

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

In 1998 and 1999, officials of the Government of Guyana attended training workshops aimed at building the capacity of the national statistics agency and the Ministry of Labor to collect and disseminate data on child labor.²⁰¹⁶ In 1999, the government established a drop-in center for street children, and is also building a home for street children.²⁰¹⁷

In 2002, the government implemented a five-year Basic Education Access and Management Systems Project to address teacher training, education management, and educational development.²⁰¹⁸ As part of the plan, the government received a loan from the IDB to modernize and strengthen the country's basic education system.²⁰¹⁹ In November 2002, the Government of Guyana became eligible to receive funding from the World Bank and other donors under the Education for All Fast Track Initiative, which aims to provide all children with a primary school education by the year 2015.²⁰²⁰ Countries are eligible to receive this financing if they are willing to prioritize primary education and enact policies that improve their primary education systems.²⁰²¹ In 2000, a draft National Education Plan was prepared with basic education, efficient and optimal use of resources, and increased accountability at all levels identified as key priorities.²⁰²² In January 1998, the government began the Escuela Nueva project, which aims to improve learning and the quality of education in schools with limited resources.²⁰²³ During the 1990s, the Government of Guyana implemented a Primary Education Improvement Project that enhanced teacher training, produced new primary school textbooks, and constructed 35 new schools, rehabilitating 64 more.²⁰²⁴

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, UNICEF estimated that 27.0 percent of children ages 5 to 14 in Guyana were working.²⁰²⁵ UNICEF reports that child labor is a problem in the informal sector, and it is common to see children engaged in street trading.²⁰²⁶ There are reports that children are involved in prostitution in ports, gold mining areas, and the capital city of Georgetown.²⁰²⁷ In the Hinterland areas, girls are recruited to work as domestic servants and waitresses in

²⁰¹⁶ ILO-IPEC, *SIMPOC: Major Activities and Achievements in 1998-1999*, [online] October 31, 2000 [cited June 5, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simpoc/simpoc00/page4.htm>.

²⁰¹⁷ UNICEF and Government of Guyana, *Progress Report Towards Attaining the Goals of the World Summit for Children*, October 2000, 31; available from http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/how_country/edr_guyana_en.PDF.

²⁰¹⁸ Safraz Ishmael, *Guyana News and Information: Guyana Monthly Update*, Embassy of Guyana, [online] June 4 [cited June 5, 2003], April 2003 edition; available from <http://www.guyana.org/GuyNews/guynews.html>.

²⁰¹⁹ Inter-American Development Bank, *IDB Approves \$30 Million to Modernize Basic Education in Guyana*, [online] June 19, 2002 [cited June 6, 2003]; available from <http://www.iadb.org/exr/PRENSA/2002/cp13802e.htm>.

²⁰²⁰ World Bank, *World Bank Announces First Group Of Countries For 'Education For All' Fast Track*, press release, Washington, D.C., June 12, 2002; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20049839~menuPK:34463~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424,00.html>.

²⁰²¹ World Bank, *Education for All the World's Children: Donors Agree to Finance First Group of Countries on Education Fast-Track*, [online] November 27, 2002 [cited June 6, 2003]; available from <http://www.worldbank.org>.²⁰²² UNICEF and Guyana, *Progress Report Towards Attaining the Goals of the World Summit*, 29.

²⁰²³ UNESCO, *Education for All 2000 Assessment: Country Reports-Guyana*, prepared by Ms. Evelyn Hamilton Ministry of Education, pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 52/84; available from <http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/guyana/contents.html#cont>.

²⁰²⁴ Ibid.

²⁰²⁵ Government of Guyana, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2000 -Guyana*, UNICEF, December 18, 2002, 53; available from <http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/newreports/guyana/guyana.htm>.

²⁰²⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2002: Guyana*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2003, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18334.htm>.

²⁰²⁷ ECPAT International, *Guyana*, in ECPAT International, [database online] [cited May 21, 2003]; available from http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Guyana*, Section 6f.

restaurants.²⁰²⁸ The Guyana Human Rights Association reported that there were cases where female adolescents, aged 14 to 16 years, traveled from the capital city of Georgetown to the Suriname border for the purpose of prostitution.²⁰²⁹

Primary education in Guyana is free and compulsory for children ages 5 years and 9 months to 12 years.²⁰³⁰ In 1999, the gross primary enrollment rate was 119.7 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 97.9 percent.²⁰³¹ In 2000, 87.3 percent of children of primary school age were attending primary school.²⁰³² In 2002, 97.0 percent of children enrolled in primary school reached grade 5.²⁰³³

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Factories Act and Employment of Young Persons and Children Act of 1999 sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years,²⁰³⁴ but children under that age may be employed in enterprises in which members of their family are employed.²⁰³⁵ Forced labor is prohibited by the Constitution.²⁰³⁶ Prostitution of a child under 13 years is illegal according to the Criminal Law Offenses Act, but it is a defense for the accused to claim that he/she believed the child to be at least 13 years.²⁰³⁷ Sections 83-86 of the Act prohibit the abduction of unmarried girls, and although there is no particular offense of child pornography in Guyana, Section 350 of the Act regulates selling, publishing, or exhibiting an obscene matter.²⁰³⁸ The Ministry of Labor lacks sufficient inspectors to enforce child labor laws effectively.²⁰³⁹

The Government of Guyana ratified ILO Convention 138 on April 15, 1998 and ILO Convention 182 on January 15, 2001.²⁰⁴⁰

²⁰²⁸ UNICEF, *Girls' Education in Guyana*, [online] [cited May 22, 2003]; available from http://www.unicef.org/programme/girlseducation/action/ed_profiles/Guyanafinal.PDF

²⁰²⁹ ECPAT International, *Guyana*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Guyana*.

²⁰³⁰ Primary education has been compulsory in Guyana for over a century. See UNESCO, *EFA 2000 Report: Guyana*. Other sources suggest that education is compulsory until age 11. See also National Development Strategy Secretariat, *National Development Strategy, Vol. 3: The Social Sectors, Ch. 20: Education Policy*, Ministry of Finance, [online] [cited June 6, 2003]; available from <http://www.guyana.org/NDS/chap20.htm>. See also UNESCO, *Guyana - Education System*, [online] [cited May 22, 2003]; available from <http://www.unesco.org/iau/cd-data/gy.rtf>.

²⁰³¹ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2003.

²⁰³² Government of Guyana, *MICS 2000 - Guyana*, 17. For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

²⁰³³ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁰³⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Guyana*, Section 6d. See also *Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act (Chapter 99:01) [consolidated up to 1973]*, No. 14 of 1933; available from <http://natlex.ilo.org>.

²⁰³⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Guyana*, Section 6d.

²⁰³⁶ *Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana*, Article 140; available from <http://www.georgetown.edu/pdba/Constitutions/Guyana/guyana96.html>.

²⁰³⁷ Interpol, *Legislation on Sexual Offences Against Children*, [database online] [cited June 9, 2003]; available from <http://www.interpol.int/public/Children/SexualAbuse/NationalLaws/csaGuyana.asp>.

²⁰³⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰³⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Guyana*, Section 6d.

²⁰⁴⁰ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited June 9, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.