

Equatorial Guinea

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

The ILO estimated that 31.3 percent of children ages 10 to 14 years in Equatorial Guinea were working in 2002.¹⁵²⁵ Children work on family farms and in domestic service, in street vending,¹⁵²⁶ and in bars and grocery stores.¹⁵²⁷ There are reports that children also work in prostitution, particularly in Bata and the capital city of Malabo.¹⁵²⁸ Children are trafficked to Equatorial Guinea from other countries in West and Central Africa, particularly Cameroon, Nigeria, and Benin. Girls are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation and domestic servitude, while boys are forced to work as farmhands and street hawkers. Boys trafficked from Nigeria reportedly work in market stalls in Bata without pay or personal freedom.¹⁵²⁹

The Equatorial Guinean Constitution established free and compulsory education through primary school,¹⁵³⁰ but the law is not enforced, and many rural families cannot afford school fees and book expenses.¹⁵³¹ In 2001, the gross primary enrollment rate was 126.2 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 84.6 percent. There was a significant disparity between the net primary enrollment rates of boys and girls, with 91.4 percent of boys enrolled versus 77.9 percent of girls.¹⁵³²

¹⁵²⁵ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2004.

¹⁵²⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Equatorial Guinea*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 6d and f; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27725.htm>. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Equatorial Guinea*, CRC/C/15/Add.245, United Nations, Geneva, November 3, 2004.

¹⁵²⁷ Integrated Regional Information Networks, *Equatorial Guinea; Minors Grounded, Prohibited from Working*, Africa News Service, Inc., [online] August 31, 2001 [cited September 27 2004]; available from www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=11006.

¹⁵²⁸ Opinions vary on the extent of this problem. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Equatorial Guinea*, Section 5. See also U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Equatorial Guinea*, Washington, D.C., June 10, 2004; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2003/21275.htm>. See also Ministry of Labor and Social Security and UNICEF, *Report on Trafficking of Children and Child Labor in Equatorial Guinea*, November 2001. See also AFROL, *Child Labour Increasing in Equatorial Guinea*, [online] November 21, 2000 [cited September 27, 2004]; available from http://www.afrol.com/News/eqg023_child_labour.htm. See also AFROL, *Prostitution Booms in Equatorial Guinea as Education Sector Folds Up*, [online] October 12, 2000 [cited September 27, 2004]; available from http://www.afrol.com/News/eqg013_prostitution.htm.

¹⁵²⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Equatorial Guinea*, Section 6f. A 2001 child trafficking study by the Equatorial Guinean Ministry of Labor and Social Security in collaboration with UNICEF, that questioned 596 children in urban and rural areas of the country, found up to 150 boys and girls whom had been trafficked from Benin and Nigeria. Ministry of Labor and Social Security and UNICEF, *Child Labor and Trafficking Report*.

¹⁵³⁰ *Constitution of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea*, (January 17, 1995), Item 23; available from http://www.ceiba-guinea-ecuatorial.org/guineeangl/nvelle_const.htm (cited on September 20, 2004).

¹⁵³¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Equatorial Guinea*, Section 5.

¹⁵³² World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004*. For an explanation of gross primary enrollment and/or attendance rates that are greater than 100 percent, please see the definitions of gross primary enrollment rate and gross primary attendance rate in the glossary of this report. There is a similar disparity in attendance rates between boys and girls. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child*, Section 54.

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. Recent primary school attendance statistics are not available for Equatorial Guinea.¹⁵³³ Late entry into the school system and high dropout rates are common, and girls are more likely than boys to drop out of school.¹⁵³⁴ Traditional and cultural perceptions, pregnancy, and the expectation that girls will assist with agricultural work result in lower education attainment levels for girls. While new schools have opened, many lack basics such as books and desks. Most teachers serve as political appointees and are insufficiently trained.¹⁵³⁵ The 2005 budget, passed in September 2004, provided a significant increase in resources for the education and health sectors.¹⁵³⁶

Child Labor Law and Enforcement

The minimum age for employment is 14 years, but the Ministry of Labor does not enforce the law.¹⁵³⁷ Children as young as 13 years old may legally perform light work that does not interfere with their health, growth, or school attendance. Children who are at least 12 years old may work in agriculture or handicrafts, with authorization from the Ministry of Labor. Children under 16 years are prohibited from work that might harm their health, safety, or morals.¹⁵³⁸ In 2001, the government passed a measure banning all children under the age of 17 years from being on the streets and working after 11 p.m. This measure was undertaken by the Ministry of the Interior to curb growing levels of prostitution, delinquency, and alcoholism among youths employed in bars, grocery stores, and as street hawkers. The new law calls for arrest of violators and fining of parents as punishment for violations.¹⁵³⁹ There is no available information assessing the government's enforcement or the impact of this measure.

Forced or bonded labor by children is forbidden, as is prostitution.¹⁵⁴⁰ In 2004, the Government adopted a new law against smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons.¹⁵⁴¹ The government prosecuted its first trafficking case in 2003, resulting in the conviction of a woman for trafficking and enslaving a young girl from Benin.¹⁵⁴²

¹⁵³³ According to the representative of UNICEF in Equatorial Guinea in 2000, 50 percent of school-age children did not attend primary school. See AFROL, *Child Labour Increasing*, afrol.com, *Child Labour Increasing in Equatorial Guinea*, [online] November 21, 2000 [cited July 15, 2003]; available from http://www.afrol.com/News/eqg023_child_labour.htm.

¹⁵³⁴ UN Economic and Social Council Commission on Human Rights, *Question of the Violation of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms in Any Part of the World: Report on the Human Rights Situation in the Republic of Equatorial Guinea submitted by the Special Representative of the Commission, Mr. Gustavo Gallón*, pursuant to Commission resolution 2000/19, E/CN.4/2001/38, United Nations, Geneva, January 16, 2001; available from [http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/0c79798828d22553c1256a15005b5ddf/\\$FILE/G0110211.pdf](http://www.unhcr.ch/Huridocda/Huridoca.nsf/0/0c79798828d22553c1256a15005b5ddf/$FILE/G0110211.pdf).

¹⁵³⁵ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Equatorial Guinea*, Section 5.

¹⁵³⁶ U.S. Embassy- Yaounde, *unclassified telegram no. 163453*, January 14 2005.

¹⁵³⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Equatorial Guinea*, Section 6d. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child*.

¹⁵³⁸ U.S. Embassy- Yaounde, *unclassified telegram no. 3123*, July 2000.

¹⁵³⁹ Integrated Regional Information Networks, *Equatorial Guinea; Minors Grounded*.

¹⁵⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Equatorial Guinea*, Section 6c.

¹⁵⁴¹ U.S. Embassy- Yaounde, *unclassified telegram no. 163453*. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child*, Section 56.

¹⁵⁴² U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Equatorial Guinea*.

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

On March 2, 2004, the Government of Equatorial Guinea and the UNDP launched a plan to train enough teachers to enable every child in the country, by the year 2010, to finish primary school. Under this plan, the UNDP and Government of Equatorial Guinea have committed to spend USD 5.2 million to train 2,000 teachers, 45 school inspectors, and 35 educational advisors over the next 4 years.¹⁵⁴³

| Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments | | |
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| Ratified Convention 138 | 6/12/1985 | ✓ |
| Ratified Convention 182 | 8/13/2001 | ✓ |
| ILO-IPEC Member | | |
| National Plan for Children | | |
| National Child Labor Action Plan | | |
| Sector Action Plan | | |

¹⁵⁴³ United Nations Development Program, *\$5.2 million investment in Equatorial Guinea aims at early achievement of Millennium education goals*, March 1, 2004; available from <http://www.undp.org/dpa/frontpagearchive/2004/march/1mar04/>.