

Zimbabwe

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

The Zimbabwe Central Statistics Office estimated that 22.7 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years in Zimbabwe were working in 1999.⁴³¹⁴ Reliable data since then is unavailable, but with a more than 30 percent contraction of the economy and decline of most economic and social indicators, that figure has likely increased substantially. Children work in traditional and commercial farming, forestry and fishing, and domestic service.⁴³¹⁵ Children also work in small-scale mining, gold panning, quarrying, construction, very small industries, manufacturing, trade, restaurants, and as beggars.⁴³¹⁶ Over 90 percent of economically active children aged 5 to 17 reside in rural areas.⁴³¹⁷ There is evidence that the incidence of children working in commercial farming has decreased as farm laborers are evicted from large commercial farms seized through the government's fast track land resettlement program, largely from white Zimbabweans. In addition, as the unemployment rate grows, fewer children are employed in formal industry.⁴³¹⁸ More children have joined the informal sector, often exposing them to other serious hazards.⁴³¹⁹

In order to gain admittance into college, teacher training schools, or the civil service, the government frequently required that youth present a diploma from one of the National Youth Service training camps. The purpose of the training camps as stated was to instill a sense of pride and develop employment skills in the youth; however, a Parliamentary investigation into the situation at camps found that conditions were poor, trainees were subjected to political indoctrination, and no real vocational training was being provided⁴³²⁰

⁴³¹⁴ Another 39.1 percent of children ages 15 to 17 years were also found working. See Ministry of Public Service, Labour, and Social Welfare, *National Child Labour Survey: Country Report- Zimbabwe*, online, Government of Zimbabwe, Central Statistical Office, Harare, 1999, 20, 45; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simpoc/zimbabwe/report/index.htm>. 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.

⁴³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 45, 60. See also Line Eldring, Sabata Nakanyane, and Malehoko Tshoamedi, "Child Labor in the Tobacco Growing Sector in Africa" (paper presented at the IUF/ITGA/BAT Conference on the Elimination of Child Labor, Nairobi, October 8-9, 2000), 87. Children from rural areas are also often recruited to work as domestics in the houses of distant kin or unrelated employers for long hours with little free time. See Micheal Bourdillion, "Working Children in Zimbabwe" (paper presented at the Conference on Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Africa, Uppsala, September 13-16, 2001); available from <http://www.nai.uu.se/sem/conf/orphans/bourdillon.pdf>.

⁴³¹⁶ Ministry of Public Service, Labour, and Social Welfare, *National Child Labour Survey*, 45, 60. See also Eldring, Nakanyane, and Tshoamedi, "Child Labor in the Tobacco Growing Sector", 87.

⁴³¹⁷ Ministry of Public Service, Labour, and Social Welfare, *National Child Labour Survey*, xii-xvi.

⁴³¹⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Zimbabwe*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27760.htm>.

⁴³¹⁹ *Ibid.* In 2002, several officials noted a surge in illegal gold panning among children. Some are reported to be as young as 11 years old. See Tsitsi Matope, "Rushing Faces Food Shortage", *allAfrica.com*, [no longer available online, hard copy on file], August 16, 2002; available from <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200208160250.html>.

⁴³²⁰ The government gives a preference to National Youth Service graduates for many civil service jobs, which is a strong incentive given the estimated 80 percent unemployment rate in the country. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Zimbabwe*, Section 5, 6d.

Over the past few years, the number of children living on the streets has continued to rise and there are reports of children involved in commercial sexual exploitation.⁴³²¹ The traditional practice of offering a young girl as payment to settle inter-family feuds continues to occur in Zimbabwe, as does early marriage of young girls.⁴³²² Zimbabwe is considered a source and transit country for a small number of children trafficked for forced labor and sexual exploitation.⁴³²³ Within Zimbabwe, a small number of children are reportedly trafficked internally to southern border towns for commercial sexual exploitation.⁴³²⁴ The child labor situation is compounded by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, which in Zimbabwe, has left close to 1 million children orphaned, reliant on informal work to supplement lost family income, and has forced others to work as caregivers for sick adults.⁴³²⁵ As a result of the epidemic, Zimbabwe is currently experiencing an increase in child-headed households.⁴³²⁶

Education is neither free nor compulsory in Zimbabwe.⁴³²⁷ In 2001, the gross primary enrollment rate was 99.0 percent. The net primary enrollment rate was 82.7 percent.⁴³²⁸ Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. In 1999, the gross and net primary attendance rates were 108.9 and 85.1 percent, respectively.⁴³²⁹ The full impact of the recent political turmoil; fast track land resettlement program; drought; scarce food supply; and the growing HIV/AIDS crisis has yet to be determined, but has already had a negative effect on school enrollment and attendance as well as the quality of public education.⁴³³⁰

⁴³²¹ Ibid., Section 5, 6f.

⁴³²² Ibid., Section 5.

⁴³²³ Reports indicate that children are trafficked from Zimbabwe to South Africa and through Zimbabwe to South Africa from Malawi. See U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Zimbabwe*, online, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C., June 14, 2004; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2004/33189.htm>. There are also anecdotal reports of child trafficking for farm labor. See Congress of South Africa Trade Unions, *COSATU/SAAPAWU Media Statement on the SAHRC Investigation Into Human Rights Violations in Farming Communities*, press release, Johannesburg, July 16, 2002, [cited August 14, 2003]; available from <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200207160635.html>. Hard copy on file, no longer available online

⁴³²⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Zimbabwe*.

⁴³²⁵ ILO-IPEC Director General, "A Future without Child Labour: Global Report under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights to Work" (paper presented at the International Labour Conference, 90th Session 2002, Geneva, 2002), 41-43; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/decl/download/global3/part1chapter3.pdf>. One source estimates 780,000 orphans under age 14 have lost parents to HIV/AIDS. See Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS, *Epidemiological Fact Sheets on HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections: Zimbabwe*, in UNAIDS, [online database] 2002 [cited May 6, 2004]; available from http://www.unaids.org/hiv/aidsinfo/statistics/fact_sheets/pdfs/Zimbabwe_en.pdf. Others estimate there will be roughly 1 million children below the age of 15 orphaned by 2005. See The Herald, "240,000 Children Living With HIV, Says Minister of Health", *allafrica.com*, [online], June 11, 2003; available from <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200306110261.html>. Hard copy on file, no longer available online.

⁴³²⁶ U.S. Embassy- Harare, *unclassified telegram no. 1386*, August 2004.

⁴³²⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Zimbabwe*, Section 5.

⁴³²⁸ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2004.

⁴³²⁹ USAID Development Indicators Service, *Global Education Database*, [online] 2004 [cited October 10, 2004]; available from <http://quesdb.cdie.org/ged/index.html>.

⁴³³⁰ The closing of more than 500 schools on formerly white owned farms in 2002, left over 250,000 children unable to attend classes. Two hundred thousand of the children who attended the closed schools were primary school students. See Itai Dzamara, "Land-Grab Deprives 250,000 Pupils of Education", *allafrica.com*, [online], July 22, 2002; available from <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200207220629.html>. Hard copy on file, no longer available online. The ILO estimates that Zimbabwe may lose 16,200 teachers to HIV/AIDS over the next decade. See Desmond Cohen, *Human capital and the HIV epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa*,

Since the beginning of 2004, many schools have been forced to increase fees to cover the growing cost of materials and salaries due to inflation. The fee increases reportedly have led to a rise in dropout rates, affecting girls disproportionately.⁴³³¹ The sexual abuse of female students by teachers has also had a negative impact on girls' educational attainment.⁴³³²

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Relations Amendment Act of 2003 raised the minimum age for employment to 13 years, specifying that children between the ages of 13 and 15 can only be employed as apprentices and only under special training conditions.⁴³³³ The minimum age at which children may perform light work is set at 15 years, and young persons under the age of 18 years are prohibited from performing work that might jeopardize their health, safety, or morals.⁴³³⁴

The Children's Protection and Adoption Amendment Act prohibits the involvement of children in hazardous labor. However, implementation of the Act has been slow.⁴³³⁵ The Act defines hazardous labor as any work likely to: interfere with the education of children; expose children to hazardous substances; involve underground mining; require the use of electronically powered hand tools, cutting or grinding blades; expose children to extreme conditions; or occur during a night shift.⁴³³⁶

The Penal Code prohibits children from visiting or residing in a brothel, and prohibits anyone from causing the seduction, abduction, or prostitution of children.⁴³³⁷ No laws specifically address trafficking in persons.⁴³³⁸ However, under the Immigration Act, prostitutes and persons benefiting from the earnings of

Working Paper 2, ILO Programme on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work, Geneva, June 2002; available from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/trav/aids/publ/wp2_humancapital.pdf. Orphans tend to be approximately 10 percent less likely to attend school than non-orphans. See UNICEF, *Orphans less likely to attend school*, UNICEF, [online] 2004 [cited May 25, 2004]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/sowc04/16151.html>.

⁴³³¹ Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Zimbabwe: Rise in drop out rate over school fees hike", IRINnews.org, [online], December 24, 2003 [cited February 12, 2004]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=38586>. The government responded to the fee increase by forcibly closing nearly 50 private schools, insisting that schools could not legally charge increased fees without requesting approval from the permanent Secretary of Education. Most schools were reopened the following week. See Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Zimbabwe: Private schools reopen", IRINnews.org, [online], May 10, 2004 [cited May 6, 2004]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=40966>.

⁴³³² Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Zimbabwe: Sexual abuse of schoolgirls largely unpunished", IRINnews.org, [online], February 6, 2004 [cited May 6, 2004]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=39353>.

⁴³³³ The Labour Relations Amendment Act was enacted in March 2003. See The Herald, "Labour Act Amended", *allafrica.com*, [online], March 10, 2003; available from <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200303100134.html>. See also U.S. Embassy-Harare, *unclassified telegram no. 1669*, August 2003. See also *Labour Relations Amendment Act*, (2002); available from http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.details?p_lang=en&p_country=ZWE&p_classification=01.02&p_origin=COUNTRY.

⁴³³⁴ U.S. Embassy-Harare, *unclassified telegram no. 1669*.

⁴³³⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Zimbabwe*, Section 6d. See also The Republic of Zimbabwe, *Children's Protection and Adoption Amendment Act*, (2001); available from http://ilis.ilo.org/cgi-bin/gpte/stbna/natlex?wq_fld=B380&wq_val=Zimbabwe&wq_rel=AND&wq_fld=B380&wq_val=Children&wq_rel=AND&wq_fld=B520&wq_val=&wq_rel=AND&wq_fld=B500&wq_val=&wq_rel=AND&wq_fld=B380&wq_val=

⁴³³⁶ *Children's Protection and Adoption Amendment Act*.

⁴³³⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Zimbabwe*.

⁴³³⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Zimbabwe*, Section 6f.

prostitution are barred from entering the country,⁴³³⁹ and the Sexual Offenses Act criminalizes the transportation of persons across borders for sex.⁴³⁴⁰ Both the Constitution and Labor Relations Amendment Act prohibit forced labor. However, the Labor Relations Amendment Act makes an exception for labor required from a member of a disciplined force.⁴³⁴¹

According to the amended Labor Act, violators of Section 11, Employment of Young Persons, are subject to fines of up to ZWD 30,000 (USD 5.00) and/or imprisonment up to 2 years.⁴³⁴² Persons violating Section 4A, Prohibition of Forced Labor are also liable for fines and imprisonment.⁴³⁴³ Under the Sexual Offenses Act of 2001, a person convicted of prostituting a child under the age of 12 years is subject to a fine of up to ZWD 35,000 (USD 6.00) or imprisonment of up to 7 years.⁴³⁴⁴ The Sexual Offenses Act also establishes a maximum fine of ZWD 50,000 (USD 8.00) and a maximum prison sentence of 10 years for procuring another person for prostitution or sex inside and outside of the country.⁴³⁴⁵

According to an ILO report, labor regulations, including child labor laws, are poorly enforced because of weak interpretations of the laws, a lack of labor inspectors, and a poor understanding among those affected of their basic legal rights.⁴³⁴⁶ The Zimbabwe police serve as the primary authority to combat trafficking, and the Department of Immigration monitors borders. In January 2004, the Ministry of Home Affairs launched a program to combat corruption at border posts.⁴³⁴⁷ Although the government has established Victim Friendly Courts in Harare (where abuses perpetrated against children can be tried), these courts are understaffed as a result of magistrates' preference for more lucrative employment outside Zimbabwe.⁴³⁴⁸

⁴³³⁹ The Republic of Zimbabwe, *Immigration Act*, (December 31, 1995), Part III, section 14. See also The Protection Project, "Zimbabwe," in *Human Rights Report on Trafficking of Persons, Especially Women and Children: A Country-by-Country Report on a Contemporary Form of Slavery*, March 2002; available from <http://209.190.246.239/ver2/cr/Zimbabwe.pdf>.

⁴³⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Zimbabwe*.

⁴³⁴¹ Labor required by way of parental discipline is also excluded from the definition of forced labor. See U.S. Embassy- Harare, *unclassified telegram no. 1669*. See also *Constitution*; available from <http://confinder.richmond.edu/Zimbabwe.htm#14>.

⁴³⁴² U.S. Embassy- Harare, *unclassified telegram no. 1669*. Currency conversion was obtained using the government foreign exchange auction rate as of May 2005. See U.S. Embassy- Harare official, electronic communication to USDOL official, June 8, 2005.

⁴³⁴³ U.S. Embassy- Harare, *unclassified telegram no. 1669*.

⁴³⁴⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Zimbabwe*, Section 5. For currency conversion see U.S. Embassy- Harare official, electronic communication, February 18, 2004.

⁴³⁴⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Zimbabwe*, Section 5, 6f. For currency conversion see U.S. Embassy- Harare official, electronic communication, February 18, 2004.

⁴³⁴⁶ Eldring, Nakanyane, and Tshoedi, "Child Labor in the Tobacco Growing Sector", 85-86.

⁴³⁴⁷ One hundred immigration and police officials attended trafficking awareness workshops in 2003. See U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Zimbabwe*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Zimbabwe*, Section 5.

⁴³⁴⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Zimbabwe*, Section 5. The development of Victim Friendly Courts has led to child friendly legal facilities and collaborations with police stations, hospitals, social welfare, families, communities, and prosecutors' offices. See "Analysis of the Situation of Sexual Exploitation of Children in the Eastern and Southern Africa Region" (paper presented at the 2nd World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, Nairobi, Kenya, October 2001), Section 6.10; available from http://www.unicef.org/events/yokohama/csec-east-southern-africa-draft.html#_Toc527979975.

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

The Government of Zimbabwe has a Child Labor Task Force Committee to define child labor, identify child exploitation, recognize problem areas, and propose legislation to resolve these problems.⁴³⁴⁹ The government is also making efforts to incorporate child labor issues into the plans and policies of several government ministries, such as the Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Social Welfare. Social Welfare programs have included initiatives to support orphans, who are particularly vulnerable to child labor.⁴³⁵⁰ The government's "Children in Difficult Circumstances" program is intended to assist street children.⁴³⁵¹ The government has also engaged in anti-trafficking efforts and programs to combat sexual exploitation of children.⁴³⁵²

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138	6/6/2000	✓
Ratified Convention 182	12/11/2000	✓
ILO-IPEC Associated Member		✓
National Plan for Children		
National Child Labor Action Plan		
Sector Action Plan		

The Ministry of Education operates 489 satellite schools on formerly white-owned commercial farms to accommodate the close to 70,000 children whose families have been resettled from communal lands.⁴³⁵³ The Children in Difficult Circumstances Program and the Basic Education Assistance Module provide school fees, uniforms and books for children who cannot afford to attend school.⁴³⁵⁴ UNICEF and other international organizations are assisting with the government's education efforts and have been

⁴³⁴⁹ The committee is composed of the Ministries of Education, Sport and Culture; National Affairs; Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation; Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare; Health and Child Welfare; Lands, Agriculture, and Rural Resettlement; and Local Government, Public Works and National Housing. See Education to Combat Abusive Child Labor Activity, *Child Labor Country Brief: Zimbabwe*, [online] September 12, 2002 [cited September 20, 2002]; available from <http://www.beps.net/ChildLabor/Database.htm>. Hard copy on file, no longer available online.

⁴³⁵⁰ The government approved a National Policy on the Care and Protection of Orphans in 1999. See UNAIDS, *Children Orphaned by AIDS: Front-line Responses from Eastern and Southern Africa*, UNAIDS, December 1999, 21-23; available from <http://www.unaids.org/publications/documents/children/young/orphrepteng.pdf>. Funds collected from an AIDS levy on formal sector wage earners and distributed by the National AIDS Council have been used to provide support to orphans in the form of education assistance, income generation projects, and research to identify the needs of HIV/AIDS orphans. See U.S. Embassy- Harare, *unclassified telegram no. 1669*.

⁴³⁵¹ Tendai Mangoma, "More Children Forced to Beg", *allAfrica.com*, [online], May 29, 2002; available from <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200205290632.html>.

⁴³⁵² "Analysis of the Situation of Sexual Exploitation".

⁴³⁵³ Satellite schools function as unregistered learning centers affiliated with local official schools. They have been criticized for lacking proper facilities and learning materials and generally providing poor quality education, resulting in high absenteeism. See Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Zimbabwe: Farm kids struggle to find decent education", *IRINnews.org*, [online], February 13, 2004 [cited May 6, 2004]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=39468>.

⁴³⁵⁴ The programs reached only 18 percent of eligible children in 2000. Since that time, the percentage of beneficiaries has declined. See U.S. Embassy- Harare, *unclassified telegram no. 1386*. By the second term of the 2004 school year, education assistance given to orphans and disadvantaged children through the Basic Education Assistance Model (BEAM) had run out, leaving at least 800,000 children receiving support unable to pay the higher fees. The government blamed the hike in school fees for the early exhaustion of funds. See Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Zimbabwe: Hundreds of thousands may be out of school", *IRINnews.org*, [online], April 29, 2004 [cited May 6, 2004]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=40832>.

particularly involved in school feeding programs during the recent food crisis.⁴³⁵⁵ UNICEF has also been supplying school-in-a-box kits, which provide basic learning materials, to children attending satellite schools.⁴³⁵⁶

⁴³⁵⁵ UNICEF, *Zimbabwe*, [online] April 3, 2003 [cited May 26, 2004]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/noteworthy/safricacrisis/zimbabwe.html>. See also Vongai Makamure, "Zimbabwe - WV is assisting communities," *World Vision - Africa in Harmony* (October 23, 2002). See also Oxfam, "Zimbabwe Short of Food," *Oxfam News* (April 3, 2003); available from http://www.oxfam.ca/news/Zimbabwe/April3_update.htm. See also Christian Aid, *Christian Aid in Zimbabwe*, in Christian Aid,, [online] 2004 [cited May 25, 2004]; available from <http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/world/where/safrica/zimbabp.htm>.

⁴³⁵⁶ UNICEF, *At a Glance: Zimbabwe*, UNICEF, [online] [cited May 6, 2004]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/zimbabwe.html>.