

*In 2014, Dominica made a minimal advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. The Government continued to conduct labor inspections and support programs to reduce poverty and ensure access to education. Research found no evidence that child labor, including its worst forms, exists in Dominica. However, there has not been a recent study of child labor to confirm this. National legislation does not expressly prohibit child prostitution, child pornography, or the use of children in illicit activities, including drug trafficking. In addition, the minimum age for both light work and hazardous work falls below international standards, leaving children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor.*






## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research did not indicate that child labor, including its worst forms, exists in Dominica.(1)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Dominica has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 1).

**Table 1. 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 2).

**Table 2. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor**

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	12/14/16	Articles 2–3 of the Employment of Children (Prohibition) Act; Articles 2 and 4–5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act; Article 46 of the Education Act 1997 (2-4)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	14	Articles 2 and 4–5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act (3)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Articles 4–5 and 7 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act (3)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 4 of the Constitution; Article 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act (5, 6)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act (6)

# Dominica

## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

**Table 2. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor (cont)**

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 18 of the Sexual Offenses Act (7)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A†		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	N/A†		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 2 of the Education Act 1997 (4)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 15 of the Education Act 1997 (4)

† No standing military (8)

While Article 3 of the Employment of Children (Prohibition) Act allows children ages 12 and older to be employed, Article 46 of the Education Act prohibits the employment of children ages 5 to 16 during the school year, with exceptions for students ages 14 and older working during school vacations or in school sponsored employment training programs. The three different minimum ages for work may create confusion over which protections apply to working children and may make the law difficult to enforce.(2, 4) Although the Government of Dominica indicated that it would raise the statutory minimum age for employment to 15 when it ratified ILO C. 138, it has not done so.(9, 10)

Article 3 of the Employment of Children (Prohibition) Act allows children under age 12 to be employed in light domestic and agricultural work by their parents, but the law does not define specific activities and conditions permissible for such work or meet international standards on the minimum age for light work.(2, 9) Articles 4 and 5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act prohibit children under age 14 from working in certain industries, including mining, construction, and transportation; article 7 bars children under age 16 from working in those industries at night.(3) However, the minimum age of 14 for hazardous work does not comply with international standards and leaves children age 14 and older vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor.(1, 10) Moreover, the Government of Dominica has yet to enact laws or regulations explicitly prohibiting the use of children in prostitution, pornography, or illicit activities, including drug trafficking.(11)

### 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 3).

**Table 3. 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. Inspectors report children found in exploitative labor situations to police and social services.(12, 13)
Social Welfare Division, Ministry of Social Services, Family, and Gender Affairs	Provide social services—which may include education, housing, counseling, and financial aid—in child labor cases.(12, 14)
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.(12, 13)
Police Force	Enforce criminal laws, including those related to child labor.(13)

In 2014, the Ministry of National Security, Labor, and Immigration (MNSLI) employed 4 labor inspectors and the Ministry of Health (MOH) employed 19 health inspectors. The MNSLI indicated that the number of inspectors was adequate to enforce child labor laws.(12) The MNSLI inspectors did not receive child labor-specific training during the reporting period, but the Government continued to sponsor workshops and conferences related to child protection. The funding level for the MNSLI labor inspectorate was not publicly available; however, the MNSLI believes that the allocation for labor inspections is insufficient.(12)

The MNSLI conducted onsite labor inspections and reviewed records for legal compliance during the reporting period; however, the total number of labor inspections the MNSLI and the MOH conducted in 2014 was not publicly available. The MNSLI labor inspections did not specifically target child labor and no child labor cases were filed during the reporting period.(12)

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for criminal law enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms.

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

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for mechanisms to coordinate efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms.

#### V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, the Government has a policy that may contribute to the prevention of child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

**Table 4. Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
Third Mid-Term Growth and Social Protection Strategy (2012–2014)	Includes goal of overall poverty reduction.(1, 13, 15)

#### VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem there appears to be no need for programs to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, there is no current research on whether the worst forms of child labor exists in Dominica.(1, 12) In 2014, the Government of Dominica funded and participated in programs that may have an impact on child labor (Table 5).

**Table 5. 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.(1, 16)
Dominica Social Investment Fund	Program funded by the European Union that includes the goal of poverty reduction through training and projects for future income generation.(1, 17)
Education Trust Fund‡	Government program that provides financial assistance to students in secondary school who would otherwise not be able to complete their education.(13)
School Textbook Provision Scheme‡	Government program that subsidizes the cost of textbooks for primary and secondary school students.(13)
School Feeding Program‡	Government program that provides lunch to primary school students in targeted areas.(13)
Shelter for Abused and Neglected Children‡	Government shelter that may accept children who are victims of the worst forms of child labor.(12)

‡ 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 6).

**Table 6. Suggested Government Actions to Prevent Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Harmonize all laws governing the minimum age for work to set the statutory minimum age for employment to at least 15.	2009 – 2014
	Define the activities and conditions permissible for light work and ensure only children ages 13 and older are employed in light work.	2014
	Raise the minimum age for hazardous work to 18 to comply with international standards.	2009 – 2014

**Table 6. Suggested Government Actions to Prevent Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms (cont)**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Enact legislation to expressly prohibit child prostitution, as well as the use, procuring, or offering of a child for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances.	2011 – 2014
	Ensure that laws protect children from engaging in illicit activities such as drug trafficking.	2014
Enforcement	Make information regarding the annual funding levels and the total annual number of labor inspections for the MNSLI and the MOH publicly available.	2014
	Ensure the MNSLI and the MOH allocate sufficient funding for labor inspections.	2014
Social Programs	Conduct research to determine whether any of the worst forms of child labor exist in Dominica.	2014

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