

Dominica

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 periodically help their families in agriculture.¹²⁹⁹ According to the World Bank children, in particular schoolgirls, have also been involved in commercial sexual exploitation for material or basic needs, such as school fees or food.¹³⁰⁰

Under the Education Act of 1997, schooling is compulsory from ages 5 to 16.¹³⁰¹ In 2002, the gross primary enrollment rate was 92.7 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 89.9 percent.¹³⁰² 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 Dominica. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.¹³⁰³ Poor physical conditions and overcrowded classrooms affect the quality of education, while poverty, the need for children to help with seasonal harvests,¹³⁰⁴ increasing rates of teen pregnancy,¹³⁰⁵ and the termination of a school lunch program have negatively affected school attendance.¹³⁰⁶

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

Two acts prohibit employment of children. One defines child as under age 12 and the other as under age 14. However, the government has ratified ILO Convention on minimum age for employment, which specifies age 15, and abides by this standard in principle.¹³⁰⁷ The Employment of Women, Young Persons

¹²⁹⁹ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1126*, June 23, 2000.

¹³⁰⁰ 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; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2004/03/09/000160016_20040309103136/Rendered/INDEX/272670LCR.txt.

¹³⁰¹ Education Planning Unit Official, Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth Affairs, facsimile communication to USDOL official, August 22, 2002.

¹³⁰² *Ibid.*

¹³⁰³ For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

¹³⁰⁴ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1126*. See also, UNESCO, *Education for All 2000 Assessment: Country Reports- Dominica*, prepared by Youth, pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 52/84, June 1999; available from <http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/dominica/contents.html>.

¹³⁰⁵ Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by State Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Dominica*, CRC/15/Add.238, June 30, 2004; available from [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/50842131889894cdc1256eef002d1afa?Opendocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/50842131889894cdc1256eef002d1afa?Opendocument).

¹³⁰⁶ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1126*. See also, UNESCO, *EFA 2000 Report: Dominica*.

¹³⁰⁷ See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Dominica*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 6d; available from www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27894.htm. See also Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child*.

and Children Act prohibits the employment of children, night employment of young adults, false representation of age, night employment of women, and places liability with the employer.¹³⁰⁸ The Constitution prohibits slavery, servitude and forced labor,¹³⁰⁹ and protects the fundamental rights and freedoms of every person in Dominica, whether a national or foreign national.¹³¹⁰

There are no laws that specifically prohibit child pornography,¹³¹¹ but the Sexual Offenses Act of 1998 prohibits prostitution.¹³¹² 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.¹³¹³

The government amended the Immigration and Passport Act in November 2003 to define the assisting of persons to move unlawfully into or out of the country as a violation of the law.¹³¹⁴

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

In 2004, The World Bank, in partnership with CARICOM and other international donor organizations, launched a regional HIV/AIDS prevention project active in Dominica. One of the goals of this project is to target young people who are at-risk for contracting the HIV/AIDS virus and who contracted AIDS through commercial sexual exploitation. 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 2007.¹³¹⁵

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments	
Ratified Convention 138 09/27/1983	✓
Ratified Convention 182 01/04/2001	✓
ILO-IPEC Member	
National Plan for Children	
National Child Labor Action Plan	
Sector Action Plan	

¹³⁰⁸ Government of Grenada, *Government of the Commonwealth of Dominica Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, 1999*, (February 1, 1999); available from http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.details?p_lang=en&p_country=DMA&p_classifications=04&p_origin=COUNTRY.

¹³⁰⁹ *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>.

¹³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Chapter 1, Section 1. See also Edward A. Alexander, *Caribbean Workers on the Move: Dominica*, IOM, June 19-20, 2000, 2-4.

¹³¹¹ Interpol, *Legislation of Interpol Member States on Sexual Offences Against Children: Dominica*, Interpol.int, [online] [cited April 2, 2004]; available from <http://www.interpol.int/Public/Children/SexualAbuse/NationalLaws/csaDominique.asp>.

¹³¹² *Sexual Offenses Act 1998 (No. 1 of 1998)*, (April 22, 1998), [cited August 28, 2003]; available from <http://www.protectionproject.org/main1.htm>.

¹³¹³ These provisions are found in Articles 2, 3, 4, and 7 of the Sexual Offenses Act. See Interpol, *Sexual Offences Against Children: Dominica*, III.

¹³¹⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Dominica*, Section 6f.

¹³¹⁵ 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 Government of Dominica currently sponsors an Education Trust Fund to support students in secondary schools by providing assistance with uniforms, books and external examination fees; as well as a Text Book Scheme to assist primary and secondary students to purchase textbooks.¹³¹⁶

The government plans to expand and improve the quality of secondary education by 2005.¹³¹⁷ In 2002, the Dominica Agricultural Industrial and Development Bank secured a loan of USD \$7 million to fund student loans and vocational training.¹³¹⁸

¹³¹⁶ International Monetary Fund, *Dominica: Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*, 04/7, International Monetary Fund, Washington, D.C., January 2004; available from <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2004/cr0407.pdf>.

¹³¹⁷ Education Planning Unit Official, Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth Affairs, facsimile communication, August 22, 2002. See also UNESCO, *EFA 2000 Report: Dominica*.

¹³¹⁸ Caribbean Development Bank, *Funding for Student Loans in Grenada*, Caribbean Development Bank, October 22, 2002; available from <http://www.caribank.org>.