

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

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

In 1999, Government of St. Kitts and Nevis officials participated in the ILO Tripartite Meeting on the Worst Forms of Child Labor.³⁷⁵¹ 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.³⁷⁵² In 1998, a Teacher Resource Center was established, and primary school children now receive a hot lunch.³⁷⁵³ Also in 1998, public expenditures on primary education were 36.7 percent of total public expenditures on education and 1.7 percent of GNP.³⁷⁵⁴

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children 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.³⁷⁵⁵ Children may also be involved in the distribution of drugs, pornography and prostitution.³⁷⁵⁶ As of 2002, no cases of forced or bonded child labor had been reported.³⁷⁵⁷

Education is free and compulsory between the ages of 5 and 16 years.³⁷⁵⁸ In 1997 to 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 97.6 percent, and the net primary enrollment was 88.6 percent.³⁷⁵⁹ 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.³⁷⁶⁰ 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 teaching methods that are exclusively exam oriented.³⁷⁶¹

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The 1966 Employment of Children Ordinance and the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act were both amended to set the minimum legal working age at 16 years.³⁷⁶² The Employment of Children Ordi-

³⁷⁵¹ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1791*, September 2001.

³⁷⁵² 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; available from http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/st.kitts_nevis/contents.html.

³⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2002: Saint Kitts and Nevis*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2003, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18343.htm>.

³⁷⁵⁶ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1791*.

³⁷⁵⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: St. Kitts and Nevis*, Section 6c.

³⁷⁵⁸ Government of Saint Kitts and Nevis, *The Education Act*, No. 18 of 1975, (July 31, 1975). See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: St. Kitts and Nevis*, Section 5.

³⁷⁵⁹ UNESCO, *EFA Country Report: Saint Kitts and Nevis*.

³⁷⁶⁰ For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

³⁷⁶¹ 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, para. 28; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/b5d52fb968f8571a80256797004a6e81?OpenDocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/b5d52fb968f8571a80256797004a6e81?OpenDocument).

³⁷⁶² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: St. Kitts and Nevis*, Section 6d.

nance also outlaws slavery, servitude and forced labor.³⁷⁶³ The Constitution prohibits slavery, servitude and forced labor.³⁷⁶⁴

The Department of Labor in St. Kitts and Nevis is responsible for investigating child labor complaints.³⁷⁶⁵ The Labor Ministry relies on school truancy officers and its community affairs division to monitor compliance with child labor provisions.³⁷⁶⁶

The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis has not ratified ILO Convention 138; it ratified ILO Convention 182 on October 12, 2000.³⁷⁶⁷

³⁷⁶³ Ibid.

³⁷⁶⁴ *Constitution of Saint Christopher and Nevis, 1983*, Article 6 (1), (2), (June 22, 1983); available from <http://www.georgetown.edu/pdba/Constitutions/Kitts/stkitts-nevis.html>.

³⁷⁶⁵ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1791*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: St. Kitts and Nevis*, Section 6d.

³⁷⁶⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: St. Kitts and Nevis*, Section 6d.

³⁷⁶⁷ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited June 13, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.