

São Tomé and Príncipe

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

An estimated 15.4 percent of children ages 5 to 14 were counted as working in São Tomé and Príncipe in 2000. Approximately 17.2 percent of all boys 5 to 14 were working compared to 13.5 percent of girls in the same age group.⁴¹⁴⁶ Children work in subsistence agriculture, on plantations, and in informal commerce, sometimes from an early age.⁴¹⁴⁷ A small number of children perform domestic work for more than 4 hours a day.⁴¹⁴⁸ Children also work in auto mechanic shops and as street vendors.⁴¹⁴⁹

Education is universal and compulsory through the sixth grade and tuition-free to the age of 15.⁴¹⁵⁰ However, in practice, conditions do not permit mandatory schooling for all children through sixth grade.⁴¹⁵¹ Schools providing education up to sixth grade are not accessible to children in remote areas, as they exist only in district capitals.⁴¹⁵² Therefore, many very young children work in the absence of access to education beyond fourth grade.⁴¹⁵³ Owing to financial constraints, the shortage of classrooms, and the deterioration in the infrastructure in place, a triple-shift system is used in primary education, involving three successive sessions of three classes in three-hour periods in the same classroom (instead of the required five hours).⁴¹⁵⁴ Average class time is severely curtailed with students effectively having only 2 to 3 hours of class time per day.⁴¹⁵⁵ The World Bank reports that government ministries coordinate poorly on

⁴¹⁴⁶ 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.

⁴¹⁴⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2004: São Tomé and Príncipe*, Washington, D.C., February 28, 2005, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41622.htm>.

⁴¹⁴⁸ Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2000 - São Tomé and Príncipe*, UNICEF, 2000, 64; available from <http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/newreports/saotome/STPtables.pdf>. See also Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, *Enquête de grappes à indicateurs multiples MICS: Rapport d'analyse*, UNICEF, July 14, 2000, 9; available from <http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/newreports/saotome/SaoTome&Principe.PDF>.

⁴¹⁴⁹ Ambrósio Quaresma, *Unicef quer conhecer a realidade de mão de obra infantil em S. Tomé e Príncipe*, UNICEF, [online] [cited November 3, 2005]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/saotome/trabalho.htm>.

⁴¹⁵⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: São Tomé and Príncipe*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27746.htm>.

⁴¹⁵¹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties Due in 1993*, CRC/C/8/Add.49, prepared by Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, March 4, 2003, 15.

⁴¹⁵² Ibid.

⁴¹⁵³ UNICEF, *Education Programme*, [online] 2000 [cited October 28, 2005]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/saotome/educatio.htm>.

⁴¹⁵⁴ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of State Parties: Sao Tome and Principe*, 15.

⁴¹⁵⁵ World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Credit in the Amount of SDR 3.4 Million (US\$ 5.0 Million Equivalent) and a Proposed Grant in the Amount of SDR 1.1 Million (US\$ 1.5 Million Equivalent) to the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe for a Social Sector Support Project*, no. 28319-STP, Washington, D.C., April 22, 2004, 1; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2004/04/29/000160016_20040429122636/Rendered/INDEX/28319.txt.

education issues,⁴¹⁵⁶ and a lack of domestic funding for the school system leaves the system highly dependent on foreign assistance.⁴¹⁵⁷

In 2001, the gross primary enrollment rate was 126 percent and the net primary enrollment rate was 97 percent.⁴¹⁵⁸ 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, 68.8 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years were attending school.⁴¹⁵⁹ As of 2000, 61 percent of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade 5.⁴¹⁶⁰

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The minimum age for work in São Tomé and Príncipe is 18, and employers in the formal wage sector generally respect the legally mandated minimum employment age.⁴¹⁶¹ The law prohibits minors from working more than 7 hours a day and 35 hours per week and allows fines to be imposed on those who employ underage workers.⁴¹⁶² However, the government has not prosecuted any cases of child labor law violations.⁴¹⁶³

The worst forms of child labor may be prosecuted under different statutes in São Tomé and Príncipe. Laws prohibit forced or compulsory labor, including by children.⁴¹⁶⁴ The Penal Code of 1929 prohibits the commercial sexual exploitation of children, but there have been few prosecutions.⁴¹⁶⁵

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

The Government of São Tomé and Príncipe is engaged in efforts to support basic education. Buying books and uniforms for school is the responsibility of the family, but the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe provides assistance to those who cannot afford them.⁴¹⁶⁶ The Ministry of Education and Culture, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Fishing and Rural Development, Ministry of Labor and Solidarity, and

⁴¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 19.

⁴¹⁵⁷ Government tax revenue in 2003 constituted approximately 20.5 percent of GDP (or 41 percent of total revenues and grants), non-tax revenues constitute 49 percent of GDP (9 percent of total revenues and grants), and grants, from foreign donors, constitute 49 percent of revenues. Ibid., 37.

⁴¹⁵⁸ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=51> (Gross and Net Enrolment Ratios, Primary; accessed October 2005). For an explanation of gross primary enrollment rates that are greater than 100 percent, please see the definition of gross primary enrollment rates in the "Data Sources and Definitions" section of this report.

⁴¹⁵⁹ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*.

⁴¹⁶⁰ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=55> (School life expectancy, % of repeaters, survival rates; accessed December 2005).

⁴¹⁶¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: São Tomé and Príncipe*, Section 6d.

⁴¹⁶² Ibid.

⁴¹⁶³ Ibid.

⁴¹⁶⁴ Ibid., Section 6c.

⁴¹⁶⁵ The Protection Project, *Human Rights Report: São Tomé and Príncipe* (accessed January 6, 2006), Washington, D.C.; available from <http://www.protectionproject.org/pub.htm>.

⁴¹⁶⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: São Tomé and Príncipe*, Section 5.

Ministry of Youth and Sports all support non-formal education programs.⁴¹⁶⁷ The World Food Programme (WFP) assists the government by supplying meals to primary school students.⁴¹⁶⁸ UNICEF's school garden program provides an alternative learning environment for the students, as well as vegetables to supplement the food supplied by the WFP.⁴¹⁶⁹

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments	
Ratified Convention 138 - May 4, 2005	✓
Ratified Convention 182 - May 4, 2005	✓
ILO-IPEC Member	
National Plan for Children	
National Child Labor Action Plan	
Sector Action Plan	

⁴¹⁶⁷ UNESCO, *Education Pour Tous-EPT: Plan Nacional d'Action 2002-2015*, November 18, 2002, 15; available from http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/file_download.php/7e1173d3d3e6b9fdc9ce582c6fa1e723PNA_EPT_SaoTomeetPrincipe.doc.

⁴¹⁶⁸ WFP, *World Hunger - Sao Tome and Principe*, [cited October 28, 2005]; available from http://www.wfp.org/country_brief/indexcountry.asp?country=678.

⁴¹⁶⁹ UNICEF, *At a glance: Sao Tome and Principe*, [online] [cited October 28, 2005]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/stp.html>.