

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

In 1998, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, through its Department of Women's Affairs, produced and distributed a series of pamphlets to raise public awareness about the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.<sup>3787</sup> The government has also established a program to reintegrate street children into their families.<sup>3788</sup>

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is in the process of completing construction of primary and secondary schools, completing computerization of all learning institutions, expanding the vocational training program at the school for children with special needs, and constructing a national library and library facilities at one primary school.<sup>3789</sup> The Ministry of Education, is participating in the implementation of the OECS Education Strategy, through which the OECS territories aim to improve their education systems. The government is also collaborating with UNICEF, UNESCO and other organizations to improve the level of educational services.<sup>3790</sup> School textbook and feeding programs aim to improve the participation rate of children at the primary level.<sup>3791</sup> The government also sponsors a Youth Empowerment Program as a supplement to secondary school which consists of an apprenticeship program for young adults interested in learning a trade.<sup>3792</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children in St. Vincent and the Grenadines are unavailable.<sup>3793</sup> However, children are known to work on family-owned banana farms, mainly during harvest time, or in family-owned cottage industries.<sup>3794</sup> Some children are known to work in marijuana fields.<sup>3795</sup> Some parents have allowed their children, particularly adolescent girls, to become involved in commercial sexual exploitation in order to improve the economic situation of the family.<sup>3796</sup> Street children, and boys in particular, have been found to engage in sexual practices for payment.<sup>3797</sup> There were no official reports of people being trafficked in 2002.<sup>3798</sup>

<sup>3787</sup> The Department of Women's Affairs is a branch of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Women's Affairs. See UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports by States Parties: Summary record of the 797th Meeting*, Geneva, June 10, 2002, para. 24; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/39d61c982067b61ac1256bd8003b7fd?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/39d61c982067b61ac1256bd8003b7fd?Opendocument).

<sup>3788</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Concluding Observations*, CRC/C/15/Add.184, UN, Geneva, June 13, 2002, para. 46, 13; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/d40d2e0630491d59c1256bd6004a471f?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/d40d2e0630491d59c1256bd6004a471f?Opendocument).

<sup>3789</sup> Embassy of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, *Education*, [online] August 19, 2002 [cited June 3, 2003]; available from <http://www.embsvg.com/Education.htm>.

<sup>3790</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Initial Reports of States Parties*, CRC/C/28/Add.18, UN, Geneva, October 10, 2001, para. 311; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/233cbd03c45af4fec1256b490053e099/\\$FILE/G0145063.pdf](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/233cbd03c45af4fec1256b490053e099/$FILE/G0145063.pdf).

<sup>3791</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 350.

<sup>3792</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2002: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2003, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18344.htm>.

<sup>3793</sup> U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1758*, September 2001.

<sup>3794</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Section 6d.

<sup>3795</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Summary Record of the 797th Meeting*, para. 65.

<sup>3796</sup> U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, electronic communication to USDOL official, February 21, 2004.

<sup>3797</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, 70. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations*, para. 48.

<sup>3798</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Section 6f.

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Education at government primary schools is free,<sup>3799</sup> and the government is committed to providing free education to all its children within the next decade.<sup>3800</sup> Although the 1992 Education Act provides for compulsory education, it is not yet enforced.<sup>3801</sup> The government investigates cases in which children are withdrawn from school before the age of 16, but there is as much as 13 percent truancy among primary school children because of poverty, low quality of schools, and a perception that there are few jobs available after education is completed.<sup>3802</sup>

Entry into secondary school is dependent upon the student passing an examination. While most children complete primary school, there is a decrease in enrollment into secondary school as a result of the exams.<sup>3803</sup> Some children who do not pass the exams drop out of school and end up working in the marijuana fields.<sup>3804</sup> In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was estimated at 90.5 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was estimated at 83.5 percent.<sup>3805</sup> Attendance rates are not available for Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.<sup>3806</sup>

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children's Act of 1990 sets the minimum age for basic employment at 16 years,<sup>3807</sup> but since children often leave school at the age of 15, many begin work as apprentices at that age.<sup>3808</sup> Any person who employs a child in an industrial undertaking is liable to a USD 100 fine for their first offense, and a USD 250 fine for each subsequent offense.<sup>3809</sup> Forced or compulsory labor is prohibited by the constitution, and it is not known to occur.<sup>3810</sup>

The Labor Inspectorate at the Department of Labor is authorized to investigate and address child labor legislation and conducts annual workplace inspections.<sup>3811</sup> No violations have been reported, and employers are believed to generally respect the law in practice.<sup>3812</sup>

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<sup>3799</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, para. 317.

<sup>3800</sup> Minister of Social Development, Cooperatives, the Family, Gender, and Ecclesiastical Affairs of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, The Honourable Mrs. Girlyn Miguel, Statement at the United Nations Special Session on Children, May 10, 2002; available from <http://www.un.org/ga/children/stvgE.htm>.

<sup>3801</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, para. 313 - 15. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations*, para. 42.

<sup>3802</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Section 5. See U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1758*.

<sup>3803</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, para. 318-22.

<sup>3804</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Summary Record of the 797th Meeting*, para. 65.

<sup>3805</sup> UNESCO, *Education for All: Year 2000 Assessment* [CD-ROM], Paris, 2000.

<sup>3806</sup> For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

<sup>3807</sup> U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1758*.

<sup>3808</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Section 6d.

<sup>3809</sup> U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1758*.

<sup>3810</sup> *Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Article 4; available from <http://www.georgetown.edu/pdba/Constitutions/Vincent/stvincent79.html>. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Section 6c.

<sup>3811</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Section 6d. See also U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1758*.

<sup>3812</sup> U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *unclassified telegram no. 1758*.

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Although there are no laws that specifically address trafficking in persons, there are various laws that could be applied to trafficking in the country's Criminal Code.<sup>3813</sup> Causing or encouraging prostitution of girls under the age of 15 is prohibited by the Criminal Code and is punishable with imprisonment for seven years.<sup>3814</sup> It is also illegal to have intercourse with a girl under the age of 15 years.<sup>3815</sup> Kidnapping and abduction with the intent to take the person out of St. Vincent and the Grenadines are offenses punishable with 14 years of imprisonment.<sup>3816</sup>

The Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines has not ratified ILO Convention 138 but ratified ILO Convention 182 on December 4, 2001.<sup>3817</sup>

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<sup>3813</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Section 6f. See also Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, *Criminal Code*, as cited in The Protection Project Legal Library; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/St.Vincent&GrenEpdf>.

<sup>3814</sup> *Criminal Code*, Article 130.

<sup>3815</sup> Sexual intercourse with a girl under 13 years of age is an offense and punishable with imprisonment for life. Sexual intercourse with a girl above the age of 13 but below the age of 15 is punishable with imprisonment for 5 years. *Ibid.*, Articles 124 and 25.

<sup>3816</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 201.

<sup>3817</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited June 19, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.