

Vanuatu

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children in Vanuatu under age 15 are unavailable.⁴¹⁹⁵ However, there are reports that many children assist their parents in family-owned agricultural production.⁴¹⁹⁶ There have been no reports of trafficked, bonded, or forced labor involving children in Vanuatu.⁴¹⁹⁷

Access to school is limited,⁴¹⁹⁸ and there is no constitutional guarantee mandating that education be either compulsory or free.⁴¹⁹⁹ School fees can be as high as USD 400 a year.⁴²⁰⁰ In 2001, the gross primary enrollment rate was 111.6 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 93.2 percent.⁴²⁰¹ 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. Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for Vanuatu.⁴²⁰² As of 2000, 95.1 percent of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade 5.⁴²⁰³ The educational system is complicated by the use of 1 or 2 official languages in the classroom, while there are over 100 vernaculars used over many islands. This makes the subject matter presented largely irrelevant to children's every day lives and illiteracy widespread.⁴²⁰⁴ A 1999 report published by the UNDP stated that 24 percent of all primary school teachers in Vanuatu lack training. Projections have been made that at the current high growth rate of school age children, primary school enrollment will double by the year 2010.⁴²⁰⁵

⁴¹⁹⁵ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2004. 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 Margaret Chung and Gerald Haberkorn, *Broadening Opportunities for Education: Pacific Human Development Report*, 1999, 42.

⁴¹⁹⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Vanuatu*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27793.htm>.

⁴¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, Sections 6c and 6f.

⁴¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, Section 5. See also ADB, *Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific Relevance and Progress*, 2003 [cited March 18, 2004], 54; available from http://www.adb.org/documents/books/MDG_Pacific/mdg.pdf.

⁴¹⁹⁹ Right to Education, *Constitutional Guarantees: Vanuatu*, Right to Education, [database online] [cited August 25, 2004]; available from 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 August 25, 2004]; available from http://www.right-to-education.org/content/index_4.html. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Vanuatu*, Section 5.

⁴²⁰⁰ UNESCO, *Education ou aliénation?*, [online] [cited August 18, 2004]; available from http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=21208&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

⁴²⁰¹ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004*. For an 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.

⁴²⁰² For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

⁴²⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁰⁴ Chung and Haberkorn, *Broadening Opportunities for Education*, 42. See also UNESCO, *Education ou aliénation?*

⁴²⁰⁵ Chung and Haberkorn, *Broadening Opportunities for Education*, 40, 44-45.

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.⁴²⁰⁶ Children between the ages of 12 and 18 are restricted from working by occupation category and labor conditions, including working at night or in the shipping industry.⁴²⁰⁷ Forced labor is also prohibited by law.⁴²⁰⁸ Vanuatu's Penal Code prohibits procuring, aiding or facilitating the prostitution of another person or sharing in the proceeds of prostitution.⁴²⁰⁹

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

Vanuatu's Cultural Centre, in collaboration with NGOs, is currently working with the Ministry of Education on primary school curriculum reform, in an effort to teach in the vernacular languages, improve relevance of education, and increase literacy levels.⁴²¹⁰ The government is also working with UNICEF through the Ministry of Health, other government agencies, NGOs, and Pacific Island Regional Organizations to address issues of early childhood education.⁴²¹¹

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments	
Ratified Convention 138	
Ratified Convention 182	
ILO-IPEC Member	
National Plan for Children	
National Child Labor Action Plan	
Sector Action Plan	

⁴²⁰⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Vanuatu*, Section 6d.

⁴²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, Section 6d.

⁴²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, Section 6c.

⁴²⁰⁹ *Criminal Code of Vanuatu*, in The Protection Project Legal Library, [database online]; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/VantuatuF.pdf>.

⁴²¹⁰ UNESCO, *Education ou aliénation?*

⁴²¹¹ UNICEF, *Assistance to Pacific Island Countries*, [online] [cited August 25, 2004], [hardcopy on file]; available from http://www.undp.org.fj/un/UNICEF/UNICEF_PIC.htm.