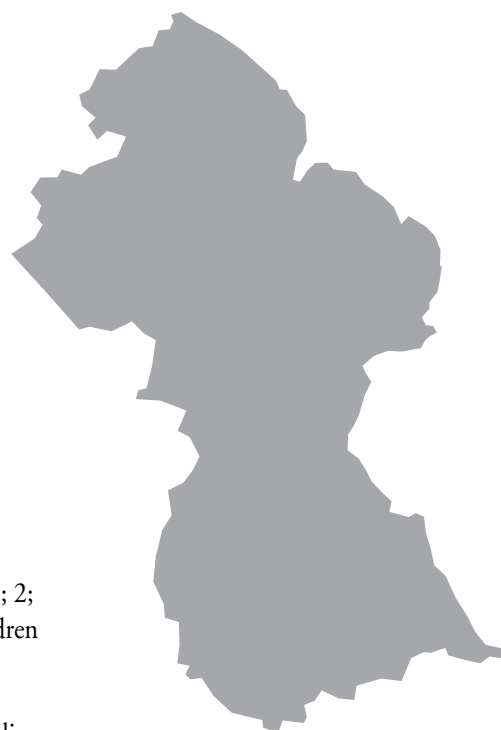


*In 2017, Guyana made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government published a Rapid Assessment of Child Labor conducted by the ILO, established a child labor hotline, and hired ten additional labor inspectors. However, children in Guyana continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in mining and in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Law enforcement agencies have insufficient funding and capacity to enforce laws related to child labor, including its worst forms, and existing laws do not fully prohibit using children in certain forms of child labor. Moreover, the government does not have a comprehensive policy to combat child labor or targeted social programs to fully address the extent of the problem.*



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Guyana engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in mining and commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9) The 2014 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey indicated that children living in Guyana's interior are more likely to be engaged in child labor than other children, with 37 percent of children ages 5 to 17 living in the interior engaged in child labor. The survey also indicated that 41 percent of children living in Amerindian households engage in child labor, with 34 percent of these children engaged in hazardous work. (1) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Guyana.

**Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (%)	5 to 14	20.1
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	97.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	22.1
Primary Completion Rate (%)		97.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (10)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 5 (MICS 5) Survey, 2014. (11)

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	Farming, including the production of cabbage, cherries, limes, rice, squash, sugarcane, and charcoal (2; 3; 12; 13; 14; 7; 9; 15)
	Forestry, including logging,† preservation of lumber, and work in sawmills† (1; 3; 7; 9)
	Raising animals, including chickens (9)
	Fishing,† activities unknown (6; 9)
Industry	Construction,† activities unknown (7; 9)
	Mining,† including gold mining and bauxite mining (1; 3; 7; 9)
Services	Domestic work (2; 9)
	Welding and working in scrap iron yards (2; 9)
	Working in stores, bars, and restaurants (2; 16; 9)
	Street work, including selling fruit, washing cars, and begging (2; 4; 13; 14; 9)
	Cleaning boats and ferries and helping load luggage and goods (9)

# Guyana

## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2; 3; 7; 8) (13; 14; 9)
	Use in illicit activities, including planting marijuana and smuggling drugs, weapons, and goods (2; 9)
	Domestic servitude (8)

† 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.




Children in Guyana, including girls as young as age 12, are involved in commercial sexual exploitation in Georgetown and the country’s interior. There are reports of young girls being subjected to commercial sexual exploitation in mining communities as a result of human trafficking. (2; 12; 7; 9) Children are engaged in informal, small scale mining in which they wash gold, operate dangerous machinery, and are exposed to hazardous chemicals. (7; 9)

Children in Guyana’s interior and rural areas have limited access to education due to poor infrastructure, long distances to access schools, transportation costs, and a shortage of trained and qualified teachers. This leads to decreasing enrollment and high dropout rates among students, particularly in secondary school. (2; 17; 7; 18; 9)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Guyana 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 (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Guyana’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including sufficient prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation children.

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Articles 2–3 of the Employment of Young Persons and Children Act; Articles 17–22 of the Education Act (19; 20)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Part 1, Article 2 and Part 2, Article 3 of the Employment of Young Persons and Children Act; Articles 17, 41, 46, and 75 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (19; 21)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		List of Hazardous Occupations and Processes in Guyana; Part 1, Article 2 of the Employment of Young Persons and Children Act; Articles 17, 41, and 75 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (19; 21; 22)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 40 of the Constitution; Article 3 of the Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act (23; 24)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 3 of the Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act (24)

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (cont)**

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Article 50(3) of the Protection of Children Act; Article 3(2) of the Combating of Trafficking in Persons Act (24; 25)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Article 50(1) of the Protection of Children Act (25)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	N/A*		
State Voluntary	Yes	18	Article 18 of the Defense Act (26; 27)
Non-state	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Articles 13 and 22 of the Education Act (20)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 27 of the Constitution (23)

\* No conscription (5; 28)

Although the Employment of Young Persons and Children Act prohibits hazardous work for anyone under age 18, the law does not fully protect adolescents ages 16 and 17 from engaging in hazardous work. Part 1, Article 2 of the Employment of Young Persons and Children Act prohibits night work for minors employed in industry and provides an exception allowing adolescents ages 16 and older to perform certain work requiring continuity through day and night, including gold mining reduction work and the production of iron, steel, glass, paper, and raw sugar, without provisions to ensure that their health, safety, and morals are fully protected or that they receive specific instruction or training in these activities. (19)

Guyanese law does not sufficiently prohibit all commercial sexual exploitation of children as it does not prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of a child for pornographic performances. (29; 24; 30) Although Article 50(1) of the Protection of Children Act prohibits selling or giving drugs to children, the law does not specifically prohibit the use, procuring, or offering of a child for the production and trafficking of drugs. (25)

### III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Social Protection that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Social Protection	Monitor and enforce child labor laws in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Forestry Commission, Geology and Mines Commission, National Insurance Scheme, and Guyana Police Force. The Chief Labor Officer handles special investigations stemming from child labor complaints and oversees routine labor inspections. (4; 29) Includes a Trafficking in Persons Unit and the Childcare and Protection Agency, to which children identified during labor inspections are referred. (4; 15)
Guyana Police Force	Enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor, including human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities. Works in consultation with the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Ministry of Public Security, the Ministry of Social Protection, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples' Affairs, depending on the circumstances of each case. (4)
Ministry of Public Security	Lead enforcement of human trafficking laws. Chair the Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Combating Trafficking in Persons. (4)

#### *Labor Law Enforcement*

In 2017, labor law enforcement agencies in Guyana took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Social Protection that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including financial resource allocation.

**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (3)	Unknown (15)
Number of Labor Inspectors	15 (3)	25 (7)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (3)	No (7)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	N/A (31)	Yes (7)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	No (7)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (3)	No (7)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	1,000 (3)	1,400 (7)
Number Conducted at Worksites	1,000 (3)	1,400 (7)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	2 (3)	7 (7)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	0 (3)	0 (7)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed That were Collected	0 (3)	N/A (7)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (3)	Yes (7)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (3)	No (7)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (3)	Yes (7)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (3)	Yes (7)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (3)	Yes (7)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (3)	Yes (7)

Although the government hired 10 new labor inspectors in 2017, the Ministry of Social Protection reported that it had insufficient inspectors to carry out labor inspections. Additional funding for the labor inspectorate is needed to adequately monitor Guyana's interior, where child labor is most prevalent. (7; 9) There are insufficient labor inspections conducted in gold mining areas, and there are sometimes delays in accessing the necessary resources for inspections in remote areas, including for transportation and accommodation. (4; 29; 7) The government has acknowledged challenges in monitoring and enforcing the provisions established in Articles 41 and 46 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act, which aim to protect children from work that may harm their physical health or emotional development. (32; 33)

### *Criminal Law Enforcement*

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in Guyana took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including human resource allocation.

**Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	N/A (31)	Yes (7)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A (7)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (3)	Yes (7)
Number of Investigations	2 (3)	7 (15)
Number of Violations Found	2 (3)	0 (7)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (3)	0 (7)
Number of Convictions	0 (3)	0 (7)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (3)	Yes (7)

The government has acknowledged that there is an insufficient number of staff members in the Ministry of Social Protection's Trafficking in Persons Unit. (34; 15) In general, the government's capacity to carry out prosecutions is limited. With only 33 justices and magistrates, the courts have a backlog of cases and more than a 2-year waiting period on all legal matters. (4; 5; 6)

#### IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8). However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including efforts to address all forms of child labor.

**Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
Inter-Ministerial Taskforce on Combating Trafficking in Persons	Report on the nature and magnitude of human trafficking in Guyana, document the government's response, and carry out public education and prevention measures. (35) Combats, through the participation of member agencies, commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in illicit activities. (4) Chaired by the Minister of Public Security, comprises the Ministries of Amerindian Affairs, Natural Resources and Environment, Education, Legal Affairs, and Foreign Affairs. (4; 29) The taskforce convened monthly during 2017. (7)
National Tripartite Committee	Address national labor legislation and policy. Includes representatives from government agencies, labor unions, and employers, including the Ministry of Social Protection, the Consultative Association of Guyanese Industries, the Guyana Trades Union Congress, and the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Guyana. (4; 36; 37)
Commission on the Rights of the Child	Protect and promote children's rights in accordance with the UN CRC, which includes addressing the worst forms of child labor. (4)

Although the government has established the Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Combating Trafficking in Persons, research found no evidence of mechanisms to coordinate efforts to combat other worst forms of child labor. In addition, reports indicate that a lack of coordination efforts, regular meetings, and resources impede efforts to combat child labor. (38; 39)

#### V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including coverage of all worst forms of child labor.

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor‡**

Policy	Description
Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Combating Trafficking in Persons Action Plan	Seeks to prevent and raise awareness about human trafficking, provide direct assistance to victims, improve law enforcement's capacity to identify and respond to human trafficking, and strengthen interagency coordination and referral mechanisms. (3; 40; 41) In 2017, provided training on human trafficking to business and civil society representatives. (15)

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (6; 42)

The government does not have a comprehensive written strategy for combating and responding to child labor and has not included child labor elimination and prevention strategies in other policies, such as the 5-Year Strategic Plan on the Rights of the Child (2012–2017) or the National Education Policy. (3; 7; 33; 42; 6)

#### VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2017, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including adequacy to address the problem in all sectors.

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Guyana Decent Work Country Program (2017 to 2021)*†	Aims to improve working conditions and increase respect for international labor standards, social protection, economic opportunities, and social dialogue. Includes plans to conduct research and raise awareness on child labor, develop a national child labor policy, and establish coordination mechanisms to prevent and respond to child labor and forced labor. (43)
Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor in the Americas Project	Government of Brazil-funded regional cooperation project to address child labor. In 2017, the Government of Guyana published the ILO's Rapid Assessment of Child Labor in Guyana and indicated the report will inform their development of a national child labor policy. (9)
Child Labor Hotline*†	Ministry of Social Protection hotline established during the reporting period for the public to report cases of child labor. (7; 15)
Human Trafficking Hotline†	Government hotline to assist human trafficking victims. (12)

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)**

Program	Description
Shelter for Domestic Violence Victims†	Government-funded, NGO-run shelter that houses victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. Provides services, including psychological counseling and practical skills training. (5) Accommodates teenage girls under age 16 who are placed at the shelter at the request of the government's Childcare and Protection Agency. (29) Receives \$50,000 annually from the government. (44)
School Meals and Uniforms†	Provides hot meals to 16,000 students at schools in the interior and transportation for students in several remote areas. All students in government-run schools, from nursery to secondary school, receive vouchers to purchase school uniforms, shoes, and backpacks. (4; 6; 45)
6Bs Program†	Provides boots, boats, buses, bicycles, books, and breakfast to school children to improve access to education. (7; 18)
Child Advocacy Center	Ministry of Social Protection and NGO partnership to provide services for abused children. The Ministry of Social Protection's Childcare and Protection Agency oversees the center and makes referrals; funded by private sector donations. (40; 46)
Board of Industrial Training†	Attempts to deter early school dropouts by providing job skills to at-risk youth between ages 15 and 17 who may not be able to complete their formal education. (4)

\* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Guyana.

The scope of government programs targeting the worst forms of child labor is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem. (44; 7)

## VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Guyana (Table 11).

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law fully protects all children under age 18 from engaging in hazardous work, including night work.	2010 – 2017
	Ensure that the law sufficiently prohibits all commercial sexual exploitation of children by prohibiting the use, procuring, and offering of a child for pornographic performances.	2010 – 2017
	Ensure that the law sufficiently prohibits the use of children for illicit activities by prohibiting the use, procuring, or offering of a child for the production or trafficking of drugs.	2016 – 2017
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2017
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors trained and responsible for providing enforcement of child labor laws to have sufficient inspectors to carry out labor inspections.	2015 – 2017
	Publish information on the Labor Inspectorate's funding.	2015 – 2017
	Authorize the Labor Inspectorate to assess penalties.	2016 – 2017
	Ensure the Labor Inspectorate receives sufficient funding to monitor the interior, where child labor is most prevalent, and that resources are allocated in a timely manner to facilitate targeted labor inspections, particularly in remote areas and in gold mining areas.	2011 – 2017
	Ensure the appropriate application of Articles 41 and 46 of the Occupational Safety and Health Act to ensure that children are not engaged in work that may harm their physical health or emotional development.	2015 – 2017
	Dedicate more resources, including judicial personnel, to investigate and prosecute court cases related to the worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2017
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat child labor, including all its worst forms, and ensure that these bodies engage in regular meetings and coordination efforts.	2014 – 2017
Government Policies	Establish a comprehensive strategy for combating child labor.	2014 – 2017
	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the 5-Year Strategic Plan on the Rights of the Child (2012–2017) and the National Education Policy.	2010 – 2017



**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont)**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Social Programs	Ensure that children are not prevented from attending school because of transportation costs.	2014 – 2017
	Increase the number of trained and qualified teachers, particularly in rural and interior areas.	2015 – 2017
	Develop new initiatives and expand existing programs to reach all children involved in the worst forms of child labor, including Amerindian children and children living in the interior; in particular, increase funding to identify and assist victims of human trafficking.	2010 – 2017

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