

# Ghana

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

In 1999, the USDOL funded a national program on the prevention and elimination of child labor in Ghana, and the Government of Ghana has been a member of ILO-IPEC since 2000.<sup>1040</sup> The Government of Ghana is in the process of formulating a national policy and plan of action to combat child labor with a focus on the worst forms of child labor.<sup>1041</sup> Ghana also participates in a nine-country ILO-IPEC regional project in West and Central Africa, funded by the USDOL. It is designed to prevent and halt the practice of trafficking children and rehabilitate victims of trafficking.<sup>1042</sup> The Ghana Statistical Service is also conducting a national survey on child labor with funding from USDOL and technical assistance from the ILO-IPEC's SIMPOC.<sup>1043</sup>

In 1996, Ghana initiated its Free Compulsory and Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) program to serve as the focal point for all domestic and internationally funded initiatives to improve basic education.<sup>1044</sup> The goals of the FCUBE are to improve the quality of teaching and learning, access to basic education facilities, and management efficiency.<sup>1045</sup> The enrollment, retention and provision of various educational services to girls is specially emphasized.<sup>1046</sup> International donors are assisting Ghana to construct new classroom facilities, conduct school feeding programs, provide training to teachers and educational administrators, and help families defray the cost of children's school fees and other expenses.<sup>1047</sup> To attract teachers to rural areas and supplement low salaries, the government has offered accelerated promotions and incentives such as

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<sup>1040</sup> ILO-IPEC, *National Program on the Elimination of Child Labor in Ghana*, project document (Geneva, 1999) [on-file].

<sup>1041</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Summary of Individual Country Programs—National Program on the Elimination of Child Labor in Ghana*, August 1999 [hereinafter *Summary of Individual Country Programs*], 7.

<sup>1042</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Trafficking of Children for Labor Exploitation in West and Central Africa (Phase II)*, *Country Annex: Ghana* [hereinafter *Combating the Trafficking of Children (Phase II)*], 6.

<sup>1043</sup> The survey is currently in the data processing stage. See USDOL-Funded ILO-IPEC Projects/Programs, *Technical Progress Report: Statistical Programme for Advocacy on the Elimination of Child Labour and the Protection of Working Children in Ghana*, no. 4 (November 2001). See also *Summary of Individual Country Programs*.

<sup>1044</sup> Harry Sawyerr, "Successful African Experiences: Country-Led Coordination of Aid in Ghana," *Association for the Development of Education in Africa Newsletter*, vol. 9, no. 3, at <http://www.adeanet.org/newsletter/Vol9No3/ghana-eng.html> on 12/11/01.

<sup>1045</sup> Ghana, Ministry of Education, "Implementation," The Ghana Education Website [hereinafter "Implementation"], at <http://www.ghana.edu.gh/present/implementation.html> on 12/11/01.

<sup>1046</sup> "Implementation."

<sup>1047</sup> Plan International, World Vision, and the European Union have helped with the provision of classroom facilities. See Emmanuel Acquaye, Director of Basic Education, Ghana Education Service, interview by USDOL official, August 1, 2000 [hereinafter Acquaye interview], and U.S. Embassy—Accra, unclassified telegram no. 3474, June 2000 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 3474].

bicycles to teachers willing to work in rural areas.<sup>1048</sup> Ghana has also initiated a Needy Child Fund that helps up to fifty children in each of Ghana's 110 districts qualify for help with basic school needs, and programs on girls' education.<sup>1049</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 1999, the ILO estimated that 12.3 percent of children between the ages of 10 and 14 in Ghana were working.<sup>1050</sup> Deteriorating economic conditions have led to an increase in the number of children who earn a living for themselves or supplement family income.<sup>1051</sup> The majority of working children are unpaid family workers, involved in family farms and family enterprises.<sup>1052</sup> Children as young as 7 years old work as porters, domestic servants, street vendors, rock breakers in quarries, farmers, in small-scale mines and in various jobs in the fishing industry.<sup>1053</sup> Increased migration to urban areas, particularly Accra, has led to an increase in the numbers of street and working children in urban areas.<sup>1054</sup>

Some girls who migrate from rural areas to urban centers serve as *kayayooos*—self-employed girl porters who carry goods on their heads for petty traders.<sup>1055</sup> Some *kayayooos* reportedly

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<sup>1048</sup> Acquaye interview.

<sup>1049</sup> The government has allocated two million cedis (approximately USD 276) to each District for this program. See Acquaye interview and *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5. Currency conversion at <http://www.carosta.de/frames/convert.htm> on 2/7/02.

<sup>1050</sup> *World Development Indicators 2001* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2001) [hereinafter *World Development Indicators 2001*] [CD-ROM]. In 1997, the Core Welfare Indicators Survey estimated that 9.2 percent of children between ages 6 and 14 in Ghana were working. See Ghana, Core Welfare Indicators Survey, 1997, as found in Understanding Children's Work, at <http://www.ucw-project.org/cgi-bin/ucw/Survey/> on 12/5/01.

<sup>1051</sup> The Ghana National Commission on Children, *The First Decade of the Ghana National Commission on Children (1979-1989)* (Accra, 1990).

<sup>1052</sup> Sudharshan Canagarajah and Harold Coulombe, *Child Labor and Schooling in Ghana*, background paper for World Bank Economic and Sector Work (Washington D.C., 1997) [hereinafter Canagarajah and Coulombe, *Child Labor and Schooling*], 10.

<sup>1053</sup> *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—Ghana* (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=803>.

<sup>1054</sup> In August 2000, Ghana's Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare reported that 18,000 children were working in Accra and 800,000 were working nationwide. Seventy percent of these working children are estimated to receive no schooling, while 21 percent complete only their primary education. See Margaret Sackey, Executive Director, Ghana National Children's Commission, interview by DOL official, August 4, 2000 [hereinafter Sackey interview]. See also *Country Reports 2000*.

<sup>1055</sup> Seema Agarwal et al., "Bearing the Weight: The Kayayoo—Ghana's Working Girl Child" (Legon: Centre for Social Policy Studies, University of Ghana, May 1997), 1.

practice prostitution to add to their earnings.<sup>1056</sup> Ghana is also a source and a destination for trafficked children,<sup>1057</sup> many of whom are girls between the ages of 10 to 15 years.<sup>1058</sup>

Under FCUBE, the government is striving to provide nine years of free and compulsory education to all children by 2005. Currently, school expenses amount to about 35,000 cedis a year (USD 6.77).<sup>1059</sup> In 1997, the gross primary attendance rate was 72 percent.<sup>1060</sup> Schools in rural areas are often inadequate due to a shortage of teachers.<sup>1061</sup> School taxes and associated costs, such as books and uniforms, make education costly and preclude some children from attending school.<sup>1062</sup>

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Children's Act sets the minimum age for general employment at 15 years, although 13 years is the minimum age for light work, defined as work that is not harmful to the health or development of a child and does not affect the child's attendance at school.<sup>1063</sup> The Children's Act

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<sup>1056</sup> Nana Araba Apt and Ebenezer Q. Blavo, "Street Children and AIDS" (Legon: Centre for Social Policy Studies, University of Ghana, May 1997), 9.

<sup>1057</sup> *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6f.

<sup>1058</sup> African Centre for Human Development, *Ghana Country Study: Combating the Trafficking in Children for Labour Exploitation in West and Central Africa* (Accra, April 2000), 6. Cross-border trafficking and abduction have been reported between Ghana and Togo, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Nigeria, where both boys and girls are lured into prostitution or hard labor. See *Combating the Trafficking of Children (Phase II)*.

<sup>1059</sup> Acquaye interview. See also unclassified telegram 3474.

<sup>1060</sup> Net enrollment statistics for Ghana are unavailable. See Sudharshan Canagarajab and XiaoYe, *Public Health and Education Spending in Ghana in 1992-98, Issues of Equity and Efficiency*, policy research working paper 2579, The World Bank, Country Director Groups, Ghana Country Department and Africa Technical Families, Macroeconomics 1, April 2001.

<sup>1061</sup> Teachers' salaries are considered inadequate, and it is difficult to attract teachers to rural areas. See Acquaye interview.

<sup>1062</sup> Acquaye interview and Canagarajan and Coulombe, *Child Labor and Schooling*, at 11.

<sup>1063</sup> Government of Ghana, Act 560, The Children's Act, 1998, Part V, Employment of Children, Sub-Part I, Child Labour.

prohibits children under 18 years from engaging in hazardous labor, including work in mines and quarries, manufacturing industries, at sea, where machines are used, in bars, and in any job that necessitates carrying heavy loads.<sup>1064</sup> Children may serve as apprentices at the age of 15 years, so long as their employers provide a safe and healthy work environment.<sup>1065</sup> Ghana's Constitution prohibits slavery and forced or bonded labor.<sup>1066</sup>

Inspectors from the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare inspect worksites annually and make spot checks when violations are alleged.<sup>1067</sup> Although trafficking is a problem, no laws specifically address trafficking.<sup>1068</sup> The Government of Ghana has not ratified ILO Convention 138, but ratified ILO Convention 182 on June 13, 2000.<sup>1069</sup>

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<sup>1064</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1065</sup> Violation of any sub-part pertaining to child labor of the Children's Act may result in a fine not to exceed 10 million cedis (USD 1,420) or to imprisonment for a term not to exceed 2 years or both. See *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d. Currency conversion at <http://www.carosta.de/frames/convert.htm> on 1/29/02.

<sup>1066</sup> *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6c.

<sup>1067</sup> Ibid. at Section 6d.

<sup>1068</sup> Ibid. at Section 6f.

<sup>1069</sup> ILOLEX database: Ghana at <http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/english/newratframeE.htm> on 11/27/01.

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