

In 2014, Uganda made a significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government passed a law that prohibits child pornography and appointed 10 members to the Industrial Court. It also launched a national child helpline to report cases of child exploitation to district officials and conducted a child labor prevalence study. In addition, the National Council on Children established an inter-ministerial task force to coordinate resource allocation and programming on child labor across ministries. However, children in Uganda are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture and in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Gaps in the legal framework persist, such as between compulsory education and minimum working ages, and enforcement information is not made publicly available.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Uganda are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture. Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. (1-19) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Uganda.

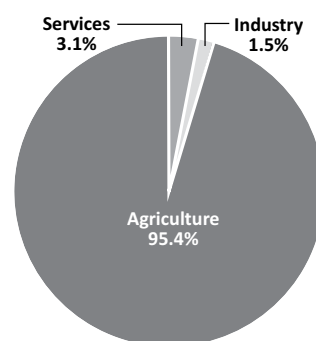
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	30.9 (3,034,126)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	88.7
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	34.4
Primary Completion Rate (%)		53.1

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2011, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015. (20)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Labor Force Survey, 2010. (21)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



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	Picking coffee and tea† (3, 7-11)
	Growing cocoa* and tobacco† (1, 9, 10, 12)
	Growing rice† and acting as scarecrows on rice fields* (3, 9-11, 13)
	Production of vanilla and palm oil* (3, 12)
	Cutting, collecting, and carrying sugarcane† (10, 14-16)
	Herding cattle† (3, 9, 10)
	Fishing,† including catching, smoking,† and selling fish; loading boats† with equipment and offloading fish; using spears and diving under water to catch fish; and scaling, cleaning, and cutting fish (2, 6, 7, 9, 10)
Industry	Producing and carrying charcoal (3, 10)
	Making bricks† (3, 4, 9, 12, 22)
	Collecting firewood for sale* (23)
	Collecting scrap metal* (23)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Industry	Mining*† and stone quarrying*† (3, 6, 9, 24)
	Domestic work (3, 5, 6, 9, 25, 26)
Services	Street vending† and working as porters*† (3, 12, 17)
	Cross-border trading, including carrying heavy loads† to and from Ugandan border points (27)
	Working in restaurants and bars† (9, 10, 17)
	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4, 17-19)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Work in agriculture, fishing, bars, begging, cattle herding, and domestic service each as a result of human trafficking (18, 19)
	Forced labor in brick making,* mining,* and stone quarrying* (4)
	Used in the production of pornography* (10)
	Used in illicit activities, including smuggling* (3, 23)

* 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.




Children are trafficked internally for sexual exploitation and forced labor in fishing, agriculture, and domestic service.(4) Children from the Karamoja region are trafficked to towns in Eastern Uganda for agriculture and domestic service, or to Kampala where they engage in begging.(28) In some cases, Ugandan children have been trafficked to East African countries for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor.(4) Children from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and South Sudan are also trafficked to Uganda for commercial sexual exploitation and agricultural work.(4)

Section 10(3)(a) of the Education (Pre-Primary, Primary, and Post-Primary) Act, 2008 calls for free primary education through age 12, but fees for school supplies and operating costs are often prohibitive for families.(6, 10, 29)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Uganda has ratified most 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	

Uganda has not ratified the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

Uganda has ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention).(30) The Convention prohibits armed groups from recruiting children or from allowing them to participate in conflict in any manner.(31)

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	14	Section 32(2) of The Employment Act, 2006; Regulation 3 of The Employment (Employment of Children) Regulations, 2012 (32, 33)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Section 32(4) of The Employment Act, 2006; Regulation 5 of The Employment (Employment of Children) Regulations, 2012 (32, 33)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Regulation 6 and the First Schedule of The Employment (Employment of Children) Regulations, 2012 (33)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 25 of the Constitution (34)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Sections 3 and 5 of The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2009 (35)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Sections 131, 136–137 and 139 of the Penal Code; Regulation 5 of The Employment (Employment of Children) Regulations, 2012; Section 14 of The Anti-Pornography Act, 2014 (33, 36, 37)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Regulation 5 of The Employment (Employment of Children) Regulations, 2012 (33)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	13	Section 10(3)(a) of The Education (Pre-Primary, Primary, and Post-Primary) Act, 2008 (29)
Free Public Education	Yes		Section 10(3)(a) of The Education (Pre-Primary, Primary, and Post-Primary) Act, 2008 (29)

* No conscription (38)

Regulation 5 of Uganda's Employment (Employment of Children) Regulations prohibits the use, procurement, or offering of any child for commercial sexual exploitation.(33) Despite this Regulation, Section 131 of the Penal Code only criminalizes those who procure or attempt to procure a girl for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. The Penal Code does not protect boys from being procured for the same purpose.(36, 39) The Penal Code penalizes intermediaries, but it is not clear whether it penalizes clients. It also does not protect children who are procured or offered for commercial sexual exploitation from being treated as offenders rather than victims.(36, 39)

During the reporting period, Uganda passed the Anti-Pornography Act, which fully prohibits child pornography.(37)

Section 10(3)(a) of the Education (Pre-Primary, Primary, and Post-Primary) Act calls for compulsory primary education to age 13, but the law leaves children ages 13 to 14 particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, as children are not required to be in school nor are they legally permitted to work in areas other than light work.(10, 29)

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
Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (MGLSD)	Enforce labor laws.(3, 7, 40) District labor officers conduct labor inspections, including occupational safety and health inspections, throughout the country.(40–42) The Child Labor Unit develops policies and programs on child labor, serves as a resource for MGLSD's non-specialized labor inspectors and occupational health and safety inspectors, and works with partners to implement awareness raising campaigns.(7, 42)

TABLE 5. AGENCIES RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD LABOR LAW ENFORCEMENT (cont)

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA)	Enforce criminal laws against forced labor, trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children for illicit activities. Lead investigations related to trafficking in persons.(7) Within MIA, Uganda Police Force's (UPF) Special Investigations Unit manages trafficking cases while the Sexual Offenses Department manages cases of commercial sexual exploitation. The Child and Family Protection Unit (CFPU) processes child abuse cases, including child labor.(42) CFPU liaison officers handle child labor complaints and overall child protection issues at police posts that do not have a CFPU officer.(7) MIA's Immigration Department assists in identifying potential trafficking victims.(43)
Ministry of Local Government	Oversee district labor officers and deploy community development officers (CDOs) at the district level. CDOs serve as labor officers when a district labor officer is not available.(23)
Ministry of Justice and Directorate for Public Prosecutions	Prosecute human trafficking cases.(44)
Industrial Court*	Handle labor disputes. Labor officers have the authority to bring cases before the court.(23) In 2014, 10 members were sworn in to the court.(23)

* Agency responsible for child labor enforcement was created during the reporting period.

Law enforcement agencies in Uganda took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Labor Law Enforcement

Uganda's centralized labor inspection system was taken apart in the mid-1990s, following the decentralization of the country. The Local Governments Act, No. 1 of 1997 transferred labor issues from the central government to the districts.(41) The labor inspection function in the country has subsequently deteriorated.(41) Each of the 112 districts in the country is supposed to have a district labor officer responsible for addressing all labor issues, including child labor. There are conflicting estimates of the total number of district labor officers; however, the highest estimate is 49 officers countrywide.(23, 42) Training, funding, and logistical support for district labor officers is inadequate; some officers are responsible for additional non-labor duties.(3, 23, 42, 45)

Comprehensive information on labor inspections is not available, but the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (MGLSD) reported having inspected more than 300 workplaces, largely in the agriculture sector. This level of inspection is inadequate according to the Government, and lack of funding prohibits a sufficient number of inspections.(23) Labor inspections are generally conducted based on complaints or in a certain geographic area, with random workplaces chosen. Notice is not usually given to employers in advance, and labor officers have the ability to close workplaces or processes that pose an imminent danger to workers.(45) During the reporting period, MGLSD worked with UNICEF to launch a national child helpline for reporting cases of child exploitation to district officials.(23, 46) Initial reports from the helpline indicate that approximately 100 to 150 calls related to child labor are received monthly. The helpline is only active in three districts, Kampala, Rakai, and Mukono.(23)

Comprehensive information is unavailable on the number of child labor law violations observed and the number of penalties issued.(23)

A source indicates that Uganda is developing a more comprehensive inspection program that involves all relevant public sector agencies.(47)

Criminal Law Enforcement

The Uganda Police Force's (UPF) Child and Family Protection Unit (CFPU) has approximately 500 officers throughout the country who handle child abuse, including child labor complaints.(42)

During the reporting period, the Anti-Human Trafficking National Taskforce trained more than 100 police officers on trafficking prevention and how to identify potential trafficking victims. In addition, more than 200 police officers were trained on victim management and investigation of cases.(28) Twenty magistrates were trained on implementing the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act.(28) However, this training has yet to be integrated into the general police training curriculum.(43) Training on other worst forms of child labor appears to be insufficient.(42)

During the reporting period, information was not available on the exact number of criminal law complaints related to child labor or on the number or the quality of the investigations, including on the presence of referral mechanisms to social services. The CFPU lacks sufficient resources to fully carry out its mandate of investigating child labor complaints, but it was able to record 143 cases of child labor.(23, 42)

The Government registered 88 male and 51 female child victims of trafficking. It investigated all 139 child trafficking cases and 4 people were convicted of human trafficking in 2014.(28) In February, the Uganda People's Defense Force assisted two children returning from the Lord's Resistance Army's captivity. The children were given medical assistance and then passed on to the army's child protection unit which works with NGOs to resettle the children.(43)

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 6).

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committee on the Elimination of Child Labor	Coordinate child labor issues and implementation of the National Action Plan (NAP) on Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2012/2013–2016/2017). Led by the MGLSD, with representation from several ministries, trade unions, development agencies, civil society, and media houses.(10)
Stop Child Labor Partners Forum	Coordinate, monitor, and evaluate child labor-related programs and policies in Uganda. Led by the National Council for Children (NCC), with representatives from several ministries, CFPU, and civil society groups.(10)
Coordination Office to Combat Trafficking in Persons (COCTIP)	Coordinate, monitor, and oversee implementation of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act of 2009. Began implementing activities during the reporting period, including coordinating awareness raising and training initiatives.(23)
Anti-Human Trafficking National Taskforce	Coordinate anti-trafficking efforts among government ministries, draft policy, implement public information campaigns, and establish a database for trafficking cases. Led by MIA, with 30-member representation from several ministries and government directorates, UPF, Interpol, and other security organizations.(10, 28)
National Child Protection Working Group	Address child protection issues. Led by MGLSD, with participation from various ministries and civil society.(10)
NCC Inter-Ministerial Coordination Mechanism*	Ensure effective allocation of resources and programming on child labor issues across multiple agencies. Members include MGLSD; Office of the Prime Minister; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Defense; Justice, Law, and Order Sector; MIA; Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES); and Ministry of Water and Sanitation. Headed by NCC and meets quarterly.(23)

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

In 2014, all of Uganda's coordinating mechanisms for child labor met regularly.(23, 28, 48)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Uganda has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2012/2013–2016/2017)	Aims to reduce the worst forms of child labor in Uganda by 2017, by increasing enrollment and completion of primary education; increasing households' access to social protection and assistance; increasing public awareness; strengthening the legal and policy framework; withdrawing, rehabilitating, and integrating working children; and enhancing tripartite collaboration among the Government, employers, and labor unions.(13)
National Awareness Strategy on Trafficking	Focuses on the prevention of human trafficking. Developed as a result of a training conducted by IOM and the National Coordinator of the Anti-Human Trafficking National Taskforce for government officials from intelligence agencies and the Justice, Law, and Order Sector.(43)

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Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
National Development Plan (2010/2011–2014/2015)	Outlines Uganda's development priorities and implementation strategies. Includes an objective to promote and empower artisanal and small-scale miners, in part by training mining communities on child labor issues and enhancing monitoring of child labor in the mining industry.(49) Addresses increasing household incomes, and the availability and quality of gainful employment and access to social services.(49)
Education Sector Strategic Plan (2004–2015)*	Supports expansion of the basic education system to include complementary programs for disadvantaged children and youth.(50)
Skilling Uganda Strategic Plan (2011–2020)*	Provides a strategic plan for business, technical, and vocational education and training. Seeks to provide vocational training to youth who drop out of school.(51)
UNDAF Uganda (2010-2014)*	Aims to improve the situation of vulnerable populations through sustainable livelihoods and access to quality social services.(52)
National Strategic Program Plan of Interventions for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (2011/2012–2015/2016)	Aims to monitor and protect children from child labor.(53)
Strategic Plan for the Implementation of the Amnesty Act of 2000 (2013–2015)	Continues activities to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate former LRA rebels, including child soldiers. Implemented by the Uganda Amnesty Commission along with other government agencies.(28)

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

The National Anti-Trafficking Taskforce has drafted a national action plan to combat trafficking, which is in the final stages of review. The plan aims to prevent trafficking, increase prosecutions, and improve coordination and services.(23, 54)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of Uganda funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms. The Government has other programs that may have an impact on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Skilling Uganda Program*	MOES program providing vocational training to youth who drop out of school. During the reporting period, the World Bank contributed \$75 million, OPEC contributed \$25.5 million, and Saudi Arabia contributed \$13.5 million.(10, 51) Government will improve 26 vocational schools with these funds.(10)
Uganda Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (2011–2015)*‡	MGLSD program providing direct income support of approximately \$8 per month to poor and vulnerable households in 15 districts located in Central, Northern, and Western Uganda. Supported by donors at approximately \$49 million.(10) Government funded approximately \$2.4 million in office space, equipment, and staff; also released \$800,000 in funding for the program.(54) In 2014, the program expanded to Yumbe District and the number of beneficiaries increased to 113,000.(23)
Coordinated Response to Human Trafficking in Uganda	IOM project providing support to children trafficked from the Karamoja region for exploitive street work in urban areas of Uganda; builds capacity of services providers in Karamoja and elsewhere in Uganda. (55) Together with the Government, launched a Web site to raise awareness of human trafficking issues in Uganda and provide information on laws and government activities; Web site helps link trafficking victims to appropriate contacts.(43, 55)
Uganda Youth Development Link	Protects children from sexual exploitation, trafficking, and labor; provides rehabilitation and livelihood skills training to victims. Provides services through five drop-in centers and outreach posts in a Kampala slum; one drop-in center in Kitega, Mukono District; and one rehabilitation transit center at Masooli in Wakiso District.(56)
Child Labor Study†	MGLSD study to map areas with high prevalence of child labor. The main sectors covered include agriculture, mining, stone quarrying, and the service industry.(23, 48)
Uganda Women's Effort to Save Orphans	NGO-implemented initiative that provides shelter and counseling to trafficking victims under age 18.(43)
Combating Child Labor through Education (2010–2015)‡	MOES 3-hour after-school education program in areas where children are unable to attend school for a full day. Collaborates with MGLSD and received support from ILO and the Dutch Government.(10) Schools receive some funding from district budgets.(10)

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)

Program	Description
Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues Project (2011–2016)	USDOL-funded project implemented by the ILO in approximately 40 countries to support the priorities of the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor by 2016 established by the Hague Global Child Labor Conference in 2010. Aims to improve the evidence base on child labor through data collection and research in Uganda.(57) In April 2014, a report on child labor and youth employment was presented at a national workshop in Kampala.(58)
Country-Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce (CLEAR) Child Labor Project (2013–2017)	USDOL-funded capacity building project implemented by the ILO in at least 10 countries to build local and national capacity of the Government to address child labor. Aims to improve legislation addressing child labor issues, including by bringing local or national laws into compliance with international standards; improve monitoring and enforcement of laws and policies related to child labor; and develop, validate, adopt, and implement a NAP on the elimination of child labor in Uganda.(59)
African Youth Empowerment and Development Initiative (2013–2017)	A \$3 million USDOL-funded, 4-year project implemented by World Education, Inc. to address exploitative labor among youth under the age of 18. The project will provide training to youth to help them develop marketable skills and serve as civic leaders in their communities.(60)
Decent Work Country Program (2013–2017)	ILO-implemented program that outlines strategies for promoting decent work in Uganda. Priorities include youth employment and improved social protection for both formal and informal workers; also includes a focus on prevention and elimination of the worst forms of child labor.(61)
Youth Venture Fund*‡	Government program aiming to reduce youth unemployment.(43)

* The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

† Program was launched during the reporting period.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Uganda.

In 2014, the Government continued to carry out a number of activities to raise awareness of human trafficking in Uganda. The Government's anti-trafficking budget is small, and the country depends on agency and donor contributions for its activities.(28)

Although Uganda has programs that address 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 Uganda (Table 9).

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.	2013 – 2014
	Ensure that the Penal Code protects boys from being procured for commercial sexual exploitation, all clients are penalized, and children who are procured or offered for prostitution are protected from being treated as offenders.	2009 – 2014
	Ensure that the law requires free, compulsory education to age 15 so that it is commensurate with the minimum age for work.	2009 – 2014
Enforcement	Ensure adequate funding, training, and logistical support for law enforcement agencies.	2013 – 2014
	Collect and publish comprehensive data on labor inspections—including the type, quality, frequency, location, complaints, and referrals—and on child labor violations and penalties.	2013 – 2014
	Provide sufficient training to criminal law enforcement officials on identifying the worst forms of child labor, including integrating the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act into the police officer training curriculum.	2013 – 2014
	Collect and publish information on the number of criminal law complaints received related to child labor and the number and quality of criminal investigations, including referral mechanisms to social services.	2014
	Ensure that criminal law enforcement entities are adequately funded to investigate child labor reports.	2014

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Education Sector Strategic Plan, Skilling Uganda Strategic Plan, and the UNDAF Uganda.	2014
	Finalize and adopt the National Action Plan to combat human trafficking.	2013 – 2014
Social Programs	Take steps to ensure that all children are able to attend school regardless of their ability to pay school fees and other related costs.	2012 – 2014
	Assess the impact that existing social programs may have on addressing child labor.	2013 – 2014
	Increase funding and services for trafficking victims.	2013 – 2014
	Expand existing social programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, particularly in agriculture and commercial sexual exploitation.	2009 – 2014

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