

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

The Government of St. Lucia has given high priority to bettering educational opportunities for its children and supports programs such as subsidized meals in a number of schools and building new schools.³⁷⁶⁸ From 1995 to 2000, the government undertook a Basic Education Reform Project with support from the World Bank to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the education system, and enhance access to educational opportunities.³⁷⁶⁹

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 in Saint Lucia are unavailable. Children are found working in rural areas, where they help harvest bananas on family farms. Children also work in urban food stalls and as street traders during non-school and festival days.³⁷⁷⁰ The sexual exploitation of children is a growing problem in Saint Lucia, but there is still very little information available on the issue.³⁷⁷¹

Education in St. Lucia is compulsory between the ages of 5 and 15 years, but registration fees are required.³⁷⁷² In 2000, the World Bank estimated that the gross primary school enrollment rate was 112.4 percent, and the net primary school enrollment was 99.9 percent.³⁷⁷³ Attendance rates are not available for Saint Lucia. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.³⁷⁷⁴ Only about one-third of primary school children continue on to secondary school.³⁷⁷⁵

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Law sets 14 years as the minimum age for employment, 18 years in industrial settings,³⁷⁷⁶ and prohibits night work for children under 16 years.³⁷⁷⁷ The Education Act of 1999 sets the minimum age for employment at 16 years during the school year.³⁷⁷⁸ The Constitution prohibits slavery, servitude, or forced labor, except for labor required by law, court order, military service, or public emergency.³⁷⁷⁹ The Criminal Code bans the procurement of women and girls for prostitution, as well as the abduction

³⁷⁶⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2002: Saint Lucia*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2003, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/19170.htm>. See also U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1792*, September 2001.

³⁷⁶⁹ World Bank, *Basic Education Reform Project*, [online], Washington, D.C.; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=104231&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P038698>.

³⁷⁷⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Saint Lucia*, Section 6d.

³⁷⁷¹ Felicia Robinson, *Saint Lucia Report to the Regional Congress*, Ministry of Health, Human Services and Family Affairs and Gender Relations; available from http://www.iin.oea.org/ST_LUCIA_ing.PDF.

³⁷⁷² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Saint Lucia*, Section 5.

³⁷⁷³ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003*, [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2003.

³⁷⁷⁴ For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

³⁷⁷⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Saint Lucia*, Section 5.

³⁷⁷⁶ The government recognizes that the age for the end of compulsory schooling does not correspond with the minimum age for employment, and has drafted a revision to the Labor Code to address this by increasing the minimum age for employment to 16 years. See *Ibid.*, Section 6d. ILO reports that the government has drafted legislation to increase the minimum age of employment to 15 years. See ILO, *Review of Annual Reports under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, GB.283/3/1, Geneva, March 2002, 25, para. 120.

³⁷⁷⁷ *Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act*, 136.

³⁷⁷⁸ Government of Saint Lucia, *Education Act*, Articles 27 and 47.

³⁷⁷⁹ *Constitution of Saint Lucia, 1978*, (February 22, 1979), Section 4; available from <http://www.georgetown.edu/pdba/Constitutions/Lucia/Luc78.html>.

of any female for the purpose of forced sexual relations.³⁷⁸⁰ Procurement is punishable with imprisonment for 2 years, and abduction for the purpose of sexual relations is punishable with imprisonment for 14 years.³⁷⁸¹ There are no laws that specifically address trafficking in persons.³⁷⁸² Hazardous work is not defined in a single law, but is covered through a combination of legislation and regulations.³⁷⁸³ The penalties for violation of child labor laws do not exceed USD 200 or 3 months imprisonment.³⁷⁸⁴

The Department of Labor of the Ministry of Labor Relations, Public Service, and Cooperatives is responsible for implementing statutes on child labor. There were no reports of violations of child labor laws, or of trafficking in persons in 2001.³⁷⁸⁵

St. Lucia has not ratified ILO Convention 138, but ratified ILO Convention 182 on December 6, 2000.³⁷⁸⁶

³⁷⁸⁰ *Criminal Code*, as cited in The Protection Project Legal Library, [database online], Articles 103 and 225; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/St.Lucia.pdf>.

³⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Articles 225 and 106.

³⁷⁸² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Saint Lucia*, Section 6f.

³⁷⁸³ ILO, *Review of Annual Reports*, 25, para. 121.

³⁷⁸⁴ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1792*.

³⁷⁸⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Saint Lucia*, Sections 6d and 6f.

³⁷⁸⁶ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited June 16, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.