

# Dominica

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 in Dominica are unavailable.<sup>1442</sup> However, some children periodically help their families in agriculture.<sup>1443</sup> According to the World Bank, children, particularly schoolgirls, have also been exploited in prostitution as a way to obtain basic necessities, such as school fees or food.<sup>1444</sup>

Under the Education Act of 1997, schooling is compulsory from age 5 to 16.<sup>1445</sup> In 2002, the gross primary enrollment rate was 88 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 81 percent.<sup>1446</sup> 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 statistics are not available for Dominica.<sup>1447</sup> Poor physical conditions and overcrowded classrooms affect the quality of education, while poverty, the need for children to help with seasonal harvests,<sup>1448</sup> increasing rates of teen pregnancy,<sup>1449</sup> and the termination of a school lunch program have negatively affected school attendance.<sup>1450</sup>

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<sup>1442</sup> This statistic is not available from the data sources that are used in this report. Please see the "Data Sources and Definitions" section for information about sources used. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms, such as the use of children in the illegal drug trade, prostitution, pornography, and trafficking. As a result, statistics and information on children's work in general are reported in this section. Such statistics and information may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the section in the front of the report titled "Data Sources and Definitions."

<sup>1443</sup> U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1126*, June 23, 2000. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms, such as the use of children in the illegal drug trade, prostitution, pornography, and trafficking. As a result, statistics and information on children's work in general are reported in this section. Such statistics and information may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on the definition of working children, please see the section in the front of the report titled "Data Sources."

<sup>1444</sup> 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](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2004/03/09/000160016_20040309103136/Rendered/INDEX/272670LCR.txt).

<sup>1445</sup> Education Planning Unit Official, Ministry of Education, Sports, and Youth Affairs, facsimile communication to USDOL official, August 22, 2002.

<sup>1446</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=51> (Gross and Net Enrollment Ratios, Primary; accessed December 2005).

<sup>1447</sup> This statistic is not available from the data sources that are used in this report. Please see the "Data Sources and Definitions" section for information about sources used.

<sup>1448</sup> U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1126*.

<sup>1449</sup> 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).

<sup>1450</sup> U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1126*.

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Employment of Women, Young Persons 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.<sup>1451</sup> However, conflicting legislation establishes the minimum age for employment at both 12 and 14 years, although the government has stated it enforces a standard of 15 years.<sup>1452</sup> The ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Ratifications has repeatedly urged the Government of Dominica to increase the legal minimum age to 15.<sup>1453</sup>

The worst forms of child labor may be prosecuted under different statutes in Dominica. The Constitution prohibits slavery, servitude, and forced labor,<sup>1454</sup> and protects the fundamental rights and freedoms of every person in Dominica, whether a national or foreign national.<sup>1455</sup>

There are no laws that specifically prohibit child pornography,<sup>1456</sup> but the Sexual Offenses Act of 1998 prohibits the defilement of girls less than 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.<sup>1457</sup>

Dominican law prohibits trafficking in persons,<sup>1458</sup> and violators are subject to a fine of USD 37,000 and up to 7 years of imprisonment.<sup>1459</sup> Dominica has no military force and no conscription policy.<sup>1460</sup>

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

Since 2004, the World Bank, in partnership with CARICOM and other international donor organizations, has been carrying out 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 aims to provide support to orphans, increase access to HIV/AIDS prevention and services for out of school youth, integrate HIV/AIDS information

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<sup>1451</sup> 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://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex\\_browse.details?p\\_lang=en&p\\_country=DMA&p\\_classification=04&p\\_origin=COUNTRY](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.details?p_lang=en&p_country=DMA&p_classification=04&p_origin=COUNTRY).

<sup>1452</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2004: Dominica*, Washington, DC, February 28, 2005; available from [www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41757.htm](http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41757.htm).

<sup>1453</sup> ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Ratifications, *Observation concerning Convention No. 138, Minimum Age, 1973 Dominica (ratification: 1983)*, International Labor Organization, 2005; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/gbe/ceacr2004.htm>.

<sup>1454</sup> *The Commonwealth of Dominica Constitution Order, 1978 No. 1027*, (November 3, 1978), Chapter 1, Section 4, 1-2 [cited June 29, 2005]; available from <http://www.georgetown.edu/pdba/Constitutions/Dominica/const.html>.

<sup>1455</sup> *Ibid.*, Chapter 1, Section 1. See also Edward A. Alexander, *Caribbean Workers on the Move: Dominica*, IOM, June 19-20, 2000, 2-4.

<sup>1456</sup> 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>.

<sup>1457</sup> These provisions are found in Articles 2, 3, 4, and 7 of the Sexual Offenses Act. See *Ibid.*, III.

<sup>1458</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Dominica*, Section 5.

<sup>1459</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1460</sup> Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Caribbean" in *Global Report 2004*, November 17, 2004, available from: [http://www.child-soldiers.org/document\\_get.php?id=814](http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=814).

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.<sup>1461</sup>

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.<sup>1462</sup>

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		

<sup>1461</sup> 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*.

<sup>1462</sup> 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>.