



Child labor in Cape Verde

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I am going to try to speak to you about child labor in Cape Verde. Before I get into the subject, I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to be here, it is a pleasure. I work in Cape Verde and I am going to speak about child labor in Cape Verde.

To speak about child labor in Cape Verde is a difficult task, because, socially speaking, child labor in Cape Verde is quite normal, it is something that is acceptable. This is because from early childhood children are trained to work as a way to create responsibility, but I would like to speak to you about certain issues regarding my country.

First of all, geographically speaking, Cape Verde is a country in Africa. It is an archipelago in front of Senegal, in the Sahara region, formed by ten islands. Nine are inhabited and one island is a nature reserve, the island of S. Nicolao. Cape Verde was discovered in 1460 by António da Noli and again in 1462 by Diogo Alfonso. It was a Portuguese colony. After its independence, there came the need to create an institution to raise children. Therefore, the Cape Verde Institute for Minors was created soon after independence.

Then, in 2006, this Institute also started to accommodate adolescents, because of certain issues that arose concerning, for example, human rights violations and sexual exploitation, just to mention a couple. This is how ICCA was born. ICCA is the Cape Verde Institute for Children and Adolescents. ICCA uses both legal and civil mechanisms to protect and defend the rights of children. Among these, we can mention the family code, civil code, criminal code, and the labor code.

In Cape Verde it is prohibited to hire children for work under 15 years of age, as stated by the articles 138 and 182 of the International Labor Organization. Then, of course, there is the international convention under the African Charter on the Rights and Well-being of Children, of which Cape Verde is a signatory. According to the census of 2010, there are 491,875 inhabitants in Cape Verde, and about 192,000 of them are children and adolescents aged between 0 and 17 years, which account for almost 40% of the total population. There was also the need to create a hotline. Cases of negligence, abandonment of children, sexual abuse, and other human rights violations are reported every day. The country has worked very hard on sexual exploitation issues and child labor, we have really addressed that.

Now I am going to try to speak to you about labor more specifically. As I said, it is prohibited by the law to hire children in Cape Verde. The types of jobs that are carried out by children include shopping, garbage collection, repairing equipment, cooking, house cleaning, agriculture, and farm work. It is quite common to find children outside of supermarkets, selling products like water or shoeshining. We can also find children in the civil sector or civil construction sector.

I wanted to show this table just to make a comparison of the various types of child labor in Cape Verde. Most of this labor is in agriculture. 76.2% of boys and 56.7% of girls work in agriculture, for a total of 69.9% in agriculture. These children work in agriculture and fishery. Some of them are engaged in services to a lower extent and family, domestic work (7.7% of the total work carried out by boys and 22.7% of the total work carried out by girls is domestic work). This is because parents inculcate in their children, especially girls, the fact that they need to start doing housework, so that they will become good wives. It is socially acceptable for girls to start working at the age of seven. So girls have to be taught how to iron, clean and cook. Boys, instead, are trained in other areas. In addition to these types of work there are other services such as trade – I have already told you about children who sell products on the streets or right next to supermarkets. Many boys are engaged in that. A few of them even work in mechanical workshops to repair cars.

This graph shows that about 85,682 children do domestic work, 69,2% of which are girls. In addition to this, child labor especially affects boys: 8.8% of boys as against 5.3% of boys are involved in child labor.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations that come from this analysis are the need for more rigorous child protection and closer control. There is the need not only to respect the laws of Cape Verde, but also to create mechanisms to fight against sexual exploitation and child labor. This is something that has required us to provide further training to our children and that is why there is the need to create other mechanisms to support this situation because in Cape Verde, for example, we only have four homes or shelters for children. One of them is protected and supported by ICCA, the others are supported by others. Three of them are concentrated in Santiago, which is the largest island of the archipelago.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Bibliography

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