

Somalia

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Although instability in the country complicates the gathering of statistics, UNICEF estimated that 41.9 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years were working in Somalia in 1999.³⁶⁵² Formal employment of children is rare, with the vast majority of working children engaged in herding, agriculture, and domestic service.³⁶⁵³ A 2002 World Bank study observed urban-rural differences in working children's employment relationships. Self-employment and casual labor were more often observed in urban areas, while unpaid farm labor was the primary form observed in rural areas.³⁶⁵⁴ Children are also conscripted by armed Somali militias and used for forced labor or sexual exploitation.³⁶⁵⁵ Boys as young as 14 or 15 have participated in combat and many belong to gangs who raid indiscriminately.³⁶⁵⁶ Trafficking networks exist that transport children to South Africa and promote their commercial sexual exploitation. The Middle East and Europe are also trafficking destinations.³⁶⁵⁷

Somalia has no government to provide free or compulsory education. Results from the UNICEF Primary Schools' Survey of 1998-1999 indicate that 62 percent of primary schools in Somalia required families to pay fees. Another study estimated that the fees were approximately USD 15.60 per year for each child.³⁶⁵⁸ In addition, many schools lack textbooks and running water.³⁶⁵⁹ Gross and net enrollment rates are not available for Somalia. In 1999 UNICEF estimated that 58.4 percent of primary school-age children attended

³⁶⁵² UNICEF, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS2)- Somalia: List of Tables*, [online] [cited November 9, 2004], Table 42; available from <http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/natlMICSrepz/Somalia/TablesFinal150101.pdf>. For more information on the definition of working children, please see the section in the front of the report entitled Statistical Definitions of Working Children.

³⁶⁵³ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Somalia*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18226.htm>.

³⁶⁵⁴ World Bank, *Socio-Economic Survey Somalia 2002*, 1, May 28, 2003; available from <http://www.worldbank.org/afr/so/surveydoc.htm>.

³⁶⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Somalia*, Washington, D.C., June 14, 2004; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2004/>.

³⁶⁵⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Somalia*. Section 5

³⁶⁵⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Somalia*.

³⁶⁵⁸ UNESCO, *Education for All 2000 Assessment: Country Reports- Somalia*, pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 52/84, 2000; available from http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/somalia/rapport_2.html.

³⁶⁵⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Somalia*, Section 5.

school, and that 72.5 percent of children who had started primary school were likely to reach grade 5.³⁶⁶⁰ Many students attend Koranic schools, though these schools do not provide broad-based education.³⁶⁶¹

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

Somalia has no national government and no means of enforcing labor laws.³⁶⁶²

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

With no national government, Somalia has no national education policies or programs on child labor or education.³⁶⁶³

Since 1996, the international effort to improve education in Somalia has been coordinated by the Education Sectoral Committee of the Somalia Aid Coordination Body (SACB), made up of UN agencies, donors, and international NGOs.³⁶⁶⁴

The major goals of the SACB include improving access to education, improving learning conditions, enhancing teacher training, and establishing a viable financial management system.³⁶⁶⁵ UNICEF, in concert with other partners and local authorities, is working on projects to reform the education system, develop curriculum, train teachers, develop and distribute standardized textbooks, establish educational standards, and develop management information systems.³⁶⁶⁶ UNICEF, UNESCO-PEER and some NGOs have also distributed textbooks and other instructional materials to a small number of Koranic schools in Somalia and have created a program under which Koranic schools supplement or substitute for formal primary education.³⁶⁶⁷

| Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments | |
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| Ratified Convention 138 | |
| Ratified Convention 182 | |
| ILO-IPEC Member | |
| National Plan for Children | |
| National Child Labor Action Plan | |
| Sector Action Plan | |

³⁶⁶⁰ UNICEF's MICS2 study looked at the education of children ages five and older. According to UNICEF, 77 percent of children in the central-south of Somalia who entered grade 1 reached grade 5, as did 74 percent in the northeast and 80 percent in the northwest. See UNICEF, *Somalia: List of Tables*. See also Government of Somalia, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2 (MICS2)*, UNICEF; available from http://www.ucw-project.org/cgi-bin/ucw/Survey/Main.sql?come=Tab_Country_Res.sql&ID_COUNTRY=193&anno=?anno. NetAid, an NGO, estimates that "four out of every five children have no access to any schooling whatsoever." See also NetAid, *Somalia- Concern*, NetAid.org, [online] [cited November 26, 2003]; available from http://www.netaid.org/projects/project_index.pt?project_id=10231. The U.S. Department of State's Human Rights Report also cites the 10-20 percent enrollment figure. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Somalia*, Section 5.

³⁶⁶¹ UK Save the Children, *Emergency Updates-Somalia*, [previously online] 2002 [cited September 12, 2002]; available from http://savethechildren.org.uk/emerg_updates/Somalia.html. [hard copy on file].

³⁶⁶² U.S. Department of State, *Background Note: Somalia*, October 2003; available from <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2863.htm>. See also UN Somalia, *Somalia History*, United Nations, [previously online] [cited October 4, 2002]; available from <http://www.unsomalia.org/infocenter/history.htm> [hard copy on file].

³⁶⁶³ The Transitional National Government, based in Mogadishu, represents Somalia in the UN and other international organizations. It has yet to establish its authority over most of the country and has little control over most government services.

³⁶⁶⁴ Somalia Aid Coordination Body, *The Somalia Aid Coordination Body on the Net*, [cited October 29, 2004]; available from http://www.sacb.info/main_intro.htm.

³⁶⁶⁵ Somalia Aid Coordination Body, *SACB Education Sectoral Strategy*, [cited October 29, 2004]; available from <http://www.sacb.info/committees/education/SACB%20EDUCATION%20SECTORAL%20STRATEGY.doc>.

³⁶⁶⁶ UNICEF, *UNICEF Humanitarian Action: Somalia Donor Update 27 January 2003*, [online] 2003 [cited July 23, 2003]; available from <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/0/0541ED3A1C22572E85256CBD006DE4FA?OpenDocument>.

³⁶⁶⁷ UNESCO, *EFA 2000 Assessment: Somalia*, [cited November 3, 2003].