

# Bahamas a look at child labour



International Labour Office

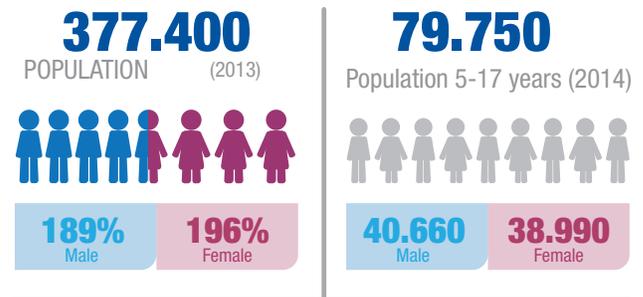
The Bahamas, archipelago and state on the north-western edge of the West Indies. Formerly a British colony, The Bahamas became an independent country within the Commonwealth in 1973.

In spite of the concentration of the population in urban centres (especially Nassau and Freeport) that are devoted to tourism, the traditional pattern of small farming and fishing prevails in some villages, notably in the southeastern islands. The Bahamas has a predominantly market economy that is heavily dependent on tourism and international financial services. The gross national product (GNP) per capita is one of the highest in the region.

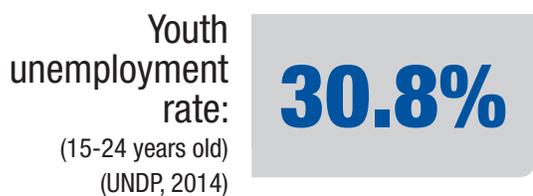
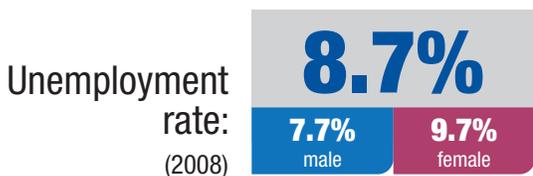
Bahamas's Human Development Index (HDI) value for 2013 is 0.789— which is in the high human development category—positioning the country at 51 out of 187 countries and territories. Between 2000 and 2013, Bahamas's HDI value increased from 0.766 to 0.789, an increase of 3.0 percent or an average annual increase of about 0.23 percent.

While the Bahamas is relatively stable and well developed among the Americas, poverty rates are increasing and Bahamian children are therefore vulnerable. Some main challenges are: Sexual exploitation of children is on the rise, the number of reported cases

of sexual abuse of children rose by 52% from 2009 to 2011. There is a considerable difference in the quality of education and graduation rates in state and private schools. There is discrimination based on racial grounds, against women, against children with disabilities, among others.



## Employment

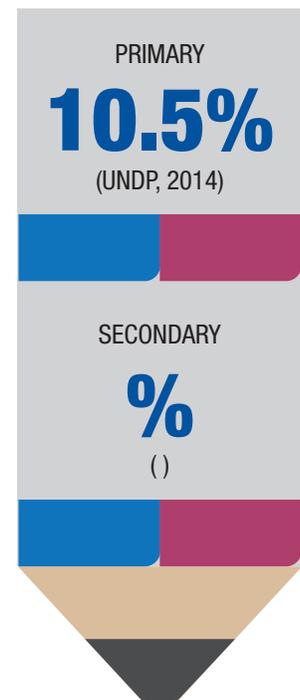
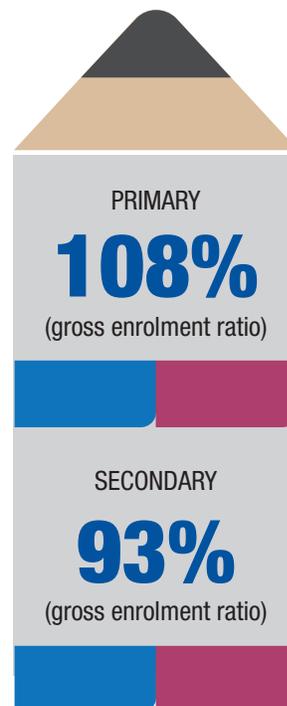


## Education



ATTENDANCE rate

INTRA-ANNUAL DESERTION rate



## The situation of child labour

### Legal framework regarding child labour



#### Ratified International Standards

- Convention on the Rights of the Child, 20/02/1991
- ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), 31/10/2001
- ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), 14/06/2001
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 26/08/2008



#### National Legislation

- The Constitution of the Bahamas, Chapter 111, Section 18(2)
- Child Protection Act, 2007
- The Employment Act of 2001 Part X deals with Employment of Children and Young Persons.
- Recruiting of Workers Act, Chap. 318 Section 5.
- The Education Act Chapter 46 Section 37.
- Child Protection Act, 2007 (No. 1 of 2007).
- Status of Children (Amendment) Bill, 2014.
- The Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act, Chap. 99.
- Penal Code, Chap. 84 Sections 33, 41, 288

## Causes of Child Labour

### Poverty:

there are Haitian migrant families that suffer from poverty, which then leads to child labour as a way to cover the families' expenses. Not only migrant families suffer from poverty, in poor Bahamian families child labour is also present as for an extra income for the household.

### Inadequate awareness of children's rights:

there is an "enabling environment" surrounding child labour, a general tolerance towards child labour.



## Accomplishments

1. Ministry of Labour and Immigration has initiated action to remedy the policy deficiency and has recently established a National Committee on Child Labour whose task is to make recommendations for a policy on child labour.

## Development Cooperation

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### Canada

- The regional project for Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the English- and Dutch-speaking Caribbean Countries 2001 -2008.
- Strengthening of national capacities of CARICOM members, 2006.

## Challenges to face child labour

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1. The existing tolerance surrounding child labour.
2. The exploitation of children related to tourism, as for tourism and services related to tourism are an important part of the Bahamian economy.
3. The existing legal gaps.

## Sources

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