



Article 32 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child says: 'States parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development'. The 2013 Vanuatu DHS survey included several questions pertaining to child labour, which is defined as 5–14 year-old children being engaged in various forms of paid or unpaid labour activities. A child is considered to be involved in child labour if, during the week preceding the survey, it undertook the following activities:

- ▶ was involved in at least one hour of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work (children aged 5–11 years)
- ▶ was involved in at least 14 hours of economic work or 28 hours of domestic work (children aged 12–14 years).

A note of caution is advisable when describing different child labour activities, given the substantial contrast in working hours of economic work undertaken by children of different ages.

Child labour

Survey results show that one in every five children aged 5–11 years falls into the category of child labour, having undertaken at least one hour of paid or unpaid economic activity or 28 hours of household activities (Fig. 1). The report also highlights that there are a few differences between young boys (20%) and girls (22%), with near equal proportions of boys and girls undertaking household chores below (73.9%) and above (0.3%) 28 hours per week (Table 16.1). The lack of gender disparities is not surprising, as regular help at home is part and parcel of growing up in Vanuatu: helping out around the house and garden, fetching water or collecting firewood, and looking after younger siblings while parents work in the food gardens

or plantations. Only a very small proportion of these young children were engaged in paid work – 2.3% in urban Vanuatu, and 3.4% in rural areas.

Looking at the situation of 12–14 year old children, a similar pattern emerges across most work activities highlighted above, except for the fact that less than one per cent of children was engaged in child labour, that is, was involved in at least 14 hours of economic work, or 28 hours of domestic work. As stated above, this contrast is a reflection of a longer reference time for "hours worked" for 12–14 year old children (14 hours versus 1 hour), as illustrated in the sizeable proportion of these children (26.3%), who worked between 1 and 14 hours.

Child discipline

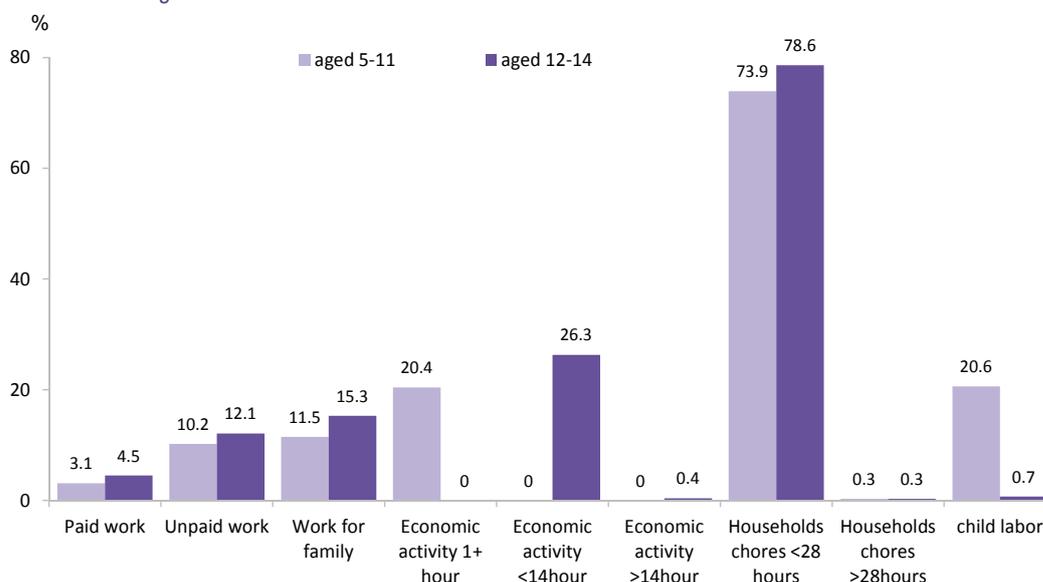
The UN Millennium Declaration calls for the protection of children against any acts of violence, abuse and exploitation. In the 2013 DHS, mothers/caretakers of children aged 2–14 years were asked a series of questions on the ways parents discipline their children when they misbehave. From these questions, two child discipline indicators are derived:

1. Proportion of children aged 2–14 years who experience either psychological aggression as punishment, or minor or severe physical punishment;
2. Proportion of parents/caretakers of children 2–14 years old, who believe that in order to 'raise their children properly', they need to physically punish them.

For the child discipline module, one child aged 2–14 years per household was selected randomly during fieldwork.

In Vanuatu, the majority (84%) of children aged 2–14 were subjected to some form of forceful child discipline (Fig. 2). More than 70% were subjected to at least one form of psychological

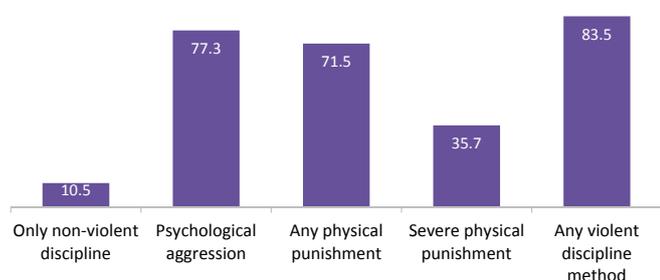
Figure 1: Household children aged 5–14 involved in child labour and other activities





or physical punishment by their mothers/caretakers or other household members, with one in three children (36%) subjected to severe physical punishment, and one in ten children exposed to non-physical punishment. Apart from a slightly higher proportion of young boys (38%) being subject to severe physical punishment than young girls (34%), being exposed to forceful or violent disciplining does not discriminate between boys (83.3%) and girls (83.6%). Prevalent across Vanuatu society, there appear no real differences between socio-economic groupings (wealth quintiles), ranging from a 'low' 80% amongst the poorest wealth quintile to 86% in the middle quintile. And there are also only marginal differences between rural and urban Vanuatu, with a slightly higher incidence of physical aggression (78% vs 74%) and severe physical punishment (37% vs 32%) in rural Vanuatu..

Figure 2: Percentage of children aged 2–14 years exposed to different types of punishment



Policy note

The survey showed that one in five children aged 5-11 were undertaking child labour activities during the two-week survey reference period. While most of these activities related to undertaking household chores and other forms of unpaid work, a small number of children (3%) reportedly undertook some form of paid work, which could impact on their health, education and general development.

Although representing only a small proportion, it could be argued that 3 percent is still too many, given Vanuatu's ratification of the Convention of the Rights of Children (CRC), with Article 19 quite explicit that "governments should protect children from work that is dangerous or that might harm their health or education".

The Convention of the Rights of Children is equally explicit on governments ensuring that "children are properly cared for and protected them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them" (Article 32). Given the rather high prevalence of forceful or violent disciplining, including physical punishment young ni-Vanuatu children are exposed to by their parents or caretakers, Vanuatu authorities associated with justice and community services might wish to have a close look at these statistics, which are incompatible with the spirit of the Vanuatu's support of the CRC.

*For more detailed information on child health see chapter 10 in the 2013 Vanuatu DHS report.