

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

The Government of the Gambia began implementing an education initiative in 1998, with USD 15 million in loan support from the World Bank. The project will last until 2005 and is intended to increase the gross enrollment rate to 90 percent, improve educational opportunities for girls,<sup>1768</sup> strengthen basic education curricula, and improve teacher training.<sup>1769</sup> The government's education efforts are also supported through a joint project with UNICEF, which began in February 1999 and will end in 2003.<sup>1770</sup> In 2002 the government initiated a program that paid the school fees for girls enrolled in grades 7 through 12 in public schools, and it now covers girls around the country as well as girls in private schools.<sup>1771</sup> The government also implements the President's Empowerment of Girls Education project in the Banjul, Western and North Bank.<sup>1772</sup> In June 2002, the Government of the Gambia became eligible to receive funding from the World Bank and other donors under the Education for All Fast Track Initiative, which aims to provide all children with a primary school education by the year 2015.<sup>1773</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, UNICEF estimated that 26.9 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years in the Gambia were working.<sup>1774</sup> Children in rural areas mainly work on family farms and assist with housework; many children in urban areas work as street vendors or taxi and bus assistants.<sup>1775</sup> Other sectors where children ages 14 to 17 years are known to work

<sup>1768</sup> One method of improving access to education for girls is the Scholarship Trust Fund, which covers the costs of tuition, textbooks, and examination fees for girls at all levels of education. For more information see *Initiatives in Girls Education: The Scholarship Trust Fund*, Secretary of State for Education, [online] [cited June 27, 2003]; available from [http://www.edugambia.gm/Directorates/Current\\_Projects/Girls\\_Education/body\\_girls\\_education.html](http://www.edugambia.gm/Directorates/Current_Projects/Girls_Education/body_girls_education.html).

<sup>1769</sup> The 1998 project is the continuation of an education program that began in 1988 in the Gambia. See 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*, No. 17903-GM, August 7, 1998, 3.5. See also World Bank, *Education and Health in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Review of Sector-Wide Approaches*, The Gambia Education Case Study, January 2001, 107. See also *Education Sector Project (03)*, World Bank, [online] June 20, 2003 [cited June 26, 2003]; available from <http://www4.worldbank.org/sprojects/Project.asp?pid=P035643>. A similar program was implemented in February 1999 as a joint project between UNICEF and the government of the Gambia. This project spans 1999-2003 and encompasses identical goals to those already mentioned. For further information, see UNICEF and Government of the Gambia, *Programme of Cooperation 1999-2003*, 31-34; available from <http://www.ungambia.gm/unicef/pdf/mpopart2.pdf>. The goal of the Gambian government is that every child receives nine years of schooling, with at least 50 percent attending secondary school. See Satang Jow, *Education Management Project*, Secretary of Station for Education, [online] [cited June 27, 2003]; available from [http://www.edugambia.gm/Mission\\_Statement\\_And\\_Policy/\\_/Policy\\_Documents\\_and\\_Reports/EMP/body\\_emp.html](http://www.edugambia.gm/Mission_Statement_And_Policy/_/Policy_Documents_and_Reports/EMP/body_emp.html).

<sup>1770</sup> UNICEF and Government of the Gambia, *Programme of Cooperation 1999-2003*. UNICEF also has programs designed to eliminate the disadvantages in education that girls have faced in The Gambia. See *Girls' Education in The Gambia*, UNICEF, [online] [cited June 26, 2003]; available from [www.unicef.org/programme/girlseducation/action/ed\\_profiles/Gambiafinal.PDF](http://www.unicef.org/programme/girlseducation/action/ed_profiles/Gambiafinal.PDF).

<sup>1771</sup> The Department of State for Education cannot fund the entire program, but works with different partners to ensure financial support. U.S. Embassy- Banjul, *unclassified telegram no. 0642*, August, 2003.

<sup>1772</sup> The U.S. Embassy in Banjul contributes funds to this project through the Education for Development and Democracy Initiative Ambassador's Girls Scholarship Fund. Ibid.

<sup>1773</sup> World Bank, *World Bank Announces First Group Of Countries For 'Education For All' Fast Track*, press release, Washington, D.C., June 12, 2002; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20049839~menuPK:34463~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424,00.html>.

<sup>1774</sup> 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. See Government of The Gambia in collaboration with UNICEF, *The Gambia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Report*, New York, 2000, 40, 88; available from <http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/newreports/gambia/MICS2%20Report%20gambia.pdf>. In 2001, the ILO estimated that 33 percent of children ages 10 to 14 are in the labor force. See World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2003.

<sup>1775</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2002: The Gambia*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2003, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18205.htm>.

are carpentry, sewing, masonry, plumbing, tailoring, and mechanics.<sup>1776</sup> The number of street children is increasing, and they are vulnerable to exploitation.<sup>1777</sup> Some children work in commercial sexual exploitation.<sup>1778</sup> Sex tourism is a problem in the Gambia and involves both boys and girls.<sup>1779</sup> Many girls in rural areas leave school to work, and some migrate to urban areas seeking domestic or other employment.<sup>1780</sup>

The Constitution mandates free and compulsory primary education for 9 years, but a lack of resources and educational infrastructure has made implementation difficult.<sup>1781</sup> In 2000, the gross primary enrollment rate was 82.3 percent and the net primary enrollment rate was 68.7 percent.<sup>1782</sup> Enrollment of girls is low in rural areas where cultural factors and poverty dissuade parents from sending girls to school.<sup>1783</sup> Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for the Gambia. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.<sup>1784</sup> In 1998, 69.2 percent of children enrolled in primary school reached grade 5.<sup>1785</sup> Approximately 20 percent of school-age children attend Koranic schools, which usually have a restricted curriculum.<sup>1786</sup>

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Gambia's statutory minimum age for employment is 14 years.<sup>1787</sup> The legal framework governing child labor in the Gambia is limited, and there are no laws that restrict the sectors in which children can work.<sup>1788</sup> There is no formal mechanism that specifically ensures compliance with child labor standards.<sup>1789</sup> Employee labor cards list employee ages with the Labor Commissioner, but enforcement inspections rarely take place.<sup>1790</sup> The Criminal Code prohibits procuring a girl under 21 years of age for the purposes of prostitution, either in the Gambia or

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<sup>1776</sup> U.S. Embassy- Banjul, *unclassified telegram no. 1032*, October 15, 2002.

<sup>1777</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties, Concluding Observations: Gambia*, UNICEF, June 11, 2001; available from <http://wwwserver.law.wits.ac.za/humanrts/crc/gambia2001.html>.

<sup>1778</sup> UNICEF, *Country Profile: UNICEF in The Gambia, Programme Cycle: 1999-2003*, [previously online]; available from <http://www.ungambia.gm/unicef/profile.html> [hard copy on file]. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: The Gambia*, Section 6f.

<sup>1779</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2003*, Washington, D.C., June 11, 2003; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2003/21275.htm>. See also ECPAT International, *Gambia*, in ECPAT International, [database online] [cited June 26, 2003]; available from [http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat\\_inter/projects/monitoring/online\\_database/index.asp](http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/index.asp). See also The Protection Project, "The Gambia," in *Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children: A Country-by-Country Report on a Contemporary Form of Slavery*, 2002; available from <http://209.190.246.239/ver2/cr/Gambia.pdf>.

<sup>1780</sup> UNICEF, *Country Profile*.

<sup>1781</sup> According to different sources, education in The Gambia either begins at age 7 or age 8 and is compulsory through the age of 15. See *The EFA 2000 Country Assessment: Country Reports The Gambia*, UNESCO, 2000; available from [http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/gambia/rapport\\_1.html](http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/gambia/rapport_1.html). See also U.S. Embassy- Banjul, electronic communication to USDOL official, February 19, 2004. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: The Gambia*, Section 5. See also UNICEF and Government of the Gambia, *Programme of Cooperation 1999-2003*.

<sup>1782</sup> The gross primary enrollment rate increased from 63.9 percent in 1990 to 81.4 percent in 1998. *World Bank, World Development Indicators 2003*.

<sup>1783</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: The Gambia*, Section 5.

<sup>1784</sup> For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

<sup>1785</sup> World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003*.

<sup>1786</sup> UNICEF, *Country Profile*.

<sup>1787</sup> U.S. Embassy- Banjul, *unclassified telegram no. 1032*.

<sup>1788</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1789</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1790</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: The Gambia*, Section 6d.

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outside of the country.<sup>1791</sup> Reports indicate that the police deported five foreigners in 2001 for trafficking young girls into the Gambia and employing them as commercial sex workers.<sup>1792</sup>

The Government of the Gambia ratified ILO Convention 138 on September 4, 2000 and ILO Convention 182 on July 3, 2001.<sup>1793</sup>

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<sup>1791</sup> Government of The Gambia, *Criminal Code*, as cited in The Protection Project Legal Library, [database online] 1964; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/GambiaFpdf>.

<sup>1792</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report 2003*, Washington, D.C., June 11, 2003; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2003/21275.htm>.

<sup>1793</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited June 26, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.