

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

In 1997, the Government of Vanuatu implemented a Comprehensive Reform Program (CRP) with a focus on education.<sup>4605</sup> A major goal of the CRP program was to introduce 10 years of compulsory education for all children by the year 2010.<sup>4606</sup> In 2003, the government developed an initiative to build capacity for technical vocational education in order to meet its goal of achieving universal primary education.<sup>4607</sup> The government is also working with UNICEF through the Ministry of Health, other governmental departments, NGOs, and Pacific Island Regional Organizations to address the issues of early childhood education.<sup>4608</sup> Another goal of the government is to increase access to secondary school education for students who complete primary school.<sup>4609</sup> To meet this goal the government has received assistance from the Peace Corps in launching its “Youth with Potential” project. Peace Corps volunteers continue to support government initiatives by developing educational curricula and teaching secondary school math, science, and English.<sup>4610</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children in Vanuatu under age 15 are unavailable. Many children assist their parents in family-owned agricultural production. There have been no reports of trafficked, bonded, or forced labor involving children in Vanuatu.<sup>4611</sup>

Access to school is limited,<sup>4612</sup> and there is no constitutional guarantee mandating that education be either compulsory or free.<sup>4613</sup> In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 97.3 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 90.1 percent.<sup>4614</sup> Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for Vanuatu. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children’s participation in school.<sup>4615</sup> The educational system is complicated by the use of 2 official languages and over 100 vernaculars spread out over many islands.<sup>4616</sup> A 1999 report published by the UNDP stated that 24 percent of all primary school teachers in Vanuatu are untrained, and projections have been made that at the current high growth rate of school age children, primary school enrollment will double by the year 2010.<sup>4617</sup>

<sup>4605</sup> UNESCO, *Education For All 2000 Assessment: Country Report: Republic of Vanuatu*, prepared by Sports, pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 52/84, 2000; available from <http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/vanuatu/contents.html>.

<sup>4606</sup> Information is not available on the progress of the program. See Margaret Chung and Gerald Haberkorn, *Broadening Opportunities for Education: Pacific Human Development Report*, 1999, 44.

<sup>4607</sup> ADB, *Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific Relevance and Progress*, 2003 [cited October 9, 2003]; available from [http://www.adb.org/documents/books/MDG\\_Pacific/mdg.pdf](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/MDG_Pacific/mdg.pdf).

<sup>4608</sup> UNICEF, *Assistance to Pacific Island Countries*, [online] [cited July 7, 2003]; available from [http://www.undp.org/jf/un/UNICEF/UNICEF\\_PIC.htm](http://www.undp.org/jf/un/UNICEF/UNICEF_PIC.htm).

<sup>4609</sup> Peace Corps, *Vanuatu Assignments*, [online] [cited July 7, 2003]; available from <http://www.peacecorps.gov/countries/vanuatu/assignments.cfm>.

<sup>4610</sup> Peace Corps estimated that by the end of 2002 volunteers would have taught approximately 9,500 students. *Ibid.*, 1c.

<sup>4611</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2002: Vanuatu*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2003, Sections 6c and 6f; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18269.htm>.

<sup>4612</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 5.

<sup>4613</sup> Right to Education, *Constitutional Guarantees: Vanuatu*, Right to Education, [database online] [cited July 7, 2003]; available from [http://www.right-to-education.org/content/index\\_4.html](http://www.right-to-education.org/content/index_4.html). See also Right to Education, *Gap Between Promise and Performance*, Right to Education, [database online] [cited July 7, 2003]; available from [http://www.right-to-education.org/content/index\\_4.html](http://www.right-to-education.org/content/index_4.html).

<sup>4614</sup> UNESCO, *EFA 2000 Report: Republic of Vanuatu*.

<sup>4615</sup> For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

<sup>4616</sup> Chung and Haberkorn, *Broadening Opportunities for Education*, 42.

<sup>4617</sup> *Ibid.*, 40, 44–45.

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## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

Under the Labor Code, children below the age of 12 are prohibited from working outside family-owned operations involved in agricultural production.<sup>4618</sup> Children between the ages of 12 and 18 are restricted from working at night or in the shipping industry.<sup>4619</sup> Forced labor is also prohibited by law.<sup>4620</sup>

Vanuatu's Criminal Code also prohibits procuring, aiding or facilitating the prostitution of another person or sharing in the proceeds of prostitution.<sup>4621</sup>

The Government of Vanuatu is not a member of the ILO, and therefore has not ratified ILO conventions on child labor.<sup>4622</sup>

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<sup>4618</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Vanuatu*, Section 6d.. Child labor is not perceived to be a major concern in the Pacific Island region. However, the large number of children out of school signifies that many children work either in the community or at home. See Chung and Haberkorn, *Broadening Opportunities for Education*, 42.

<sup>4619</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Vanuatu*, Section 6d.

<sup>4620</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 6c.

<sup>4621</sup> *Criminal Code of Vanuatu*, in The Protection Project Legal Library, [database online]; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/Vantuatuf.pdf>.

<sup>4622</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited July 7, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.