

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children in St. Vincent and the Grenadines are unavailable.³⁴⁷² Children work on family-owned banana farms, mainly during harvest time, in family-owned cottage industries,³⁴⁷³ and in marijuana fields.³⁴⁷⁴ According to the World Bank, children are becoming involved in commercial sexual exploitation in order to pay for basic needs, such as school costs and food.³⁴⁷⁵ Street children and boys in particular, have been found to engage in commercial sexual exploitation.³⁴⁷⁶

Education at government primary schools is free.³⁴⁷⁷ Although the 1992 Education Act provides for compulsory education, it is not yet enforced.³⁴⁷⁸ In 2001, the gross primary enrollment rate was 101.2 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 91.9 percent.³⁴⁷⁹ Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. Recent primary school attendance statistics are not available for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Government school-feeding and textbook loan programs substantially contribute to improving the participation rate of children at the primary level.³⁴⁸⁰ The government investigates cases in which children are withdrawn from school before the age of 16, but there is as much as 13 percent truancy

³⁴⁷² LABORSTAT, 1A- Total and economically active population, by age group (Thousands) [Database], Geneva, 2004; available from <http://laborsta.ilo.org>.

³⁴⁷³ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 6d; available from www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27919pf.htm.

³⁴⁷⁴ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports by States Parties: Summary record of the 797th Meeting*, Geneva, June 10, 2002; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/39d61c982067b61ac1256bd8003b7fbd?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/39d61c982067b61ac1256bd8003b7fbd?Opendocument).

³⁴⁷⁵ The World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed IDA Grant in the Amount of SDR 6.1 Million Equivalent to the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) for The Pan Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS Project*, The World Bank, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2004, 5; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2004/03/09/000160016_20040309103136/Rendered/INDEX/272670LCR.txt.

³⁴⁷⁶ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Initial Reports of States Parties*, CRC/C/28/Add.18, UN, Geneva, October 10, 2001, 70; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/233cbd03c45af4fec1256b490053e099/\\$FILE/G0145063.pdf](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/233cbd03c45af4fec1256b490053e099/$FILE/G0145063.pdf). See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Concluding Observations*, CRC/C/15/Add.184, UN, Geneva, June 13, 2002, para. 48; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/d40d2e0630491d59c1256bd6004a471f?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/d40d2e0630491d59c1256bd6004a471f?Opendocument).

³⁴⁷⁷ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, para. 317. Although education at government schools is free, other costs of school attendance must be borne by parents, such as the cost of textbooks, food, and transportation. These costs present an obstacle to poor families and contribute to children's non-attendance. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, para. 305, 313, and 350.

³⁴⁷⁸ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, para. 313-15. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations*, para. 42.

³⁴⁷⁹ The World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004* [CD-ROM], 2004. For an explanation of gross primary enrollment and/or attendance rates that are greater than 100 percent, please see the definitions of gross primary enrollment rate and gross primary attendance rate in the glossary of this report.

³⁴⁸⁰ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, para. 350.

among primary school children because of poverty, low quality of schools, and a perception that there are few jobs available after education is completed.³⁴⁸¹

While most children complete primary school, there is a decrease in enrollment into secondary school as a result of the entrance exams.³⁴⁸² Many children who do not pass the exams drop out of school and enter the work force.³⁴⁸³

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children's Act of 1990 prohibits employment of youth under the age of 14.³⁴⁸⁴ Children often leave school at the age of 15 and many begin to work as apprentices at that age.³⁴⁸⁵ Any person who employs a child in an industrial undertaking is liable to a USD 100 fine for their first offense, and a USD 250 fine for each subsequent offense.³⁴⁸⁶ Forced or compulsory labor is prohibited by the Constitution, and it is not known to occur.³⁴⁸⁷

The Labor Inspectorate at the Department of Labor received, investigated and addressed child labor complaints and conducted annual workplace inspections.³⁴⁸⁸ No violations have been reported, and employers are believed to generally respect the law in practice.³⁴⁸⁹

There are no laws that specifically address trafficking in persons, but there are various laws that could be applied to trafficking in the country's Penal Code.³⁴⁹⁰ There are no reports that children were trafficked to, from, or within the islands of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.³⁴⁹¹ Causing or encouraging prostitution of

³⁴⁸¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2002: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2003, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18344.htm>. See U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1758*, September 2001.

³⁴⁸² UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, para. 318-22.

³⁴⁸³ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Summary Record of the 797th Meeting*, para. 65.

³⁴⁸⁴ Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, *Written correspondence*, information submitted in response to U.S. government inquiry, Kingstown, September 13, 2004.

³⁴⁸⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Section 6d.

³⁴⁸⁶ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1758*.

³⁴⁸⁷ *Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Article 4; available from <http://www.georgetown.edu/pdba/Constitutions/Vincent/stvincent79.html>. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Section 6c.

³⁴⁸⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Section 6d. See also U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1758*.

³⁴⁸⁹ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1758*.

³⁴⁹⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Section 6f. See also *Criminal Code*, as cited in The Protection Project Legal Library; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/St.Vincent&GrenF.pdf>.

³⁴⁹¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Section 6f.

girls under the age of 15 is prohibited by the Penal Code and is punishable with imprisonment for 7 years.³⁴⁹² It is also illegal to have intercourse with a girl under the age of 15 years.³⁴⁹³ Kidnapping and abduction with the intent to take the person out of St. Vincent and the Grenadines are offenses punishable with 14 years of imprisonment.³⁴⁹⁴

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

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is in the process of finalizing construction of primary and secondary schools, completing computerization of all learning institutions, expanding the vocational training program at the school for children with special needs, and constructing a national library and library facilities at one primary school.³⁴⁹⁵

The Ministry of Education is participating in the implementation of the OECS Education Strategy, through which the OECS territories aim to improve their education systems. The government is also collaborating with UNICEF, UNESCO, and other organizations to improve the level of educational services.³⁴⁹⁶

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138		
Ratified Convention 182	12/04/2001	✓
ILO-IPEC Member		
National Plan for Children		
National Child Labor Action Plan		
Sector Action Plan		

In 2004, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines secured funding from The World Bank to implement the third phase of the OECS Education Development Project, which will support the construction of new schools, teacher and administrator trainings, and improve the administration of school programs and the larger school system.³⁴⁹⁷ This project will fund literacy training, peer mentoring programs, and train guidance counselors and special education specialists.³⁴⁹⁸ The Caribbean Development Bank is also funding a Basic Education II project to improve the management of the school system.³⁴⁹⁹

In 2004, The World Bank, in partnership with CARICOM and other international donor organizations, launched a regional HIV / AIDS prevention project active in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. This project

³⁴⁹² *Criminal Code, Article 130.*

³⁴⁹³ Sexual intercourse with a girl under 13 years of age is an offense and punishable with imprisonment for life. Sexual intercourse with a girl above the age of 13 but below the age of 15 is punishable with imprisonment for 5 years. See *Ibid.*, Articles 124 and 25.

³⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Article 201.

³⁴⁹⁵ Embassy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, *Education*, [online] August 19, 2002 [cited August 13, 2004]; available from <http://www.embsvg.com/Education.asp>.

³⁴⁹⁶ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, para. 311.

³⁴⁹⁷ The World Bank, *St. Vincent and the Grenadines- OECS Education Development Project, Vol 1 of 1*, (n.d.), The World bank, [online] 2004 [cited August 24, 2004]; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDS_IBank_Servlet?pcont=details&eid=000012009_20040614170953.

³⁴⁹⁸ The World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Loan in the Amount of US\$3.1 Million and Credit in the Amount of SDR2.2 Million to the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, The World Bank, Washington, D.C., May 27, 2004; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDS/IB/2004/06/14/000012009_20040614170953/Rendered/PDF/290470ECS.pdf.

³⁴⁹⁹ Caribbean Development Bank, *Pipeline Projects*, Caribbean Development Bank, [online] n.d. 2004 [cited August 11, 2004]; available from <http://www.caribank.org>.

contains a component focused on prevention of HIV transmission among young people. It will provide support to orphans, increase access to HIV/AIDS prevention and services for out of school youth, integrate HIV/AIDS information into reproductive health programs, and promote peer counseling for youth, parents and teachers. The first phase of this project is expected to end in 2007.³⁵⁰⁰

As part of the February 2004 update to the National HIV/AIDS/STI Strategic Plan 2001-2006, the World Bank will fund a USD 7 million project in St. Vincent and the Grenadines to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS. Several government ministries will be involved in HIV/AIDS prevention activities. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports will sponsor interventions through the school system. The Ministry of Social Development will provide family services, address child abuse cases, supply school dropouts with vocational and technical skills training, and target orphans and juvenile delinquents.³⁵⁰¹

³⁵⁰⁰ The World Bank, *Caribbean HIV/AIDS I-Barbados*, previously online, The World Bank, Washington, D.C., August 17, 2004; available from http://www.wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2001/08/04/000094946_0107704151672/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf [hard copy available].

³⁵⁰¹ The World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Loan in the Amount of US\$3.5 Million Credit in the Amount of SDR1.25 Million and Grant in the Amount of SDR1.25 Million to St. Vincent and the Grenadines*, The World Bank, Washington, D.C., May 27, 2004; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2004/06/17/000012009_20040617160435/Rendered/INDEX/282361ST0V.txt.