

Fiji

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 in Fiji are unavailable.¹⁶⁰⁶ Children work in agriculture in Fiji, including in the tobacco sector.¹⁶⁰⁷ Other children, especially those that are homeless, can be found working in the informal sector and on the streets. Children shine shoes, collect bottles, run errands for restaurants, repair cars, and work as domestics in homes.¹⁶⁰⁸ Children on the streets are susceptible to commercial sexual exploitation,¹⁶⁰⁹ and are lured into the commercial sex industry by both local and foreign adults wishing to profit from the pornography trade.¹⁶¹⁰

Primary school education is compulsory for children ages 6 to 15.¹⁶¹¹ In 2001, the gross primary enrollment rate was 108.8 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 99.8 percent.¹⁶¹² 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 Fiji. The cost of transportation and the imposition of fees at some schools are reported to limit attendance for some children.¹⁶¹³

¹⁶⁰⁶ LABORSTAT, *Fiji: 1A- Total and economically active population, by age group (Thousands)* [Database], Geneva, 05/11/04; available from <http://laborsta.ilo.org>. While the extent of working children is unknown, recent reports indicate that child labor is a growing concern in the country. See *Child labour on the rise in Fiji*, Pacnews, July 8, 2003 [cited May 7, 2004]; available from <http://www.pacificislands.cc/pina/pinadefault.php?urlpinaid=8337>, *Fiji sees rise in child labour and poverty*, ABC Radio Australia News, April 4, 2003 [cited May 7, 2004]; available from http://www.abc.net.au/ra/newstories/RANewsStories_824943.htm, *1000 Kids in the Workforce*, The Daily Post, June 7, 2003 [cited May 7, 2004]; available from <http://www.fijiwomen.com/news/2003/06/07/07j.html>.

¹⁶⁰⁷ Farm Consultancy Services, *Child Labour in the Fiji Tobacco Industry*, n.p., 2004, 17, 19, and 24; available from <http://www.eclt.org/activities/research/fiji.html>.

¹⁶⁰⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Fiji*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27770pf.htm>, *Child labour on the rise in Fiji*.

¹⁶⁰⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Fiji*, Section 5.

¹⁶¹⁰ UN Commission on Human Rights, *Rights of the Child: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; Addendum, Report on the Mission of the Special Rapporteur to the Republic of Fiji on the Issue of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (October 11-16, 1999)*, E/CN.4/2000/73/Add.3, prepared by Ofelia Calcetas-Santos, December 27, 1999, para. 36, 104; available from <http://www.hri.ca/forthecord2000/documentation/commission/e-cn4-2000-73-add3.htm>. Exploitation of children through both prostitution and pornography occurs both by local and foreign abusers. See also The Protection Project, "Fiji," in *Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children: A Country-by-Country Report on a Contemporary Form of Slavery*, 2002, 192-95; available from <http://209.190.246.239/ver2/cr/Fiji.pdf>.

¹⁶¹¹ UNESCO, *Global Education Digest 2004: Comparing Education Statistics Around the World*, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, Montreal, 2004; available from http://www.uis.unesco.org/TEMPLATE/pdf/ged/2004/GED2004_EN.pdf, U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Fiji*, Section 5.

¹⁶¹² World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2004. For a detailed 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.

¹⁶¹³ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Fiji*, UN Commission on Human Rights, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Sale of Children*, 84.

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Employment Ordinance sets the minimum age for employment at 12 years, and establishes that working children between the ages of 12 and 15 years of age are prohibited from harsh conditions, long hours, and night work.¹⁶¹⁴ The Constitution prohibits forced labor,¹⁶¹⁵ and the Penal Code prohibits the sale or hiring of minors under 16 years of age for prostitution.¹⁶¹⁶ The U.S. Department of State has reported that the country's child labor laws and enforcement mechanisms are insufficient.¹⁶¹⁷

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

The Government of Fiji receives bilateral assistance for the country's development strategy from donor agencies such as AusAID and NZAID to implement new programs in the education sector, particularly in rural and peri-urban areas.¹⁶¹⁸ The Government of Fiji has several ongoing education programs being funded by AusAID: the Lautoka Teachers College Upgrade (2002-2005); the Fiji Education Sector Program (2003-2008); and the Rural Schools Infrastructure Project. These projects are intended to train primary school teachers; improve the delivery and quality of educational services; and improve access to schools in rural areas.¹⁶¹⁹ NZAID provides the Government of Fiji with resources to support primary school education.¹⁶²⁰

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138	1/3/2003	✓
Ratified Convention 182	/17/2002	✓
ILO-IPEC Associated Member		✓
National Plan for Children		
National Child Labor Action Plan		
Sector Action Plan		

Save the Children Fiji cooperates with the Ministry of Education to identify schools in need of textbooks and provides money to these schools to purchase textbooks. Children from families with financial need are given school subsidies so that they have access to books.¹⁶²¹

¹⁶¹⁴ *Employment Ordinance*, (1978); available from http://paclii.org/vu/fj/legis/consol_act/eo202.html, UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties due in 1995, Addendum: Fiji*, CRC/C/28/Add.7, prepared by Government of Fiji, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, September 24, 1996, 258.

¹⁶¹⁵ *Fiji Constitution*, 1988, Section 24; available from http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/fj00000_.html.

¹⁶¹⁶ *Penal Code*, (1978), Section 162-63; available from http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/paclawmat/Fiji_legislation/Consolidation_1978/Fiji_Penal_Code.html.

¹⁶¹⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Fiji*, Section 6d.

¹⁶¹⁸ AusAID, *AusAID Pacific Program Profiles 2003-2004- Fiji*, Australian Government, 2003; available from http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/pac_prog_prof.pdf. See also NZAID, *Fiji Overview*, [cited May 11, 2004]; available from <http://www.nzaid.govt.nz/programmes/c-fiji.html>.

¹⁶¹⁹ AusAID, *AusAID Pacific Program Profiles 2003-2004- Fiji*, 13, AusAID, *Australia's \$20 Million Boost for Education in Fiji*, AusAID, 2003 [cited May 11, 2004]; available from http://www.ausaid.gov.au/media/release.cfm?BC=Media&Id=5506_5294_8923_1756_6298.

¹⁶²⁰ NZAID, *Fiji Overview*.

¹⁶²¹ Save the Children, *Save the Children Fiji*, Save the Children, Southeast, East Asia, and Pacific Region, [cited May 11, 2004]; available from <http://www.seapa.net/external/members/sc-fiji.htm>, Save the Children, *What We Do and Why: Fiji*, New Zealand, December 15, 2003 [cited May 7, 2004]; available from http://www.savethechildren.org.nz/new_zealand/what_we_do/our_projects/fiji.html.