

Ethiopia

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

An estimated 49.7 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years were counted as working in Ethiopia in 2001. Approximately 39.5 percent of all boys 5 to 14 were working compared to 59.5 percent of girls in the same age group. The majority of working children were found in the agricultural sector (94 percent), followed by services (3.6 percent), manufacturing (1.2 percent), and other sectors (1.1 percent).¹⁷⁸¹ In rural areas, the largest numbers of working children, especially boys, are engaged in activities such as cattle herding, petty trading, wage work, plowing, harvesting and weeding. Children, mostly girls, are also engaged in domestic activities, such as washing clothes, food preparation, caring for children and collecting firewood and water.¹⁷⁸² In urban areas, domestic activities are the most common forms of work in which children are engaged.¹⁷⁸³ Some child domestics in Addis Ababa are orphans. Children working as domestic servants are sometimes victims of physical, verbal and sexual abuse.¹⁷⁸⁴ The highest percentages of working children are found in the Amhara, Oromia, Southern Nation, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP) and Tigray regions.¹⁷⁸⁵ Many children start working at the age of 5.¹⁷⁸⁶ Different sources estimate that there are between 150,000 and 700,000 street children in Ethiopia and roughly between 50,000 to 150,000 in Addis Ababa alone.¹⁷⁸⁷ Some of these children beg or work in the informal sector in order to survive.¹⁷⁸⁸

¹⁷⁸¹ 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.

¹⁷⁸² Tassew Woldehanna, Bekele Tefera, Nicola Jones, and Alebel Bayray, *Child Labour, Gender Inequality and Rural/Urban Disparities: how can Ethiopia's national development strategies be revised to address negative spill-over impacts on child education and wellbeing?* Working Paper No. 20, 2005, 15-17,30; available from

<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/younglives/data/publications/pdfs/WP20Labour.pdf>. See also Sonia Bhalotra, *Child Labour in Africa*, Paris, April 28, 2003, 48-49; available from <http://www.oecd.org/cataoecd/28/21/2955692.pdf>. See also Central Statistical Authority, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and International Labor Organization, *Ethiopia Child Labour Survey Report*, 2001; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simpoc/ethiopia/>.

¹⁷⁸³ Woldehanna, *Child Labour, Gender Inequality and Rural/Urban Disparities*, 15. In urban areas, children work in productive activities including street peddling, delivering messages, shoe-shining, portering, assisting transport drivers, construction, mining, manufacturing, refuse disposal and shop and market sales work. Central Statistical Authority, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, and International Labor Organization, *Ethiopia Child Labour Survey Report 2001*.

¹⁷⁸⁴ The long hours worked by child domestics may prevent regular attendance at school. These children also may not be able to voluntarily quit their jobs. See Abiy Kifle, *Ethiopia - Child Domestic Workers in Addis Ababa: A Rapid Assessment*, ILO-IPEC, Geneva, July, 2002, 18-19,22; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simpoc/ethiopia/ra/domestic.pdf>.

¹⁷⁸⁵ Woldehanna, *Child Labour, Gender Inequality and Rural/Urban Disparities*, 15.

¹⁷⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁷⁸⁷ The Government of Ethiopia estimates the total number of street children at 150,000 to 200,000, and somewhere between 50,000 and 60,000 on the streets of Addis Ababa. UNICEF estimates are significantly higher. See UNICEF, *The UNICEF Protection, Rehabilitation and Prevention of Street Children and Street Mothers Project*, Addis Ababa; available from http://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/ET_media_child_protection.pdf. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2004: Ethiopia*, Section 5.

¹⁷⁸⁸ See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2004: Ethiopia*, Washington, DC, February 28, 2005, Sections 5, 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41603.htm>. See also SCD SNGOA, and ANPPCAN-Ethiopian Chapter, *Study on the Worst Forms of Child Labour with Special Focus on Child Prostitution - in Addis Ababa*, Addis Ababa, June, 2003, 3; available from http://www.redbarnet.dk/Files/Filer/sexuelt_misbrug/ChildProstitutionStudy.doc. See also L Mapp, *Children Working on the Streets of Ethiopia*, online, 2000; available from http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/index_14282.html.

Child labor is one of many problems associated with poverty. In 2000, 23 percent of the population in Ethiopia were living on less than USD 1 a day.¹⁷⁸⁹

Reports indicate that the commercial sexual exploitation of children is increasing in Ethiopia.¹⁷⁹⁰ Girls as young as 11 years old have reportedly been recruited to work in brothels where they are targeted by customers because they are believed to be free from sexually transmitted diseases.¹⁷⁹¹ Girls also work as prostitutes in resort towns and rural truck stops. Girls also work as barmaids and as hotel workers, which may expose them to involvement in commercial sexual exploitation.¹⁷⁹² Ethiopia is a source country for children trafficked for forced labor and sexual exploitation primarily to Djibouti, Lebanon, and other countries in the Middle East. Children are also trafficked internally from rural to urban areas for domestic service, prostitution, and forced labor.¹⁷⁹³

Primary education is compulsory through grade six and free, but there are not enough schools to accommodate students.¹⁷⁹⁴ In urban areas, the government used a three-shift system to increase access to primary and secondary schools.¹⁷⁹⁵ Students in rural areas often have limited access to education,¹⁷⁹⁶ and girls' enrollment in school remains lower than that of boys in all regions but the capital city.¹⁷⁹⁷ In 2003, the gross primary enrollment rate was 70 percent and the net primary enrollment rate was 51 percent.¹⁷⁹⁸ 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 2001, 36.8 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years were attending school.¹⁷⁹⁹ In 2002, 62 percent of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade 5.¹⁸⁰⁰ Many children in Ethiopia start school at a late age; the mean age of first graders is over 10 years, despite the fact that the official age when schooling begins is seven.¹⁸⁰¹

¹⁷⁸⁹ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2005* [DC-ROM], Washington, DC, 2005.

¹⁷⁹⁰ CSEC Database ECPAT International,

http://www.ecpat.net./eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/countries.asp?arrCountryID=57&CountryProfile=&CSEC=Overview&Implement=&Nationalplans=&orgWorkCSEC=&DisplayBy=optDisplayCountry (Ethiopia; accessed June 29, 2005). See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2004: Ethiopia*, section 5. See also UN Integrated Regional Information Network, *Ethiopia: Child prostitution on the rise, report says*, Addis Ababa, July 15, 2003; available from http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=35392&SelectRegion=Horn_of_Africa&SelectCountry=ETHIOPIA.

¹⁷⁹¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2004: Ethiopia*, Section 5.

¹⁷⁹² Ibid. Girls as young as 13 have been seen on the street soliciting clients. See ECPAT International, (Ethiopia).

¹⁷⁹³ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, Washington, DC, June 3, 2005; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2004/33189.htm>. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2004: Ethiopia*, Section 5. See also Alisha Ryu, *Ethiopian Children Easy Prey for Child Traffickers*, Addis Ababa, May 26, 2005; available from <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/VBOL-6CSC3Y?OpenDocument>.

¹⁷⁹⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2004: Ethiopia*, Section 5.

¹⁷⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2004: Ethiopia*, section 5. See also ILO/EAMAT, *A Study on Child Labour in Rural Ethiopia: working paper no. 1*, ILO/Eastern Africa Multidisciplinary Advisory Team, Addis Ababa, 1999, 10. See also UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Ethiopia: Focus on Primary Education", IRINnews.org, [online], July 30, 2002 [cited December 2, 2005]; available from

http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=29084&SelectRegion=Horn_of_Africa&SelectCountry=ETHIOPIA.

¹⁷⁹⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2004: Ethiopia*, Section 5.

¹⁷⁹⁸ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=51> (Gross and Net Enrolment Ratios, Primary; accessed December 2005).

¹⁷⁹⁹ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*.

¹⁸⁰⁰ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=55> (School life expectancy, percentage of repeaters, survival rates; accessed December 2005).

¹⁸⁰¹ Julie Schaffner, *The Determinants of Schooling Investments Among Primary School Aged Children in Ethiopia*, The World Bank, November, 2004, 6.

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

Ethiopia's Labor Proclamation sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years.¹⁸⁰² Under the Proclamation, employers are forbidden to employ "young workers" when the nature of the job or the conditions under which it is carried out may endanger the life or health of a child. Prohibited activities include transporting goods by air, land, or sea; working with electric power generation plants; and performing underground work.¹⁸⁰³ Young workers are prohibited from working over 7 hours per day, night hours between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., during weekly rest days, and on public holidays.¹⁸⁰⁴

The worst forms of child labor may be prosecuted under different statutes in Ethiopia. Article 36 of the Constitution states that children have the right to be protected against exploitative practices and work conditions, and should not engage in employment that could threaten their health, education or well-being.¹⁸⁰⁵ Ethiopia's Penal Code was amended in 2005 to include provisions to address loopholes in child trafficking legislation. According to the Penal Code, child trafficking is punishable by imprisonment of up to 5 years and a fine of up to USD 10,000.¹⁸⁰⁶ A newly developed database will improve the government's ability to track the outcome of trafficking in persons arrests.¹⁸⁰⁷ The code also prohibits forced or bonded labor of children.¹⁸⁰⁸ The minimum age for military conscription is 18.¹⁸⁰⁹ Since 1999, the Government of Ethiopia 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 138.¹⁸¹⁰

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs is responsible for enforcement of child labor laws.¹⁸¹¹ The Department of State reports that within the formal industrial sector, the Government made some efforts to enforce these laws.¹⁸¹² However, various sources report that exploitative child labor is pervasive, particularly in the agrarian and the informal sectors,¹⁸¹³ areas where child labor laws are not easily enforced.¹⁸¹⁴

¹⁸⁰² *Negarit Gazeta of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia*, Proclamation No. 42/1993, Articles 2-4.

¹⁸⁰³ A "young worker" refers to those aged 14 to 18. See *Ibid.*, Articles 1,3-4.

¹⁸⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, Articles 90, 91.

¹⁸⁰⁵ *The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia*, (December 8), Article 36; available from <http://www.ethiopianembassy.org/constitution.doc>.

¹⁸⁰⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*. See also *Penal Code of the Empire of Ethiopia*, (1957), Article 605 a,b. See also U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*.

¹⁸⁰⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*.

¹⁸⁰⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2004: Ethiopia*, section 6c.

¹⁸⁰⁹ *Ethiopia Manpower Considerations*, ITA, [online] n.d. [cited December 2, 2005]; available from http://www.photius.com/countries/ethiopia/national_security/ethiopia_national_security_manpower_considerati~8178.html. See also *Ethiopia Military Manpower-Military Age*, Index Mundi, [online] January 1, 2005 [cited December 2, 2005]; available from http://www.indexmundi.com/ethiopia/military_manpower_military_age.html.

¹⁸¹⁰ ILO-IPEC official, email communication to USDOL official, November 8, 2005.

¹⁸¹¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2004: Ethiopia*, Section 6d.

¹⁸¹² *Ibid.*, section 6d.

¹⁸¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹⁴ Bhalotra, *Child Labour in Africa*, 65.

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

The Government of Ethiopia has adopted a National Plan of Action for Children which includes activities to promote quality education to children and protect them from violence, abuse and exploitation.¹⁸¹⁵ The Children, Youth, and Family Affairs Department at the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs chairs the National Steering Committee against Sexual Exploitation of Children.¹⁸¹⁶ The U.S. Department of State reports that the government's protection services for trafficking victims increased during the second half of 2004 and the first half of 2005. Child protection units in the capital city's police stations carried out efforts to detect cases of trafficking in persons.¹⁸¹⁷ A USAID-funded center provides services to trafficking victims.¹⁸¹⁸ As part of a US Department of State-funded program to combat the trafficking of women and children to the Middle East, high-school aged students were educated about the dangers of trafficking in persons. In the capital city, a 24-hour hotline provided confidential counseling and support.¹⁸¹⁹

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138	5/27/1999	✓
Ratified Convention 182	9/02/2003	✓
ILO-IPEC Associated Member		✓
National Plan for Children		✓
National Child Labor Action Plan		
Sector Action Plan		

The Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, in coordination with UNICEF, is implementing a program to provide formal and non-formal education, school materials, and health care to over 6,000 street children.¹⁸²⁰ USDOL-funded projects increase educational alternatives to children exploited in hazardous labor and document best practices and replicable strategies.¹⁸²¹ The Government of Italy supports an ILO-IPEC Country Program to combat the worst forms of child labor in Ethiopia.¹⁸²²

The government works with the WFP on a U.S. Department of Agriculture-funded school feeding program aimed at improving school children's nutrition, attendance and retention rates in school and increasing parental involvement in school activities.¹⁸²³ UNICEF collaborates with the Ethiopian Government on education and child protection activities.¹⁸²⁴ In September 2005, UNICEF received USD 4.96 million from the Swedish Government, which will be used to begin implementation of the first phase of the National Plan of Action for children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS. Funds will be used to foster open communication between children and parents, to build the capacity for youth

¹⁸¹⁵ *Joint Action Plans Launched for Children*, Relief Web, [online] December 17, 2004 [cited June 29, 2005]; available from <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/HMYT-684RVZ?OpenDocument>.

¹⁸¹⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2004: Ethiopia*, section 6d. See also SNGOA, *Study on the Worst Forms of Child Labour*.

¹⁸¹⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*.

¹⁸¹⁸ Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Centre for Helping Victims of Trafficking Opens", IRINnews.org, [online], 2004 [cited June 29, 2005]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=41909>.

¹⁸¹⁹ US Embassy- Addis Ababa, *reporting*, February 1, 2005.

¹⁸²⁰ UNICEF, *Child Protection*; available from http://www.unicef.org/ethiopia/protection_465.html.

¹⁸²¹ Winrock International, *Projects in Ethiopia*, [online] 2005 [cited December 20, 2005]; available from http://www.winrock.org/where/display_country.cfm?CountryID=680.

¹⁸²² ILO-IPEC official, email communication, November 8, 2005.

¹⁸²³ U.S. Department of Agriculture, *The Global Food for Education Pilot Program*, Report to the United States Congress, Washington D.C., February, 2003; available from <http://www.fas.usda.gov/excredits/FoodAid/FFE/gfe/congress2003/countryreports.htm>.

¹⁸²⁴ UNICEF, *At a glance: Ethiopia*, 2004; available from <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/ethiopia.html>. See also UNICEF, *Child Protection*.

programming, to develop youth friendly services (including voluntary counseling and testing), and to strengthen anti-AIDS clubs and other youth groups.¹⁸²⁵

USAID is funding a 6-year educational program through 2007 that focuses on training new teachers, providing in-service training for current teachers, improving the quality of radio instruction, strengthening community/government partnerships, and improving education management systems.¹⁸²⁶

¹⁸²⁵ Implementation will take place over a 3 year period in the regions of: Afar, Oromia, Somali and Tigray. UNICEF, *UNICEF receives US 4.96 million from Sweden to scale up response to HIV/Aids among orphans, vulnerable children and youth*, [online] September 9, 2005 [cited December 28, 2005]; available from <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/EVOD-6G3CDU?OpenDocument>.

¹⁸²⁶ *Ethiopia: Program Data Sheet 663-009*, USAID, [online] n.d. [cited May 27, 2004]; available from <http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/cbj2003/afr/et/663-009.html>. See also USAID, *Basic Education Strategic Objective 2: Community-Government Partnership Program*, November, 2004.