

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

From 1996 to 2001, the Government of Dominica implemented a 5-year Basic Education Reform Project with assistance from the World Bank,¹³³² which focused on strengthening management and planning at the Ministry of Education; 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 identifying more cost effective methods for selecting, acquiring and distributing educational materials.¹³³³

The government plans to expand and improve the quality of secondary education by 2005.¹³³⁴ 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, and scientific skills for all learners; ensuring computer literacy in schools; and strengthening the role of civil society in planning, implementing and evaluating educational reform.¹³³⁵

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.¹³³⁶ 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.¹³³⁷

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 in Dominica are unavailable. However, some children help their families on a seasonal basis in agriculture,¹³³⁸ and it has been reported that Dominica is a transit and destination country for trafficking activities.¹³³⁹ Under the Education Act of 1997, schooling is compulsory from ages 5 to 16.¹³⁴⁰ In 2002, the gross primary enrollment rate was 92.7 percent, and the net primary

¹³³² Education Planning Unit Official, Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth Affairs, facsimile communication to USDOL official, August 22, 2002.

¹³³³ 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 August 28, 2003]; available from <http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/dominica/contents.html>.

¹³³⁴ Education Planning Unit Official, Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth Affairs, facsimile communication, August 22, 2002. See also UNESCO, *EFA 2000 Report: Dominica*.

¹³³⁵ Education Planning Unit Official, Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth Affairs, facsimile communication, August 22, 2002.

¹³³⁶ Government of Canada, *Canadian Cooperation in the Caribbean 2000 Edition: Dominica*, CIDA.gc.ca, [cited August 28, 2003]; available from <http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/index-e.htm>.

¹³³⁷ Ibid.

¹³³⁸ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1126*, June 23, 2000.

¹³³⁹ Dominica is a transit point for trafficking from Dominican Republic to St. Martin and a destination for sex tourists from North America and Europe. See The Protection Project, *Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in the Countries of the Americas*, November, 2002; available from <http://209.190.246.239/iomz.pdf>.

¹³⁴⁰ Education Planning Unit Official, Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth Affairs, facsimile communication, August 22, 2002.

enrollment rate was 89.9 percent.¹³⁴¹ 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.¹³⁴² 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.¹³⁴³

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

Conflicting legislation concerning the minimum age for employment defines a child as an individual under 12 and 14 years respectively.¹³⁴⁴ The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act places restrictions on the employment of young persons at night.¹³⁴⁵ The Constitution prohibits slavery, servitude and forced labor,¹³⁴⁶ and protects the fundamental rights and freedoms of every person in Dominica, whether a national or non-national.¹³⁴⁷ There are no laws that specifically prohibit trafficking in persons¹³⁴⁸ or child pornography,¹³⁴⁹ but the Sexual Offenses Act of 1998 prohibits prostitution.¹³⁵⁰ The Sexual Offenses Act also prohibits the defilement of girls under 16 years of age, 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.¹³⁵¹

The Government of Dominica ratified ILO Convention 138 on September 27, 1983 and ratified ILO Convention 182 on January 4, 2001.¹³⁵²

¹³⁴¹ Ibid.

¹³⁴² For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

¹³⁴³ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1126*. See also, UNESCO, *EFA 2000 Report: Dominica*.

¹³⁴⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2002: Dominica*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2003, Section 6d [cited August 27, 2003]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/index.htm>. Previous Department of State Country Reports indicated that the minimum age for admission into employment in Dominica is 15 years. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: Dominica*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/wha/8340pf.htm>.

¹³⁴⁵ Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica, *Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act (L.f.5 of 1938)*, (February 1, 1939), [cited August 28, 2003]; available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/scripts/natlexcgi.exe?lang=E>.

¹³⁴⁶ *The Commonwealth of Dominica Constitution Order, 1978 No. 1027*, (November 3, 1978), Chapter 1, Section 4, 1-2 [cited August 27, 2003]; available from <http://www.georgetown.edu/pdba/Constitutions/Dominica/const.html>.

¹³⁴⁷ Ibid., Chapter 1, Section 1. See also Edward A. Alexander, *Caribbean Workers on the Move: Dominica*, IOM, June 19-20, 2000, 2-4.

¹³⁴⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Dominica*, Section 6f.

¹³⁴⁹ Interpol, *Legislation of Interpol Member States on Sexual Offences Against Children: Dominica*, Interpol.int, [online] [cited August 28, 2003]; available from <http://www.interpol.int/Public/Children/SexualAbuse/NationalLaws/csaDominique.asp>.

¹³⁵⁰ Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica, *Sexual Offences Act 1998 (No. 1 of 1998)*, (April 22, 1998), [cited August 28, 2003]; available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/scripts/natlexcgi.exe?lang=E>.

¹³⁵¹ These provisions are found in Articles 2, 3, 4, and 7 of the Sexual Offenses Act. See Interpol, *Sexual Offences Against Children: Dominica*, III.

¹³⁵² ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited August 27, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.