The Gambia

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

In 1988, the Government of The Gambia began a major education initiative which included a 15-year plan that has emphasized increasing gross enrollment rates, lowering school entry age from 8 to 7, developing basic education curricula, and improving teacher training.[1004] Many of these goals have been met. The gross primary enrollment rate increased from 62.2 to 77.1 percent from 1989 to 1995; the entry age was lowered to seven years; more textbooks were made available for students; and 1,200 unqualified teachers in the system received training.[1005] The major goal The Gambia has set for itself for the remainder of the plan is to enroll 90 percent of children in schools for the full cycle of basic education by 2005.[1006] Over the 1990s, spending on education increased from 15 to 21 percent of government expenditure and 2.6 percent to 4.3 percent of GNP, while the share of the education budget devoted to primary education increased from 38 percent to 45 percent.[1007]

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 1999, the ILO estimated that 34.5 percent of the children between the ages of 10 and 14 in The Gambia were working.[1008] Children in rural areas help their families on farms and with housework, and children in urban areas often work as street vendors and taxi and bus assistants.[1009] Some children become involved in prostitution, which is engendered by The Gambia's thriving tourist industry.[1010] Many girls in rural areas leave school to work, and some migrate to urban areas seeking domestic or other employment.[1011] According to a press report, The Gambia

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[1004] World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Credit in the Amount of SDR 15.0 Million to the Republic of the Gambia for a Third Education Sector Project in Support of the First Phase of the Third Education Sector Program*, *August 7, 1998*, 17903-GM [hereinafter World Bank *Project Appraisal*]. See also *World Development Indicators 2001* and The World Bank, *Education and Health in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Review of Sector-Wide Approaches*, Annex 7, "The Gambia Education Case Study" [hereinafter "The Gambia Education Case Study"], January 2001.

[1005] World Bank *Project Appraisal* and *World Development Indicators 2001* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2001) [hereinafter *World Development Indicators 2001*] [CD-ROM].

[1006] "The Gambia Education Case Study."

[1007] Ibid.

[1008] *World Development Indicators 2001.*

[1009] *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—The Gambia* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2001) [hereinafter *Country Reports 2000*], Section 6d, at http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/af/index.cfm?docid'799.

[1010] Two brothels in Banjul, the capital of the Gambia, reportedly keep young girls to serve foreign tourists. *See* UNICEF, *Country Profile: UNICEF in The Gambia, Programme Cycle: 1999-2003* [hereinafter *Country Profile*], at http://www.un.gm/unicef/profile.html on 11/28/01. See also *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d and Saihou Mballow, "Sex Trafficking in Gambia, West Africa," ECPAT News, March 2000 [hereinafter Mballow, "Sex Trafficking"], at http://www.dreamwater.net/ecpatusa/enews1.html on 11/28/01.

[1011] *Country Profile.*

is also a destination for children trafficked from West and Central African countries, some of whom are purchased for as little as USD 10 in Benin, Togo, Mali, Niger and Nigeria.[1012]

The Constitution mandates free and compulsory primary education, but a lack of resources and educational infrastructure has made implementation difficult.[1013] In 1995, the gross primary enrollment rate was 77.1 percent and the net primary enrollment rate was 64.7 percent.[1014] School fees long prevented many children from attending school, but in February 1998 the President of The Gambia ordered the termination of fees for the first six years of schooling.[1015] Girls make up about 40 percent of primary school students, though the figure is much lower in rural areas where cultural factors and poverty prevent parents from sending girls to school.[1016] Approximately 20 percent of school-age children attend Koranic schools, which usually have a restricted curriculum.[1017]

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Gambia's minimum age for employment is set at 18 years.[1018] All employers must file labor cards that list employees' ages with the Labor Commissioner, but few inspections are conducted.[1019] The Gambia has arrested and deported child traffickers, although the practice continues.[1020] The Gambia ratified both ILO Convention 138 on September 4, 2000 and ILO Convention 182 on July 3, 2001.[1021]

[1012] Matthias Muindi, "West Africa: The Bitter Taste of Chocolate: Child Labour in Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana," A*fricaNews*, July 2001, at http://www.globalmarch.org/child-trafficking/news-articles/thebittertasteofchocolate.htm on 11/28/01.

[1013] Information on the length of compulsory education in the Gambia is not available. See *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5.

[1014] *World Development Indicators 2001.* According to United Kingdom statistics, in 1999/2000 the gross enrollment rate for primary school was 72 percent and for girls was 47 percent. *See* United Kingdom, Department for International Development, *The Gambia: The Gambian ICT Distance Education Programme*, at http://www.imfundo.org/projects/gambia.htm on 11/28/01.

[1015] *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5

[1016] Ibid.

[1017] *Country Profile.*

[1018] *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d.

[1019] Ibid.

[1020] For example, one English tourist was arrested and extradited for having sex with girls ages 8 to 18 in the Gambia. *See* Mballow, "Sex Trafficking." Several Nigerians trafficking women into Gambia were expelled in November 2001. *See* "Banjul Deports Three Foreigners Over Girl Trafficking," *This Day (Lagos),* November 8, 2001.

[1021] ILO, International Labour Standards: Gambia, at http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/english/iloquery.htm on 11/27/01.

NOTE: Hard copies of all Web citations are on file.