

Saint Lucia

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

In order to ensure access to educational facilities, the government has meal subsidization programs in a number of schools and has a program that includes the building of new schools.²¹⁶¹ In addition, the UNDP, along with the Caribbean Development Bank, is implementing poverty reduction projects in St. Lucia.²¹⁶²

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 in St. Lucia are unavailable. Children are reportedly found working alongside family members harvesting bananas and selling food or commercial products on urban sidewalks or at food stalls.²¹⁶³ These activities reportedly take place on non-school days and during holidays.²¹⁶⁴

The Education Act provides for free and compulsory education from the ages of 5 to 15.²¹⁶⁵ Provisions in the Education Act pertaining to the minimum age for employment are intended to serve as the country's primary legislation on child labor.²¹⁶⁶ In 1999, the gross primary enrollment rate was 115.1 percent.²¹⁶⁷ Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for St. Lucia. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.²¹⁶⁸

²¹⁶¹ Schools are built within a 3-mile radius of each other in order to ensure that educational facilities are accessible to all. See U.S. Embassy-Bridgetown, unclassified telegram no. 1792, September 2001 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 1792].

²¹⁶² UNDP, *Poverty Strategies Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean*, at <http://www.undp.org/poverty/initiatives/> on 10/25/01.

²¹⁶³ Ibid.

²¹⁶⁴ Unclassified telegram 1792. See also U.S. Embassy-Bridgetown unclassified telegram no. 452, February 1998.

²¹⁶⁵ St. Lucia Education Act [hereinafter St. Lucia Education Act], Article 27, as cited in electronic correspondence from the Commissioner of Labor of St. Lucia to USDOL official, November 29, 2001. See also *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—St. Lucia* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2001) [hereinafter *Country Reports 2000*] at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/wha/index.cfm?docid=830>.

²¹⁶⁶ According to an official at the St. Lucia Department of Labor, based on the Education Act 16, years is generally recognized as the minimum age for employment. See St. Lucia Education Act.

²¹⁶⁷ UNESCO, *Education for All: Year 2000 Assessment* (Paris, 2000) [CD-ROM].

²¹⁶⁸ For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see *Introduction* to this report.

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

Education Act No. 41 of 1999 sets the minimum age for employment at 16 years during the school year.²¹⁶⁹ The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Law sets 14 years as the minimum age for employment in industrial work, and night work is prohibited for children under 16 years.²¹⁷⁰ The Constitution prohibits forced labor except when fulfilling a court sentence, serving in the military, working as an alternative when a conscientious objection to military service exists, or working during a period of public emergency.²¹⁷¹ The Criminal Code bans the procurement of women for prostitution, as well as the abduction of any female for the purposes of forced sexual relations.²¹⁷²

The Department of Labor of the Ministry of Legal Affairs, Home Affairs and Labor enforces all labor laws and regulations through workplace inspections.²¹⁷³ St. Lucia has not ratified ILO Convention 138, but it did ratify ILO Convention 182 on December 6, 2000.²¹⁷⁴

²¹⁶⁹ St. Lucia Education Act.

²¹⁷⁰ Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, Chapter 100, Article 3, as cited in electronic correspondence from the Commissioner of Labor of St. Lucia to USDOL official, November 29, 2001.

²¹⁷¹ Constitution of Saint Lucia, Article 4(2), 1979, at <http://www.georgetown.edu/LatAmerPolitical/Constitutions/Lucia/stlucia.html> on 10/24/01.

²¹⁷² Criminal Code, Articles 103, 225, as cited in the Protection Project Database at <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/St.Lucia.pdf>.

²¹⁷³ Penalties for violations of child labor legislation do not exceed USD 200, and imprisonment does not exceed 3 months. *See* unclassified telegram 1792.

²¹⁷⁴ ILOLEX database: St. Lucia at <http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/english/newratframeE.htm> on 10/24/01.

NOTE: Hard copies of all Web citations are on file