

# Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

*In 2014, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government participated in the First Meeting of the Working Groups of the XVIII Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor to engage on policies and programs related to child labor and it also continued to implement social programs that target children who may be vulnerable to child labor. However, although the problem does not appear to be widespread, children are engaged in child labor, including in domestic work, and in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Gaps remain in the legal framework. The minimum age for hazardous work falls below international standards; and although the use of children for the trafficking of drugs is prohibited, there is no law to prohibit the use of children in the production of drugs.*

## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although the problem does not appear to be widespread, children are engaged in child labor, including in domestic work. There is also limited evidence that children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.(1, 2) 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)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		98.9

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(3)  
Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2015.(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 marijuana* (5)
Services	Domestic work* and begging* (1, 6, 7)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Commercial sexual exploitation* (5, 8, 9)

\* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

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

There is a lack of data and research on the prevalence of child labor and its worst forms in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.(10)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF 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, 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	Part II, Article 8 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act (11)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	14	Part I, Article 3 and Schedule Part, Article 2 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act (11)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Part I, Article 2 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (12)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Part II, Articles 5–8 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (12)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Part II, Article 7 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (12)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Part II, Article 8 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (12)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	19	Part I, Article 6 of the Police Act (13, 14)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Part I, Article 2 of the Education Act (15)
Free Public Education	Yes		Part III, Articles 14–16 of the Education Act (15)

\* No conscription (13, 14)

The minimum age for hazardous work is 14. There are no regulations defining or prohibiting hazardous occupations or conditions for children under the age of 18 beyond prohibitions against working at night and in industrial undertakings.(1, 16, 17) The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act prohibits the use of children in the trafficking of illicit goods, but not the use of children in the production of illicit drugs.(12, 17, 18)

### 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 Labor	Enforce child labor laws and refer victims to appropriate social services.(1)
Royal Police Force	Make criminal arrests, including those involving the worst forms of child labor; specifically address human trafficking through the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit; refer victims to appropriate social services.(1)
Ministry of Social Mobilization	Maintain Child Protection Unit, which includes Child Protection Officers who report cases of child abuse.(7)

Research found no evidence that law enforcement agencies in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines took action to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

## ***Labor Law Enforcement***

The Department of Labor has seven labor inspectors; however, there are no officers dedicated to child labor issues.(7, 19) In 2014, no information is available on the number of inspections carried out in 2014.(2, 20)

## ***Criminal Law Enforcement***

For 2014, there is no information available on the number of criminal investigators; however, a report indicates that there are no investigators responsible for enforcing criminal laws solely on the worst forms of child labor.(19) The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit (ATIPU) provided trafficking awareness training to more than 60 officials in related agencies and to members of other units of the police department, immigration officials, and labor officials.(19) The ATIPU did not participate in any additional training. The ATIPU investigated three cases during the reporting period. Two out of the three cases involved adults, and information is still pending on the third case.(20) No trafficking prosecutions were made for the three cases.(20)

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

Although the Government has established a coordination mechanism on trafficking, research found no evidence of mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including all its worst forms (Table 6).

**Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons	Develop a national plan to address human trafficking, coordinate the collection of data among government agencies, establish policies to enable government agencies to work with NGOs to prevent trafficking and assist victims, and provide training to all relevant government officials and authority figures; chaired by the Prime Minister.(1, 12, 21)

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

Research found no evidence of any policies to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, in September 2014, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines participated in the First Meeting of the Working Groups of the XVIII Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor to foster continued dialogue and cooperation on labor issues throughout the Americas. Held in Bridgetown, Barbados, these discussions promoted the exchange of information on policies and programs that seek to formalize the informal sector, uphold workers' rights, and prevent and eliminate child labor.(22, 23)

The National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons (2013–2015) has not yet been passed by the Parliament. However, civil society members argue that the plan is not in place, while the Government insists that it is in force.(20)

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

In 2014, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines funded and participated in programs that may have an impact on child labor, including its worst forms. (Table 7)

**Table 7. Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Community Capacity Building Program and Village Integrated Development Program*‡	Ministry of Social Development program that reduces poverty in rural areas.(1)
"Multi-Country" 2012–2016*	UNICEF program to address children's rights in the Eastern Caribbean. Ensures that governments comply with convention reporting requirements on children's rights, and assists governments with developing policies and laws to protect all children, especially vulnerable children.(24) Also includes preschool and other educational opportunities for vulnerable children.(24)
Supplementary Feeding Program*‡	Government program that provides free meals to preschool and primary school students from low-income families.(1, 25)

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**Table 7. Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)**

Program	Description
Education Sector Development Plan*‡	Government program that aims to increase access to and improve the quality of education for all.(26)
Book Loan Program*‡	Government program that subsidizes textbooks for children from low-income families.(6, 27)
Street Children Rehabilitation Program*‡	Government program that returns children living or working on the street to school.(6, 27)
Children Against Poverty Program*‡	Government annual 2-week program that addresses gaps in the school system and breaks the cycle of intergenerational poverty.(6, 27, 28)
Crisis Center Shelter*‡	Government program providing short-term shelter that may also be used to house human trafficking victims, including children. Number of children assisted by this shelter is unknown.(1, 8)
Foster Care Program*‡	Government program that provides meals, transportation to school, and school fees for 140 school children.(7)

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

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

As there is limited evidence of a problem, there appears to be little need for programs to address child labor, including its worst forms.

## 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 Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (Table 8).

**Table 8. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that hazardous work is prohibited for all children under the age of 18.	2009 – 2014
	Ensure that the law prohibits hazardous occupations or activities prohibited for children in all relevant sectors.	2009 – 2014
	Ensure that laws prohibit procuring or offering a child for the production of illicit drugs.	2011 – 2014
Enforcement	Make publicly available information regarding the number of labor inspections conducted, as well as information regarding the number of criminal investigators.	2014
Coordination	Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat all worst forms of child labor.	2009 – 2014
Government Policies	Develop policies to address child labor, including its worst forms.	2009 – 2014
Social Programs	Conduct research to determine the prevalence of child labor and its worst forms in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.	2009 – 2014
	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on addressing child labor, including its worst forms of child labor.	2009 – 2014

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