

Saint Kitts and Nevis

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

The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis is working to improve primary education through construction and expansion of school buildings, revision of the primary curriculum, and by funding textbooks and paying school fees for students' external examinations.³⁰⁶⁹ In 1997, a curriculum Development Unit was established. In 1998, a Teacher Resource Center was established, and primary school children now receive a hot lunch.³⁰⁷⁰ In 1998, public expenditures on primary education were 36.7 percent of total public expenditures on education and 1.7 percent of GNP.³⁰⁷¹

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 in St. Kitts and Nevis are unavailable, and limited information is available on the incidence and nature of child labor. Children work in agriculture and domestic service, usually to help their families.³⁰⁷² There are no reported cases of forced or bonded child labor.³⁰⁷³

Education is compulsory between the ages of 5 and 16 years.³⁰⁷⁴ In 1997 to 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 97.6 percent, and the net primary enrollment was 88.6 percent.³⁰⁷⁵ Attendance rates are not available for Saint Kitts and Nevis. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.³⁰⁷⁶ Primary schools suffer from a high dropout rate and poor reading ability for males, high truancy, lack of relevant learning material, an insufficient number of trained and qualified teachers, and outdated teaching methods.³⁰⁷⁷

³⁰⁶⁹ UNESCO, *Education for All 2000 Assessment: Country Reports- Saint Kitts and Nevis*, prepared by Ministry of Education, pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 52/84, 1999, [cited December 18, 2002]; available from http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/st.kitts_nevis/contents.html.

³⁰⁷⁰ Ibid.

³⁰⁷¹ Ibid.

³⁰⁷² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: Saint Kitts and Nevis*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002, 3031-32, Section 6d [cited December 31, 2002]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/wha/8258.htm>.

³⁰⁷³ Ibid., 3031-32, Section 6c.

³⁰⁷⁴ Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis, *The Education Act of 1976*, definition of "compulsory school age," as cited in Labour Officer Le-roy Richards, facsimile communication to USDOL official, November 2001.

³⁰⁷⁵ UNESCO, *EFA Country Report: Saint Kitts and Nevis*.

³⁰⁷⁶ For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

³⁰⁷⁷ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Saint Kitts and Nevis*, CRC/C/15/Add.104, Geneva, August 24, 1999, [cited September 4, 2002]; available from [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/b5d52fb968f8571a80256797004a6e81?OpenDocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/b5d52fb968f8571a80256797004a6e81?OpenDocument).

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Constitution prohibits slavery, servitude and forced labor.³⁰⁷⁸ The Employment of Children Ordinance sets the minimum legal working age at 12 years.³⁰⁷⁹

The Department of Labor in St. Kitts and Nevis is responsible for investigating child labor complaints.³⁰⁸⁰ The Labor Ministry relies on school truancy officers and its community affairs division to monitor compliance with child labor provisions.³⁰⁸¹ To date, no cases of child labor violations have been brought to the attention of the ministry.³⁰⁸²

The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis has not ratified ILO Convention 138. It ratified ILO Convention 182 on October 12, 2000.³⁰⁸³

³⁰⁷⁸ *Constitution of Saint Christopher and Nevis, 1983*, Article 6, (June 22, 1983), [cited December 31, 2002]; available from <http://www.georgetown.edu/LatAmerPolitical/Constitutions/Kitts/stkitts-nevis.html>.

³⁰⁷⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Saint Kitts and Nevis*, 3031-32, Section 6d.

³⁰⁸⁰ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1791*, September 2001.

³⁰⁸¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Saint Kitts and Nevis*, 3031-32, Section 6d.

³⁰⁸² U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1791*.

³⁰⁸³ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited September 3, 2002]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.