

Comoros

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

UNICEF estimated that 36.7 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years in Comoros were working in 2000.¹⁰⁴⁸ Children work in the informal sector, agriculture, and family enterprises, particularly in subsistence farming and fishing.¹⁰⁴⁹ Children, some as young as 7 years old, also work as domestic servants in exchange for food and shelter.¹⁰⁵⁰ There are also growing numbers of working street children.¹⁰⁵¹

Primary education is compulsory until the age of 10.¹⁰⁵² In 2001, the gross primary enrollment rate was 89.6 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate for 1999 was 54.7 percent.¹⁰⁵³ 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. Attendance is not enforced by the government,¹⁰⁵⁴ and only 31.2 percent of all primary school children ages 6 to 12 attend school.¹⁰⁵⁵ As of 2000, 24.2 percent of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade 5.¹⁰⁵⁶ There is a general lack of facilities, equipment, qualified teachers, textbooks and other resources.¹⁰⁵⁷ Salaries for teachers are often so far in arrears that many teachers refuse to work.¹⁰⁵⁸

¹⁰⁴⁸ 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 Comoros, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2 (MICS2): Standard Tables for Comoros*, UNICEF Statistics, 125; available from <http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/newreports/comoros/comoros.htm>.

¹⁰⁴⁹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Comoros*, CRC/C/15/Add.141, October 2000, para. 48. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Comoros*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27720.htm>.

¹⁰⁵⁰ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Summary Record of the 666th Meeting: Comoros*, CDC/C/SR.666, Geneva, June 2001, para. 3. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2003: Comoros*, Section 6d.

¹⁰⁵¹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations*, para. 39. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Summary Record*, para. 3.

¹⁰⁵² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2003: Comoros*, Section 5.

¹⁰⁵³ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2004.

¹⁰⁵⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2003: Comoros*, Section 5.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Government of Comoros, *MICS2: Standard Tables for Comoros*, Table 10.

¹⁰⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, table 10.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Comoros: Trouble in Paradise", IRINnews.org, [online], December 8, 2003; available from <http://www.irinnews.org>. See also Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Southern Africa: UNICEF appeals for assistance for region's children", IRINnews.org, [online], December 2, 2003; available from <http://www.irinnews.org>.

¹⁰⁵⁸ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Summary Record*, para. 23.

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 15 years.¹⁰⁵⁹ The Constitution prohibits forced and bonded labor.¹⁰⁶⁰ The Criminal Code makes any act of indecent assault committed against a child under the age of 15 years punishable by 2 to 5 years imprisonment.¹⁰⁶¹ A juvenile court can impose protective measures for a minor under 21 years discovered engaging in prostitution.¹⁰⁶² The Code provides for imprisonment of 2 to 5 years for anyone who is complicit in the prostitution of a minor or uses threats, coercion, violence, assault, or the abuse of authority.¹⁰⁶³ Article 323 of the Criminal Code also provides for the same penalties for complicity in international trafficking.¹⁰⁶⁴ Child labor laws are not strictly enforced.¹⁰⁶⁵

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

The Government of Comoros is working to improve educational infrastructure with the assistance of two World Bank loans.¹⁰⁶⁶

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138	3/17/2004	✓
Ratified Convention 182	3/17/2004	✓
ILO-IPEC Member		
National Plan for Children		
National Child Labor Action Plan		
Sector Action Plan		

¹⁰⁵⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2003: Comoros*, section 6.d.

¹⁰⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Section 6c

¹⁰⁶¹ *Criminal Code of Comoros*, Article 318 [cited September 8, 2004]; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/Comorosf.pdf>.

¹⁰⁶² *Ibid.*, Article 327.

¹⁰⁶³ *Ibid.*, Article 323.

¹⁰⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶⁵ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations*, para. 48. See also U.S. Department of State official, electronic communication to USDOL official, February 18, 2004. The Ministry of Labor does not have many resources to devote to enforcing the minimum age law. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2003: Comoros*, Section 6d.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Education is one component that is being addressed by the Service Support Credit and Social Fund Projects. The former will run through 2008, while the latter closes in June 2004. See World Bank, *Service Support Credit*, in Projects Database, [online] 2004 [cited May 18, 2004]; available from <http://www.web.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64027221&piPK=64027220&theSitePK=64027220&menuPK=349969&Projectid=P084315>. See also World Bank, *Social Fund Project*, in Projects Database, [online] 2004 [cited May 18, 2004]; available from <http://www.web.worldbank.org/external/default/main?pagePK=64027221&piPK=64027220&theSitePK=349937&menuPK=349969&Projectid=P044824>.