

The Gambia

Selected Statistics and Indicators on Child Labor

Percent of children 5-14 estimated as working in 2000:	24.8% ¹⁷⁰⁷
Minimum age of work:	16 ¹⁷⁰⁸
Age to which education is compulsory:	8 ¹⁷⁰⁹
Free public education:	Yes ^{1710*}
Gross primary enrollment rate in 2004:	81% ¹⁷¹¹
Net primary enrollment rate in 2004:	75% ¹⁷¹²
Percent of children 5-14 attending school in 2000:	57.8% ¹⁷¹³
Percent of primary school entrants likely to reach grade 5:	Unavailable
Ratified Convention 138:	9/4/2000 ¹⁷¹⁴
Ratified Convention 182:	7/3/2001 ¹⁷¹⁵
ILO-IPEC participating country:	No ¹⁷¹⁶
*Must pay for school supplies and related items.	

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In rural areas of The Gambia, most working children work on farms. Working children in urban areas work as taxi or bus attendants.¹⁷¹⁷ Working girls are most likely to work as street vendors, selling food items such as candy, water, and fruits for their parents. Working boys are most commonly found doing such odd jobs as hauling items or sweeping.¹⁷¹⁸ Many children between 14 and 16 work in technical sectors such as lumbering, sewing, or masonry.¹⁷¹⁹ Children who are sent to Koranic schools are often forced to beg in the streets for their teachers.¹⁷²⁰

¹⁷⁰⁷ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*, October 7, 2005.

¹⁷⁰⁸ Government of The Gambia, Government of The Gambia., *Children's Act, 2005*, Article 43(1).

¹⁷⁰⁹ *Constitution of the Gambia*, (1997); available from <http://www.childlaborlaws.org/docs/866.shtml>. See also U.S. Department of State, "The Gambia," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2006*, Washington, DC, March 6, 2007; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78736.htm>.

¹⁷¹⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: The Gambia." Section 5.

¹⁷¹¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Gross Enrolment Ratio. Primary. Total*, accessed December 20, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/>.

¹⁷¹² UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Net Enrolment Rate. Primary. Total*, accessed December 20, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/>.

¹⁷¹³ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*.

¹⁷¹⁴ ILO, *ILOLEX Database of International Labour Standards*, 2005 [cited October 26, 2006]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.

¹⁷¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷¹⁶ ILO, *Alphabetical List of ILO Member Countries*, Washington, DC, , 2006; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/reIm/ctry-ndx.htm>.

¹⁷¹⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: The Gambia." Section 6d.

¹⁷¹⁸ Christian Children's Fund- The Gambia, *Child Protection Baseline Assessment for Children Living and Working in the Streets of Banjul*, Christian Children's Fund, January 3, 2006, 13. See also Department of State for Education Official, Interview with USDOL contractor, September 4, 2006.

¹⁷¹⁹ U.S. Embassy- Banjul, *reporting*, October 15, 2002.

¹⁷²⁰ Ejatou Jallow, "The State of Gambian Children," *The Independent* (Banjul), April 2, 2004; available from http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/IRC/newsdesk_articles.asp?SCID=1293. See also Gambia, *Child Protection Baseline Assessment*, 13.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children, including prostitution, is common in The Gambia.¹⁷²¹ Gambian men called “sugar daddies” are also reported to offer gifts to young girls in exchange for sexual favors.¹⁷²² Visiting European pedophiles exploit children through sex tourism.¹⁷²³

Child trafficking is also a problem in The Gambia. Boys are trafficked for a wide range of work including, but not limited to, sexual exploitation, fishing, and begging.¹⁷²⁴

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The law sets the minimum age for employment in The Gambia at 16 years.¹⁷²⁵ Gambian law prohibits economic exploitation and hazardous work, or work that interferes with education for children under 16.¹⁷²⁶ Children 16 to 18 can only engage in light work and are not permitted to work at night.¹⁷²⁷ However, children may serve as apprentices at 12.¹⁷²⁸

All employees are given employee labor cards that include their age. These cards are registered with the labor commissioner who is authorized to enforce child labor laws. However, the U.S. Department of State reports that inspections rarely occurred.¹⁷²⁹ Child Protection Units within the Police Department also handle child-related law enforcement.¹⁷³⁰ There is a Children’s Court that likewise handles child labor cases.¹⁷³¹

Forced labor, including by children, is prohibited by law.¹⁷³² Children under 18 may not be recruited into the armed forces.¹⁷³³ The law prohibits promoting child prostitution and procuring a child for sexual exploitation in The Gambia or elsewhere. Penalties for such offenses range from 10 to 14 years imprisonment.¹⁷³⁴ Trafficking of children is specifically prohibited under Gambian law, which stipulates a penalty of life imprisonment.¹⁷³⁵ Enforcement of law pertaining to trafficking in children is primarily the responsibility of the Tourism Security Unit.¹⁷³⁶ The Department of Labor under the Department of State for Trade and Employment was responsible for implementing provisions on the worst forms of child labor.¹⁷³⁷

¹⁷²¹ Department of State for Education Official, Interview, September 4, 2006.

¹⁷²² Integrated Regional Information Networks, "GAMBIA: Rising poverty breeds sexual exploitation of children by Sugar Daddies", IRINnews.org, June 15, 2006; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=40937>.

¹⁷²³ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: The Gambia." Section 5.

¹⁷²⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006: The Gambia*, Washington, D.C., June 3, 2005; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2005/46613.htm>.

¹⁷²⁵ *Children's Act, 2005*, Article 43(1).

¹⁷²⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: The Gambia."

¹⁷²⁷ *Children's Act, 2005*, Articles 42-43.

¹⁷²⁸ *Children's Act, 2005*, Article 51.

¹⁷²⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: The Gambia." Section 6d.

¹⁷³⁰ U.S. Embassy- Banjul, reporting, July 24, 2007.

¹⁷³¹ Ibid.

¹⁷³² Ibid., Section 5.

¹⁷³³ *Children's Act, 2005*, Article 59(1).

¹⁷³⁴ Ibid., Articles 29-38.

¹⁷³⁵ Ibid., Article 39.

¹⁷³⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: The Gambia."

¹⁷³⁷ Ibid.

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

The Government of The Gambia is implementing its 2004-2008 National Policy for Children in The Gambia, which includes components addressing child economic and sexual exploitation.¹⁷³⁸ To educate hotel personnel about child sexual tourism, the Child Protection Alliance (CPA), a consortium of government agencies and NGOs, conducted several awareness campaigns. With the help of the Department of State for Justice, the CPA launched a government-funded trafficking education campaign during the year.¹⁷³⁹ CPA has also aired radio programs that covered such issues as child trafficking, and they teamed up with another local NGO for a child trafficking workshop.¹⁷⁴⁰

¹⁷³⁸ Republic of The Gambia, *2004–2008 National Policy for Children in The Gambia.*, Department of Social Welfare, , 2003.

¹⁷³⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006:Gambia*, Washington, D.C., June 5, 2006; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/65988.htm>.

¹⁷⁴⁰ U.S. Embassy- Banjul, *reporting*, March 5, 2007.