

# Tunisia

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

In 1992, the Government of Tunisia established a multi-sectoral National Plan of Action for the Survival, Protection, and Development of the Child.<sup>3614</sup> The Ministry of Youth and Children, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Education and Sciences, and the National Institution for the Protection of Children were among the participants in the development of the plan.<sup>3615</sup>

In 2000, the World Bank approved a USD 99 million loan for an Education Quality Improvement Project designed to facilitate the Ministry of Education's efforts to promote primary and secondary education. This project targets students at these levels who are at risk of dropping out of school or repeating classes.<sup>3616</sup> UNICEF is working with the government to implement educational projects, including gender-based initiatives, and promote children's rights.<sup>3617</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, UNICEF estimated that 2.1 percent of children ages 5 to 15 years in Tunisia were working.<sup>3618</sup> Slightly more boys than girls were involved in child labor, and the rate of working children in the rural areas was also higher than in urban areas.<sup>3619</sup> Approximately 71.4 percent of working children worked more than four hours per day, and over half worked during school hours, which was found to increase the risk of dropout from, or failure in, school. All working children were paid for their services, and nearly half of them spent their salaries on family necessities.<sup>3620</sup>

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<sup>3614</sup> Government of Tunisia, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) Report: Tunisia*, UNICEF, 2000, 7 [cited January 2, 2003]; available from <http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/newreports/tunisia/tunisia.pdf>.

<sup>3615</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

<sup>3616</sup> World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Loan in the Amount of US \$99 Million to the Republic of Tunisia for the First Phase of the Education Quality Improvement Program (EQIP)*, [online] 2000 [cited August 29, 2002]; available from [http://www.wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/07/07/000094946\\_00061705502666/Rendered/PDF/multi\\_page.pdf](http://www.wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2000/07/07/000094946_00061705502666/Rendered/PDF/multi_page.pdf). See also World Bank, *Education Quality Improvement Project*, [cited August 29, 2002]; available from <http://www4.worldbank.org/sprojects/Project.asp?pid=P050945>.

<sup>3617</sup> UNICEF's 1997-2001 Programme of Cooperation includes health, education, and children's rights components. UNICEF, *UNICEF in Tunisia*, [online] 2001 [cited August 29, 2002]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/programme/countryprog/mena/tunisia/mainmenu.htm>. UNICEF Global Girls' Education Program is implemented in specific regions of Tunisia to assist teachers to reduce gender disparities in learning achievement. See UNICEF, *Global Girl's Education Programme: Country Highlights*, [online] 2000 [cited August 29, 2002]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/efagirlsed.htm#Tunisia>.

<sup>3618</sup> Children who are working in some capacity include children who have performed any paid or unpaid work for someone who is not a member of the household, who have performed more than four hours of housekeeping chores in the household, or who have performed other family work. See Government of Tunisia, *MICS Report: Tunisia*, 83.

<sup>3619</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3620</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

Children work as apprentices, domestic laborers, vendors and agricultural workers and during school vacations.<sup>3621</sup>

Education is compulsory and free between the ages of 6 and 16.<sup>3622</sup> In 2000, approximately 96 percent of six-year-old children were enrolled in school.<sup>3623</sup> In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 119.2 percent (115.7 percent for girls and 122.5 percent for boys) and the net primary enrollment rate was 97.5 percent.<sup>3624</sup> In 2000, 94.4 percent of children between the ages of 6 and 12 attended school. Attendance in urban areas is higher than in rural areas (97.2 percent and 90.5 percent respectively).<sup>3625</sup> The attendance rate for adolescents between the ages of 13 and 19 years was 66.1 percent.<sup>3626</sup>

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Code of 1966 established the minimum age for labor at 16 years with a number of exceptions.<sup>3627</sup> The age of 13 years is set for light agricultural, non-agricultural, and non-industrial work, provided that the work does not pose a health hazard or interfere with the child's development or education.<sup>3628</sup> Under the Labor Code, children may work as apprentices or through vocational training programs at age 14.<sup>3629</sup> In addition, children under 16 years of age may work in family-run businesses as long as the work does not interfere with school or pose a threat to the child's health.<sup>3630</sup> The age of 18 years is established for hazardous work.<sup>3631</sup> The hours that children below the age of 18 are permitted to work are regulated.<sup>3632</sup> In 1995, the Government of Tunisia passed the Child Protection Code, which protects children under 18 years

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<sup>3621</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: Tunisia*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002, 2301-03, Section 6d [cited December 18, 2002]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/nea/8303.htm>.

<sup>3622</sup> UN Economic and Social Council, *Concluding Observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: Tunisia*, 1999 [cited August 29, 2002], Par. 7; available from <http://www.hri.ca/fortherecord1999/documentation/tbodies/e-c12-1-add36.htm>.

<sup>3623</sup> Government of Tunisia, *MICS Report: Tunisia*, 67.

<sup>3624</sup> World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2002* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2002.

<sup>3625</sup> Government of Tunisia, *MICS Report: Tunisia*, 69.

<sup>3626</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>3627</sup> Government of Tunisia, *Code du Travail, 1966*, Loi no. 66-77, (April 30, 1966), Article 53 [cited December 18, 2002]; available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/scripts/natlexcgi.exe?lang=E>.

<sup>3628</sup> *Ibid.*, Articles 55-56.

<sup>3629</sup> *Ibid.*, Articles 52-53.

<sup>3630</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 54.

<sup>3631</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 58. This article prohibits work that is a danger to the health, safety, or morality of children, and authorizes the Ministry of Social Affairs to determine the jobs that fall in this category.

<sup>3632</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 65. Article 65 prohibits children under 14 years of age from working in nonagricultural jobs between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m. Article 66 prohibits children between 14 and 18 years of age from working in non-agricultural jobs from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. For agricultural work, Article 74 states that children under 18 years must have fixed rest periods and cannot work between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m.

from abuse and exploitation, including participation in wars or armed conflicts, prostitution, and hazardous labor conditions.<sup>3633</sup> Labor inspectors from the Ministry of Social Affairs are responsible for enforcing child labor laws.<sup>3634</sup>

The Government of Tunisia ratified ILO Convention 138 on October 19, 1995 and ILO Convention 182 on February 28, 2000.<sup>3635</sup>

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<sup>3633</sup> Government of Tunisia, *Loi No. 95-92, 1995, Relative a la publication du code de la protection de l'enfant*, (November 9, 1995), Articles 2, 18, 20, 25, and 26 [cited December 18, 2002]; available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/scripts/natlexcgi.exe?lang=E>.

<sup>3634</sup> *Code du Travail*, Articles 170-71.

<sup>3635</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited September 15, 2002]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.