

In 2015, the Kyrgyz Republic made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government established a Coordination Council for Social Protection and Children's Rights and passed a resolution to set up a procedure for the identification of children living in difficult conditions, including those engaged in child labor. In addition, the Government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, children in the Kyrgyz Republic are engaged in child labor, including in cultivating cotton and selling items in the bazaars. The State Inspectorate did not conduct inspections to ensure compliance with legal minimum age protections. The compulsory education age remained lower than the minimum age to work.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in the Kyrgyz Republic are engaged in child labor, including in cultivating cotton and selling items in the bazaars.(1-4) According to the most recent child labor survey conducted in 2007, child labor is concentrated in agriculture, primarily in the *oblasts* (provinces) of Issyk Kul and Osh. Children also transport and sell items in local bazaars.(5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in the Kyrgyz Republic.

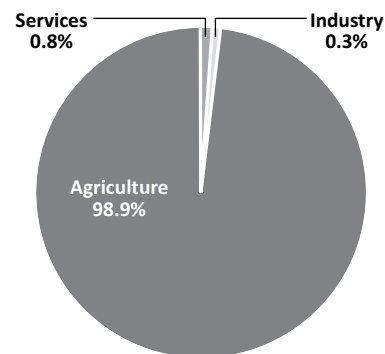
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10-14 yrs.	33.9 (397,407)
Attending School (%)	10-14 yrs.	86.5
Combining Work and School (%)	10-14 yrs.	41.0
Primary Completion Rate (%)		105.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2014, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(6)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from National Child Labor Survey, 2014.(7) Data on working children, school attendance, and children combining work and school are not comparable with data published in the previous version of this report because of differences between the surveys used to collect the data.

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14



Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Cultivating cotton, tobacco,† rice,* potatoes,* sugar beets,* and wheat* (3, 4, 8-13) Raising cattle* and sheep* (8, 11-13)
Industry	Coal mining*† (4, 8, 12, 13) Brick making* (8, 12, 13) Construction, including lifting and portering construction materials,* and cutting metal sheets for roofs* (8, 13)
Services	Loading and unloading goods, portering, collecting plastic bottles* and garbage, and selling items, including food and newspapers, in bazaars (2-5, 10, 14-16) Washing cars* (10, 15) Working in restaurants and cafes, including serving food* and washing dishes* (3, 12, 17) Street work, including begging and shoe shining* (12, 15, 18, 19) Domestic work, including child care* (4, 9, 19, 20)

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity (cont)

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Raising cattle and sheep, sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (4, 8)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (8, 15, 16, 19, 20)
	Use in illicit activities, including trafficking illegal drugs, as a result of human trafficking* (20, 21)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.




Some girls from Uzbekistan are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation as a result of human trafficking in the Kyrgyz Republic.(20) In addition, some parents who migrate to Kazakhstan, Russia, or other areas of the country to work leave their children behind, oftentimes without birth certificates and guardianship documents. As a result, some of these children cannot enroll in school and are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor.(3, 5, 12, 22) While there are estimated to be few ethnic Lyuli, a subgroup of the Roma people living in Central Asia, in the Kyrgyz Republic (approximately 3,500), many children from this community are vulnerable to child labor as they do not attend school.(5, 21, 23) Children with disabilities and those living and working on the street also have difficulty accessing education.(2, 5, 8, 24) The practice of schools requiring residence registration, known as *propiska*, for enrollment may also hinder access to education, although, according to the Ministry of Education and Science, this is not mandatory.(8, 9, 16)

In 2014, the National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic, in cooperation with the ILO, conducted a National Child Labor Survey in 2014, the results of which were presented in a roundtable discussion in 2016. The results show that while the rate of child labor has decreased from 32.9 percent in 2007 to 27.8 percent in 2014, the rate of children engaged in hazardous child labor has increased from 12.5 percent in 2007 to 18.6 percent in 2014.(25) The full report of the survey is expected to be published in 2016.(1)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Kyrgyz Republic has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

Convention	Ratification
 ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
 UN CRC	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
 Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The Government has established laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 18 of the Labor Code (26)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 294 of the Labor Code; Article 15 of the Code on Children (26, 27)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Article 294 of the Labor Code; Decree 314; Annex I of Decree 548 (26, 28, 29)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor (cont)

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 10 of the Labor Code; Article 15.2 of the Code on Children; Article 1 of the Law on Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking; Article 124 of the Criminal Code (26, 27, 30, 31)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 1 of the Law on Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking; Article 124 of the Criminal Code (30, 31)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 157 of the Criminal Code; Articles 5 and 15 of the Code on Children (27, 30)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 157, 247, 249, and 375 of the Criminal Code; Articles 5 and 15 of the Code on Children (27, 30)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Articles 17.1 and 22.1 of the Law on Military Service (32)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Article 24.1 of the Law on Military Service (32)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Article 16 of the Law on Education (33)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 16 of the Law on Education (33)

‡ Age calculated based on available information

According to Article 6 of the Labor Code, protections, such as the minimum age of employment and prohibition on hazardous work, are not extended to children engaged in non-contractual employment.(26) Most incidences of child labor occur in employment relationships in which the child has no signed employment contract with the employer.(3, 11)

Although the Kyrgyz Republic has ratified the Palermo Protocol, which necessitates waiving requirements related to the use of force, deception, or fraud for child victims of human trafficking, both the Law on Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking and the Criminal Code require these elements during the human trafficking process.(30, 31)

Children in the Kyrgyz Republic are required to attend school only until grade nine, which is typically until they reach age 14 or 15.(3, 9, 34) This standard makes children ages 14 and 15 vulnerable to child labor because they are not required to be in school, but they also are not yet legally permitted to work.

The Government drafted a revised list of hazardous work for children in 2011, which is pending review by the Ministry of Labor and Social Development.(1)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
State Inspectorate on Ecological and Technical Safety	Monitor work sites and refer child laborers to social services. Cooperate with the Inspectorate for Minors' Affairs in the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Prosecutor General's Office, and regional State District Administration authorities to enforce child labor laws.(35)
Ministry of Internal Affairs, Inspectorate for Minors' Affairs	Enforce criminal laws related to child labor, including its worst forms; conduct independent inspections and joint raids with the State Inspectorate on Ecological and Technical Safety to find neglected or abused children; and refer children to social institutions for care.(35)
Prosecutor General's Office	Enforce and apply laws concerning labor, including by conducting labor inspections and investigating child labor violations in coordination with the State Inspectorate on Ecological and Technical Safety.(35, 36)
<i>Oblast</i> Administration	Enforce child labor laws at the <i>oblast</i> level.(35)
Ministry of Labor and Social Development	Serve as the key government agency for child issues. Charged with protecting children and families in difficult conditions, including child laborers.(21) The Ministry's Department of Child Protection covers child labor issues. Monitor for children engaged in the worst forms of child labor.(21) Coordinate with <i>oblast</i> -level authorities to pursue violations of child labor laws.(37)

Kyrgyz Republic

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2015, law enforcement agencies in the Kyrgyz Republic took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	23 (2)	23 (2)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (2)	Yes (2)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown
■ Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown	N/A
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (2)	No (1)
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown	Unknown (23)
■ Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	Unknown (23)
■ Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	Unknown (23)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	243 (2)	Unknown (23)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown	Unknown (23)
■ Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown	Unknown (23)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (2)	Unknown (23)
■ Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (2)	Unknown (23)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	No (2)	No (2)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	N/A	N/A
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (2)	Yes (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (35)	Yes (38)

According to the ILO recommendation of 1 inspector for every 20,000 workers in transitioning economies, the Kyrgyz Republic should employ about 132 inspectors to adequately enforce labor laws throughout the country.(2, 39-41) The State Inspectorate on Ecological and Technical Safety acknowledged that the number of labor inspectors was inadequate to ensure appropriate enforcement of child labor laws.(2) The Inspectorate conducted child labor inspections but since inspectors monitor a number of conditions in addition to child labor, it does not publish disaggregate statistics on child labor.(23)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2015, criminal law enforcement agencies in the Kyrgyz Republic took actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Training for Investigators		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown
■ Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Investigations	Unknown (42)	0 (1)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	0 (1)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (42)	N/A (1)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (42)	N/A (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	No (20)	Yes (38)

In 2015, the Government passed a resolution establishing the identification process for children in difficult living conditions, including those engaged in the worst forms of child labor. An integral part of this process is the referral of identified children to social and educational services.(38)

There were no reports of police misconduct, nor of children engaged in child labor being treated as criminals.

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Coordination Council for Social Protection and Children's Rights*	Develop policies to eliminate child labor.(1) Chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, members include representatives from the Ministries of Labor and Social Development, Internal Affairs, Finance, and Education and Science, as well as civil society organizations.(43, 44) During the reporting period, the Council drafted a National Action Plan on Child Labor and submitted it to the Ministry of Labor and Social Development for review.(1) The Council also asked the Ministry of Labor and Social Development to provide information on what measures the Ministry has taken to establish guardianship for children whose parents migrate to other areas or countries.(44)

* Mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor was created during the reporting period.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Regulations on the Procedure for the Identification of Children and Families in Difficult Situations†	Establishes the identification process of children in difficult living conditions, including those engaged in the worst forms of child labor. Actors involved in the identification process include employees of the Ministries of Education and Science, Labor and Social Development, Internal Affairs, and Health.(38) The process includes receiving complaints, conducting outreach activities, devising an individual action plan, removing the child from the worst forms of child labor, and providing financial and educational services.(38)
National Program Against Human Trafficking and Action Plan for the Implementation of the Program (2013–2016)	Aims to provide protection to children in difficult situations to prevent them from becoming victims of sexual, labor, or criminal exploitation.(35)
Sustainable Development Plan (2013–2017)	Addresses child labor by undertaking a child labor survey, strengthening enforcement mechanisms for monitoring child labor, and replicating best practices to improve access to education.(35, 45)
Roadmap on Out-of-School Children*	Seeks to collect information on the problem of school non-attendance and develop a comprehensive list of activities to address the issue. Developed by UNICEF, the ILO, and the Ministry of Education and Science.(45)
National Education Strategy (2012–2020)*	Seeks to expand coverage of preschool education, improve access to basic and general secondary education, and develop skills based on labor market needs. Also promotes adult and non-formal education for those who never attended school or dropped out early due to child labor.(34)

* Child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into this policy.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

The Ministry of Education and Science is reviewing a change in the definition of out-of-school children to replace 45 missed days in an academic year with 10 days in 1 month. This change is expected to facilitate the identification of children who engage in child labor in agriculture during the harvest season.(1)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2015, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Combating Child Labor in Central Asia—Commitment Becomes Action (PROACT CAR Phase III) (2010–2016)	\$4.57 million Government of Germany-funded, 5-year project, implemented by the ILO-IPEC to mainstream child labor issues into national policies and legislation, build the capacity of stakeholders, and provide direct services to children withdrawn from the worst forms of child labor.(45) A manual for teachers on non-formal education was developed and incorporated in the regular teacher training package.(46) A pilot program in two districts consists of evening classes for children engaged in child labor and child labor monitoring by teachers and social workers.(8, 47)
Implementing Practices to Address Child Labor in Tobacco in Kyrgyzstan (IMPACT) (2013–2015)	\$709,943 Eliminating Child Labor in Tobacco Growing Foundation-funded, 2-year project implemented by the Alliance on the Protection of Child Rights that worked to eliminate child labor in tobacco-growing communities in southern areas of the Kyrgyz Republic. Objectives included withdrawing or preventing 3,000 children from entering child labor and improving access to education, water, and sanitation.(48)
Evening Classes for Child Laborers†	ILO and Ministry of Education and Science project that provides evening classes to secondary school students in districts with a high concentration of child laborers. Includes weekly or biweekly family consultations with social workers who observe the children and provide parents with information on the hazards of child labor.(49)
Social Support for Children and Families in Difficult Living Conditions†	Social workers monitor places where children may be working, with a primary focus on bazaars, and return children to school.(37)
Technical Assistance to the Government of Kyrgyzstan to Strengthen the Legal and Operational Framework for Combating Trafficking in Persons (2015–2018)*	\$750,000 USDOS-funded, 3-year project implemented by the IOM to establish an anti-trafficking task force; support the development of a National Referral Mechanism; and provide anti-human-trafficking trainings to government officials, such as judges, prosecutors, and law enforcement officers.(50)
Cash Transfer Program*†	Government cash transfer program for families living in difficult conditions.(1) In 2015, the Government helped 4,403 children in difficult conditions, including those engaged in child labor.(51)
Ministry of Education and Science National School Attendance Database†	Pilot national electronic database to track children who do not attend school. After the database is developed and used throughout the country, database information will be shared with the Ministry of Labor and Social Development to assist children engaged in child labor.(9) The Ministry of Internal Affairs will also be informed of cases of criminal violations of child labor laws. In addition, social pedagogues will work with families to ensure that children attend school.(9)
Toll-Free Hotline for Human Trafficking†	Ministry for Social Development toll-free line provided to the IOM that offers information to potential labor migrants and assistance to victims of human trafficking.(23)
Awareness-Raising Campaign†	One-month joint campaign of the Ministry of Labor and Social Development and the Ministry of Education and Science to raise awareness on child labor called “No to child labor, Yes to quality of education,” consisting of competitions and roundtables.(52)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Although the Kyrgyz Republic has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in the Kyrgyz Republic (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law’s minimum age provisions and hazardous work prohibitions apply to all children, including those working without a signed employment contract.	2014 – 2015
	Ensure that child trafficking laws do not require an element of force or deception and are in accordance with international standards.	2015
	Increase the age for compulsory schooling to 16, the minimum age to work.	2014 – 2015

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Make publicly available information about the funding of the State Inspectorate, the training system for labor inspectors and criminal investigators, the number of labor inspections, including those conducted at worksites or by desk review, the number of child labor violations found, and the number of penalties imposed and collected, and information about whether inspections are routine or targeted.	2011 – 2015
	Strengthen the labor inspection system by permitting and conducting unannounced inspections.	2014 – 2015
	Increase the number of labor inspectors and provide inspectors with adequate resources to conduct inspections.	2012 – 2015
	Ensure that cases of the worst forms of child labor are investigated and prosecuted.	2015
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Roadmap on Out-of-School Children and the National Education Strategy.	2015
Social Programs	Ensure that all children have access to free education, including children with disabilities and those without birth certificates.	2009 – 2015
	Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem.	2014 – 2015

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41. UN. *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2012 Statistical Annex*. New York; 2012. http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp-current/2012country_class.pdf. For analytical purposes, the Development Policy and Analysis Division (DPAD) of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat (UN/DESA) classifies all countries of the world into one of three broad categories: developed economies, economies in transition, and developing countries. The composition of these groupings is intended to reflect basic economic country conditions. Several countries (in particular the economies in transition) have characteristics that could place them in more than one category; however, for purposes of analysis, the groupings have been made mutually exclusive. The list of the least developed countries is decided upon by the United Nations Economic and Social Council and, ultimately, by the General Assembly, on the basis of recommendations made by the Committee for Development Policy. The basic criteria for inclusion require that certain thresholds be met with regard to per capita GNI, a human assets index and an economic vulnerability index. For the purposes of the Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor Report, "developed economies" equate to the ILO's classification of "industrial market economies"; "economies in transition" to "transition economies"; "developing countries" to "industrializing economies, and "the least developed countries" equates to "less developed countries." For countries that appear on both "developing countries" and "least developed countries" lists, they will be considered "least developed countries" for the purpose of calculating a "sufficient number" of labor inspectors.
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