

In 2013, Guinea-Bissau made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government remains in transition after the 2012 coup. The Guinea-Bissauan Embassy in Dakar worked closely with the Government of Senegal to repatriate 45 trafficked children back to Guinea-Bissau. Meanwhile, the Guinea-Bissauan Government continued to participate in a project, funded by the U.S. DOL, to combat the worst forms of child labor and in several other social programs. However, children continue to engage in child labor in agriculture and in the worst forms of child labor in forced begging. A decree to establish a National Commission to Combat Child Labor (CNCTI) remains in draft form. Guinea-Bissau has neither established a list of hazardous occupations that are prohibited for children, nor provided enforcement officials with appropriate training and resources to monitor, investigate, and prosecute cases of child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children engage in the worst forms of child labor in forced begging, and in child labor in agriculture. (3-6) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Guinea-Bissau.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	47.3 (219,734)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	56.9
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	34.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		64.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(1)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 3, 2006.(2)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Production of cashews* and rice* (3, 4)
	Farming, activities unknown (3-5)
	Fishing,* activities unknown (3, 6, 7)
Industry	Mining (3, 6)
Services	Street work, activities unknown (3, 5, 7, 8)
	Domestic service (3, 5, 7, 8)
	Car washing and shoe shining (3, 5, 7, 8)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation and begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (5, 7, 9-11)
	Forced labor as a result of human trafficking* (9)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a) – (c) of ILO C. 182.

The Government lacks current statistics on the prevalence of child labor.(7)

In Guinea-Bissau, organized networks of former male trafficking victims affiliated with Koranic schools traffic young boys.(7) It is a traditional practice to send boys, known as *talibés* (in Wolof) and *almudus* (in Fula) away from their

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families to be educated by Koranic teachers, called *marabouts*. Though many teachers carry out the intended tradition of providing education, some instead force students to beg on the streets for money and food and to then surrender their earnings to their teachers.(3, 10, 12) Teachers who force *talibés/almudus* to beg typically set a daily quota; if they do not meet the quota, they may be beaten.(3, 10, 12) A source indicates that politicians in Guinea-Bissau do not confront Koranic teachers for trafficking boys due to the teachers' importance in the Muslim electorate.(13)

Some children who sell goods on the street are obligated by their families to bring home a certain amount of income. If they are unable to do so, they are likely to be subjected to physical violence.(11) In order to meet their families' demands, some of these children engage in prostitution to avoid corporal punishment.(11)




Child marriage is common in Guinea-Bissau. Limited evidence suggests that girls who flee forced marriages are victims of commercial sexual exploitation as a result of trafficking.(5)

Access to education is hindered by the lack of schools and trained teachers, poor teaching methods, and informal school fees, such as registration and monthly charges, which are common in public schools.(4, 12) Children often leave schools to work in the fields during the cashew harvest season.(5) As reported in the National Strategy to Combat Poverty, for every 100 children who enroll in first grade, only 40 children reach the sixth grade.(14)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Guinea-Bissau has ratified most key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

	Convention	Ratification
	ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
	ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	UN CRC	✓
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The Government has established relevant laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Article 146 of the General Labor Law (15)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 148 of the General Labor Law (15)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Prevention and Trafficking in Persons Law; Penal Code (16, 17)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Prevention and Trafficking in Persons Law; Public Law 12/2011; 2009 Child Code (17)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Prevention and Trafficking in Persons Law; Penal Code (16, 17)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	16	Decree 20/83 (3, 18, 19)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Basic Education Law (20)
Free Public Education	Yes		Basic Education Law (20)

The Government has not established a list of hazardous occupations that are prohibited for children.(15)

Children may voluntarily enter the military at age 16 with parental consent, but are not permitted into combat activities.(3, 18, 19) The Government has no law that prohibits the use of children for illicit activities.

Procurement of 16- to 18-year-olds in prostitution is not prohibited.(21)

The Education Law establishes compulsory education through the ninth grade.(20) The Government has reported to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics that education is compulsory until age 13.(22) Therefore, the compulsory education age is unclear in Guinea-Bissau. School is free for all children, but in practice there are limited resources to cover all children in schools; therefore, not all children have equal opportunities in school.(20)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Civil Service and Labor, in collaboration with the National Institute for Women and Children (INMC)	Enforce child labor legislation.(3, 23)
The Ministry of Interior	Lead efforts to combat child trafficking.(3)
Police and border officials	Prevent traffickers from entering or exiting the country with children. With INMC and UNICEF, maintain data on child trafficking.(24)
The Government of Guinea-Bissau and the Government of Senegal	Collaborate in combating child trafficking.(3)

Criminal law enforcement agencies in Guinea-Bissau took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms. However, research found no evidence that labor law enforcement agencies took such actions.

Labor Law Enforcement

Enforcement officials, including labor inspectors, do not have appropriate training and equipment to carry out inspections and investigations of child labor cases; the lack of lawyers and courts in rural areas limits law enforcement.(3, 24) During the reporting period, the government provided no funding for labor inspections.(7)

Criminal Law Enforcement

During the reporting period, there was no information available on the number of investigations, labor inspections, prosecutions, or convictions conducted on child labor.

However, during the reporting period, the Guinea-Bissauan Embassy in Dakar worked closely with the Government of Senegal to repatriate 45 trafficked children back to Guinea-Bissau.(7)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Institute for Women and Children (INMC)	Coordinate and monitor NGOs and activities of other rehabilitation partners to defend and protect children.(7)
Ministry of Justice in collaboration with the INMC	Enforce child labor legislation.(3, 23)

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Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor (cont)

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
The Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee	Coordinate government efforts to combat human trafficking. Led by the INMC and includes representatives from the Ministries of Interior, Justice, Health, Education, and Transportation, as well as various NGOs.(24)
Ministry of Public Function, Work, and Modernization of the State (MFPTME)	Implement and coordinate actions to combat child labor in Guinea-Bissau. Comprised of the General Inspector of Public Administration; the General Inspector of Social Security; the General Directorate of Public Function; the General Directorate of Work, Employment, and Professional Training; and the National Institute of Social Security. Drafted the decree establishing the National Commission for Combating Child Labor and carried out a national child labor survey.(8)
National Committee to Prevent, Combat, and Assist Victims of Trafficking	Strengthen efforts to fight human trafficking. Created by the Trafficking Act.(17)

Agencies enforcing criminal laws against child labor and trafficking do little to coordinate their efforts, and there are no social services for victims.(7) The National Trafficking Committee has not met since the 2012 coup; the Committee's operational status and its role in relation to the established Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee is unclear.(3)

The national child labor survey carried out by MFPTME was projected to be published in late 2013, but research did not uncover whether it was published.(8)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence of programs to specifically address child labor, including its worst forms. However, the Government has funded other programs that may have an impact on child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Education Action Plan for All (2000–2015)*	Guides Guinea-Bissau's efforts to ensure universal access to education and facilitate interagency coordination.(25)
Political Letter for Educational Sector (2010– 2020)*	Outlines actions to be developed for preschool, primary, and secondary education, additional higher education, technical/professional training, and higher education, and science studies.(8)
National Strategy for Social Protection of Children*	Provides orientation to the Government and national partners to address social response for vulnerable children, including orphans and children who are HIV/AIDS carriers.(8)
National Action Plan on Trafficking (2011– 2013)*	Aims to guide implementation of the anti-trafficking law. Research unable to identify what the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee has done toward this goal.(9, 24)
National Strategy to Combat Poverty (2011– 2015)*	Seeks to reduce poverty from 69.3 percent to 24 percent by 2015, and extreme poverty from 33 percent to 13 percent, by 2015 by improving access to basic services and generating income and employment opportunities. Strengthens government coordination and mechanisms to protect at-risk children, including those engaged in child labor.(26)
Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) Action Plan to Combat Child Labor	Establishes four target areas to combat child labor. Includes the exchange of information and experiences; awareness-raising campaigns; use of statistical methodologies to collect child labor data; and technical cooperation and training.(27-29)

*The impact of this policy on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

The Government developed plans for a National Committee to Combat Child Labor (*Comissão Nacional para o Combate ao Trabalho Infantil* or CNCTI).(8) Once approved and implemented, the Committee will produce reports on child labor and develop a proposal for the National Plan to Combat Child Labor. CNCTI also will receive funding to implement the plan, to approve projects and programs combating the worst forms of child labor, and to create enforcement mechanisms for child labor.(8)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

In 2013, the Government of Guinea-Bissau funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
National School Lunch Program*‡	Government and International Partnership for Human Development National school lunch program that covers more than 300 schools and reaches more than 88,000 children.(30-32)
Emergency Food Security Support Project*	World Bank and EU program to improve food security by providing school meals to children and food-for-work opportunities to adults.(33)
Cash transfer program*	World Bank program aimed at vulnerable populations that benefits 2,500 individuals.(4)
Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labor in West Africa and Strengthening Sub-Regional Cooperation through ECOWAS I & II	USDOL-funded regional projects that supported ECOWAS to strengthen its role in combating the worst forms of child labor in the West Africa sub-region by providing policy and capacity building support for all ECOWAS states.(34, 35)
Association for Women and Children's (Associação de Mulher e Criança) (AMIC), anti-trafficking programs‡	Government provides \$10,000 to the budget of the local NGO, AMIC, which offers medical and psychological support to children and women who are trafficking victims; maintains the main anti-trafficking coordinating force in Guinea-Bissau.(7, 13)

* The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Guinea-Bissau

Although Guinea-Bissau has programs that target social welfare and child trafficking, the scope of these problems is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem. Research did not identify programs that target children engaged in other worst forms of child labor, including agriculture, forced begging, and street work.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Guinea-Bissau (Table 9).

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Establish a comprehensive list of hazardous activities prohibited for children younger than age 18.	2009 – 2013
	Ensure that access to education is not hindered by informal fees and the lack of trained teachers.	2011 – 2013
	Adopt legislation prohibiting procurement of 16- to 18-year-olds in prostitution.	2013
	Clarify the age to which education is compulsory.	2011 – 2013
	Adopt legislation that bans the use of children for illicit activities.	2011 – 2013
Enforcement	Boost institutional capacity of the Ministries of Interior, Justice, and Civil Service and Labor to enforce child labor laws:	
	■ Train enforcement officials on child labor legislation.	2009 – 2013
	■ Provide enforcement officials with sufficient resources to monitor, investigate, and prosecute child labor and child trafficking cases.	2011 – 2013
	■ Expand the number of courts in areas with high rates of child labor and child trafficking	2010 – 2013
	■ Make public information about labor inspections, including the number of labor inspectors, inspections, violations, enforcement actions, and prosecutions related to the worst forms of child labor.	2009 – 2013
Coordination	Clarify the roles of the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee and the National Committee to Prevent, Combat and Assist Victims of Trafficking.	2011 – 2013
Government Policies	Conduct research to complement the 2010 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey to determine the extent and nature of the worst forms of child labor in agriculture and street work.	2011 – 2013
	Publish the results of the national child labor survey.	2013
	Assess the impact existing policies may have on addressing child labor.	2013
Social Programs	Develop new programs and expand existing programs to reach more children engaged in the worst forms of child labor, particularly those in agriculture, forced begging, and street work.	2009 – 2013
	Assess the impact existing programs may have on addressing child labor.	2013

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