



World Bank Global
HIV/AIDS Program

Protecting Children Affected by AIDS in the Caribbean Recommendations for Legal Reform in Guyana

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Guyana has achieved some notable successes in its HIV response. But more could be done to protect the welfare, safety and security of children whose lives are affected by HIV and AIDS. This note suggests key legal reforms – including some “Quick Wins” – that could contribute to improving the legal protection of children in Guyana who are orphaned or made vulnerable by AIDS.

1. OVERVIEW

This report provides recommendations for legal reform to enhance the protection of children orphaned or made vulnerable by AIDS in Guyana. It is an outcome of a broader research study financed by the World Bank - Netherlands Partnership Program on the legal protection of AIDS orphans and vulnerable children in the Caribbean. The research methodology consisted of extensive desk reviews of existing legislation in Guyana, Grenada, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as well as in-depth interviews with key stakeholders in each of the countries. This approach facilitated the identification and critical assessment of relevant statutes as well as of the institutions charged with making them work. The detailed research findings were reported in background papers for each of the countries, on file at the World Bank.¹

In order to focus attention on the aspects of the legal and institutional frameworks that require the most urgent attention of Governments and policy-makers, Recommendations for Legal Reform were prepared for each of the four countries.

Guyana has achieved some notable successes in its efforts against HIV and AIDS, however, the legislative framework should be improved and the institutional responses strengthened. As detailed in this report, legal and institutional reform is particularly recommended in the areas of: (a) child care and protection; (b) juvenile justice; (c) sexual exploitation and abuse; (d) economic exploitation; and (e) financial support. On-going initiatives such as CARICOM's Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS, the National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS of the Government of Guyana, the World Bank-financed HIV/AIDS Prevention and

¹ The background papers on Grenada and Saint Lucia were prepared by Jacqueline Sealy-Burke, and those on Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Guyana by Leighton Jackson, consultants to the World Bank. The research study was managed by Rudolf V. Van Puymbroeck, Lead Counsel, Public Health and HIV/AIDS, World Bank, under the overall guidance of Joana Godinho, Senior Health Specialist, World Bank. Mary Mulusa (LAC Regional HIV/AIDS Focal Point) contributed to the final review of the note; Joy de Beyer (World Bank Global HIV/AIDS Program) prepared it for publication. The constructive comments of colleagues at UNICEF and the World Bank on the background papers, and the participation by many of them in a review meeting on May 1, 2006 are gratefully acknowledged.

Control Project of the Government of Guyana, and other donor funded projects may assist in making the reforms recommended in this report a reality.

2. AIDS AND CHILDREN'S VULNERABILITY

National data indicate a steady rise in diagnosed cases of HIV infection.

The most recent data provided through the national HIV surveillance unit indicate that the total number of HIV infected persons was approximately eighteen thousand (18,000) at the end of 2003. The figures have climbed consistently over the years since 1989. National HIV prevalence is estimated at 2.5%, and 7% among pregnant women—among the highest in the Caribbean.

The largest number of AIDS cases occurs among persons 25-49 years old and AIDS is the leading cause of death for people aged 25-44 years. Females make up 38% of all AIDS cases, but outstrip the number of males in 15-19 and 20-24 age groups, and AIDS cases are growing faster among females than males. The Ministry of Health estimates that under-reporting of AIDS cases may be around 60 percent. It is therefore possible that the number of officially reported cases represents less than one third of the total number of cases in Guyana.

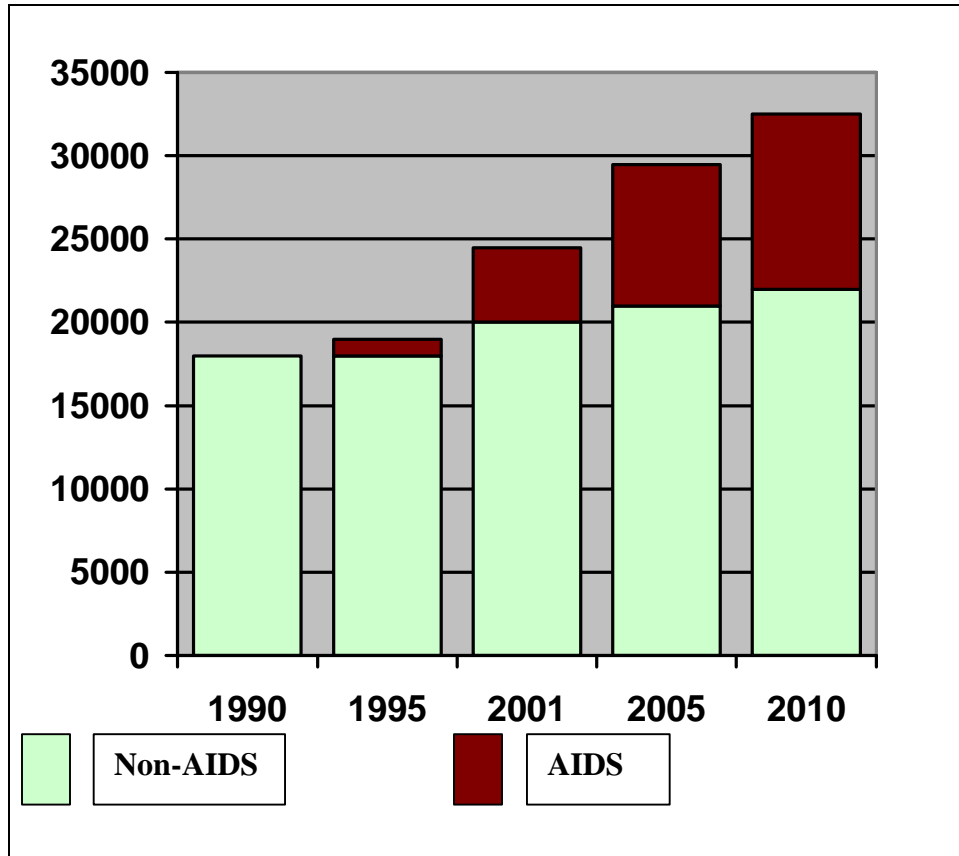
HIV incidence among infants in Guyana is alarming. In 2002, it was estimated that some 420 infants were affected, representing 21 infants per 1000, much higher than in other English-speaking Caribbean countries. This points to a clear need to develop and deploy strategies to redress the peculiar vulnerabilities of Guyana's children.

AIDS is recognized worldwide as a threat to children and their families.

One of the most tragic and difficult consequences of the AIDS epidemic is the growing number of children whose lives have been irreversibly altered by the death of one or both of their parents from this disease. AIDS affects both men and women in the peak of their sexual and economic productive years, destroying their ability to provide for their children, and burdening children and female members of the family who become responsible for care-giving.

The rising number of AIDS-related deaths – from less than one percent of all deaths in 1990 to 10 percent in 2000 – has a serious impact on children. At end of 2001, the estimated number of children in Guyana orphaned by AIDS was 4,200, projected to rise to 9,000 by 2010. Many other children lose their parents to malaria, diabetes, cancer, violence, suicide, and migration, but AIDS remains the single largest cause of orphaning. Contrary to trends worldwide and in the Caribbean, in Guyana the number of orphans is rising, both as a result of AIDS and other causes (Figure 1).

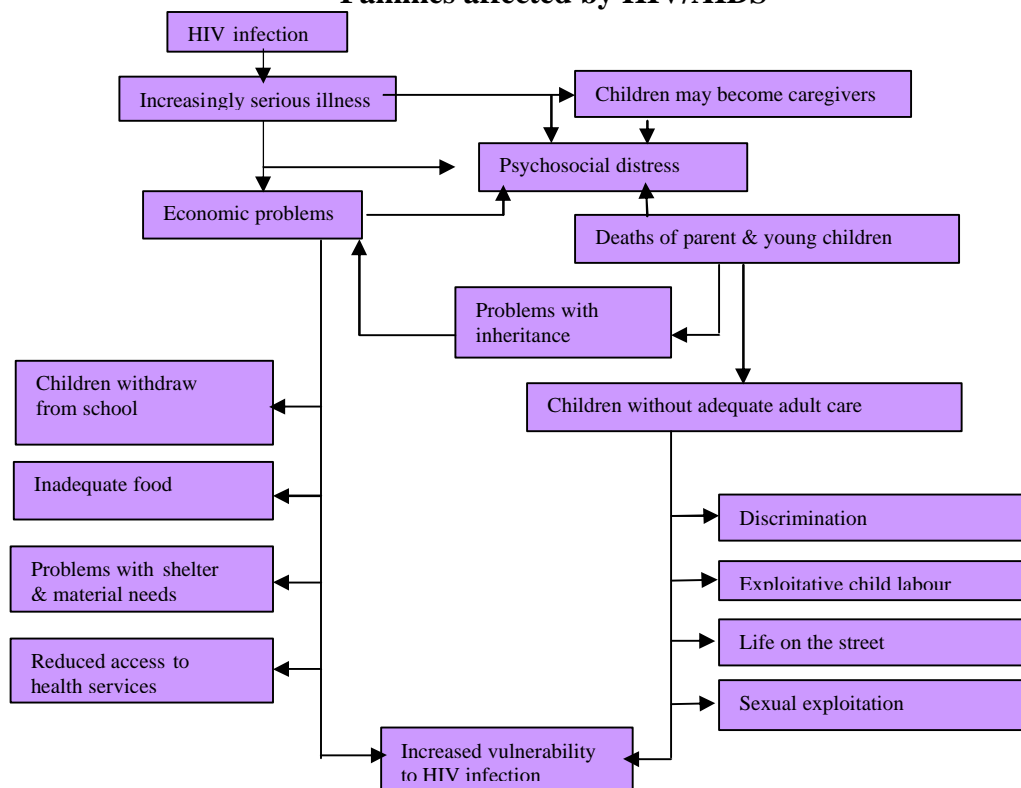
Figure 1: Orphan Estimates, Guyana 1990-2010



Source: Children on the Brink, 2002: A Joint Report on Orphan Estimates and Program Strategies by UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID

The problems experienced by children and their families affected by HIV are acute and varied, ranging from extreme psychological distress to economic hardship and increased risk of abuse (Figure 2). Children from HIV-affected families are themselves at greater risk of HIV infection because of factors like sexual exploitation, withdrawal from school and lack of adequate adult supervision.

Figure 2: The Complex and Interrelated Problems among Children and Families affected by HIV/AIDS



Source: UNICEF/UNAIDS, The Framework for the Protection, Care and Support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children Living in a World with HIV and AIDS, July 2004.

Natural disasters can compound the vulnerability of children.

When natural disasters such as hurricanes and floods strike an already vulnerable population, many persons find themselves without shelter, food, personal belongings or a social network to provide immediate support. The education sector is usually also severely affected with school closures and long periods of school interruption affecting thousands of school aged children.

This has undoubtedly been the case in Guyana in the wake of the severe floods that have affected the country in recent years. The precarious social and economic existence of Guyanese in the aftermath of these floods will inevitably affect the safety and security of children in general. The implications are even more dire for children who have experienced the traumatic impact of HIV/AIDS in their household, have themselves been exposed to the risk of sexually transmitted diseases because of incest or sexual exploitation, or have in some way been made more vulnerable as a result of HIV/AIDS.

3. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

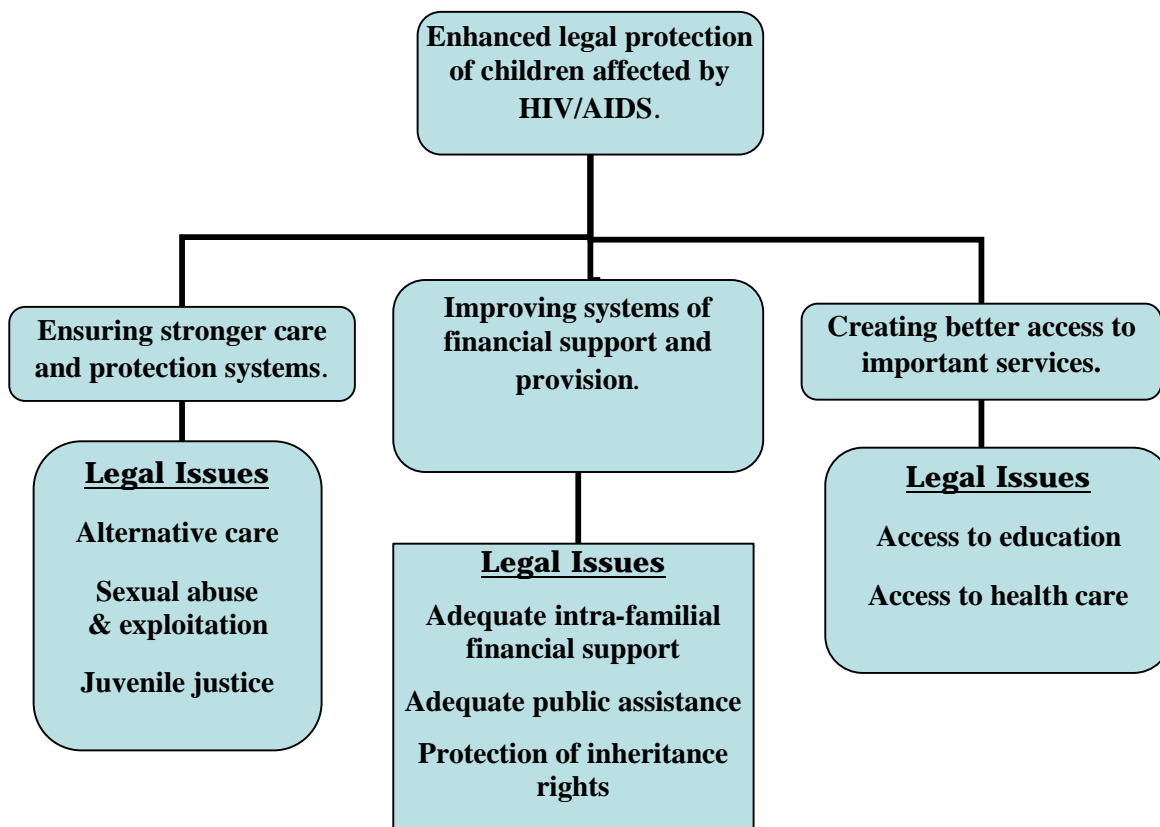
The critical role of the Law

The law on its own cannot remedy the many difficulties experienced by children and families who are affected by HIV. In fact, as indicated in Section 5 below, adequate social service and other programmatic interventions are indispensable to the effectiveness of the proposed legal reforms.

Effective legislative and institutional responses are critical components of the overall package of actions necessary to reduce children's vulnerability to the growing HIV epidemic. Improved policy and legislation are among the five key strategies recommended in the seminal framework document on the protection of vulnerable children from HIV and AIDS by UNICEF and UNAIDS.²

The essential components of a sound framework for the legal protection of children affected by HIV/AIDS can be depicted as in Figure 3:

Figure 3: Essential Components for Enhancing the Legal Protection of Children Affected by HIV/AIDS



² UNICEF/UNAIDS, The Framework for the Protection, Care and Support of Orphans and Vulnerable Children Living in a World with HIV and AIDS, July 2004.

Although all of these areas present opportunities for important legal reform, there are some areas that deserve urgent attention and should therefore be addressed with priority. This report focuses on these high priority areas. There are also some areas of proposed law reform that are relatively simple and easy to achieve. These have been identified as "Quick Wins".

4. PRIORITY AREAS FOR LEGAL REFORM

Child Care and Protection

Issues

Orphans and vulnerable children are more likely to be in need of care and protection than any other social group. The death or illness of one or both parents often results in the disintegration of the economic, social and psychological environment of the child's home. When this occurs, it is necessary to ensure that legislative and institutional arrangements are in place to at least cushion the impact of the loss by ensuring that provisions are made for alternative care in a safe environment.

One survey found that 23% of all children in Guyana live with only their mother and 8% live with neither biological parent. These figures are even more alarming for the urban coast where as many as 11% live with neither biological parent and 32% live with their mother alone. The dependency on mothers as the primary caregivers, nurturers and providers for children is an important factor given the increasing rate of HIV prevalence among women in Guyana. Maternal orphans are therefore at serious risk of neglect and poverty.

Legal Context

As a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Government of Guyana has undertaken to provide alternative care within a supportive infrastructure for those children who are abused, neglected or at risk of harm (Art.20).

Presently, there is no designated legislation for the care and protection of children in Guyana. While the Juveniles Offenders Act is used to commit children to alternative care, it is clearly designed for children who are in conflict with the law and not for alternative care and protection. There is therefore an urgent need to enact legislation dealing specifically with the care and protection of children

Fortunately, there are positive moves to bring the legislative scheme dealing with the care and protection of children in line with international standards and the international obligations of the state. A Protection of Children Bill has been drafted together with companion Bills relating to child care and protection, namely: the Adoption of Children Bill, the Custody Access, Guardianship and

Maintenance Bill, the Status of Children Bill and the Child Care and Development Services Bill.

It is hoped that the enactment of these pieces of legislation will begin a new era in Guyana in matters of child care and protection.



The expeditious passage and implementation of these Bills would be a “quick win” initiative in improving the plight of children who are vulnerable because of HIV/AIDS.

The Juvenile Justice System

Issues

Orphans and vulnerable children are at great risk of coming into conflict with the law. Indeed, it is now internationally recognized that children who get into trouble are often in need. The connection between vulnerability and delinquency is strong. This situation highlights the need for children in conflict with the law to be recognized as victims of circumstances and to be dealt with not by punishment, but in a manner appropriate to their well-being and proportionate both to their circumstances and the offence.

The current system for dealing with juvenile offenders is inappropriate. Boys and girls are accommodated in the same institution and several potentially exploitative relationships have been reported. This situation, no doubt, creates significant potential for increased exposure of young persons to HIV.

A recent report on juvenile delinquency in Guyana found that children are often kept in police stations and lock ups with no special correctional facilities for them. Although two police stations in Georgetown have separate cells for children, elsewhere the police have to improvise and allow children to sleep either in the public waiting area or in cells with adults.


Legal Context

The Convention on the Rights of the Child sets out a number of requirements at Article 40. These include, but are not limited to, the separation of children from adults during confinement; promoting the use of alternatives to formal trials; and encouraging rehabilitative measures so that children can be reintegrated into constructive participation in society.

Guyana does have legislation which addresses young people who are in conflict with the law. However, the Juvenile Offenders Act which was passed in 1931 is outdated and does not sufficiently uphold the rights of the child or promote the rehabilitative focus that is so critical to meeting the needs of vulnerable children.

The Act applies to all children under the age of seventeen (17), although a child is defined as a person under the age of fourteen (14). This is further complicated by the fact that the Act provides that no person under the age of ten (10) can be guilty of an offence, which clearly establishes an age of criminal liability well below the international legal standard.

The priority areas for legal reform are:

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- (i) Modernizing the Juvenile Offenders Act to make it more reflective of the current and appropriate objectives of rehabilitation, care and protection of children in conflict with the law.
 - (ii) Increasing the age of criminal responsibility so as to bring it in conformity with international legal standards. The age of criminal responsibility is presently ten (10) and increasing the age would be another easily and quickly achievable reform initiative.
 - (iii) Reviewing the laws concerning “wandering” to avoid criminalizing children who are trying to escape from abuse.
 - (iv) Reviewing the laws so as to provide for detention of children as an intervention of last resort. Detaining children in secure facilities should only occur if they have committed a serious offence.
 - (v) Establishing laws and policies that provide established alternatives to judicial proceedings. Diversion programs, which would permit the juvenile to take responsibility for his or her actions without the need for court intervention, do not exist and should be introduced.
 - (vi) The sentencing options under the Juvenile Offenders Act are restricted. It is necessary to introduce new and additional sentencing options such as suspended sentences, community service orders or other non-custodial measures.
 - (vii) There is presently no Family Court legislation in Guyana. Establishing a Family Court by appropriate legislation with attendant support services and alternate modes of intervention and disposition would go a long way in enhancing the system of juvenile justice.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Issues

Sexual abuse and exploitation present some of the most challenging issues confronting the safety and security of children. Females are particularly at risk, often being victims of incest, sexual exploitation and other forms of sexual abuse.

Transactional sex with older men, commonly referred to as the “Sugar Daddy Syndrome”, is viewed as becoming alarmingly widespread. Incest, which places children at risk in their own home environment, also presents as a significant issue.

The age difference and youthfulness of the young persons exploited by older male adults make the negotiation of condom use and sexual boundaries very difficult. This is an extremely important factor that inevitably increases the risk of HIV infection for children.

The pressure on women to engage in serial relationships leads to situations in which males live in close and intimate association with children who are not their own. Sometimes the man may be left to supervise the children alone. There is also the related practice of mothers either encouraging or ignoring their daughters obtaining money for sexual favors. Moreover, underreporting is endemic to this kind of offence.

Legal Context

As a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Government of Guyana has undertaken to protect children from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (Article 34). The Convention also creates a legal obligation on the part of the State to provide alternative care with a supportive infrastructure for children who are abused, neglected or at risk of harm (Article 20).

Guyana’s domestic law does afford some protection to sexually abused and exploited children. The Criminal Law (offences) Act creates offences relating to the sexual abuse of children. It addresses the issues of “carnal knowledge”, incestuous relationships and rape. It creates the offence of what is commonly known as “statutory rape” in that it prescribes the age below which a child cannot consent to sexual intercourse. Until quite recently the Act prohibited carnal knowledge of a girl under the age of 13. In December 2005, Parliament passed the Age of Consent Act, 2005 which amended the Criminal Law (offences) Act by increasing the age of consent to 16.

The combined effect of these two pieces of legislation is to make it a felony, with liability of imprisonment for life for a person to “unlawfully and carnally know” any girl under the age of 15 whether he believes her to be over 15 years of age or not. These laws also make it a misdemeanor punishable by 5 years imprisonment to “unlawfully and carnally know” any girl above the age of 15 and under the age of 16. In this latter case, it is a defense where the accused had reasonable cause to believe that the girl was above the age of 16.

Notwithstanding these provisions, there is significant scope for reform in the laws applicable to the protection of Guyana’s sexually abused or exploited children. The following areas particularly deserve attention:

- (i) Although the age of consent is sixteen (16), the defense of “honest belief” still exists and can be utilized by an adult who has had “unlawful carnal knowledge” with a child under the lawful age of consent. This defense is applicable if the defendant can establish that he honestly believed that the child was sixteen (16) or older. Other jurisdictions in the Caribbean have narrowed the defense to make it available only if the accused has no record of similar offenses and is under a prescribed age. Consistent with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which defines a child as under the age of eighteen (18), it is recommended that the Government raise the age of consent to eighteen (18). The authorities could also make carnal knowledge of a child a strict liability offense against which honest belief is no defense.
- (ii) The incest provision at S.66 of the Criminal Law (Offences) Act refers to “carnal knowledge” (sexual intercourse) of specified family members. Since sexual intercourse is a material element of the offence, the provision does not provide special protection to children who suffer abuse that does not include actual intercourse or abuse by a relative of the same sex.
- (iii) Sexual intercourse is a material element of other sexual offences, including rape. Sexual intercourse is limited to vaginal penetration by a penis and would therefore exclude other equally traumatic and invasive acts like penetration by an object or oral sex. Some Caribbean States have broadened their definition of sexual intercourse so as to incorporate other types of sexual acts.
- (iv) There are no laws addressing child pornography.
- (v) The offence of unlawful carnal knowledge which prohibits sexual intercourse with a child under the age of sixteen (16), applies only to offences committed by men against girls, and excludes intercourse by a woman or a man with any boy under sixteen (16).
- (vi) Rules of evidence and procedure are not sufficiently sensitized to the special needs of child witnesses and victims. Lengthy delays, intimidating cross-examinations and strict rules of evidence are features of Guyana’s legal system that compromise a child’s right to participate comfortably and effectively in criminal justice proceedings.

Economic Exploitation

Issues

It is well established that chronic poverty fuels child labor. A survey of child labor in Guyana revealed that there is a high level of child labor which was associated with or resulted from the poverty of their parents and the need for

children to fend for themselves. The work often involved conditions which were hazardous to health, safety and morals of the children.

A UNICEF assessment of the vulnerability of children in Guyana found that children falling into the category of “street children”, child victims of prostitution, and children from remote Amerindian communities tended to suffer worse forms of abuse. It was found that 64 percent of the children interviewed worked 7-18 hours per day.

Employment of children negatively impacts their psychological development and their ability to attend school. Orphans and vulnerable children are especially at risk of exploitation in employment, whether through being paid low or no wages, being in dangerous occupations, or having irregular school attendance, non-attendance or poor school performance.

Legal Context

The Convention on the Rights of the Child recognizes the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous, interfere with the child’s education, or be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. The ILO Conventions on Minimum Wages and Worst Forms of Child Labour are also applicable and should help guide the local law wherever appropriate.

The laws relating to child labor in Guyana fall far short of compliance with internationally accepted standards. The Education Act, the Employment of Women, Children And Young Persons Act and the Factories Act, while purporting to prohibit child labor, all define a “child” as a person under the age of 15 years. Consequently, none of these laws prohibit the employment of children under the age of 18 in circumstances that are dangerous to the life, health or morals of the person employed.

The following areas are in need of reform:

- (i) The enactment of legislation defining a child as a person under eighteen (18) for any and all purposes of employment in circumstances that are dangerous to the life, health or morals of the person employed.
- (ii) The Constitution of Guyana guarantees every citizen access to a free education from nursery school to University. The Education Act, which dates from 1877, should be reviewed with a view to ensuring that it reflects this constitutionally protected right.
- (iii) Any barriers, such as inability to produce a birth certificate, should not be allowed to frustrate admission to a school. Given the stated difficulties experienced in this regard, an express provision in the Education Act should speak directly to these potential barriers to access to education.

Financial Provision and Support

Issues

It is internationally accepted that every child has the right to a standard of living adequate for his or her full development. Since children are unable to independently secure such a standard of living, they must rely on parents, others in a special relationship with them (and thereby responsible for their care and protection) as well as the state to support their needs.

Guyana is one of the poorest countries in the Western hemisphere. Given the relatively large number of children born out of wedlock, the significant number of households headed by women and the impoverishment experienced by these families, it is important that there be an efficient system for ensuring adequate child support from non-custodial fathers. Where familial child support is not available, public assistance from the state should be a viable alternative.

The importance of an effective legal system which can facilitate adequate financial support for children is especially important for vulnerable children, including those whose parents are infected with HIV or who are otherwise vulnerable because of HIV/AIDS. In a social context where poverty rates are high and children are disproportionately represented amongst those who are impoverished, the need for meaningful responses to child poverty assumes greater significance.

Legal Context

As a signatory to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Guyana has undertaken to take all appropriate measures to ensure that parents meet their financial responsibility to their children (Article 27). The CRC also recognizes that every child has the right to benefit from social security.

Under Guyana's domestic law, parents do have the legal obligation to contribute financially to their children's needs. Entitlement to child support is no longer considered an issue since the passage of the Children Born out of Wedlock (Removal of Discrimination) Act which removed any distinction between children born in and out of wedlock.

Nevertheless, children born to unions outside of marriage continue to be disadvantaged because of separate legislative schemes for married and unmarried women, very low child support awards in the Magistrates' Court and poor child support enforcement mechanisms.

The Maintenance Act provides for low statutory maximums, and entitlement to child support terminates at the age of 16 years. The Applicant must establish that there was failure to pay or neglect on the part of the other party who is under a duty to provide maintenance.

The following areas are in need of reform:

- (i) The Maintenance Act (1991) makes provisions for the child under the age of sixteen (16) to be reasonably provided for by his/her parents or legal guardian. This falls short of the international legal standard subscribed to by the Government of Guyana which would require maintenance of a child until the age of eighteen (18).
- (ii) Child support guidelines do not exist and there is little uniformity or predictability in the amount of court-ordered child support. Guidelines may be especially necessary given the reportedly low awards that are presently ordered at the Magistrates' Court level.
- (iii) There is no Maintenance Enforcement Legislation, such as the Attachment of Earnings Legislation that exists in other Caribbean States. Enactment of such a statute would permit automatic deduction of wages in those instances where non-custodial parents are gainfully employed. The introduction of this legislation would be another "quick win" initiative.
- (iv) Presently, the types of orders that can be made are too restrictive. The court should be empowered to make different types of awards, including lump sum; wholly or partly secured orders; as well as periodical payments. The power to award interim maintenance should also be available.
- (v) The need to show fault or neglect should be abolished.
- (vi) The absence of a Family Court Act reinforces the duality of the system which discriminates against poor and unmarried mothers. The introduction of a unified family court would remove the dual nature of the system which discriminates against poor and unmarried mothers.



5. OPERATIONAL AND PROGRAMATIC IMPLICATIONS

Comprehensive remedial action for the benefit of children made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS will require a broad based systemic response that goes beyond legal reform. The legislative responses recommended in this report will need to be supported by adequate social service mechanisms and other programmatic interventions, including the following:

- > A Family Court with trained staff and strong social support.
- > Protocols to facilitate a coordinated and systematic approach to child protection.
- > Enhanced data collection and disaggregation in all related areas, with priority given to data relating to children orphaned as a result of AIDS, sexual abuse and exploitation and children in conflict with the law.

- > Public awareness and sensitization initiatives which would draw attention to the plight of children who are orphaned or otherwise vulnerable because of HIV/AIDS.
- > More placement opportunities for children at risk, including adoption and foster placements.
- > Training and other educational opportunities, especially for people who work with vulnerable children and their families.
- > Legal Aid services for children and/or their impoverished custodial parents. Particular attention should be given to young people who come into conflict with the law and parents who need to pursue child support.

6. THE WAY FORWARD

Recommendations for legal reform

As indicated in this Report, there is significant scope for strengthening the country's legal framework to provide better protection against the impact of HIV and AIDS for orphans and vulnerable children. Specific recommendations in each of the priority areas are captured in Table 1.

Current initiatives which can inform the way forward

The recommendations for priority legal reform set forth in this Report must be placed in the context of the Government's National Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS and the work already started on reforming laws to address stigma and discrimination. These should be coordinated with and benefit from on-going regional initiatives geared at reform in relevant areas of the law. Initiatives that need to be taken into account include CARICOM's Pan Caribbean Partnership against HIV/AIDS, which focuses on legislative deficiencies relating to HIV and AIDS.

By coordinating the recommendations for priority legal reform of this Report with the inputs and other assistance received from these initiatives, the Government of Guyana will be extremely well poised to achieve significantly greater protection for children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS.

Table 1: Recommendations for Priority Legal Reform

Child Care and Protection	Juvenile Justice	Sexual Abuse & Exploitation	Economic Exploitation	Financial Support and Provision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enact legislation specifically to address the care and protection of children. • Enact several Bills currently pending which are relevant to the care and protection of children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernize the Juvenile Offenders Act which was passed in 1931 and does not reflect the more currently accepted objectives of promoting the rehabilitation, care and protection of children in conflict with the law. • Increase the age of criminal responsibility to comply with international legal standards. • Review the laws concerning “wandering” to avoid criminalizing children who are trying to escape from abuse. • Introduce new and additional sentencing options such as suspended sentences, community service orders or other non-custodial measures. • Establish a Family Court by appropriate legislation with attendant support services and alternate modes of intervention and disposition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconsider the honest belief defense to sexual intercourse with a child under the lawful age of consent. • Broaden definitions under the Criminal Code so as to extend the material element of incest, rape and other sexual offences to sexual activities beyond actual sexual intercourse. • Enact a child pornography statute. • Amend the Criminal Code so as to afford equal protection of young girls and boys from all forms of sexual abuse and exploitation. • Relax the rules of evidence and process so as to make the court a more child friendly environment and to facilitate the process of sexual abuse cases involving young victims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enact legislation defining a child as a person under eighteen (18) for any and all purposes of employment in circumstances that are dangerous to the life, health or morals of the person employed. • Review the Education Act to ensure that it reflects the constitutionally guaranteed right of every Guyanese citizen to a free education from nursery school to University. • Remove the non-production of a birth certificate and other such requirements as barriers to access to education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance the Maintenance Act so as to require payment of child maintenance until a child reaches the age of eighteen (18). • Introduce maintenance enforcement legislation, such as Attachment of Earnings legislation and other more creative enforcement mechanisms. • Create Reciprocal Enforcement Legislation so as to facilitate payment of child support by payers who are residing in other countries. • Create Family Court Legislation for the establishment of a Family Court. The Family Court structure should be geared at removing the dual nature of the present family law process, which discriminates against poor and unmarried mothers. • Create child support guidelines so as to ensure uniformity and predictability in the amount of court-ordered child support.

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