# 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.

# 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](#_ENREF_1), [2](#_ENREF_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**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Working children, ages 5 to 14 (% and population):** | Unavailable |
| **School attendance, ages 5 to 14 (%):** | Unavailable |
| **Children combining work and school, ages 7 to 14 (%):** | Unavailable |
| **Primary completion rate (%):** | 98.9 |

*Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.*([3](#_ENREF_3))

*Date were unavailable from Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis, 2015.*([4](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_5)) |
| Services | Domestic work\* and begging\* ([1](#_ENREF_1), [6](#_ENREF_6), [7](#_ENREF_7)) |
| Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡ | Commercial sexual exploitation\* ([5](#_ENREF_5), [8](#_ENREF_8), [9](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_10))

# 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).

**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](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_12)) |
| Prohibition of Child Trafficking | Yes |  | Part II, Articles 5–8 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act ([12](#_ENREF_12)) |
| Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children | Yes |  | Part II, Article 7 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act ([12](#_ENREF_12)) |
| Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities | Yes |  | Part II, Article 8 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act ([12](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_13), [14](#_ENREF_14)) |
| Compulsory Education Age | Yes | 16 | Part I, Article 2 of the Education Act ([15](#_ENREF_15)) |
| Free Public Education | Yes |  | Part III, Articles 14–16 of the Education Act ([15](#_ENREF_15)) |

\* No conscription ([13](#_ENREF_13), [14](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_1), [16](#_ENREF_16), [17](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_12), [17](#_ENREF_17), [18](#_ENREF_18))

# 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](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_1)) |
| Ministry of Social Mobilization | Maintain Child Protection Unit, which includes Child Protection Officers who report cases of child abuse.([7](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_7), [19](#_ENREF_19)) In 2014, no information is available on the number of inspections carried out in 2014.([2](#_ENREF_2), [20](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_20)) No trafficking prosecutions were made for the three cases.([20](#_ENREF_20))

# 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](#_ENREF_1), [12](#_ENREF_12), [21](#_ENREF_21)) |

# 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](#_ENREF_22), [23](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_20))

# Social Programs to Address the Worst Forms of 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](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_24)) Also includes preschool and other educational opportunities for vulnerable children.([24](#_ENREF_24)) |
| Supplementary Feeding Program\*‡ | Government program that provides free meals to preschool and primary school students from low-income families.([1](#_ENREF_1), [25](#_ENREF_25)) |
| Education Sector Development Plan\*‡ | Government program that aims to increase access to and improve the quality of education for all.([26](#_ENREF_26)) |
| Book Loan Program\*‡ | Government program that subsidizes textbooks for children from low-income families.([6](#_ENREF_6), [27](#_ENREF_27)) |
| Street Children Rehabilitation Program\*‡ | Government program that returns children living or working on the street to school.([6](#_ENREF_6), [27](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_6), [27](#_ENREF_27), [28](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_1), [8](#_ENREF_8)) |
| Foster Care Program\*‡ | Government program that provides meals, transportation to school, and school fees for 140 school children.([7](#_ENREF_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.

# 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 |

1. U.S. Embassy-Bridgetown. *reporting, January 17, 2014*.

2. U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown. *reporting, January 14, 2015*.

3. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. *Gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary. Total*. [accessed January 16, 2015] <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx?SPSLanguage=EN>. Data provided is the gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary school. This measure is a proxy measure for primary completion. For more information, please see the “Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions” section of this report.

4. UCW. *Analysis of Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Statistics from National Household or Child Labor Surveys*. Analysis received January 16, 2015. Reliable statistical data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics on children’s work in general are reported in this chart, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used, the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the “Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions” section of this report.

5. U.S. Department of State. "Saint Vincent and the Grenadines," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2013*. Washington, DC; February 27, 2014; <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>.

6. US Embassy- Bridgetown official. E-mail communication to USDOL official. March 3, 2014.

7. Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines. *Submitted in response to U.S. Department of Labor Federal Register Notice (November 13, 2014). "Request for Information on Efforts by Certain Countries to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor"*. Kingston February 23, 2015.

8. U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown. *reporting, February 14, 2014*.

9. U.S. Department of State. "Saint Vincent and the Grenadines " in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2014*. Washington, DC; June 19, 2014; <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/226848.pdf>.

10. ILO Committee of Experts. *Individual Direct Request concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (ratification: 2001) Published: 2014*; accessed December 1, 2014 <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:20010:0::NO:::>.

11. Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. *Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act*, no. 85, enacted July 1, 1938. <http://www.cavehill.uwi.edu/sitedemo/getattachment/bcecb492-a707-4f10-a65a-b2fc495fca02/EMPLOYMENT-OF-WOMEN,-YOUNG-PERSONS-AND-CHILDREN-AC.aspx;.gif;.jpg;.pdf;.htm;.flv>.

12. Government of Saint Vincent and Grenadines. *Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act*, no. 27, enacted September 29, 2011.

13. Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. *Police Act Revised Edition 1990*, Chapter 280, enacted 1947.

14. Child Soldiers International. "Appendix II: Data Summary Table on Recruitment Ages of National Armies," in *Louder Than Words: An Agenda for Action to End State Use of Child Soldiers*. London; 2012; <http://www.child-soldiers.org/global_report_reader.php?id=562>.

15. Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. *Education Act Revised 2006*, enacted 1992.

16. ILO Committee of Experts. *Individual Direct Request concerning Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (ratification:2006) Publlished: 2014*; accessed April 14, 2014; <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:20010:0::NO::>.

17. ILO Committee of Experts. *Individual Direct Request concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (ratification: 2001) Published: 2012*; accessed November 9, 2012; <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:20010:0::NO:::>.

18. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit (ATIPU). *The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (PTIP) Act (No.. 27 of 2011)- Part 1*. Bridgetown, Police Headquarters; November 20, 2012.

19. U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown official. E-mail communication to USDOL official. April 20, 2015.

20. U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown. *reporting, February 17, 2015*.

21. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit (ATIPU). *The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (PTIP) Act (No.. 27 of 2011)- Part 2* Bridgetown, Police Headquarters; November 27, 2012.

22. Organization of American States. *Agenda, First Meeting of the Working Group of the XVIII Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML), September 17-19*. Bridgetown; 2014. https://[www.oas.org/en/sedi/dhdee/labor\_and\_employment/pages/cpo\_trab\_WG1XVIII\_IACML.asp](http://www.oas.org/en/sedi/dhdee/labor_and_employment/pages/cpo_trab_WG1XVIII_IACML.asp).

23. Organization of American States. "List of Participants, First Meeting of the Working Groups of the XVIII Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (IACML), September 17-19, 2014. ." oas.org [online] 2014 [cited December 8, 2014 ]; https://[www.oas.org/en/sedi/dhdee/labor\_and\_employment/pages/cpo\_trab\_WG1XVIII\_IACML.asp](http://www.oas.org/en/sedi/dhdee/labor_and_employment/pages/cpo_trab_WG1XVIII_IACML.asp).

24. UNICEF. "2012-16 Multi-Country Programme " unicef.org [online] 2014 [cited December 3, 2014 ]; <http://www.unicef.org/easterncaribbean/activities.htm>.

25. Ministry of Education. *School Feeding Programme*, Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, [online] [cited January 31, 2014]; <http://www.education.gov.vc/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=62&Itemid=81>.

26. Ministry of Education. *Administration: Welcome*, Government of Saint VIncent and the Grenadines, [online] [cited January 31, 2014]; <http://www.education.gov.vc/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=73&Itemid=89>.

27. Child Rights International Network. *Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: Child Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review*. London; September 19, 2011. [http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=26137#](http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=26137).

28. U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown. *reporting, January 25, 2012*.