

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

The Government of Burundi is an associated country of ILO-IPEC.⁷¹⁸ In 1992, the government established the National Plan of Action for the Survival, Development and Protection of Rights of Children. Among the goals to be achieved by 2000, the National Plan sought to universalize education for children ages 7 to 12 years of age, increase the net primary enrollment rate from 52.0 to 80.0 percent, reintegrate street children into the school system, and improve child protection services.⁷¹⁹ In 2001, the government's Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of Burundi and UNICEF published a national evaluation survey on the Living Conditions of the Children and Women in Burundi, which included assessments of education and child labor.⁷²⁰

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has implemented projects in Burundi that reunite children with their parents, educate returnees, and provide education and work alternatives for adolescents.⁷²¹ In 2001 a 4-year, USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC regional program designed to reintegrate child soldiers in their families and communities, as well as prevent further involvement of children in armed conflicts in Central Africa was initiated in Burundi.⁷²² In October 2001, the Ministry of Labor provided strong support for these ongoing activities.⁷²³ UNICEF signed an MOU with the Government of Burundi with the goal of developing a program to address the problem of child soldiers by engaging both the government's army and the rebels.⁷²⁴

The World Bank has committed several loans to Burundi, with a focus toward social protection. The Social Action Project funds improvement of social services, including health and general education.⁷²⁵ The Multisectoral HIV/AIDS Control and Orphans Project helps find homes for orphans, provides financial support for their care and schooling, and builds the public and private infrastructure that cares for this vulnerable group of children.⁷²⁶ UNICEF has provided school materials in emergency areas and those most affected by the conflict,⁷²⁷ and is also working to improve education for girls.⁷²⁸

⁷¹⁸ *All About IPEC: Programme Countries*, ILO-IPEC, [online] August 13, 2001 [cited July 7, 2003]; available from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/about/countries/t_country.htm.

⁷¹⁹ *Enquete Nationale d'Evaluation des Conditions de vie de l'Enfant et de la Femme au Burundi (ENECEF-Burundi 2000)*, Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi, March, 2001, 10-11; available from <http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/newreports/burundi/burundi1.pdf>. The goal of universal education was not met by 2000, and a new goal of universal free primary education is now set for 2015. See U.S. Embassy-Bujumbura, *unclassified telegram no. 1025*, August, 2003.

⁷²⁰ *Enquete Nationale d'Evaluation des Conditions de vie de l'Enfant et de la Femme au Burundi (ENECEF-Burundi 2000)*, 10.

⁷²¹ *Regional Programme on the Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflicts in Central Africa (Phase I)*, ILO-IPEC, Geneva, July, 2001, 6. Save the Children UK also works to co-ordinate the tracing of families that have been separated, and to support vulnerable children. See Save the Children UK, *Save the Children UK Annual Report (2001-02)*, 2002; available from http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/functions/wedo/annualreport/spending_africa.html [hard copy on file].

⁷²² *Regional Programme on the Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflicts in Central Africa (Phase I)*, 8-9.

⁷²³ ILO-IPEC, *Regional Programme on the Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflicts in Central Africa (Phase I: Identification of a Strategy for Concerted Action)*, status report, Geneva, June 20, 2002. Other countries included in this project are the Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, and Rwanda.

⁷²⁴ *Children affected by armed conflict: UNICEF actions*, UNICEF, May, 2002.

⁷²⁵ *Social Action Project (02)*, World Bank, June 27, 2003 [cited June 29, 2003]; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=104231&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P064510>.

⁷²⁶ *Multisectoral HIV/AIDS Control and Orphans Project*, The World Bank, [online] June 27, 2003 [cited June 26, 2003]; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=104231&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P071371>.

⁷²⁷ UNICEF Burundi, *Situation Report*, January-February, 2003; available from <http://www.unicef.org/emerg/Country/Burundi/030102.pdf> [hard copy on file]. The European Union has also committed funds to provide educational materials as part of their humanitarian aid. See *EU humanitarian aid plan for Burundi*, European Union at United Nations, [online] February 14, 2003 [cited July 1, 2003]; available from <http://europa-eu-un.org/article.asp?id=2044>.

⁷²⁸ UNICEF, *Girls' Education in Burundi*, [previously online] [cited July 7, 2003]; available from http://www.unicef.org/programme/girlseducation/action/ed_profiles/Burundifinal.pdf [hard copy on file].

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, UNICEF estimated that 32.2 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years in Burundi were working.⁷²⁹ Approximately 79.0 percent of those children were active in domestic activities, such as tending to the sick, carrying water, and caring for children.⁷³⁰ Children are also known to participate in subsistence agriculture and other informal sector activities.⁷³¹ Children work as soldiers in Burundi, and the government and rebel forces are known to actively recruit children.⁷³² The most vulnerable elements of society, such as street children, are at high risk of exploitation by armed groups.⁷³³ Child prostitution is reported to be a problem.⁷³⁴

Primary education in Burundi is compulsory for six years.⁷³⁵ In 2000, the gross primary enrollment rate was 65.0 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 53.7 percent.⁷³⁶ In 2000, only 47.0 percent of school-age children regularly attended primary school (43.7 percent for girls and 50.5 percent for boys).⁷³⁷ In 1999, 58.4 percent of children enrolled in primary school reached grade 5.⁷³⁸ Enrollment and attendance have been adversely affected by the military conflict. In some high conflict areas schools have been destroyed, and finding qualified teachers willing to work in these areas has become increasingly difficult.⁷³⁹ In addition, the cost of school fees and materials are prohibitive for some families.⁷⁴⁰

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 16 years, except in cases of light, non-hazardous work or apprenticeships, provided that the work is not dangerous to the health of the child and does not interfere with their normal childhood development or education.⁷⁴¹ Children under the age of 18 are prohibited from working at night.⁷⁴² The Labor Code amendment of 1993 calls for workplaces to protect the health and welfare of children

⁷²⁹ Children who are working in some capacity include children who have performed any paid or unpaid work for someone who is not a member of the household, who have performed more than four hours of housekeeping chores in the household, or who have performed other family work. *Enquete Nationale d'Evaluation des Conditions de vie de l'Enfant et de la Femme au Burundi (ENECEF-Burundi 2000)*, 39. In 2001, the ILO estimated that 48.4 percent of children ages 10 to 14 were in the labor force. See World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2003.

⁷³⁰ *Enquete Nationale d'Evaluation des Conditions de vie de l'Enfant et de la Femme au Burundi (ENECEF-Burundi 2000)*, 39.

⁷³¹ United States Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2002: Burundi*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2003, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18171.htm>.

⁷³² *Ibid.*, Section 5. See also Amnesty International, *Poverty, isolation and ill-treatment: Juvenile Justice in Burundi*, September 2002, 6; available from [http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/Index/AFR160112002ENGLISH/\\$File/AFR1601102.pdf](http://web.amnesty.org/aidoc/aidoc_pdf.nsf/Index/AFR160112002ENGLISH/$File/AFR1601102.pdf).

⁷³³ *Regional Programme on the Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflicts in Central Africa (Phase I)*, 5. HIV/AIDS and the state of constant conflict in the country led to an increased number of street children. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2002: Burundi*, Section 5.

⁷³⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2002: Burundi*, Section 5. See also Ecpat International, *Child Prostitution*, online database, 2003; available from <http://www.ecpat.net>.

⁷³⁵ UNESCO, *National Education Systems*, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, [database online] 1999 [cited August 22, 2002]; available from <http://www.unesco.org/education/information/wer/WEBtables/Ind4web.xls>.⁷³⁶ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003*.

⁷³⁷ *Enquete Nationale d'Evaluation des Conditions de vie de l'Enfant et de la Femme au Burundi (ENECEF-Burundi 2000)*, 20.

⁷³⁸ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003*.

⁷³⁹ See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2002: Burundi*, Section 5. See also Tony Jackson, *Equal Access to Education a peace imperative for Burundi*, International Alert, London, September, 2000, 8-9; available from http://www.international-alert.org/pdf/pubgl/burun_ed_en.pdf.

⁷⁴⁰ Jackson, *Equal Access to Education*, 33.

⁷⁴¹ *Decret loi no 1/037 du 7 juillet 1993 portant revision du Code du travail*, Article 126; available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/txt/F93BDI01.htm>.

⁷⁴² U.S. Embassy-Bujumbura, *unclassified telegram no. 1025*.

and adolescents,⁷⁴³ and allows inspections to ensure this.⁷⁴⁴ Labor inspectors may also ask for working children to receive medical exams to prove that they are not working beyond their physical ability.⁷⁴⁵ Although there have been reports of recruitment of children by the armed forces, the Government of Burundi is a party to international accords that stipulate a minimum recruitment age of 18.⁷⁴⁶ Reliable information on enforcement of child labor laws is not available.

The Government of Burundi ratified ILO Convention 138 on July 19, 2000 and ILO Convention 182 on June 11, 2002.⁷⁴⁷

⁷⁴³ *Decret loi no 1/037 du 7 juillet 1993 portant revision du Code du travail*, Articles 127-28.

⁷⁴⁴ U.S. Embassy-Bujumbura, *unclassified telegram no. 1025*.

⁷⁴⁵ *Decret loi no 1/037 du 7 juillet 1993 portant revision du Code du travail*, Article 128.

⁷⁴⁶ U.S. Embassy-Bujumbura, *unclassified telegram no. 1025*.

⁷⁴⁷ *Ratifications by Country*, ILO, [database online] [cited June 29, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.