

Trinidad and Tobago a look at child labour



International Labour Office

Trinidad and Tobago is a twin-island unitary state situated at the southernmost base of the Caribbean Archipelago off the northern edge of South America, lying just off the coast of northeastern Venezuela and south of Grenada in the Lesser Antilles. Trinidad and Tobago's economy is largely based on offshore oil and gas production and the country has become a major financial centre in the Caribbean. In 2013, Trinidad and Tobago was the world's sixth largest exporter of liquefied natural gas and the largest LNG exporter to the United States, accounting for nearly 74% of US LNG imports. As the largest CARICOM economy, Trinidad and Tobago plays a leading role in the Caribbean region and has been a driving force behind regional market integration.

Trinidad and Tobago's Human Development Index (HDI) value for 2013 is 0.766— which is in the high human development category— positioning the country at 64 out of 187 countries and territories. Between 1980 and 2013, Trinidad and Tobago's HDI value increased from 0.658 to 0.766, an increase of 16.4 percent or an average annual increase of about 0.46 percent.

In spite of the economic boom and the reduction in poverty indicators, the country faces significant challenges including

poverty, unequal distribution of income. Social and physical infrastructure need attention and service delivery is often inadequate. The country continues to be at risk from natural disasters and disaster preparedness

1.340.000

POPULATION (UNDP, 2014)



665.000
Male

682.000
Female

179.293

Population 5-14 years



91.332
Male

87.962
Female



GNI

US\$ 25.325.06 per capita

POVERTY **1.75%** (UNDP, 2014)
RATE

Employment



Unemployment rate:
(Central Bank, 2010)

5.9%

Youth unemployment rate:
(UNDP, 2014)

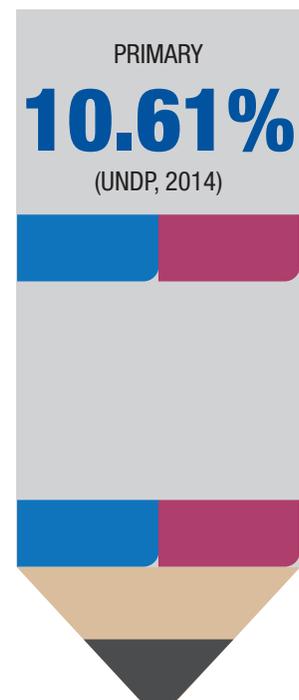
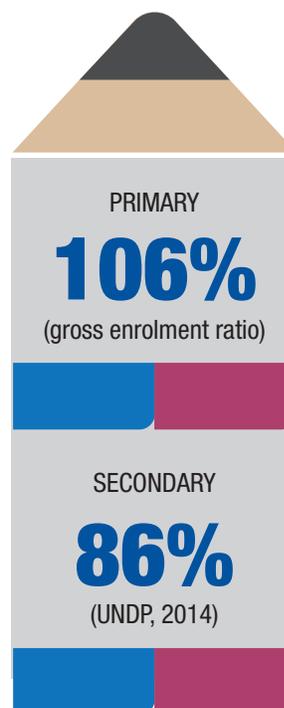
10.5%

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, 05/12/1991.
- ILO Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), 03/09/2004.
- ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), 23/04/2003.
- Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, 06/11/2007.



National Legislation

- Constitution with Reforms Through 2000, enacted August 1, 1976, art. 4.
- Children Act, 2012, Act No. 12 of 2012.
- Miscellaneous Provisions (Minimum Age for Admission to Employment), Act. 3 of 2007, enacted February 26, 2007.
- Education Act, enacted 1966.
- Trafficking in Persons Act, Act No. 14 of 2011, enacted June 9, 2011.
- Sexual Offences Act, Act 27 of 1986, enacted 1986.
- International Child Abduction Act, 2008, Act No. 8 of 2008.
- Defence Act, Act 7 of 1962, enacted 1962.

Child labour characteristics

Minimum age for admission to employment: 16

Combine work and school

Below minimum
age for admission
to employment
3.3 %
(MICS, 2014)



The country's response to child labour

Children and adolescent policy

- National Strategic Plan for Child Development, 2012-2016. Aims to develop comprehensive initiatives across governmental ministries to promote and protect children's rights, including the elimination of all forms of child labor.
- National Strategy for Child Rights, National Youth Policy. Seeks to strengthen mechanisms and structures for protecting children's rights.
- T&T-UNICEF Strategic Plan. Aims to improve the lives of children through five focus areas, including evidence-based policy making, the promotion of children's rights, child protection programming, and education and early childhood development.

Strategy for prevention and eradication of child labour

- MLSME Programming. Aims to raise awareness about child labor and disseminate information on its negative effects through newspaper messages and its radio program "Labor Link".



Accomplishments

1. The laws provide an effective coverage of sanctions.
2. Moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.
3. The Government established the Counter-Trafficking Unit to partner with the Police and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to prosecute traffickers, as well as to coordinate with government agencies and non-governmental organizations to ensure victim protection.
4. Approval of plans and programs towards children's protection and incorporation of youth in national development issues.

Development Cooperation

Canada

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

Challenges to face child labour



1. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago did not make any declaration regarding light work on its ratification of ILO Convention No. 138.
2. There is no list of hazardous occupations.
3. Trinidad and Tobago has no compulsory military service and the minimum age for recruitment to the armed forces is 18. However, those who are willing to join between the ages of 16 and 18 may do so with written approval from a parent or guardian.
4. The Education Act provides for free and compulsory schooling for children between the ages of 6 to 12. This leaves children ages 12 through 15 vulnerable to child labor, as they are not required to be in school and are not legally permitted to work.

Sources

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