour underutilization (%)	40.7	44.6	66.6	37.0	15.6	42.6
Youth NEET rate, aged 15–24 (%)	35.7	39.7	37.7			37.7
Time-related underemployment rate (%)	24.6	23.0	33.6	22.7	10.7	23.8

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. Note: Time-related underemployment rate is based on less than 40 actual hours of work per week.

Table 52. *Key indicators of the labour market (KILM) by region*

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
Labour force participation rate (%)	**52.7**	**52.8**	**55.6**	**52.2**	**48.2**	**52.4**
Employment-to-population ratio (%)	**50.8**	**51.6**	**53.9**	**50.7**	**46.7**	**50.8**
Employment	21.3	6.8	3.0	5.2	3.2	39.5
By education (% distribution)						
Less than primary or none	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.2
Completed primary	76.8	87.6	86.7	89.2	83.0	81.5
Completed secondary	19.0	11.8	12.2	9.7	13.9	15.6
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	3.9	0.2	0.6	0.5	1.9	2.4
Level not stated	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.2
By status in employment (% distribution)						
Employees	69.0	32.5	37.3	30.2	57.0	54.2
Employers	1.8	0.7	0.2	0.1	0.7	1.2
Own-account workers	24.6	56.1	59.8	65.4	40.7	39.4
Contributing family workers	4.5	10.7	2.6	4.4	1.6	5.2
By economic activity (% distribution)						
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	8.5	28.8	44.2	44.7	25.3	20.8
Industry	15.2	25.1	9.5	12.6	7.7	15.5
Services	76.3	46.2	46.3	42.7	67.1	63.7
By occupation (% distribution)						
Managers	5.1	4.2	4.4	3.4	3.9	4.6
Professionals	11.1	9.4	12.1	11.1	10.0	10.8
Technicians and associate professionals	5.6	2.9	2.9	3.2	6.1	4.7
Clerical support workers	5.0	1.0	1.5	1.4	3.6	3.5
Service and sales workers	27.6	13.0	14.3	10.8	18.9	21.1
Skilled agricultural, forestry & fishery workers	3.6	2.2	1.7	3.5	1.9	3.1
Craft and related trades workers	22.5	32.6	13.3	17.4	19.7	22.7
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	4.9	2.4	0.7	1.8	3.2	3.6
Elementary occupations	14.3	32.3	49.0	47.4	32.6	25.9

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
(Armed forces occupations)	0.1	0	0	0	0.1	0.1
Occupation not classified	0.1	0	0	0	0	0
Average actual hours of work per week	35.9	20.3	20.9	16.7	31.9	29.2
Informal employment rate (%)	52.3	74.9	66.1	72.5	52.0	59.9
Unemployment rate (%)	3.5	2.2	3.1	2.8	3.1	3.1
Youth unemployment rate, aged 15–24 (%)	10.3	0.6	12.3	9.1	9.0	8.4
Composite rate of labour underutilization (%)	38.4	54.7	34.5	55.9	26.8	42.6
Youth NEET rate, aged 15–24 (%)	33.7	45.8	42.8	46.4	35.9	37.7
Time-related underemployment rate (%)	16.8	37.5	24.9	41.3	11.7	23.8

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024. Note: Time-related underemployment rate is based on less than 40 actual hours of work per week.

Table 53. *Subsistence work and unpaid household care by region (number)*

	South Tarawa	Northern islands	Central islands	Southern islands	Line Is. & Phoenix	Total
Subsistence work	232	967	201	1,099	109	2,607
By age group						
15–24	85	194	78	317	0	674
25–64	147	747	123	735	104	1,855
65+	0	26	0	47	4	77
By education attainment						
Less than primary or none	12	4	9	4	4	34
Completed primary	220	911	165	1,069	104	2,470
Completed secondary	0	48	26	26	0	101
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	0	3	0	0	0	3
Household or family care	12,764	4,262	1,427	3,128	2,121	23,703
By age group						
15–24	3,975	1,261	390	713	451	6,789
25–64	8,280	2,805	977	2,280	1,623	15,964
65+	510	197	60	135	48	949
By education attainment						
Less than primary or none	43	29	6	13	20	112
Completed primary	10,835	3,824	1,308	2,887	2,046	20,900
Completed secondary	1,800	391	95	227	55	2,568
Tertiary (first stage or completed)	86	18	18	0	0	123

Source: Kiribati HIES 2023–2024.

Table 54. *Summary of SDG indicators from the HIES 2023*

SDG Indicator	Male	Female	Total
INDICATORS FOR WHICH ILO IS THE CUSTODIAL AGENCY OR INVOLVED			
4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex (%)	13.3	15.8	14.6
5.5.2 Proportion of women in managerial positions (%)	-	47.8	-
8.2.1 Annual growth rate of real GDP per employed person (%)	-	-	-3.6
8.3.1 Proportion of informal employment in total employment (%)			
By sex	61.6	57.9	59.9
By economic activity			
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	94.5	86.3	93.1
Industry	71.8	91.1	84.3
Services	41.9	44.3	43.1
8.5.1 Average monthly earnings of employees, by sex (age, occupation and persons with disabilities) (AUD)			
By sex	3.3	3.7	3.4
By age			
15–24	2.6	2.2	2.5
25–64	3.3	3.8	3.5
65+	10.9	5.1	8.9
By occupation			
Managers	8.0	9.1	8.5
Professionals	5.0	5.2	5.1
Technicians and associate professionals	4.4	4.6	4.5
Clerical support workers	4.0	3.8	3.8
Service and sales workers	2.1	1.9	2.0
Skilled agricultural, forestry & fishery workers	4.7	2.2	4.6
Craft and related trades workers	2.8	2.8	2.8
Plant and machine operators, and assemblers	2.8	5.3	2.9
Elementary occupations	3.6	2.5	3.2
By disability status			
With disability	3.1	4.4 *	3.3
No disability	3.3	3.6	3.4
8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities (%)			
By sex	2.5	3.8	3.1
By age			
15–24	6.2	12.1	8.4
25+	1.8	2.7	2.2
By disability status			
With disability	3.1	0.7	2.1

SDG Indicator	Male	Female	Total
No disability	2.5	3.9	3.1
8.6.1 Proportion of youth (aged 15–24 years) not in education, employment, or training (%)	35.7	39.7	37.7
OTHER EMPLOYMENT RELATED SDG INDICATORS			
9.2.2 Manufacturing employment as a proportion of total employment (%)	6.2	21.8	13.3

Source: 1) Kiribati HIES 2023–2024; 2) Kiribati HIES 2019-2020; 3) The World Bank Open Data.

Note: 1) Due to data limitations, SDG indicator 8.2.1 in this report measures the compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of real GDP per employed person between 2019 and 2024 (at constant 2015 US$).

*2) * Denotes cells with small sample of less than 30 cases*

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