

Guinea-Bissau

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

The Government of Guinea-Bissau has developed a national education plan, which will improve both access to schools and the quality of education, and which relies upon the work of the general population, the private sector, and contributions by NGOs.¹¹³² The World Bank is assisting the government to achieve these goals through a Basic Education Support loan project. The World Bank Project also has a girls' schooling component.¹¹³³ In addition, UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Education to operate primary education projects in war-affected areas in order to rebuild houses and to provide teacher training and classroom supplies.¹¹³⁴

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 1999, UNICEF estimated that 65.4 percent of children between the ages of 5 and 14 years in Guinea-Bissau were working.¹¹³⁵ Children work in street trading, farming, and domestic labor.¹¹³⁶ Reports also indicate that children as young as 14 years of age fought on both sides of the civil conflict in 1998 and 1999.¹¹³⁷

¹¹³² UNESCO, *The Education for All (EFA) 2000 Assessment: Country Reports—Guinea-Bissau*, at http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/guinea_bissau/contents.html on 10/17/01.

¹¹³³ Basic Education Support Project, World Bank Project Data, at <http://www.worldbank.org/projects/Project.asp?pid'P001015> on 12/11/01.

¹¹³⁴ In the past, UNICEF also implemented its Global Girls' Education Program in Guinea-Bissau, specifically targeting girls' enrollment, although the country project was recently put on hold. See *UNICEF's Humanitarian Response*. See also UNICEF, *Global Girls' Education Program, Guinea-Bissau*, at http://www.unicefusa.org/girls_ed/global.html#GuineaBissau on 10/17/01.

¹¹³⁵ In a 2000 study, it was estimated that 5.1 percent of children between ages 5 and 14 engage in paid work; 9.7 percent participate in unpaid work for someone other than a household member; and, overall, 65.4 percent of children are working in some capacity. 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 4 hours of housekeeping chores in the household, or who have performed other family work. See *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2*, available at Understanding Children's Work, at <http://www.ucw-project.org/resources/index.html> on 12/11/01. See also UNICEF, *MICS: Guinea-Bissau*, December 2000, at <http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/Gj99306k.htm> on 12/11/01.

¹¹³⁶ *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—Guinea-Bissau* (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'828>.

¹¹³⁷ Amnesty International, *Annual Report 2000: Guinea-Bissau*, at <http://www.web.amnesty.org/web/ar2000web.nsf> on 10/16/01.

Education is compulsory from the age of 7 to 13.¹¹³⁸ In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 53.5 percent, with higher enrollment ratio for males (67.7 percent) compared to females (40 percent).¹¹³⁹ Guinea-Bissau is continuing to recover from the civil conflict of 1999, which displaced one-third of the population, destroyed many schools, and prevented most young children from attending school for at least half a year.¹¹⁴⁰

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The General Labor Act sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years for factory work and 18 years for heavy or dangerous labor, including work in mines.¹¹⁴¹ The law prohibits forced labor.¹¹⁴² Twenty-four months of military service is compulsory for all citizens between 18 and 25 years old.¹¹⁴³ There are no specific laws protecting children from commercial sexual exploitation.¹¹⁴⁴ The Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Civil Service and Labor generally enforce minimum age laws in the formal sector, but do not enforce these requirements in other sectors.¹¹⁴⁵ Guinea-Bissau has not ratified ILO Convention 138 or ILO Convention 182.¹¹⁴⁶

¹¹³⁸ Youth at the UN, *Country Profiles on the Situation of Youth: Guinea-Bissau*, at <http://esa.un.org/socdev/nyin/countrys.asp?countrycode=gw> on 10/16/01.

¹¹³⁹ Net enrollment statistics on Guinea-Bissau are not available. See UNESCO, *Education for All (EFA): Year 2000 Assessment* (Paris, 2000) [hereinafter *EFA Assessment*] [CD-ROM].

¹¹⁴⁰ According to the U.S. Department of State, by the end of 1999, most internally displaced persons had returned to their homes. See UNICEF, *UNICEF's Humanitarian Response to Children, January–December 1999, Guinea-Bissau* [hereinafter *UNICEF's Humanitarian Response*], at <http://www.unicef.org/cap/gbissau.pdf> on 10/16/01. For year of conflict, see also *Country Reports 2000* at the Introduction.

¹¹⁴¹ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d.

¹¹⁴² *Ibid.* at Section 6c.

¹¹⁴³ There is no information available on the minimum age for voluntary recruitment in Guinea-Bissau. See Coalition to End the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report 2001: Guinea-Bissau*, at "http://www.child-soldiers.org/report2001/countries/guinea_bissau.html" http://www.child-soldiers.org/report2001/countries/guinea_bissau.html on 11/29/01.

¹¹⁴⁴ The specific law prohibiting forced labor is not named. See "CSEC Overview," ECPAT International Database, at http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online/database/ on 0/30/01.

¹¹⁴⁵ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d.

¹¹⁴⁶ ILOLEX database: Guinea-Bissau at <http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/english/> on 10/16/01.

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