

In 2018, Dominica made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government made public its number of labor inspectors, demonstrating that the country meets the ILO's benchmark for the ratio of labor inspectors to the size of its workforce. Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Dominica engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Dominica's legal framework does not protect children from exploitative work outside of the school year, and the government has not determined the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. The country also lacks prohibitions against the use of children in prostitution, pornography, or pornographic performances, and the use of children in illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Dominica engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. (1) Table I 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 I. 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 (%)		117.9

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2016, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019. (2)
Data were unavailable from International Labor Organization's analysis, 2019. (3)

No current survey data on the child labor situation in Dominica is available. (1) However, limited evidence suggests that girls under age 16 are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation in exchange for clothing, phones, or other items. The Dominica Council of NGOs reported that instances of commercial sexual exploitation of children have been on the rise as a result of trauma and physical displacement since Hurricane Maria devastated the island in September 2017. (1)

The Dominica Council of NGOs also reported rising physical and sexual violence in schools which may affect access to education. (1) Some children experienced long interruptions to their education due to destruction from the hurricane and the lack of government funds to rebuild schools. Many children left Dominica to attend school in other Eastern Caribbean states. (3-5) Children from the Kalinago community face barriers to secondary education that could make them more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Because there is no secondary school in the Kalinago territory, students encounter transportation and social integration challenges as they travel outside of the territory to attend school. (1)




II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

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

Dominica

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

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 (Table 3). However, gaps exist in Dominica's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the minimum age for work.

Table 3. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Articles 2 and 46 of the Education Act 1997 (6)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No		
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		
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 Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†		
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 2 of the Education Act 1997 (6)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 15 of the Education Act 1997 (6)

† No standing military

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. (6) Section 7(1) of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act prohibits children under age 18 from working at night, unless they are working with family members. The law does not otherwise prohibit the employment of children in work that is likely to jeopardize their health, safety, or morals. (10) Dominica does not have national laws or regulations that define the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. (11) The government has not enacted 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 CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Justice, Immigration and National Security that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 4. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Labor Division, Ministry of Justice, Immigration and National Security	Conducts inspections and enforces laws related to child labor. Authorized to conduct unannounced inspections at any location with employees and to take legal action against employers violating child labor laws. (12,13) Reports cases in which children are found in exploitative labor situations to police and social services. (12,13)
Ministry of Health and Social Services	Conducts inspections and enforces laws related to child labor. Reports cases in which children are found in exploitative labor situations to police. (13) Provides social services, including education, housing, counseling, and financial aid, in child labor cases. (12,13)
Police Force	Enforces criminal laws, including those related to child labor. (1)
Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs, Family, and Gender Affairs	Responsible for social welfare for vulnerable groups such as abused and neglected children. Implements the “Chances” emergency shelter program for children and young adults, and the Basic Needs Trust Fund, which seeks to improve access to basic public services, enhance employability, and reduce social vulnerability in poor communities. (1)

Labor Law Enforcement

Research did not find information on whether labor law enforcement agencies in Dominica took actions to combat child labor (Table 5). Gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Justice, Immigration and National Security that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including penalty assessment authorization.

Table 5. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown	4 (1)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (14)	No (1)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Unknown	No (1)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown	No (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	No (1)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Unknown (1)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (14)	Yes (1)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Yes (1)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (14)	Yes (1,15)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (14)	Yes (1)

Although the government has child labor law enforcement mechanisms in place, the lack of statistical data on child employment and inspections results makes it difficult to assess whether agencies are complying with international child labor conventions. (11) Limited research suggests the government may lack an overall strategy for carrying out labor inspections. Local NGOs indicate that authorities do not adequately target areas known for child commercial sexual exploitation, such as in the Silver Lake community outside of the capital city of Roseau. (1)

Dominica

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In addition to the labor inspectors under the Ministry of Justice, Immigration, and National Security, the Ministry of Health and Social Services employs health and safety inspectors and fire inspectors who also inspect for labor violations. (16) Government officials report that although the number of labor inspectors is sufficient to inspect labor violations, too few technical officers are available to enforce labor laws. (16)

Criminal Law Enforcement

Research did not find information on whether criminal law enforcement agencies in Dominica took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including financial resources.

Table 6. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Unknown	No (1)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	No (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	No (1)
Number of Investigations	Unknown	0 (1)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	0 (1)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	0 (1)
Number of Convictions	Unknown	0 (1)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	No (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	No (1)	No (1)

The Dominica Police Commissioner reported that there were no trainings on child labor in 2018. In addition, research indicates that the Police Force budget in general is insufficient, and police lack the transportation and equipment needed to enforce criminal laws. (1)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

Research revealed no evidence that the government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

Research revealed no evidence that the government has established policies to address child labor.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2018, the government funded and participated in programs that may contribute to preventing or eliminating child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including adequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 7. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Basic Needs Trust Fund	Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)-implemented program supervised by the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs, Family, and Gender Affairs that aims to reduce poverty through livelihood services, improved infrastructure, capacity-building projects, and technical services. (17-19) In 2018, the CDB agreed to keep resources available to Dominica and extend project timelines through 2020 in recognition of the difficulties the country faced implementing projects due to Tropical Storm Erika in 2015 and Hurricane Maria in 2017. (20)
Education Trust Fund†	Government-funded program implemented by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MOE) 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. (21,22) In 2018, the Chairman of the Board of Directors indicated the Fund would not seek contributions from the private sector given the impact from Hurricane Maria but instead would solicit an increase in government assistance for the fund. (23)

Table 7. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor (Cont.)

Program	Description
School Textbook Provision Scheme†	Government-funded program implemented by MOE that subsidizes the cost of textbooks for primary and secondary school students. (24) Research did not identify any implementing activities undertaken during the reporting period.
School Feeding Program†	Government-funded program implemented by MOE that provides lunch to primary school students in targeted areas. (25) Research did not identify any implementing activities undertaken during the reporting period.
CHANCES†	Government-funded program implemented by the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs, Family, and Gender Affairs that supports an emergency residential shelter to provide short-term services to abused and neglected children. The shelter can accept victims of the worst forms of child labor. (1,26,13,27-29) Research did not identify any implementing activities undertaken during the reporting period.
Break the Silence Awareness Program†	Government-funded program implemented by the Ministry of Health and Social Services program that raises awareness and encourages reporting of child abuse cases. (26) Managed by the Child Abuse Prevention Unit in the Social Welfare Division. (28) Research did not identify any implementing activities undertaken during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Dominica.

In May 2018, the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and UNICEF published a “National Child Protection Action Plan” to guide implementation of recommendations for Dominica’s child justice framework. Dominica has neither completed the recommendations nor adopted the action plan. (1)

While the government continued to fund social programs in 2018 that could address child labor, research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the programs during the reporting period. (1) Research found no evidence that the government has carried out programs specifically designed to assist children subjected to commercial sexual exploitation.

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 Dominica (Table 8).

Table 8. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Define the conditions, activities, and number of hours permissible for light work.	2014 – 2018
	Ensure that the minimum age for hazardous work is 18 for all children.	2015 – 2018
	Determine and codify the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, in consultation with employers’ and workers’ organizations.	2018
	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 – 2018
	Prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs.	2014 – 2018
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2018
Enforcement	Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties.	2016 – 2018
	Make labor and criminal law enforcement data publicly available, including data on child labor inspections, criminal investigations, and number of violations.	2014 – 2018
	Develop a national strategy for carrying out labor inspections, including a plan for targeted inspections in areas where child commercial sexual exploitation is known to occur.	2018
	Employ enough technical officers to provide sufficient labor law enforcement.	2015 – 2018
Enforcement	Ensure that labor inspectors and criminal investigators receive training on the worst forms of child labor.	2015 – 2018
	Ensure that the police have sufficient funding to enforce criminal laws.	2016 – 2018

Table 8. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation, including a reciprocal referral mechanism between criminal authorities and social services.	2016 – 2018
Government Policies	Adopt policies to address the worst forms of child labor, including for children involved in commercial sexual exploitation.	2016 – 2018
Social Programs	Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including members of the Kalinago community, by ensuring access to secondary education within the Kalinago territory.	2018
	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2014 – 2018
	Develop and implement existing social programs to address the full score of child labor issues in Dominica, including commercial child sexual exploitation, and implement the recommended actions from the National Child Protection Action Plan.	2017 – 2018
	Rebuild schools, address barriers to education such as school physical and sexual violence, and ensure that disaster relief efforts include measures to prevent children from engaging in child labor and the worst forms of child labor.	2017 – 2018

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