

In 2012, Senegal made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government approved a National Strategy under the Interagency Committee Against Child Labor in November 2012 and allocated funding for its implementation. Senegal's laws do not fully protect children from child labor. In particular, laws contain exceptions allowing children to work in underground mines and quarries. Enforcement agencies lack adequate resources and jurisdiction to effectively carry out their work. In addition, redundancy among government agencies and interagency bodies tasked with combating child labor results in confusion about each body's scope of responsibility and impedes effective coordination and implementation of efforts. Children in Senegal continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in dangerous activities in agriculture and forced begging.

Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	14.9 (510,420)
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	53.6
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	8.3
Primary Completion Rate		62.8

Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2011, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from DHS Survey, 2010-2011.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Senegal are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in dangerous activities in agriculture and in forced begging. Children working in agriculture may use dangerous tools, carry heavy loads, and apply pesticides.(3-8) Limited evidence suggests that children in rural areas also work in cattle herding.(3, 5-7) Children herding livestock may suffer injuries such as being bitten, butted, gored, or trampled by animals.(9, 10)

While the prevalence is unknown, children also work in the fishing sector.(3-7) In Senegal, fishing sometimes involves the use of explosives to kill large quantities of fish.(11, 12) In addition to the hazards associated with using explosives,



children in fishing may work long hours, perform physically demanding tasks, and face dangers such as drowning.(13, 14)

Children are also engaged in domestic service.(3, 4, 7, 15-17) Children employed as domestics may be required to work long hours, performing strenuous tasks, without sufficient food or shelter. These children may be isolated in private homes and are susceptible to physical and sexual abuse.(15, 18, 19) Many child domestics are victims of human trafficking. Girls as young as age 10 are brought from abroad and from rural areas in Senegal to work as domestics in the country's urban centers.(3, 6, 17, 20) Children are also trafficked domestically and internationally for work in prostitution and sex tourism.(4, 20, 21)

In Senegal, it is traditional practice to send boys to Koranic teachers called *marabouts* to receive education, which may include vocational training and apprenticeship. Some *marabouts* force their students, called *talibés*, to beg on the streets for money and food and to surrender their earnings.(7, 17, 22-24) *Marabouts* who force their *talibés* to beg typically set a daily quota that *talibés* must meet or face beatings.(7, 22, 23) Some *talibés* who fail to meet quotas are forced to spend the night on the street.(23) There are tens of thousands of *talibés*, mostly under age 12, estimated to be in situations of forced begging. These boys often live in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions; receive inadequate food and medical care; and are vulnerable to sexual exploitation.(23) According to various stakeholders, including the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the problem of forced begging appears to be increasing in Senegal.(5, 25)

Although evidence is limited, there is reason to believe some *talibés* are used to harvest cashews, mangoes, and oranges.(7) These children typically work long hours. In the Casamance Region, *talibés* working in the fields are exposed to land mines

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left from a 29-year conflict in the region.(7, 26) Limited evidence also suggests that *talibés* in Thies collect garbage from homes, sometimes carrying very heavy loads.(27) There are also reports of other children working on the streets, but information as to specific activities and hazards is unknown.(4, 6, 7, 20, 29)

Talibés typically come from rural areas within Senegal and from neighboring countries, sometimes as a result of trafficking.(3, 17, 23, 28) Senegalese children are also trafficked to Gambia and to Mauritania, where religious teachers force them to beg.(29)

Limited evidence suggests that children in Senegal may work in dangerous conditions in gold mines. Although the extent of the problem is unknown, children also work in salt mines and rock quarries.(3, 7, 16, 17, 30, 31) These children are exposed to unsafe and unhealthy working conditions such as carrying heavy loads, sifting through dirt, using mercury to attract precious metals, and working without protective gear.(7, 11, 31) Children also perform dangerous work in construction.(32)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment, including apprenticeships, at 15.(33) However, section L.145 of the Labor Code grants the Minister of Labor authority to waive the minimum age based on local needs.(34) *Arrêtés ministériels n° 3750* and *3751* prohibit children from working in hazardous conditions and identify circumstances in which children under age 18 cannot work or can only work under certain conditions.(35, 36) An exception within these laws allows boys under age 16 to work in underground mines and quarries if they are doing “light work,” such as sorting and loading ore, handling and hauling trucks within specified weight limits, or if they are handling ventilation equipment.(3, 24, 34, 36, 37) However, limiting children of any age to “light work” in underground mines and quarries is inconsistent with the international standards set forth by ILO Convention 138.(38) *Arrêté ministériel n° 3749* prohibits some of the activities considered to be worst forms of child labor, including forced labor, slavery, prostitution, begging for a third party, drug trafficking, scavenging garbage, slaughtering animals, work with dangerous products, and work that imperils the health, safety, or morality of children.(39)

The Constitution bans forced labor.(3) Senegalese law also defines slavery as a crime against humanity.(4) The minimum age for compulsory military recruitment is 20. The minimum age for voluntary recruitment is 18.(3, 40)

International Conventions and Selected Laws on Child Labor and Education

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	15
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	17
	Free Public Education	Yes

The Penal Code prohibits the procuring a person for prostitution and acting as an intermediary for prostitution. If the crime involves a minor younger than age 13, sentences are more severe.(41) The Penal Code also prohibits using, procuring, or offering a child for pornography.(37) Law n° 2005-06 prohibits all forms of trafficking and prescribes stringent penalties.(42) Law n° 2005-02 proscribes begging and establishes penalties for those who enable, coerce, or force others to beg for their profit.(4) Research did not find laws that fully protect children from involvement in illicit activities.

The Constitution mandates state provision of free education.(43, 44) Law n° 2004-2037 establishes compulsory education until the age of 17.(3)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The Government of Senegal has established several bodies tasked with coordinating efforts to combat worst forms of child labor. The Interagency Committee Against Child Labor, chaired by the Ministry of Labor (MOL), is responsible for coordinating initiatives to address child labor.(3, 5, 6) The committee comprises employers’ organizations, 20 ministries, religious leaders, international agencies, and governors from various regions.(45) The Committee receives limited technical support from the ILO and no program funding from the Government.(6)

The Ministry of Family (MOF) coordinates another national committee against child labor.(3) The Government also has a third body with child labor in its purview, the National Task Force Against the Mistreatment of Persons, in Particular Women and Children (NTAMP). The Task Force is charged with reporting on human trafficking in Senegal and coordinating efforts to combat the problem.(46) During the reporting period, NTAMP received only a minimal budget of \$20,000.(5, 46) Redundancy between these three bodies creates confusion and hinders effective collaboration and implementation of efforts.(4, 23)

MOL is responsible for enforcing child labor laws through the Labor Inspections Office and the use of social security inspectors.(3, 27). Labor inspectors are responsible for enforcement in the formal sector, which covers state-owned corporations, private enterprises, and cooperatives.(27, 29) If an incident of child labor is found during an inspection, the inspector informs the business owner that the child should be removed from work. If the child is not removed within the specified timeframe, the case is turned over to a local tribunal for adjudication.(27) As this process does not penalize violators on their first offense, it may not deter employers from exploiting children in the workplace.

Based on the most recent data available, approximately 147 MOL employees are charged with carrying out labor inspections.(6, 27) MOL's Child Labor Unit is responsible for maintaining a database of child labor violations and for monitoring and evaluating child labor activities. However, the Unit has no full-time staff. MOL staff whose primary responsibilities are to other units work part-time for the Child Labor Unit(45, 47) No child labor violations were reported as a result of inspections during the reporting period.(3)

The Ministry of Justice and the Senegalese police are responsible for enforcing laws on child trafficking, begging, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children for illicit activities. However, these laws are rarely enforced in practice, especially those against forced begging.(3, 6, 29) With few exceptions, Koranic schools (*daaras*) are not subject to government regulation or inspection.(23) The Ministry of Education (MOE) has a *daara* inspection unit, which was intended to increase monitoring of *daaras*, and integrate religious schools, including *daaras*, into the national education system. However, the unit only inspects "modern" *daaras* that meet MOE's definition.(48, 49)

The Children's Unit of the Senegalese police force specializes in child protection. However, the Unit's territorial jurisdiction is limited to Dakar, and the office employs only two agents.(3, 4)

Although other police stations in Senegal are expected to report cases involving children to the Unit, research found no evidence that this occurs regularly.(4) There is also a police vice squad responsible for combating sex tourism, including sex tourism related to children. The vice squad patrols tourist areas, including beaches, hotels, bars, nightclubs, and massage parlors.(4) Local police and *gendarmes* (military force charged with police duties among civilian populations) are responsible for intervening in cases where children face physical abuse in forced labor situations.(3)

There were no investigations, prosecutions, or convictions involving child labor during the reporting period.(6)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In November 2012, the Government approved a National Strategy for 2012 to 2016 under the Interagency Committee Against Child Labor and allocated 8 billion FCFA of its budget to the Strategy.(6, 49) UNICEF began printing the final document in May 2013 and the President requested that the Ministry of Women, Children, and Entrepreneurship distribute the document as soon as possible in order to include discussion of the Strategy on the agenda of the next meeting of the Interministerial Council for Policy Validation.(49)

The draft National Strategy for the Protection of Children, released in 2011 by the Ministry of Women, Children, and Entrepreneurship's Office of the Rights and Protection of Children, is still awaiting approval. This policy would create a national body to coordinate social policy on child protection efforts.(5, 6, 49) Research did not identify any information about how the November 2012 Strategy will complement the National Strategy for the Protection of Children.

The Government of Senegal has a National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings. The Plan's goals include enhancing the legal framework to prevent human trafficking, effectively implementing laws, providing effective protection and care for victims, and strengthening social and educational initiatives for vulnerable children.(4, 20)

The Government has also integrated child labor issues into other relevant development policies. The Ten-Year Education and Training Program (2000-2015) aims to provide quality, universal primary education to all children by 2015. The National Social Protection Strategy (2005-2015) classifies children as a specific vulnerable group and includes provisions for their protection against harmful practices, exploitation, and violence.(3, 50-52)

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Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Ministry of Women, Children, and Entrepreneurship continues to run the Project to Fight Against Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor. This Project is led by the MOF’s Office of Protection of the Rights of Children.(5, 6) The Project aims to enhance government capacity to design and implement local initiatives to address child trafficking and other worst forms of child labor, particularly forced begging, forced labor of girls, and commercial sexual exploitation.(3, 4) At the local level, technical monitoring committees composed of public and private stakeholders oversee the implementation of the project. As a result of the program, some departmental governments have developed individual action plans to address child labor.(4)

The Government continues efforts to build and promote “modern *daaras*,” where students receive Koranic instruction as well as courses in reading, writing, and mathematics.(5, 53) Approximately 60,000 students now attend these government-supported *daaras*.(16) The Government also participates in the USAID-funded Basic Education Program to improve the quality of and access to education. A key objective of the Program is to ensure *talibés* receive basic education.(54) However, given the rising number of *talibés* in forced begging, current government programs are not extensive enough to effectively combat the problem.(5, 23)

The Government of Senegal continued to participate in a 4-year, \$5.2 million Spanish-funded regional project focusing on the development and implementation of national action plans to combat the worst forms of child labor. In addition, the project seeks to help government institutions, private sector actors, and civil society organizations maintain sustainable action.(55)

The Government continued to participate in two USDOL-funded regional projects. The first, a 3-year, \$7.9 million project, is designed to strengthen ECOWAS’s Child Policy and Strategic Plan of Action and to develop programs focusing on child trafficking as it pertains to the Strategic Plan.(56) The second, a 3-year, \$5 million project, is meant to expand and extend the work of the initial project.(57)

The Ginddi Center is the only fully government-run shelter in Senegal that serves abused and vulnerable children, including runaway *talibés*, street children, and child trafficking victims.(7, 16, 53) The Center provides shelter, food, education, vocational training, family mediation, and medical and psychological care.(3, 4, 7, 23, 46) It also operates a toll-free child protection hotline through which the public can report violations of children’s rights, including instances of child labor abuses.(4, 17) The Government of Senegal also oversees the country’s NGO-run children shelters, contributing technical assistance and staff. However, these shelters are often filled to capacity and the total number of facilities is insufficient in relation to the number of children on the streets.(5, 23)

Despite the efforts discussed above, existing programs do not target commercial sexual exploitation, domestic service, or hazardous work in agriculture, mining.

Although education is free and the Senegal Basic Education Project (2009-2013) allocates grants to NGOs committed to reducing the dropout rate, some families are prevented from sending their children to school because they cannot afford to pay for books, uniforms, or other supplies.(58) In addition, some girls reportedly left school after being sexually harassed by school staff and as a result of early pregnancy.(7)

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Senegal:

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Amend the Labor Code so that the only exceptions to the minimum age for employment are consistent with international standards, specifically those set out by ILO Convention 138.	2011, 2012
	Amend the law to prohibit all children under age 18 from engaging in any work in underground mines and quarries.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Ensure laws fully protect children from all illicit activities.	2011, 2012

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Coordination and Enforcement	Ensure the effectiveness of coordinating mechanisms on child labor by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminating redundancy and defining distinct scopes of responsibility. • Providing adequate funding and resources to relevant bodies. 	2010, 2011, 2012 2011, 2012
	Penalize labor law violators on their first offense to create a stronger disincentive to illegally employ children.	2010, 2011, 2012
	Ensure that all laws related to the worst forms of child labor are adequately and evenly enforced, including those against forced begging.	2010, 2011, 2012
Coordination and Enforcement	Act swiftly to adequately equip a <i>daara</i> inspection unit to increase monitoring and remediation of forced begging practices in Koranic schools in all <i>daaras</i> .	2010, 2011, 2012
	Expand the jurisdiction and capacity of the Children's Unit of the Senegalese police force or implement systems to connect local police forces and the unit to better track and combat child labor.	2010, 2011, 2012
Policies	Approve and implement the National Strategy for the Protection of Children.	2011, 2012
Social Programs	Develop new programs and expand existing programs to combat the worst forms of child labor, by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening more shelters and service centers for abused and vulnerable children, including <i>talibés</i>, street children, and child trafficking victims. • Establishing more extensive programming to address the most pressing worst forms of child labor, including forced begging, commercial sexual exploitation, domestic service, and hazardous work in agriculture, mining, and forestry. 	2010, 2011, 2012
	Assist families to ensure all children may attend school, including by expanding programs to address issues that serve as a barrier to girls' education, such as sexual harassment in schools and early pregnancy.	2011, 2012

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