

Dominica

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

From 1996 to 2001, the Government of Dominica implemented a five-year Basic Education Reform Project with assistance from the World Bank.¹¹²⁸ The project focused on strengthening management and planning at the Ministry of Education, and improving the quality of basic education by upgrading teacher training, improving school supervision, curriculum reform, establishing testing mechanisms to monitor student and system performance, and the identification of more cost effective methods for selecting, acquiring and distributing educational materials.¹¹²⁹

In 1999, an Education Development Plan was formulated with participation from both public and private sector stakeholders. The Plan, which was revised in 2001, sets forth action plans including the development of a national curriculum and continued national assessment; increasing literacy, numeracy, scientific skills for all learners; ensuring computer literacy in schools; and strengthening the role of civil society in planning, implementing and evaluating educational reform.

From 1999 to 2000, the Government of Dominica also participated in a project with the Canadian Teachers' Federation to strengthen national teacher organizations, and train educators in leadership skills and new teaching methodologies.¹¹³⁰ The Canadian Government's Eastern Caribbean Education Reform Project provided assistance to the Government of Dominica to develop more effective supervision and support services at the school level.¹¹³¹

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children below the age of 15 in Dominica are unavailable. However, some children help their families on a seasonal basis in agriculture,¹¹³² and it was reported that Dominica is a country of origin and transit for the trafficking of children en route from the Dominican Republic to Saint Martin.¹¹³³

¹¹²⁸ Virginia Thomas, Statistician, Educational Planning Unit, Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth Affairs, Commonwealth of Dominica, facsimile communication to USDOL official, August 22, 2002.

¹¹²⁹ UNESCO, *Education for All 2000 Assessment: Country Reports-Dominica*, prepared by Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth, pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 52/84, June 1999, Part II, 9 [cited December 10, 2002]; available from <http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/dominica/contents.html>.

¹¹³⁰ Government of Canada, *Canadian Cooperation in the Caribbean 2000 Edition: Dominica*, CIDA.gc.com, [cited July 17, 2002]; available from <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca.ind.nsf>.

¹¹³¹ Ibid.

¹¹³² U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1126*, June 23, 2000.

¹¹³³ Protection Project, "Dominica," in *Human Rights Report on Trafficking of Persons, Especially Women and Children*, March 2002, [cited July 17, 2002]; available from <http://www.protectionproject.org>.

Under the Education Act of 1997, schooling is compulsory from ages 5 to 16.¹¹³⁴ In 2002, the gross primary enrollment rate was 92.7 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 89.9 percent.¹¹³⁵ Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for Dominica. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.¹¹³⁶ Poor physical conditions and overcrowded classrooms affect the quality of education, while poverty, the need for children to help with seasonal harvests, and the termination of a school lunch program have negatively affected school attendance.¹¹³⁷

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The minimum age for employment is 15 years.¹¹³⁸ The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act places restrictions on the employment of young persons at night.¹¹³⁹ There are no laws that specifically prohibit trafficking in persons¹¹⁴⁰ or child pornography, but the Sexual Offenses Act of 1998 prohibits prostitution.¹¹⁴¹ The Sexual Offenses Act also prohibits the defilement of girls under 16, unlawful detention of a woman or girl for sexual purposes, and the procurement of any person using threats, intimidation, false pretenses or the administration of drugs.¹¹⁴² The Constitution prohibits slavery, servitude and forced labor.¹¹⁴³

The Government of Dominica ratified ILO Convention 138 in September 27, 1983 and ILO Convention 182 on January 4, 2001.¹¹⁴⁴

¹¹³⁴ Thomas, facsimile communication, August 22, 2002.

¹¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹¹³⁶ For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

¹¹³⁷ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1126*. See also, UNESCO, *EFA 2000 Report: Dominica*.

¹¹³⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: Dominica*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002, 2763-64, Section 6d [cited August 7, 2002]; available from <http://state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrpt/2001/wha/8340.htm>.

¹¹³⁹ Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica, *Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act (L.f.5 of 1938)*, (February 1, 1939), [cited August 7, 2002]; available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/Scripts/natlexcgi.exe?lang=E&doc=query&ctry-DMA&11x=12.01>.

¹¹⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Dominica*, 2763-64, Section 6f.

¹¹⁴¹ Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica, *Sexual Offenses Act 1998 (No. 1 of 1998)*, (March 22, 1998), [cited August 7, 2002]; available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/Scripts/natlexcgi.exe?lang=E&doc=query&ctry-DMA&11x=02>.

¹¹⁴² These provisions are found in Articles 2, 3, 4, and 7 of the Sexual Offenses Act. See Interpol, *Legislation of Interpol Member States on Sexual Offences Against Children: Dominica*, Interpol.int, [online] [cited August 21, 2002], III; available from <http://www.interpol.int/Public/Children/SexualAbuse/NationalLaws/csaDominique.asp>.

¹¹⁴³ *The Commonwealth of Dominica Constitution Order, 1978 No. 1027*, (November 3, 1978), Chapter 1, Section 4, 1-2 [cited July 17, 2002]; available from <http://www.georgetown.edu/pdba/Constitutions/Dominica/const.html>.

¹¹⁴⁴ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited August 7, 2002]; available from <http://iloex.ilo.ch:1567/english/newratframeE.htm>.