

Djibouti

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under age 15 in Djibouti are unavailable.¹⁴¹² In rural areas, children perform unpaid labor on family farms or herding livestock.¹⁴¹³ In urban areas, children work in the informal sector in small-scale businesses, trade, catering, crafts, or as domestic servants.¹⁴¹⁴ Children displaced from neighboring countries also work in the informal sector as shoe polishers, car washers, *khat*¹⁴¹⁵ sellers, street peddlers, money changers, beggars, and in commercial sexual exploitation.¹⁴¹⁶ Many of these same children become victims of trafficking.¹⁴¹⁷ Commercial sexual exploitation of children reportedly occurs in urban areas, particularly among displaced children from Somalia and Ethiopia.¹⁴¹⁸

Education is free and compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 16 years.¹⁴¹⁹ Although education is free, the additional expenses of transportation, uniforms, and books often prevent poor families from sending their children to school.¹⁴²⁰ In 2003, the gross primary enrollment rate was 42 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 36 percent.¹⁴²¹ 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.¹⁴²² Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in

¹⁴¹² This statistic is not available from the data sources that are used in this report. Please see the "Data Sources and Definitions" section for information about sources used. 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.

¹⁴¹³ U.S. Embassy - Djibouti, *reporting*, August 17, 2005.

¹⁴¹⁴ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties due in 1993*, CRC/C/8/Add.39, prepared by Government of Djibouti, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, February 1998, paras. 144-45; available from http://66.36.242.93/reports/djibouti_crc_c_8_add.39_1998.php.

¹⁴¹⁵ "Khat" is a leaf that is chewed and its effect is as a stimulant. See Peter Kalix, *Khat (Qat, Kat): Chewing Khat*, World Health Organization, 1986; available from <http://www.a1b2c3.com/drugs/khat2.htm>.

¹⁴¹⁶ ILO, *Review of Annual Reports Under the Follow-Up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, The Effective Abolition of Child Labour: Djibouti*, GB.277/3/2, Geneva, March 2000. See also U.S. Embassy - Djibouti, *reporting*, August 24, 2004. See also U.S. Embassy - Djibouti, *reporting*, August 17, 2005.

¹⁴¹⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, Washington, DC, June 3, 2005; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2005/>.

¹⁴¹⁸ ECPAT International, *Djibouti*, in ECPAT International, [database online] [cited June 16, 2005]; available from http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/. See also 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: Djibouti*, CRC/C/15/Add.131, United Nations, Geneva, June 2000, para. 57; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/9af640001bbfa27180256900003612b6?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/9af640001bbfa27180256900003612b6?Opendocument). See also U.S. Embassy - Djibouti, *reporting*, October 16, 2002.

¹⁴¹⁹ U.S. Embassy - Djibouti, *reporting*, December 30, 2002. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2004: Djibouti*, Washington, DC, February 28, 2005, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41600.htm>.

¹⁴²⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2004: Djibouti*, Section 5.

¹⁴²¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, "Gross and Net Enrolment Ratios, Primary; accessed December 2005," available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=51>.

¹⁴²² In 2001, the gross primary enrollment rate was 34.8 percent for girls and 45.7 percent for boys. The net primary enrollment rate was 29.6 percent for girls and 38.3 percent for boys. See World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004* [CD-ROM], Washington D.C., 2004.

primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. Primary school attendance is particularly low in rural areas where many people are nomads or semi-nomads.¹⁴²³ According to one estimate, approximately 65,000 school-aged children are currently not attending school in the country.¹⁴²⁴ As of 2001, 80 percent of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade 5.¹⁴²⁵

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The worst forms of child labor may be prosecuted under different statutes in Djibouti. The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years.¹⁴²⁶ Forced and bonded labor of children is also prohibited, and according to the U.S. Department of State, there were no reports that these practices occurred.¹⁴²⁷ Djibouti does not have compulsory military service.¹⁴²⁸ Since 1994, entry into the military is voluntary.¹⁴²⁹ The Penal Code provides protection for children against many of the worst forms of child labor, such as the use of children for prostitution, pornography, and trafficking of drugs.¹⁴³⁰ The authority to enforce child labor laws and regulations rests with the Police Vice Squad "Brigade Des Moeurs" and the local police department "Gendarmerie". The Labor Inspection Office has the authority to sanction businesses that employ children.¹⁴³¹ However, according to the U.S. Department of State, the government has a shortage of labor inspectors and limited financial resources with which to enforce labor laws.¹⁴³²

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

The Government of Djibouti is taking steps to increase awareness about the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes provisions on child labor. It has broadcast radio and television programs on the rights of the child and the advancement and protection of girls in four languages (Afar, Somali, Arabic, and French).¹⁴³³ The government has established a National Policy for Youth that seeks to encourage community involvement in youth affairs and the use of Community Development Centers to host activities for out-of school children and serve as reading rooms for children in school.¹⁴³⁴

¹⁴²³ UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, *Djibouti: Special report on girls' education*, [online] [cited June 22, 2005]; available from http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=39139&SelectRegion=Horn_of_Africa&SelectCountry=DJIBOUTI.

¹⁴²⁴ U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *reporting*, August 24, 2004.

¹⁴²⁵ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *School life expectancy, % of repeaters, survival rates; accessed December 2005*; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=55>.

¹⁴²⁶ ILO, *The Effective Abolition of Child Labour: Djibouti*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Djibouti*, Section 6d. See also U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *reporting*, August 24, 2004.

¹⁴²⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Djibouti*, Section 6c.

¹⁴²⁸ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Child Soldiers Global Report 2004*, London, 2004, 296; available from http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=966.

¹⁴²⁹ The Government of Djibouti stated in a 1998 report to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child that "as is the case for all civilian and military jobs, young people under 18 may not be accepted into the army." See Ibid.

¹⁴³⁰ U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *reporting*, August 24, 2004.

¹⁴³¹ The Office of the Labor Inspector currently has one inspector, who is responsible for supervising ten controllers. Ibid.

¹⁴³² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Djibouti*. See also U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *reporting*, December 30, 2002.

¹⁴³³ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Summary Record of the 637th Meeting: Djibouti*, CRC/C/SR.637, United Nations, Geneva, January 8, 2001; available from

[http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/63755405aec3c40bc12569d60047821b?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/63755405aec3c40bc12569d60047821b?Opendocument).

¹⁴³⁴ U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *reporting*, August 24, 2004.

The government is working with UNICEF to assist children, in particular girls, in obtaining high-quality education by increasing enrollment levels, reducing gender disparities and developing a national strategy for non-enrolled children. UNICEF works to train teachers, school principals and academic inspectors. The principles of the Convention on the Rights of the Child are also incorporated in curricula.¹⁴³⁵ The government provides some school meals; according to the Ministry of Education, for 2004 through 2005, 10,468 children in primary public school received meals.¹⁴³⁶ Informal education is available for some children.¹⁴³⁷

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

The World Bank also supports several projects in Djibouti. The School Access and Improvement Project is funding the rehabilitation of classrooms for primary and middle schools, upgrading training materials, providing training, and improving government capacity to manage education reform.¹⁴³⁸ The Social Development and Public Works Project aims to enhance living standards in Djibouti by construction/rehabilitation of social infrastructures such as health posts and schools.¹⁴³⁹

USAID has dedicated USD 8 million to assist the Ministry of Education in implementing education reform programs. These programs include: increasing access to basic education; improving the quality of teaching and learning; increasing opportunities for girls' education; and developing a strategy for sustainable employment for school graduates.¹⁴⁴⁰ The African Development Fund is supporting a project through January 2010 to increase access and improve the quality of the education system.¹⁴⁴¹

¹⁴³⁵ UNICEF, *At a Glance: Djibouti, The Big Picture*, [cited June 22, 2005]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/djibouti.html>.

¹⁴³⁶ Bureau des Statistiques et de la Carte Scolaire - D.P.I. Service de la Planification, *Anneuarire Statistique, Annee Scolaire 2004/2005*, Ministere de l'Education Nationale & de l'Enseignement Superieur, Mars 2005, 36.

¹⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁴³⁸ See World Bank, *School Access and Improvement Project*, [online] June 13, 2005 [cited June 13, 2005]; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=104231&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P044585>.

¹⁴³⁹ World Bank, *Social Development and Public Works Project*, in Projects Database, [database online] June 13, 2005 [cited June 13, 2005]; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=104231&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P044584>.

¹⁴⁴⁰ U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *Developing a Stronger Djibouti*, [cited June 22, 2005]; available from http://djibouti.usembassy.gov/development_aid_to_djibouti.html.

¹⁴⁴¹ African Development Fund, *Republic of Djibouti, Basic and Secondary Education Strengthening Project (Education Project III), Evaluation Report*, May 2004.