

Ghana

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

An estimated 24.2 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years were counted as working in Ghana in 2000. Approximately 24.5 percent of all boys 5 to 14 were working compared to 24 percent of girls in the same age group. The majority of working children were found in the agricultural sector (71 percent), followed by services (22.6 percent), manufacturing (5.8 percent), and other sectors (0.6 percent).¹⁹⁷³ In rural areas, children can be found working in fishing, herding, and agriculture.¹⁹⁷⁴ The fishing industry on Lake Volta employs many children in potentially hazardous work such as deep diving¹⁹⁷⁵ and casting and drawing nets.¹⁹⁷⁶ In urban centers, street children work mainly as truck pushers, porters, and sales workers.¹⁹⁷⁷ Children also work as domestic servants, miners, quarry workers, hawkers, and fare collectors.¹⁹⁷⁸

Some children are involved in *Trokosi*, a religious practice indigenous to the southern Volta region, which involves pledging children and young women to atone for family members' sins¹⁹⁷⁹ by helping with the upkeep of religious shrines and pouring libations during prayers.¹⁹⁸⁰ As of early 2005, the most recent data that are available, it was estimated that there were fewer than 50 individuals serving in *Trokosi* shrines.¹⁹⁸¹ *Trokosis* live near shrines, often with extended family members, during their period of service, which lasts from a few months to three years.¹⁹⁸² A *Trokosi* is expressly forbidden to engage in sexual activity during the atonement period.¹⁹⁸³ Opinions differ on whether *Trokosi* constitutes forced or ritual servitude, which is banned under the Penal Code.¹⁹⁸⁴ The government does not recognize *Trokosi* as a religion and government agencies, such as CHRAJ, have at times actively campaigned against it. Local officials portray *Trokosi* as a traditional practice that is not abusive, but some NGOs maintained that *Trokosis* are subject to sexual exploitation and forced labor.¹⁹⁸⁵ Organizations that support traditional African religions

¹⁹⁷³ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*, October 7, 2005. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms, such as the use of children in the illegal drug trade, prostitution, pornography, and trafficking. As a result, statistics and information on children's work in general are reported in this section. Such statistics and information may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the "Data Sources and Definitions" section of this report.

¹⁹⁷⁴ Line Eldring, Sabata Nakanyane, and Malehoko Tshoaeidi, *Child Labour in the Tobacco Growing Sector in Africa*, 2000; available from <http://www.fafano.no/pub/rapp/654/654.pdf>.

¹⁹⁷⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2004: Ghana*, Washington, DC, February 28, 2005, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41606.htm>.

¹⁹⁷⁶ Afrol News, "Progress in Freeing Ghanaian Slave Boys", *afrol News.com*, [online], March 5, 2003 [cited June 27, 2005]; available from http://www.afrol.com/News2003/gha008_labour.htm.

¹⁹⁷⁷ Ghana Statistical Service, *Ghana Child Labour Survey*, March, 2003; available from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simpoc/ghana/report/gh_rep.pdf.

¹⁹⁷⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Ghana*, Section 6d.

¹⁹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, Sections 5 and 6d. *Trokosis* are most often young girls. See U.S. Embassy- Accra official, interview with USDOL official, July 21, 2005.

¹⁹⁸⁰ U.S. Embassy- Accra official, interview, July 21, 2005.

¹⁹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁸² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Ghana*, Section 5.

¹⁹⁸³ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2005: Ghana*, Section 5.

¹⁹⁸⁴ ILO-IPEC, *Support for the Implementation of Time-Bound Measures for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Ghana*, project document, Time-Bound Measures, project document, Geneva, September 3, 2004. See also U.S. Embassy- Accra official, interview, July 21, 2005. See the next section, "Child Labor Laws and Enforcement," for more information on this provision of the Penal Code.

¹⁹⁸⁵ U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication to USDOL official, August 15, 2006.

have said these NGOs misrepresent their beliefs and regard their campaigns against *Trokosi* as religious persecution.¹⁹⁸⁶ There is no evidence of physical or sexual abuse being a systematic part of the practice, but instances of sexual abuse may occur.¹⁹⁸⁷ Multiple investigations by foreign embassy representatives have turned up no credible evidence of systematic or widespread abuses.¹⁹⁸⁸

Ghana is a source, transit, and destination country for trafficked children.¹⁹⁸⁹ Children are trafficked for exploitation in labor and domestic service to Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, The Gambia, and Nigeria.¹⁹⁹⁰ Ghanaian girls are trafficked to the Middle East for forced labor as domestic servants and there are isolated cases of girls being trafficked to Western Europe for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation.¹⁹⁹¹ There continue to be reports of children being given away, leased, or sold by their parents to work in forced labor in the commercial sexual exploitation and fishing sectors.¹⁹⁹² Within Ghana, boys are trafficked from the Northern region to Volta Lake to work in fishing villages, or to the west to work in small mines, while girls are trafficked to Accra and Kumasi to work as domestic servants, porters, and assistants to traders.¹⁹⁹³ Children are also trafficked within Ghana to urban areas to work as street vendors.¹⁹⁹⁴ There are reports of children being trafficked within Ghana for work on cocoa farms.¹⁹⁹⁵ Ghana is a destination country for children from Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Nigeria, and Benin who are trafficked for forced labor, including domestic service and sexual exploitation.¹⁹⁹⁶

Child labor is one of many problems associated with poverty. In 1998, the most recent year for which data are available, 44.8 percent of the population in Ghana were living on less than USD 1 a day.¹⁹⁹⁷

Under the constitution, education is compulsory for children of primary and junior secondary age, the equivalent of grades 1 to 9.¹⁹⁹⁸ The constitutional provision of "free, compulsory, and universal basic education," means that tuition fees are paid by the government.¹⁹⁹⁹ Education is not free, however, and can be costly for poor families who must buy textbooks and uniforms.²⁰⁰⁰ As part of the government's effort to increase access to basic education and lower school drop-out rates, the Capitation Grant program was introduced during the 2005-2006 academic year.²⁰⁰¹ Under this scheme, the government pays 30,000 cedis (USD 2.80) to the schools for every child enrolled. This has eliminated the need for parents to pay the extra levies that schools had previously imposed on students. In 2003, the gross primary enrollment rate

¹⁹⁸⁶ U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication to USDOL official, August 15, 2006.

¹⁹⁸⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2005: Ghana*, Section 5.

¹⁹⁸⁸ U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication to USDOL official, August 15, 2006.

¹⁹⁸⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2005: Ghana*, Washington, D.C., June 3, 2005; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2005/46613.htm>.

¹⁹⁹⁰ Ibid. See also Integrated Regional Information Networks, *Gambia-Ghana: Sex slave children trafficked by Ghanaian fishermen*, February 26, 2004; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=39717>.

¹⁹⁹¹ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2005: Ghana*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Ghana*, Section 6f.

¹⁹⁹² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Ghana*, Section 6d. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2005: Ghana*, Section 5.

¹⁹⁹³ Children were often recruited for trafficking with the consent of their parents, who were sometimes given payment or promises of payment from the recruiter, along with assurances that their children would be cared for and given an education, in some cases. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Ghana*, Section 5.

¹⁹⁹⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2005: Ghana*.

¹⁹⁹⁵ USDOL official, interview with University of Ghana official, April 10, 2006. See also U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report-2005: Ghana*

¹⁹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹⁷ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2005* [CD-ROM], Washington, DC, 2005.

¹⁹⁹⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Ghana*, Section 5.

¹⁹⁹⁹ U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication to USDOL official, August 15, 2006.

²⁰⁰⁰ Ibid. See also U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication to USDOL official, June 23, 2005.

²⁰⁰¹ U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication to USDOL official, August 15, 2006.

was 83 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 59 percent.²⁰⁰² 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 2000, 80 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years were attending school.²⁰⁰³ As of 2001, 63 percent of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade 5.²⁰⁰⁴ In 2001, 64.3 percent of working children attended school.²⁰⁰⁵ Children in the poorest families, often in the economically deprived areas of the country, are engaged in domestic chores and other economic activities which hinder regular school attendance.²⁰⁰⁶ Parents rarely face penalties if their children do not attend school.²⁰⁰⁷

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Children's Act sets the minimum age for general employment at 15 years, and sets 13 years as the minimum age for light work.²⁰⁰⁸ The Children's Act prohibits children under 18 from engaging in hazardous labor, including work in mines or quarries, at sea, in bars, in manufacturing that involves chemicals, in places that operate machinery, or in any job that involves carrying heavy loads.²⁰⁰⁹ Employers who operate in the formal sector must keep a register with the ages of the young people they employ. Failing to keep this register is punishable by a fine of 10 million cedis (USD 1,111) or 2 years in prison.²⁰¹⁰

The worst forms of child labor may be prosecuted under different statutes in Ghana. The Ghanaian Constitution and labor law forbid forced or bonded labor by anyone, including children.²⁰¹¹ Ritual servitude is illegal in Ghana.²⁰¹² According to the Penal Code, "Whoever sends to, or receives at any place, any person; or participates in, or is concerned in any ritual or customary activity in respect of any person, with the purpose of subjecting that person to any form of ritual or customary servitude, or any form of forced labour related to a customary ritual, commits an offence and shall be liable on conviction to imprisonment for a term not less than three years."²⁰¹³ The Penal Code also prohibits the procurement of girls and women under the age of 21 for the purpose of prostitution.²⁰¹⁴ In 2005, the Ghanaian government passed the Human Trafficking Act, which prohibits and provides penalties for human trafficking and establishes a Human Trafficking Fund to assist trafficking victims.²⁰¹⁵ Ghana also has laws against slavery,

²⁰⁰² UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=51> (Gross and Net Enrolment Ratios, Primary; accessed December 2005).

²⁰⁰³ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*.

²⁰⁰⁴ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=55> (School life expectancy, % of repeaters, survival rates; accessed December 2005).

²⁰⁰⁵ Ghana Statistical Service, *Ghana Child Labour Survey*.

²⁰⁰⁶ U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication to USDOL official, August 15, 2006.

²⁰⁰⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports 2004: Ghana*. See also U.S.Embassy- Accra official, email communication to USDOL official, August 15, 2006.

²⁰⁰⁸ Light work is defined as work that is not harmful to the health or development of a child and that does not affect the child's attendance and performance at school. The legislation allows children aged 15 years and above to work in an apprenticeship if the employer provides a safe and healthy work environment, and training. Government of Ghana, *The Children's Act, Act 560*, (1998); available from <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/WEBTEXT/56216/65194/E98GHA01.htm>.

²⁰⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Section 91.

²⁰¹⁰ U.S. Embassy- Accra, *reporting*, October 22, 2002. For currency conversion, See FXConverter, in Oanda.com, [online] [cited June 27, 2005]; available from <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>.

²⁰¹¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Ghana*, Sections 6c and 6d.

²⁰¹² U.S. Embassy- Accra, *reporting*, October 22, 2002.

²⁰¹³ *Government of Ghana, Penal Code, 1960, Act 29, Section 314A* (December 10, 1999).

²⁰¹⁴ Government of Ghana, *Penal Code*, [previously online] 1960 [cited Act 29, 107 (1) and 108 (1)]; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutes/PDF/GhanaF.pdf> [hard copy on file].

²⁰¹⁵ Government of Ghana, *Human Trafficking Act, 2005*, (July 28, 2005). The Human Trafficking Act was passed on July 28, 2005. See U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication, June 23, 2005.

prostitution, and underage labor.²⁰¹⁶ The minimum age for military recruitment is 18 years, and Ghana's army is made up entirely of volunteers.²⁰¹⁷ Since 1999, the Government of Ghana has submitted to the ILO a list or an equivalent document identifying the types of work that it has determined are harmful to the health, safety or morals of children under Convention 182 or Convention 138.²⁰¹⁸

The Ministry of Manpower, Development and Employment is responsible for enforcing child labor laws but, according to the U.S. Department of State, these laws are not enforced with any effectiveness or consistency in Ghana.²⁰¹⁹ Labor authorities carry out routine annual inspections of workplaces in the formal sector but seldom monitor the informal sector where most working children can be found.²⁰²⁰ Other law enforcement authorities, including judges and police, are largely unfamiliar with child labor laws and lack the resources to enforce them.²⁰²¹

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

The Government of Ghana, in collaboration with ILO-IPEC and international and non-governmental organizations, continued to implement the 2001-2002 National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Ghana.²⁰²² The government is collaborating with ILO-IPEC on a 4-year, USD 4.75 million USDOL-funded Timebound Program, launched in 2004, which establishes timeframes for progress on the elimination of selected worst forms of child labor in Ghana. The project aims to strengthen Ghana's legal framework against child labor, mobilize society against child labor, expand apprenticeship and skills training programs, and develop institutional and technical capacities to more effectively address child labor.²⁰²³ The government included child labor as a problem to be addressed in the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2003.²⁰²⁴ The government also worked to develop a National Cocoa Child Labor Elimination Plan in 2005.²⁰²⁵

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138		
Ratified Convention 182	6/13/00	✓
ILO-IPEC Associated Member		✓
National Plan for Children		✓
National Child Labor Action Plan		✓
Sector Action Plan (Trafficking)		✓

With the participation of several Ghanaian government ministries, ILO-IPEC also continued to implement additional programs. The Ghanaian government was involved in the ILO-IPEC West Africa Cocoa/Commercial Agriculture Program (WACAP), a USDOL-funded USD 6 million program that aimed to build institutional capacity, promote public education and mobilization, and develop a long-term child labor monitoring system.²⁰²⁶ ILO-IPEC is also implementing the second phase of a USD 9.2 million

²⁰¹⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2005: Ghana*.

²⁰¹⁷ Ghana does not have a conscription policy. Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Ghana," in *Global Report 2004* London, 2004; available from http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=776.

²⁰¹⁸ ILO-IPEC official, email communication to USDOL official, November 14, 2005.

²⁰¹⁹ U.S. Embassy- Accra, *reporting*, August 24, 2004.

²⁰²⁰ Ibid.

²⁰²¹ Ibid. U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Ghana*, Section 6d.

²⁰²² U.S. Embassy- Accra, *reporting*, August 24, 2004.

²⁰²³ ILO-IPEC, *Support for the Implementation of Time-Bound Measures for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Ghana*.

²⁰²⁴ U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication to USDOL official, August 15, 2006.

²⁰²⁵ ILO-IPEC, *Support for the Implementation of Time-Bound Measures for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Ghana*, technical progress report, Geneva, March, 2006. See also ILO-IPEC official, interview with USDOL official, April 12, 2006.

²⁰²⁶ The WACAP project is set to end in April 2006. ILO-IPEC, *West Africa Cocoa/Commercial Agriculture Programme to Combat Hazardous and Exploitative Child Labour (WACAP)*, technical progress report, Geneva, March, 2005.

regional anti-trafficking project in West and Central Africa that has activities in Ghana.²⁰²⁷ Another USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC 3-year, USD 5.3 million multi-country project aims to build the technical skills and organizational capacity of government, workers', and employers' organizations and to identify and disseminate child labor best practice information at the sub-regional level.²⁰²⁸ Other ILO-IPEC projects active in Ghana include a regional project focusing on skills training in the urban informal sector and a nine-country study on child exploitation among displaced and refugee populations.²⁰²⁹

The Government of Ghana has a National Plan to Combat Trafficking,²⁰³⁰ and various government agencies have highlighted the issue of trafficking in special events and community education campaigns.²⁰³¹ The government is also partnering with the IOM on a 21-month project to return and reintegrate children trafficked to the fishing sector in Yeji.²⁰³² The IOM program has rescued 544 children from fishing villages in the Volta region.²⁰³³ The government, through the Department of Social Welfare, provided shelter for the trafficking children rescued by IOM at its rescue center in Medina on the outskirts of Accra.²⁰³⁴

Through 2015, the Government of Ghana will continue to implement the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education program, aimed at providing basic education to all school-age children, promoting efficiency,²⁰³⁵ quality, access, and participation.²⁰³⁶ The government has also introduced a feeding program that was piloted in 690 schools with expansion plans should the pilot be successful.²⁰³⁷

The government cooperated with USAID in the implementation of its Education Quality for All (EQUALL) project, which focuses on increasing access to primary education, improving reading instructional systems in 1,400 schools, and improving education management systems.²⁰³⁸ The World Bank and the British Department for International Development separately fund education projects that focus on provision of school infrastructure and institutional capacity building being implemented by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports.²⁰³⁹ Other Ministry of Education efforts include support for informal schools sponsored by NGOs and increased attention to students' progression to higher grades.²⁰⁴⁰ The Ghana Education Service is implementing activities under its Five-Year Action Plan for Girls'

²⁰²⁷ ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Trafficking of Children for Labor Exploitation in West and Central Africa (LUTRENA / Phase II)*, technical progress report, Geneva, September, 2005. The first phase of the LUTRENA project in Ghana was funded by USDOL, the second phase in Ghana is being funded by the Danish International Development Agency. U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication to USDOL official, August 15, 2006.

²⁰²⁸ ILO-IPEC, *Building the Foundations for Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Anglophone Africa (CBP)*, technical progress report, Geneva, September, 2005.

²⁰²⁹ ILO- IPEC official, email communication to USDOL official, November 8, 2005.

²⁰³⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Ghana*, Washington, D.C., June 13, 2004; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2004/33189.htm>.

²⁰³¹ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2005: Ghana*.

²⁰³² IOM, *Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration of Ghanaian Children Victims of Trafficking for Labour Exploitation in Yeji Fishing Communities (LEYE)*, [previously online] [cited October 26, 2004]; available from <http://www.iom.int/iomwebsite/Project/ServletSearchProject?event=detail&id=GH1Z005> [hard copy on file]. See U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2005: Ghana*. See also IOM, *Press Briefing Notes: Ghana- Reunification of Trafficked Children*, press release, Washington, D.C., April 29, 2005; available from <http://www.iom.int/en/news/pbn290405.shtml>.

²⁰³³ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2005: Ghana*.

²⁰³⁴ U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication to USDOL official, August 15, 2006.

²⁰³⁵ *Ghana's Education System*, Republic of Ghana Ministry of Information, [online] n.d. [cited June 27, 2005]; available from <http://www.ghana.gov.gh/studying/education/index.php>. See also U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication to USDOL official, August 15, 2006.

²⁰³⁶ U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication, June 23, 2005.

²⁰³⁷ U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication, August 15, 2006.

²⁰³⁸ *Ibid.* See also U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication to USDOL official, August 15, 2006.

²⁰³⁹ This five-year, USD 88 million project invests most heavily in the primary education sector and will last through 2009. World Bank Projects Database, <http://www.worldbank.org> (Education Sector Project; accessed September 23, 2005). See also U.S. Embassy- Accra official, email communication to USDOL official, August 15, 2006.

²⁰⁴⁰ U.S. Embassy- Accra, *reporting*, August 24, 2004.

Education in Ghana 2003-2008, including science and mathematics clinics around the country, scholarships for girls, incentives to attract female teachers to rural areas, and awareness-raising activities.²⁰⁴¹ The Government of Ghana is currently receiving support from the Education for All Fast Track Initiative to achieve its goal of implementing universal quality primary education by 2015.²⁰⁴²

²⁰⁴¹ Ibid.

²⁰⁴² World Bank, *Education for All Fast Track Initiative: Frequently Asked Questions*, [cited September 29, 2005]; available from <http://www.fasttrackinitiative.org/education/efafti/faq.asp>.