

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2018, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased the budget for the labor inspectorate and the number of labor inspectors. The government also trained criminal law enforcement personnel on child labor and human trafficking. Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Limited research also suggests that children perform dangerous tasks in begging. Gaps remain in the legal framework, as the minimum age for hazardous work falls below international standards and there is no law to prohibit the use of children in the production of drugs.

I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. (1-3) Limited research also suggests that children perform dangerous tasks in begging. (4-6) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. 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 (%)		90.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2017, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019. (7)
Data were unavailable from International Labor Organization's analysis, 2019. (8)

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	Activities unknown (1,2,9)
Services	Domestic work and begging (10-12)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor [‡]	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,13-15)

[‡] Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

Limited research and information received from various sources suggest that some children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation, including by their relatives, in exchange for money or goods. (3,9,16,17) Limited research also suggests that children engage in illicit activities in the cultivation of cannabis. (1,2)

All children in the country are able to access education. (2,18) However, inadequate public transportation for children in rural villages causes them to walk long distances to attend school, which may make attending school difficult. (2) Children out of school are vulnerable to engage in child labor.




II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

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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 Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the minimum age for hazardous work and prohibition of using children in illicit activities.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Article 8 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act (19)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No		Schedule, Part I, Articles 1–2 and 5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act (19)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		Part I, Sections 3–4, and Articles 1–2 and 5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act; Section VI(37) of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Occupational Safety and Health Act of 2017 (19,20)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Chapter XII, Part 207 of the Criminal Code (21)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Part II, Articles 5–8 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act(22)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Part II, Article 7 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (22)
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	Part I, Article 2 of the Education Act (18)
Free Public Education	Yes		Part III, Articles 14–16 of the Education Act (18)

* No conscription (23)

† No standing military (24)

The government has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited to children. In addition, the law does not prohibit use of children for prostitution, pornography, or pornographic performances. Furthermore, the use of children in the production and trafficking of drugs is not criminally prohibited. (22) The law also does not criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Because the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

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 Labor that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor	Enforces child labor laws through its Department of Labor; and refers victims to appropriate social services. (5,9)
Royal Police Force	Makes criminal arrests, including those involving the worst forms of child labor. Addresses human trafficking through the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit (ATIPU), refers victims to appropriate social services, and funds financial requests made by the ATIPU. (5,25)
Ministry of Social Development	Maintains the Child Protection Unit, which includes Child Protection Officers who report cases of child abuse. (11)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2018, labor law enforcement agencies in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including allocating resources.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$453,200 (26)	\$612,991 (2)
Number of Labor Inspectors	4 (9)	6 (2,27)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (9)	No (2)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	N/A (9)	N/A (2)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (9)	N/A (2)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (9)	No (28)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	21 (29)	33 (2)
Number Conducted at Worksite	21 (29)	33 (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (9)	0 (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A (9)	0 (2)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A (9)	0 (2)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (9)	Yes (2)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (9)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (9)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (9)	Yes (2)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (9)	Yes (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (9)	Yes (2)

The Ministry of Labor can inspect all sectors and is responsible for investigating labor violations. If the Ministry finds a criminal violation, it forwards the case to the Royal Police Force. (9)

During the reporting period, the Department of Labor reported that the number of inspectors and funding was sufficient. (2) However, a lack of appropriate resources, such as computers and training, hampered the labor inspectorate's enforcement of child labor laws. (2,6,25,27,29) According to sources, the number of inspections conducted was also insufficient because few businesses were inspected. (9,27,29)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2018, criminal law enforcement agencies in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 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 allocating resources.

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Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (9)	Yes (2)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (9)	N/A (2)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (9)	Yes (2)
Number of Investigations	0 (9)	0 (2)
Number of Violations Found	0 (9)	0 (2)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (9)	0 (2)
Number of Convictions	0 (9)	0 (2)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (9)	Yes (2)

In 2018, 41 new police recruits were trained on human trafficking and according to the police department, the police received sufficient training. (2,27) However, insufficient resources hampered the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit's capacity to combat human trafficking, especially in remote, mountainous areas and on both islands. (3)

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 adequate 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 & Description
National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons	Develops a national plan to address human trafficking, coordinates the collection of data among government agencies, establishes policies to enable government agencies to work with NGOs to prevent human trafficking and assist victims, and provides training to all relevant government officials and authority figures. Chaired by the Prime Minister. (5,22) Comprises representatives from police, immigration, public prosecutions, social services, gender affairs, and the Department of Labor. (16) Active in 2018. (3,27)

Sources have reported that efforts to counter child begging, a sector in which child labor is known to occur, could benefit from a coordinating mechanism. (27,29)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor (Table 9).

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Child Protection Policy Framework (2015–2020)	Strengthens national child protection strategies and programs. (30) Charged with adopting policies, goals, and reporting standards for child protection. Active in 2018. (27)
National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons (2016–2020)	Establishes procedures to eradicate human trafficking. Administered by the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons, which is chaired by the Prime Minister as head of the Ministry of National Security. (12,28,31,32) Active in 2018. (27)
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Countering Human Trafficking in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Outlines the responsibilities of each signatory agency in combating human trafficking and the worst forms of child labor. (9,33) Assigns tasks and responsibilities among nine government stakeholders regarding trafficking in persons. (17,33) Includes the Department of Labor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce, ATIPU, and others. (26) During 2018, the government continued to support the MOU between signatory agencies combatting human trafficking, including the worst forms of child labor. (2)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2018, 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 the adequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Government-funded educational programs†	Provide free meals to students and low-income families through the Supplementary Feeding Program. (9,34,35) Continued to fund other programs such as the Book Loan Program; the Street Children Rehabilitation Program; and the Foster Care Program. (9-11,34,36) Active in 2018. (2)
Zero Hunger Trust Fund‡	Provides meals, materials, and uniforms to children in need. (6) Active in 2018. (2)

† Program is funded by the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (3)

Although the government has implemented programs to address educational and food needs, research found no evidence that it has carried out programs specifically to assist children in commercial sexual exploitation and begging, both of which are industries reported to employ children. (27,29)

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 Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited to children, in consultation with workers' and employers' organizations, and ensure that the minimum age for hazardous work is 18.	2009 – 2018
	Ensure that the laws for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation are sufficient and do not only apply to human trafficking.	2017 – 2018
	Ensure that laws prohibit using, procuring, or offering a child for the production of illicit drugs.	2011 – 2018
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2018
	Raise the minimum age for work to the age up to which education is compulsory.	2018
Enforcement	Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties for labor law violations.	2016 – 2018
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by providing sufficient resources to conduct labor inspections.	2015 – 2018
	Increase the amount of resources, including personnel and vehicles, for the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit.	2017 – 2018
	Ensure labor inspectors are provided refresher courses related to child labor.	2018
Coordination	Create a coordinating mechanism to combat child begging.	2018
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2017 – 2018
	Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including children in rural communities, by providing public transportation.	2018
	Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation and begging.	2017 – 2018

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