

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2020, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit funded and conducted specialized human trafficking training for 181 new police recruits, the entire staff of the Sexual Offenses Unit, and participants in the police force's 2020 Basic Development Training Course. In addition, a new National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking was approved for 2021–2025, and campaigns aimed at increasing public awareness of human trafficking were conducted at Argyle International Airport and other popular gathering sites, as well as on radio and television announcements. Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Gaps remain in the legal framework, as the law does not fully meet international standards because the use of children for prostitution, pornography, or pornographic performances is not prohibited. In addition, the minimum age for hazardous work falls below international standards and there is no legislation prohibiting the using, procuring and offering of children in illicit activities, including 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 are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. (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 to 14	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		105.5

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2018, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021. (3)

Data were unavailable from International Labor Organization's analysis, 2021. (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	Activities unknown (1,2)
Services	Street vending, including selling fruits and vegetables at local farmers markets (5)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Commercial sexual exploitation (1,2)

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

Limited information received from various sources suggests 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. (1,2)



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All children in the country are able to access education; however, inadequate public transportation for children in rural villages causes them to walk long distances to get to school, which may make attending school difficult. (1,6) Children out of school are vulnerable to engaging 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).

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 the 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 (7)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No		Schedule, Part I, Articles 1, 2, and 5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act (7)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		Part I, Sections 3 and 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 (7,8)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Chapter XII, Part 207 of the Criminal Code (9)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Part II, Articles 5–8 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (10)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Part II, Article 7 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (10)
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 (6)
Free Public Education	Yes		Part III, Articles 14–16 of the Education Act (6)

* No conscription (11)

† No standing military (12)

The government has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. (7,8) In addition, the law does not fully meet international standards as it does not prohibit the use of children for prostitution, pornography, or pornographic performances. (10)

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The minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. (6,7)

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 enforcement agencies 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. (13) Moreover, if the Department finds a criminal violation, it forwards the case to the Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force. (1)
Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 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 ATIPU. (14)
Ministry of Social Development	Maintains the Child Protection Unit, which includes Child Protection Officers who report cases of child abuse. (1)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2020, 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 financial resource allocation.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$626,076 (15)	\$618,758 (1)
Number of Labor Inspectors	6 (15)	6 (1)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (15)	No (16)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	N/A (15)	No (1)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (15)	N/A (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	No (15)	No (1)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	42 (15)	37 (1)
Number Conducted at Worksite	42 (15)	37 (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (15)	0 (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	0 (15)	0 (1)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	0 (15)	0 (1)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (15)	Yes (1)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (15)	Yes (1)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (15)	Yes (16)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (15)	Yes (1)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (15)	Yes (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (15)	Yes (1)

During the reporting period, the Department of Labor reported that the number of inspectors and funding was sufficient; however, a lack of appropriate resources, such as computers and training, hampered the Department's abilities to enforce child labor laws. (1,17)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2020, 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 financial and human resources.

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Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (15)	Yes (18)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (15)	N/A (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (15)	Yes (18)
Number of Investigations	0 (15)	0 (1)
Number of Violations Found	0 (15)	0 (1)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (15)	0 (1)
Number of Convictions	0 (15)	0 (1)
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 (15)	Yes (1)

In 2020, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit (ATIPU) funded and conducted specialized human trafficking training for 181 new police recruits, the entire staff of the Sexual Offenses Unit, and participants in the police force's 2020 Basic Development Training Course. (18)

During the reporting period, insufficient resources, including limited personnel and vehicles, hampered the capacity of ATIPU to combat human trafficking throughout the country, especially in remote, mountainous areas. (18)

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 effective 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. (10) Comprises representatives from police, immigration, public prosecutions, social services, gender affairs, the Department of Labor, and a local NGO. (19) During the reporting period, in collaboration with the ATIPU, coordinated various efforts by the police, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, the Social Services Division, the Coast Guard, the Department of Labor and other government agencies. (18)

Research shows that there is no specific coordinating mechanism dedicated solely to addressing issues related to the worst forms of child labor, outside the scope of human trafficking.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including implementation.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Child Protection Policy Framework (2015–2020)	Strengthened national child protection strategies and programs, and ensured effective coordination among all organizations and entities working for the protection and development of children in the country, including child labor victims. (20) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Child Protection Policy Framework during the reporting period.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor (Cont.)

Policy	Description
National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons (2016–2020)	Established procedures to eradicate human trafficking, including training for frontline staff and other relevant stakeholders; conducted awareness-raising campaigns; and provided victim protection and assistance. Administered by the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons. (19,21) In July 2020, the ATIPU hosted a 2-day symposium to review the National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons and the Memorandum of Understanding on Countering Human Trafficking in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Moreover, the government conducted human trafficking awareness trainings for four churches, an NGO and two schools, addressing topics such as the definition of human trafficking, child trafficking, victim care, human trafficking indicators, causes and consequences, and examinations on the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act. (18) All trainings were funded by the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. (18)
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. Assigns tasks and responsibilities among nine government stakeholders regarding trafficking in persons. (22) Includes the Department of Labor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Commerce, ATIPU, and others. (23) In 2020, the government supported the MOU between signatory agencies, and a local NGO also signed the MOU during the reporting period. (1, 18)

In 2020, a new National Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking was approved for 2021–2025. (5)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2020, 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. (24) In 2020, the government also continued to fund other programs, such as the Book Loan Program, the Street Children Rehabilitation Program, and the Foster Care Program. (1)
Zero Hunger Trust Fund†	Provides meals, materials, and uniforms to children in need. (25) Reports indicate that during the reporting period, limited resources prevented the program from sufficiently assisting all children in need. (1)

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

During the reporting period, the ATIPU continued to conduct awareness-raising campaigns by displaying posters and handing out materials aimed at increasing public awareness of human trafficking at Argyle International Airport and other popular gathering sites. The ATIPU also raised awareness through radio and television announcements, and partnered with a local NGO to place new banners in the arrivals and departure areas of the airport. (18)

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 who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation. (26)

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 for children, in consultation with workers' and employers' organizations, and ensure that the minimum age for hazardous work is age 18.	2009 – 2020
	Ensure the use of children for prostitution, pornography, and pornographic performances is criminally prohibited.	2017 – 2020

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Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that laws prohibit the using, procuring and offering of children for illicit activities, including in the production of drugs.	2011 – 2020
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2020
	Raise the minimum age for work to the age up to which education is compulsory.	2018 – 2020
Enforcement	Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties for labor law violations.	2016 – 2020
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by providing sufficient resources to conduct labor inspections, including by providing computers and training.	2015 – 2020
	Ensure that labor inspectors are provided initial trainings and refresher courses related to child labor.	2018 – 2020
	Increase the amount of resources, including personnel and vehicles, for the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit.	2017 – 2020
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat all forms of child labor.	2019 – 2020
Government Policies	Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the National Child Protection Policy Framework.	2019 – 2020
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2017 – 2020
	Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including children in rural communities, by providing public transportation.	2018 – 2020
	Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation.	2017 – 2020
	Ensure that the Zero Hunger Trust Fund program has sufficient resources to assist all children in need.	2019 – 2020

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