

In 2016, Dominica made a minimal advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. The Government continued efforts to develop a list of hazardous occupations for children and harmonize legislation on the legal age for employment. Although research is limited, there is evidence that children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation in Dominica. The Government's ability to prevent children from becoming engaged in exploitative work is limited due to exceptions to the minimum age for hazardous work. The country also lacks prohibitions against the use of children in prostitution, pornography, or pornographic performances or the use of children in illicit activities, including producing and trafficking of drugs.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Limited evidence suggests girls under age 16 engage in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation in Dominica, with remuneration including rides, clothing, or cell phones. However, no current research on the child labor situation in Dominica is available.(1, 2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Dominica. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		111.1




Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2015, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016.(3)

Source for all other data: Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2016.(4)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Dominica has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 2).

Table 2. 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 3). However, gaps exist in Dominica's legal framework to adequately protect children from child labor.

Table 3. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	16	Articles 2 and 46 of the Education Act 1997 (5)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No	18	Articles 2, 4, 5, and 7 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act (6)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Articles 2, 4, 5, and 7 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act (6)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 4 of the Constitution; Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act (7, 8)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act (8)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Sections 2, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act; Article 18 of the Sexual Offenses Act (8, 9)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	N/A†		
State Voluntary	N/A†		
Non-state Compulsory	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 2 of the Education Act 1997 (5)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 15 of the Education Act 1997 (5)

† No standing military (10)

Article 46 of the Education Act prohibits the employment of children ages 5 to 16 during the school year, but allows students ages 14 and older to work during school vacations or in school-sponsored employment training programs without defining the conditions, specific activities, or number of hours permissible for light work.(5) In addition, the Apprentices Act permits children as young as age 10 to serve as apprentices, and includes conditions in which such children may be compelled to serve as apprentices.(11)

Article 7 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act prohibits children under age 18 from working at night, unless they are working with members of their family, but includes exceptions for children over age 16 to perform night work in certain industries or in case of emergencies without including provisions to ensure that they receive proper training or that their health, safety, and morals will be protected.(6) During the reporting period, the Government continued efforts to develop a list of hazardous occupations for children and harmonize legislation on the legal age for employment.(1) The Government has yet to enact laws or regulations explicitly prohibiting the use of children in prostitution, pornography, pornographic performances, or illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs.(12)

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 4). However, gaps in labor law and criminal law enforcement remain and some enforcement information is not available.

Table 4. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of National Security, Labor, and Immigration (MNSLI)	Conduct inspections and enforce laws related to child labor. Authorized to conduct unannounced inspections at any location with employees and take legal action against employers violating child labor laws.(13-15) Report children found in exploitative labor situations to police and social services.(13-15)

Table 4. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (cont)

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Health (MOH)	Conduct inspections and enforce laws related to child labor. Report children found in exploitative labor situations to police and social services.(13, 14)
Police Force	Enforce criminal laws, including those related to child labor.(14)
Social Welfare Division, Ministry of Social Services, Family, and Gender Affairs	Provide social services, including education, housing, counseling, and financial aid in child labor cases.(13, 15, 16)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2016, labor law enforcement agencies in Dominica took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

Table 5. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (15)	Unknown (1)
Number of Labor Inspectors	5 (15)	4 (1)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (1)	No (1)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	No (17)	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	No (17)	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown	480 (1)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	480 (1)
Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	0 (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (15)	0 (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A	N/A
Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	N/A	N/A
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (17)	Yes (1)
Routine Inspections Targeted	No (15)	No (1)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (15)	Yes (1)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (17)	Yes (1)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (15, 18)	Yes (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (15)	Yes (1)

In addition to the 4 labor inspectors employed by the Ministry of National Security, Labor, and Immigration (MNSLI), the Ministry of Health (MOH) employs 17 health and safety inspectors and 12 fire inspectors who also inspect for labor violations.(15) Government officials report that while the number of labor inspectors is sufficient to inspect labor violations, too few technical officers are available to effectively enforce labor laws.(15)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2016, criminal law enforcement agencies in Dominica did not take actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 6).

Table 6. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	No (13, 15)	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	No (15)	Unknown

Table 6. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor (cont)

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Number of Investigations	0 (15)	0 (1)
Number of Violations Found	0 (15)	0 (1)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (15)	0 (1)
Number of Convictions	0 (15)	0 (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (15)	Yes (1)

The Police Force budget is insufficient and police lack transportation and equipment needed to effectively enforce criminal laws.(1)

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

Research found no evidence that the Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that the Government has established policies to address child labor, including its worst forms.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2016, the Government funded and participated in programs that may contribute to the prevention or elimination of child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Basic Needs Trust Fund	Caribbean Development Bank-implemented program to reduce poverty through livelihood services, improved infrastructure, capacity-building projects, and technical services.(18, 19)
Education Trust Fund†	Ministry of Education (MOE) program that provides financial assistance for textbooks, transportation, and registration and exam fees to students in secondary school who would otherwise be unable to complete their education.(14, 20)
School Textbook Provision Scheme†	MOE program that subsidizes the cost of textbooks for primary and secondary school students.(14, 21)
School Feeding Program†	MOE program that provides lunch to primary school students in targeted areas.(14, 22)
CHANCES†	Ministry of Social Services, Family, and Gender Affairs program that supports an emergency residential shelter to provide short-term services to abused and neglected children. May accept victims of the worst forms of child labor.(13, 15, 17, 23)
Break the Silence Awareness Program†	Ministry of Social Services, Family, and Gender Affairs program that raises awareness and encourages reporting of child abuse cases.(15) Managed by the Child Abuse Prevention Unit in the Social Welfare Division.(23)

† Program is funded by the Government of Dominica.

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

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the continued prevention of child labor, including its worst forms, in Dominica (Table 8).

Table 8. Suggested Government Actions to Prevent Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Define the conditions, activities, and number of hours permissible for light work.	2014 – 2016
	Ensure that the minimum age for night work is 18 for all children or that children receive adequate training and that the health, safety, and morals of children are protected.	2015 – 2016
	Enact legislation to expressly prohibit child prostitution and the using, procuring, or offering of a child for the production of pornography or pornographic performances.	2011 – 2016

Table 8. Suggested Government Actions to Prevent Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs.	2014 – 2016
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016
Enforcement	Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties.	2016
	Make information for the MNSLI and the MOH regarding the annual funding levels publicly available.	2014 – 2016
	Employ a sufficient number of technical officers to provide adequate labor law enforcement.	2015 – 2016
	Ensure that labor inspectors and criminal investigators receive training on the worst forms of child labor.	2015 – 2016
	Ensure the police have sufficient funding to enforce criminal laws.	2016
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation.	2016
Government Policies	Adopt policies to address the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation.	2016
Social Programs	Conduct research to determine whether any other forms of child labor exist in Dominica.	2014 – 2016

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