

## Country Context Report - São Tomé e Príncipe

### General Country Information

#### Africa Education Initiative Program Component(s)

Ambassadors' Girls' Scholarship Program

#### Primary Language(s)

Portuguese: National, Official, Instruction Grades 1-4, Instruction Grades 5-7/8

Angolar: National

Principense: National

São Tomense: National

#### Sources

CIA World Fact Book - <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/tp.html>

Ethnologue.com - [http://www.ethnologue.com/show\\_country.asp?name=S%C3%A3o+Tom%C3%A9+e+Príncipe](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_country.asp?name=S%C3%A3o+Tom%C3%A9+e+Príncipe)

#### Population

	Total	Male	Female
Total	175,883	86,720	89,163
Under 14	83,891	42,480	41,411

#### Sources

CIA World Fact Book - <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/tp.html>

#### Ministry of Education Officials

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The United States (U.S.) Embassy in Gabon represents the U.S. in the Republic of Gabon, as well in the Democratic Republic of São Tomé e Príncipe.

## Basic Education General Information

### **Breadth of Basic Education Activities**

Length of Primary School Cycle: 6 Years

### **What are the key basic education challenges?**

- Insufficient budget for education
- Insufficient number of schools
- Shortage of adequately trained teachers
- Shortage of textbooks and learning materials

#### Sources

Education for Development and Democracy Initiative - Exegesis Consulting and SMCI

### **Is primary education 'free' (legally)?**

Free primary education is provided.

Education is free, universal and compulsory through the sixth grade, irrespective of the student's age.

#### Sources

Education for Development and Democracy Initiative - Exegesis Consulting and SMCI

### **What are the barriers to student access and participation in basic education?**

The São Tomé e Príncipe government allocates approximately 20% of the national budget to education and health, yet the biggest challenge to education in São Tomé e Príncipe is a budgetary one. The educational system suffers from insufficient numbers of schools, adequately trained teachers, and textbooks, while the student population continues to grow. With approximately 40,000 students in São Tomé e Príncipe's educational system and only one high school (grades nine to 11) and no universities, shortages in the supply of secondary and post-secondary institutions represent a major challenge for education policymakers. Furthermore, access to this one high school is constrained by overcrowding, with 60 to 70 students per classroom. Moreover, the high school is in the capital city on the island of São Tomé, thus students from Príncipe, who have sufficient funds, are forced to lodge with relatives or friends in São Tomé to attend the high school. The lucky few students with the ability and the means to do so pursue higher education opportunities outside of the country in Cuba, France, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, or Portugal, while many others are forced to abandon their educational pursuits after secondary school. This lack of opportunity for students to pursue university studies in the country discourages many students from completing their schooling. In contrast, many of the students who do receive scholarships to study in Portugal, often remain in Portugal following the completion of their studies, since São Tomé e Príncipe holds little promise of economic and/or professional success for them.

#### Sources

Education for Development and Democracy Initiative - Exegesis Consulting and SMCI

### **In what ways is the education system addressing the needs of marginalized groups? Are there special schools?**

Education is free, universal and compulsory through the sixth grade, irrespective of the student's age.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women have been ratified. Moreover, a National Commission for Children and Youth was established in 1999.

#### Sources

UNICEF - <http://www.unicef.org/saotome/perspect.htm>  
Education for Development and Democracy Initiative - Exegesis Consulting and SMCI

### **What is the stage of development of the education system?**

In 1999, there were 71 primary schools, 10 secondary schools, 1 high school, and 1 technical and vocational school.

#### Sources

Education for Development and Democracy Initiative - Exegesis Consulting and SMCI

### **Are there alternatives to traditional schools?**

There is one vocational school.

#### Sources

Education for Development and Democracy Initiative - Exegesis Consulting and SMCI

### **How is the country addressing HIV/AIDS issues?**

Within the government, the Ministry of Health, under the current leadership of Leonel do Rosario Jesus Carvalho, coordinates the national youth policy in cooperation with other youth servicing ministries and youth organizations. Its primary objective is in promoting actions that preserve the bio-physical and social well-being of youth. The Ministry of Health has engaged in activities relating to education on the prevention of contracting AIDS and drug abuse, with the collaboration of the World Health Organization (WHO). It has also dealt with the subject matter of reproductive and sexual health in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Currently the Health Ministry maintains publications in the areas of contraception and AIDS prevention and more specifically in the Youth Journal published by the Health Ministry.

#### Sources

United Nations Country Profiles on the Situation of Youth - <http://esa.un.org/socdev/unyin/country0.asp?countrycode=st>

### **Are there political conflicts and what is the impact of these conflicts on education?**

On July, 16, 2003, a military junta and former members of the South African apartheid mercenary Buffalo Battalion, assumed power for two days. Power was returned to the President after a negotiated deal by a 30-strong team of international mediators and diplomats from Portugal, Brazil, the U.S., South Africa and several other African countries, led by Rodolphe Adada, the foreign minister of Congo-Brazzaville. The coup leaders claimed to be protesting the high-levels of poverty of the majority of the 175,000 São Toméans and the rapid enrichment of corrupt senior government officials.

#### Sources

Education for Development and Democracy Initiative - Exegesis Consulting and SMCI

## **Are there on-going, recently completed projects relating to the following areas?**

### **Textbooks and Learning Material**

Environmental Education was introduced in 10 primary schools. The book 'The Rainforest and its Future' was disseminated and 10 teachers were trained on how to use the book.

#### **Sources**

Education for Development and Democracy Initiative - Exegesis Consulting and SMCI

## **Additional Basic Education General Information**

### **Donor Information**

#### **World Bank - 2004**

US\$ 6,500,000

Improve the delivery of basic health and education services

#### **USAID - 2001**

US\$ 53,000

Ambassadors' Girls' Scholarship Program

#### **Sources**

Education for Development and Democracy Initiative - Exegesis Consulting and SMCI

## **Girls' Education**

### **What are the primary reasons for girls' low enrollment and completion rates?**

- Early pregnancy
- Insufficient budget for education
- Insufficient number of schools
- Shortage of adequately trained teachers
- Shortage of textbooks and learning materials

(The female literacy rate is about 62%, 23% lower than the male literacy rate (85%).)

#### **Sources**

Education for Development and Democracy Initiative - Exegesis Consulting and SMCI

## Textbooks and Other Learning Materials

### Are teaching guides and other resources available?

There are 8,636 library books. (1999 est.)

#### Sources

CIA World Fact Book - <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/tp.html>

### To what extent is information communication technology available/used in basic education?

#### ICT Available

Access to technology such as computers and the Internet is quite limited, and this access and usage is disproportionately found in the urban areas. Even in these areas, however, computer usage is still constrained as, for example, some government offices do not have access to computers. There is currently only one Internet service provider and approximately 9,000 Internet users. In the education sector, some schools have fewer than three computers for several hundred students, while many schools have no access to computer technology at all.

#### ICT Used

In April 2000, an Internet school was opened in Príncipe. In July 2000, an Internet School, with an advanced computer center, was opened in São Tomé.

#### Sources

CIA World Fact Book - <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/tp.html>

### Description of Transportation Systems and Projected Improvements

There are no railway lines.

Highways: total: 320 km, paved: 218 km, unpaved: 102 km (1999 est.)

Ports and harbors: Santo Antonio, São Tomé Airports: 2 (2002)

#### Sources

CIA World Fact Book - <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/tp.html>

## Community Participation in Basic Education

### Are NGOs and civil society involved in education? What role do they play? Who are they?

NGOs and civil society are involved in education.

The following NGOs and civil society organizations are involved in education:

National Alliance of YMCAs of São Tomé e Príncipe, and the Youth Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé e Príncipe (JMLSTP) and São Tomé e Príncipe Union for Promotion (STePUP).

#### Sources

United Nations Country Profiles on the Situation of Youth - <http://esa.un.org/socdev/unyin/country0.asp?countrycode=st>