

Vanuatu

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under age 15 in Vanuatu are unavailable.⁴⁹¹³ However, there are reports that many children assist their parents in family-owned agricultural production.⁴⁹¹⁴

Access to school is limited,⁴⁹¹⁵ and there is no constitutional guarantee mandating that education be either compulsory or free.⁴⁹¹⁶ School fees can be as high as USD 400 a year,⁴⁹¹⁷ which may amount to 13 percent of per capita GDP.⁴⁹¹⁸ In 2002, the gross primary enrollment rate was 113 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 94 percent.⁴⁹¹⁹ Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for Vanuatu.⁴⁹²⁰ As of 1999, 72 percent of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade 5.⁴⁹²¹ The educational system is complicated by the use of 1 or 2 official languages in the classroom, while there are over 100 vernaculars used over many islands.

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

Under the Labor Code, children below the age of 12 are prohibited from working outside family-owned operations involved in agricultural production.⁴⁹²² Children between the ages of 12 and 18 are restricted

⁴⁹¹³ This statistic is not available from the data sources that are used in this report. Please see the “Data Sources and Definitions” section of this report for information about sources used. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms, such as the use of children in the illegal drug trade, prostitution and trafficking. As a result, statistics and information on children’s work in general are reported in this section. Such statistics and information may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the “Data Sources and Definitions” section.

⁴⁹¹⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices -2004: Vanuatu*, Washington, D.C, February 28, 2005, Section 6 d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41664.htm>.

⁴⁹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Section 5. See also ADB, *Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific Relevance and Progress*, 2003 [cited March 18, 2004], 54; available from http://www.adb.org/documents/books/MDG_Pacific/mdg.pdf.

⁴⁹¹⁶ Right to Education, *Constitutional Guarantees: Vanuatu*, Right to Education, [database online] [cited June, 2005]; available from http://www.right-to-education.org/content/index_4.html. See also Right to Education, *Gap Between Promise and Performance*, Right to Education, [database online] [cited June 2005]; available from http://www.right-to-education.org/content/index_4.html. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Vanuatu*, Section 5.

⁴⁹¹⁷ UNESCO, *Education ou aliénation?*, [online] [cited June, 2005]; available from http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=21208&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

⁴⁹¹⁸ UNDP, *Human Development Fact Sheet for Vanuatu*, 2005; available from <http://hdr.undp.org.inAPRI/hds/hdft/pacific/Vanuatu.htm>.

⁴⁹¹⁹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableView/tableView.aspx?ReportId=52> (Gross and Net enrolment Ratios, primary; accessed October 2005). For an explanation of gross primary enrollment and/or attendance rates that are greater than 100 percent, please see the definition of gross primary enrollment rate in the “Data Sources and Definitions” section of this report.

⁴⁹²⁰ This statistic is not available from the data sources that are used in this report. Please see the “Data Sources and Definitions” section for information about sources used.

⁴⁹²¹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableView/tableView.aspx?ReportId=55> (School life expectancy, % of repeaters, survival rates; accessed December 2005).

⁴⁹²² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Vanuatu*, Section 6d.

from working by occupation category and labor conditions, including working at night or in the shipping industry.⁴⁹²³

The worst forms of child labor may be prosecuted under different statutes in Vanuatu. Forced labor is prohibited by law.⁴⁹²⁴ Vanuatu’s Penal Code prohibits procuring, aiding or facilitating the prostitution of another person or sharing in the proceeds of prostitution.⁴⁹²⁵ No armed forces are maintained by the Government of Vanuatu. There were no reports of persons under 18 years in the security or paramilitary forces in Vanuatu.

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

Vanuatu’s Cultural Center, in collaboration with NGOs, is currently working with the Ministry of Education on primary school curriculum reform, in an effort to teach in the vernacular languages, improve relevance of education, and increase literacy levels.⁴⁹²⁶ The government is also working with UNICEF through the Ministry of Health, other government agencies, NGOs, and Pacific Island Regional Organizations to address issues of early childhood education.⁴⁹²⁷

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments	
Ratified Convention 138	
Ratified Convention 182	
ILO-IPEC Member	
National Plan for Children	
National Child Labor Action Plan	
Sector Action Plan	

⁴⁹²³ Ibid., Section 6d.

⁴⁹²⁴ Ibid., Section 6c.

⁴⁹²⁵ *Criminal Code of Vanuatu*, in The Protection Project Legal Library, [database online]; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/VantuatuF.pdf>.

⁴⁹²⁶ UNESCO, *Education ou aliénation?*

⁴⁹²⁷ UNICEF, *Assistance to Pacific Island Countries*, [online] [cited June, 2005], [hardcopy on file]; available from http://www.undp.org/fj/un/UNICEF/UNICEF_PIC.htm.