

In 2014, Rwanda made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government of Rwanda secured funding to continue the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission Child Rehabilitation Program, provided funding for districts to implement child protection programs, created District Steering Committees on Child Labor in all 30 districts, and adopted a national anti-trafficking plan of action. The Government also participates in and implements several additional programs to combat the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking. However, children in Rwanda are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture and in the worst forms of child labor, including in domestic service. Gaps exist in the Government's enforcement of laws on child labor, and social programs lack adequate safeguards to protect children engaged in domestic service.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Rwanda are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture. Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in domestic service.(1, 2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Rwanda.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	16.1 (482,180)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	79.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	17.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		57.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(3)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Demographic and Health Survey, 2010.(4)

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	Production of sugarcane,* bananas,* and tea (1, 5, 6)
	Planting and harvesting cabbage,* coffee,* manioc,* peas,* pineapple,* potatoes,* sweet potatoes,* corn,* beans,* sorghum,* pyrethrum,* and rice* (1, 6-9)
	Herding cattle* and caring for sheep,* goats,* and pigs* (9, 10)
	Producing charcoal* (11)
	Fishing,*† activities unknown (1)
Industry	Construction,*† activities unknown (12)
	Digging pit latrines* (13)
	Making bricks*† (11, 13, 14)
	Mining† coltan* (15, 16)
Services	Domestic service† (1, 17, 18)
	Collecting scrap metal† and vending (17, 19)

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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 (18, 20-23)
	Agricultural labor and domestic service as a result of human trafficking (18, 23, 24)

* 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 in the country for domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation, and are trafficked externally for agricultural labor.(18, 23)

Although education is free and compulsory, in practice, the costs of uniforms, school supplies, and unofficial school fees may preclude some families from sending their children to school.(17, 25-28)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Rwanda 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 4 of the Labor Law (29)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 4 of the Labor Law (29)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Articles 4–6 of Ministerial Order (2010-06); Kigali City Guidelines (2012-02); Mimuri sector child labor guidelines for sugar and rice production (30-32)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 8 and 72 of the Labor Law; Article 178 of the Organic Law Instituting the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (27, 29, 33)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 72 of the Labor Law; Article 28 of the Law on Prevention and Punishment of Gender-Based Violence; Articles 225, 251, 258–261 of the Organic Law Instituting the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (27, 29, 33, 34)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 72 of the Labor Law; Articles 190, 211, 260 Organic Law Instituting the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (27, 29, 33)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 72 of the Labor Law; Article 220 of the Organic Law Instituting the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (27, 29, 33)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		

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

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Presidential Order 155/01; Presidential Order 72/01; Article 50 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (27, 35)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 47 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (27)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 47 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child; Twelve Years Basic Education (12YBE) policy (27, 28)

*No conscription (18, 27, 35)

Rwandan law is not completely consistent with international standards regarding child labor. Children working in non-contractual employment do not have the same protections under child labor laws and regulations as children working in contractual employment.(29, 36, 37)

In addition to national-level regulations on child labor, the Kigali City Security Council also has guidelines on child labor.(31) These guidelines prohibit the employment of children in Kigali City as domestic servants, street beggars, porters, bar attendants, hairdressers, and dancers in clubs. It also prohibits using children to make pornographic productions, to sell drugs, and to replace their parents in paid employment.(31) In addition, the guidelines require local authorities to raise awareness of child labor and calls for a census at the local cell administrative level to estimate the prevalence of child domestic workers.(31)

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 Public Service and Labor (MIFOTRA)	Enforce labor laws, including laws on child labor.(8, 38-40)
Rwandan National Police (RNP)	Enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor and operate a free hotline to report incidents of gender-based violence and child abuse, including child labor.(8, 41, 42)
Child Protection Unit	Investigate cases of child abuse, including the use of children in commercial sexual exploitation. Located within the Commission for Criminal Investigations of the RNP.(8, 43, 44)
Directorate for Anti-Gender-Based Violence	Assist victims of the worst forms of child labor through anti-gender-based violence officers. Located within the RNP, at each of Rwanda's 78 police stations.(12)
Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration	Receive referrals for trafficking cases and employ an anti-trafficking specialist.(42) Verify that children transported across the border are traveling with the permission of their parents or guardians.(8, 45)

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

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2014, the Ministry of Public Service and Labor (MIFOTRA) employed 30 labor inspectors (1 per district) who work with the Rwandan National Police (RNP), under supervision of district authorities.(17, 38-40) At the national level, MIFOTRA employed two chief labor inspectors, who are supervised by the Directorate General in charge of labor.(12, 38) According to MIFOTRA, one labor inspector per district is not enough to conduct all of the necessary inspections.(46) The MIFOTRA reviews the performance of its labor inspectors every 6 months and provides them with training twice a year on identifying and investigating child labor violations.(12, 17) Labor inspectors hold quarterly district trainings on child labor issues for employers and local authorities.(12, 42) MIFOTRA provided labor inspectors with laptops and funds for Internet service. In addition, half of all labor inspectors received motorcycles and funds for fuel and maintenance.(12) Despite these improvements, MIFOTRA reports that many labor inspectors still lack transportation to carry out inspections.(42, 46) MIFOTRA also requires an annual report on activities from its labor inspectors and audits the disbursement of labor inspection funds to ensure that it matches appropriations.(12)

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Inspections may be conducted without prior notice, and labor inspectors may issue warnings, which require correction of the violating condition within 7 days. Otherwise, the labor inspector may ask the authorities to temporarily close the establishment under investigation.(38) Law No. 13/2009 permits labor inspectors to enter workplaces only during normal business hours, even though ILO C. 81, which Rwanda has ratified, notes that inspectors should be able to enter workplaces at all times.(47) Labor inspection reports do not contain information related to the worst forms of child labor.(48) Data regarding child labor inspections, citations, and penalties are not publicly available.(17, 46)

Labor law enforcement agencies at the district level have also been reported to take actions to combat child labor.(49) Performance contracts signed between the President and district authorities also include targets for reducing child labor and increasing school enrollment.(12)

Criminal Law Enforcement

The RNP operates an anti-trafficking unit within the force's Interpol directorate that is staffed with 15 full-time officers.(12, 17, 18, 50) However, RNP officials report that the unit has insufficient officers to address the problem.(8) In addition, evidence suggests that some RNP staff members are not sensitive to the needs of child trafficking victims, and that some children found engaged in commercial sexual exploitation and market vending were detained in transit centers for months.(12) Some officials also lack awareness and training about the laws on internal trafficking.(8, 50) With support from Interpol, the RNP operates an office at the Kigali International Airport to combat trafficking in persons and it plans to open 13 more offices at border crossings.(12, 51) During the reporting period, the RNP and the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) expanded training and outreach on trafficking in persons to encourage collaboration with investigators.(17)

The Government continued to operate a network of 15 “One-Stop” centers in hospitals and district capitals for victims of gender-based violence and trafficking, including those who have experienced child domestic servitude, commercial sexual exploitation, and forced labor. These centers provide medical exams, counseling, legal assistance, short-term shelter, and police assistance.(18) In 2014, the RNP referred some child domestic workers and children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation to “One-Stop” centers for police assistance, legal aid, shelter, medical exams, and counseling.(12, 17) Within villages, citizens can report instances of child labor to the RNP or to a local volunteer officer in charge of social affairs. If the officer cannot resolve the problem, it may be referred to the village leader, who in turn may contact the RNP.(42) Although the RNP operates a free hotline staffed by social workers to report incidences of gender-based violence and child abuse, including child labor, it is unknown how many of these complaints were related to child labor.(18, 41, 42)

From June 2013 to June 2014, the RNP arrested and referred 10 suspected human traffickers for prosecution, of which three were convicted under Articles 252 or 255 of the Penal Code and four were acquitted. Between June 2014 and February 2015, the RNP arrested 24 individuals suspected of being involved in human trafficking; of these, 6 were prosecuted, 4 convicted, and 2 acquitted.(18) Research did not find information about the punishments assigned in these cases, and it is unclear how many of these cases, if any, involved child trafficking crimes. The cases against 21 individuals remain pending judicial review or prosecution.(18)

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 Advisory Committee on Child Labor	Coordinate government efforts related to the worst forms of child labor, review child labor laws, advocate for the inclusion of child labor policies in national development plans, oversee the implementation of child labor interventions, and conduct field visits to assess the prevalence of child labor and to raise awareness of child labor. Meets quarterly and includes representatives from MIFOTRA; the Ministry of Youth; the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC); the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF); the Ministry of Local Government (MINILO); the Ministry of Sports and Culture; the RNP; the National Human Rights Commission; the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC); trade unions; the ILO; UNICEF; the Private Sector Federation; and Winrock International.(12, 46, 51)

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor (cont)

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Consultative Forum on Human Trafficking, Drug Abuse, and Gender-Based Violence	Enable national-level discussion of and coordination of efforts to address human trafficking. Chaired annually by the First Lady of Rwanda and comprises parliamentarians; representatives of MIGEPROF, the Ministry of Justice (MINIJUST), MINEDUC, and the RNP; NPPA prosecutors; NGOs; and faith-based and civil society leaders. Convened for the first time and adopted a national anti-trafficking action plan in October 2014; MIGEPROF was selected to coordinate implementation of the plan.(18)
National Commission for Children (NCC)	Monitor, promote, and advocate for children's rights; develop action plans to protect children from abuse and exploitation. Overseen by MIGEPROF and supported by a board of directors and an advisory council of 14 institutions.(12, 52-54)
Inter-Ministerial Committee on Child Rights	Coordinate and assess the progress of the Integrated Child Rights Policy (ICRP) and Strategic Plan in Rwanda. Mandated to meet at least once a year. Includes members from MIGEPROF; the Ministry of Health; MINEDUC; MINILOC; MINIJUST; and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.(8, 12, 35)
National Commission on Orphans and Vulnerable Children	Monitor and protect orphans and vulnerable children in Rwanda. Composed of the NCC, MIFOTRA, MIGEPROF, and UNICEF.(8, 45, 55)
Child Labor Committees	Monitor incidents of child labor nationwide, through 149 local committees.(12, 51) In the case of Gender-Based Violence Committees, operate at the district level. In the case of Child Protection Committees, identify and report cases of child rights violations at the district, sector, and cell levels.(56, 57)
Friends of the Family (<i>Incuti Z'Umuryango</i>) Committees	Support child welfare and protection, combat child labor, and counter trafficking in persons through the creation of the national-to-village level reporting and social assistance structure.(17, 18)
Kigali City Council Task Force	Coordinate activities to combat child labor in the districts of Gasabo, Kicukiro, and Nyarugenge.(15, 57, 58)

The National Commission for Children (NCC) employed 19 staff members and coordinated child protection activities on a daily basis.(12, 52, 54, 55) The NCC appointed 10 National Protection Officers and 48 social workers responsible for child labor issues during the reporting period. Additionally, 320 child labor focal point volunteers were appointed at the village level to support these staff members.(17) During the reporting period, the NCC sent psychologists and social workers to 3 of Rwanda's 30 districts to address child labor.(51) The NCC had a budget of \$2.4 million for 2014, which included \$1.5 million earmarked for districts to implement child protection programs.(51) In 2014, District Steering Committees on Child Labor were created in all 30 districts.(59)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Policy for the Elimination of Child Labor (2013) and 5-Year Action Plan to Combat Child Labor	Aims to prevent at-risk children from entering exploitative child labor; withdraws children engaged in exploitative labor through the provision of education; rehabilitates former child laborers through counseling, life skills training, and medical care; raises community awareness on child labor; and establishes monitoring and evaluation mechanisms on child labor. Government committed more than \$4.2 million to implement activities listed in the Policy and Plan.(8, 60-62)
Integrated Child Rights Policy and Strategic Plan (2011–2016)	Addresses all children's issues, including child labor. Guided by the principles that deem abuse, exploitation, and violence against children intolerable, and that the Government and caretakers are accountable for the well-being of children.(35, 63) In the case of the ICRP, prohibits child labor, and in the case of the Strategic Plan, provides \$9,000 to MIFOTRA to develop timebound programs to eliminate child labor.(35, 63)
National Policy Against Gender-Based Violence (2011–2016)	Acknowledges that orphans and vulnerable children, including child laborers, are at increased risk of gender-based violence and outlines measures to provide assistance to such groups. Implemented by the Gender-Based Violence Technical Working Committee under the MIGEPROF.(64, 65)
National Employment Policy (2007)	Includes a set of integrated strategies for employment promotion and generation. Provides for youth employment programs, which include child labor issues.(46, 66)
Vision 2020 (2000)*	Aims to transform agriculture into a productive, market-oriented, and high-value sector. Calls for the protection of children and provides educational opportunities to children who drop out of secondary school.(42, 67)
National Social Protection Strategy (2011)*	Defines social protection and outlines social development activities to assist poor households, such as providing vulnerable children with grants and free education.(68)

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
National Youth Policy (2005)	Seeks to address concerns facing youth, including economic exploitation and education.(42, 69)
12YBE Policy*	Provides free education for 12 years and aims to improve access to education by hiring new teachers and building schools.(28)
Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (2013–2018)	Describes the social policies and programs necessary to promote growth and reduce poverty. Supports access to education and seeks to eliminate child labor.(70)
National TVET Policy (2008)*	Aims to establish a well-trained and adaptable workforce and provides educational alternatives to children who have dropped out of school.(71)
Girls' Education Strategic Plan (2009–2013)	Aims to improve access and quality of girls' education to prevent girls from engaging in the worst forms of child labor.(72)
UNDAF Rwanda (2013–2018)	Enhances government efforts to protect children from exploitation.(73)
Trafficking in Persons Action Plan (2014)†	Aims to improve government efforts to combat human trafficking through awareness raising, research, poverty reduction strategies, improved service provision, enforcement, and collaboration. Developed by the Consultative Forum on Human Trafficking, Drug Abuse, and Gender-Based Violence.(18, 74)

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

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

It is unclear how the Integrated Child Rights Policy (ICRP) and its Strategic Plan are coordinated with the National Policy for the Elimination of Child Labor and the 5-Year Action Plan to Combat Child Labor. In addition, current budget allocations may not be sufficient for the full implementation of the ICRP.(64)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of Rwanda 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
Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) Child Rehabilitation Program and Center	RDRC-operated center in the Musanze District of the Northern Province for former child combatants returning from the Democratic Republic of the Congo that raises awareness of child soldier issues and provides a 3-month course to former child soldiers, which includes counseling, education, recreational activities, and vocational training.(11, 12, 35, 50) In 2014, the Government secured funding from the World Bank to continue the project.(75) The third stage of the RDRC program plans to help 3,300 child ex-combatants demobilize and reintegrate.(72)
Rwanda Education Alternatives for Children in Tea-Growing Areas (2013–2017)	USDOL-funded, \$5 million, 4-year project implemented by Winrock International targets 4,090 children engaged in or at risk of entering exploitative child labor in Rwanda with a focus on the tea sector, and 1,320 vulnerable households for sustainable livelihoods promotion. With support from MIFOTRA, aims to train labor inspectors on child labor issues and develop and eventually operate a mobile-phone child labor monitoring system.(76)
Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues (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 build the capacity of the Government and develop strategic policies to address the elimination of child labor in Rwanda.(77)
Child Labor Awareness Raising‡	MIFOTRA program to raise public awareness of the worst forms of child labor through radio shows, television announcements, and skits. Also implements awareness-raising campaigns to combat commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons.(12, 18)
Friends of the Family (<i>Incuti Z'Umuryango</i>) Program	Government social assistance and reporting program launched in November 2014 to support child welfare and counter child trafficking and child labor. Trains volunteers to provide social services to families and children, as well as connect at-risk families to government support programs, while reporting children at risk for trafficking or forced labor to district governments and the RNP. Intended to identify child domestic workers and those subjected to other forms of forced labor. Establishing monitoring committees at the village, cell, sector, district, and national levels.(18)
Counter-Trafficking Program in Rwanda	Government program, with support from the IOM, to raise awareness of human trafficking, train law enforcement officials and immigration officers to identify cases of human trafficking, and establish victim assistance and referral mechanisms.(78)

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

Program	Description
Positive Parenting to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Drug Abuse‡	MIGEPROF campaign launched in November 2014 that partners with churches and civil society organizations to teach parents and community leaders to recognize risk factors for human trafficking and to report identified victims.(18)
Eastern Africa Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization	Government program to combat human trafficking by collaborating with 11 East African countries to foster regional cooperation and build the capacity of East African law enforcement authorities.(79, 80)
Vision 2020 Umurenge Program*‡	Government cash and in-kind transfer program for child-headed households and street children.(8, 68, 81, 82)
Gitagata Center*‡	Government-operated center for former street children in the Bugesera District that provided education support, vocational training, and psychosocial counseling to street children, and when able to do so, reunites them with their families.(12, 83)
One Cup of Milk per Child Program*	EU-funded school feeding program that provides milk to children in nursery and primary schools.(55, 84, 85)

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

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Rwanda.

In 2012, MIGEPROF announced that it would begin phasing out Rwanda's orphanages and integrating children with families across the country. In 2013, MIGEPROF closed four orphanages.(8, 12, 86, 87) It is too early to determine the impact that the closing of childcare institutions will have on child labor. The Government aimed to place all children with families and transform existing orphanages into institutions to support children and families in 2014, but it was unable to meet this goal.(88)

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 Rwanda (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that relevant child labor laws and regulations apply equally to children working in non-contractual and contractual employment.	2009 – 2014
	Revise Law No. 13/2009 to allow labor inspectors to enter workplaces outside of normal business hours.	2012 – 2014
Enforcement	Ensure that MIFOTRA and RNP have sufficient human and financial resources to enforce child labor laws.	2009 – 2014
	Ensure that labor inspections meet international standards, including authority to conduct inspections outside of business hours.	2014
	Make information publicly available on inspections, violations, citations, and penalties related to child labor.	2009 – 2014
	Increase training among enforcement officials on internal child trafficking and the rights of trafficking victims and children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation.	2009 – 2014
	Disaggregate the number of complaints that relate to child labor to the RNP hotline.	2013 – 2014
	Ensure that MIGEPROF and RNP provide training to staff on government-approved procedures for screening children and referring them to services.	2012 – 2014
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into Vision 2020, the National Social Protection Strategy, 12YBE Policy, and National TVET Policy.	2011 – 2014
	Allocate funds for the ICRP to ensure its implementation.	2013 – 2014
Social Programs	Conduct research to determine the activities carried out by children working in construction and fishing to inform policies and programs.	2013 – 2014
	Ensure that school costs, such as uniforms, school supplies, and unofficial school fees do not diminish the impact of the 12-year education policy.	2010 – 2014
	Assess the impact that existing social programs may have on addressing child labor.	2009 – 2014

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