

In 2013, Ecuador made a significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government also launched the Unified Child Labor Registration System (SURTI) and prioritized eradicating child labor in agriculture as well as street begging. It increased the number of Grants for Human Development beneficiaries to 1.5 million families. It also increased the budget for labor inspections by 42 percent, and conducted a child labor survey that included domestic child labor. In addition, the Government issued a decree requiring that all Government procurement contracts with the private sector include a provision prohibiting the use of child labor.

However, children in Ecuador continue to be engaged in child labor, including in agriculture and street work. Ecuador still faces resource constraints that prevent labor inspectors from conducting inspections and enforcing child labor laws.



### I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Ecuador engage in the worst forms of child labor in agriculture and street work. Indigenous children are particularly vulnerable to involvement in child labor.(1-3) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Ecuador.

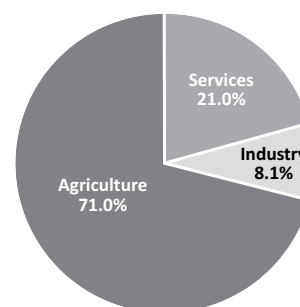
**Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	2.7 (75,689)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	96.9
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	2.4
Primary Completion Rate (%)		110.9

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(4)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Encuesta Nacional de Empleo, Desempleo, y Subempleo, 2011.(5)

**Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14**



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 bananas,† palm oil,*† coca cultivation,*† timber,*† and flowers† (2, 6-14)
	Raising livestock†* (11, 15)
	Fishing,*† activities unknown (6, 11, 15, 16)
Industry	Gold mining† and small-scale mining† (2, 3, 9, 12, 14, 16, 17)
	Production of brick† (9, 12, 14, 17-19)
	Construction, activities unknown† (3, 15, 20, 21)
Services	Domestic service in third party home† (2, 22-24)
	Unpaid household service (3)
	Street work, including shoe shining,*† selling newspapers,*† and street vending*† (2, 10, 16, 17, 23, 25)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (13, 23, 26)
	Work as drug mule† (2)
	Forced begging (24, 27-29)
	Recruitment of children by Colombian non-state armed groups* (13, 24, 30-33)

**Table 2. Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity (cont)**

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Used in production of pornography* (10, 12)
	Domestic service, street vending, begging, and work in unknown sectors, sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (2, 21, 23, 24, 26, 34-42)

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

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.




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

During the reporting period, the Government released the results of the Child Labor Survey. The Survey indicates that 359,597, or 8.56 percent, Ecuadorian children and adolescents between the ages of 5 and 17 work. Data from this survey were not analyzed in time for inclusion in the table above.(3, 43) The number of children and adolescents working is higher than the number of children and adolescents reported working in Ecuador in 2010 (269,881). The survey also includes domestic housework over 14 hours a week which was not counted in 2010.(3, 43) Children, mostly girls, who do household chores for more than 14 hours a week, Monday through Friday, are often the most vulnerable because they perform work activities behind closed doors.(3) According to the survey, 75 percent of the children and adolescents who worked in 2013 also attended school. This number reflects an increase of 25 percent from the 2010 survey.(43) Cotopaxi Province, located in the central highlands, has the highest percentage of children working.(44) The survey shows that children work predominantly in agriculture and street begging.(3)

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

Ecuador 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 relevant laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4).

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor**

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Constitution; Childhood and Adolescence Code (10, 45, 46)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Childhood and Adolescence Code (10, 46-48)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	Yes		Resolution No. 016 of 2008 (47)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Constitution; Penal Code (10, 45)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Constitution; Penal Code (10, 45, 49)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Constitution; Penal Code (10, 45, 49)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit activities	Yes		Constitution; Penal Code (10, 45)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		Constitution (45, 50)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Constitution (45, 50)

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor(cont)**

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Organic Intercultural Education Law; Constitution (10, 12, 45)
Free Public Education	Yes		Organic Intercultural Education Law; Constitution (10, 12, 45)

\* No conscription or no standing military.

### 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 Relations (MRL)	Monitor child labor, conduct labor inspections at work sites, and enforce child labor laws. Administer sanctions against companies found using child labor.(10) The MRL also has a system to collect fines.(7)
Attorney General's Office (AGO), Ministry of Justice (MoJ)	Enforce criminal laws against child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and trafficking.(6, 10, 12)
Ministry of Interior (MOI)	Oversee and evaluate all police actions, including those of the country's Anti-Trafficking Police Unit (ATU) and the National Police Unit for Crimes against Children and Adolescents (DINAPEN).(24) The ATU investigates trafficking cases, rescues victims, and arrests traffickers.(7, 10) These police units have dedicated officers for victims and witness protection in each province.(43)
National Directorate of Specialized Police for Children and Adolescents (DINAPEN)	Investigate all crimes against children, including abuse, sexual exploitation, sex tourism, smuggling, kidnapping, illegal confinement, disappearance, exploitative and forced labor, use of children in the drug trade, and abandoned children.(43)
Office of the Public Prosecutor	Conduct investigations and try cases of child sex trafficking, child forced labor, commercial sexual exploitation and child pornography.(10, 25)
Ministry of Education	Provide immediate educational services for victims of child labor.(51)
Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion (MIES)	Provide remediation services to child laborers and their families.(51) MIES has a "Special Protection Unit" to work with children who are victims of abuse, trafficking, exploitative child labor, and sexual abuse of all types. Runs seven protection centers staffed by social workers, doctors, psychologists, and educators.(43)

Law enforcement agencies in Ecuador took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

#### *Labor Law Enforcement*

In 2013, the Ministry of Labor Relations (MRL) employed 262 people nationwide in the inspection unit, including a dedicated child labor inspector in each province. This overall number was a decrease from 280 in 2012.(43) The total budget in 2013 for labor inspections related activities was \$857,000, an increase of 42 percent from 2012.(10, 43) The MRL acknowledged that the amount of funding was still insufficient.(43) Between January and November 2013, labor inspectors conducted approximately 27,169 inspections for all types of labor violations, versus 23,773 for the entire year in 2012, and found that 1,345 children were engaged in child labor, compared to 223 children in 2012.(10) As a result, the MRL removed the 1,345 children in question, provided them with services, and issued 56 fines.(10, 43, 52) Of the 24 fines issued in 2012, three had been collected as of January 2013.(10, 43) Between January and November 2013, the MOL reported that it collected 39 out of 56 fines imposed in 2013, for a total of \$42,996.(43) All labor inspectors received training about the laws and the enforcement of laws related to child labor. In addition, an online child labor training program and reference materials were made available to inspectors.(43) During the reporting period, the MOL began providing inspectors with computer tablets so that they could access online materials from the field.(43) The Government has a protocol in place to provide immediate access to social protection programs to working children and adolescents who are found during inspections.(53)

The Labor Code authorizes labor inspectors to conduct inspections at workplaces, including factories, workshops, workers' homes, and any other work establishments, when they consider it appropriate or when employers or workers

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request an inspection.(48) In addition, under an agreement between the MRL and the Ministry of Mines and Energy, labor inspectors can enforce child labor laws in mining activities and impose sanctions for violations.(12)

### *Criminal Law Enforcement*

In 2013, the Anti-Trafficking Unit (ATU) of the National Police had 27 agents based in Quito.(43) The National Directorate of Specialized Police for Children and Adolescents (DINAPEN) had approximately 600 agents nationwide to handle all crimes against children.(10) Also in 2013, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), DINAPEN, and the ATU sponsored training for police on themes of child labor and trafficking in persons.(43)

In 2013, DINAPEN investigated 73 cases involving the worst forms of child labor, a decrease from 86 in 2012. During the reporting period, 41 individuals were arrested for child sexual exploitation and three individual for child labor exploitation.(43) DINAPEN, ATU, and the MRL removed 1,397 children from labor exploitation, sexual exploitation, child trafficking, street begging, and membership in guerillas, up from 300 in 2012.(43) During the reporting period, ATU conducted 72 investigations on the worst forms of child labor, sex trafficking, and forced labor of adults.(43) ATU arrested five persons for child sexual exploitation. Six convictions for sexual trafficking and one for labor trafficking were reported by DINAPEN during 2013.(43) The seven convicted persons are all serving sentences, yet no information was available about the length of the sentences.(43)

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

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Interagency Committee for the Elimination and Prevention of Child Labor (IAC)	Coordinate efforts to combat child labor in Ecuador under the Program to Eradicate Child Labor (PETI).(6, 12) Includes several ministries as well as provincial and municipal governments. Systematically document the elimination of child labor in priority sectors and develop guidelines so that the strategy can be replicated in other sectors in which children work.(7, 54-57) MIES coordinates the actions of all the institutions involved to combat child labor.(51, 57)
National Council for Children and Adolescents (CNNA)	Monitor child labor eradication policy at the national and local levels.(6, 10, 51, 58)
Local Autonomous Governments	Participate in coordinating the mechanisms to combat child labor. Mayors are accountable for ensuring that children are not found working, or they face a fine.(51)
Unified Child Labor Registration System (SURT)	Used by agencies within the IAC to provide appropriate services to working children.(52)

During the reporting period, the IAC, through the PETI program, launched the Unified Child Labor Registration System (SURT). The system will alert and allow agencies within the IAC to provide appropriate services to children registered in the system.(52) In addition, the IAC launched the national public awareness campaign “A child who works loses more than he earns.” The campaign included ads on billboards, short films, and radio spots across the country.(52)

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

The Government of Ecuador has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

**Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
2005-2013 National Plan for the Progressive Elimination of Child Labor	Seeks to mainstream child labor eradication and prevention into social programs and to coordinate efforts between Government, private sector, and civil society. This is the main policy instrument to combat child labor.(59)
National Plan to Combat Human Trafficking, Sexual and Labor Exploitation, and other Forms of Exploitation	Guides efforts to prevent, investigate, and impose legal sanctions for human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and other forms of abuse as well as protect and restore the rights of victims of these crimes.(60)

**Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)**

Policy	Description
Ecuador Without Child Labor	Seeks to increase efforts to eradicate child labor by improving data collection, strengthening labor inspections, and carrying out awareness-raising activities in 150 municipalities.(61-63) Various government agencies work with the private sector and other actors to address child labor in brickmaking, fishing, street work, and markets.(53) The Government signed an agreement with the agriculture, flower, livestock, and construction sectors to coordinate actions and promote joint programs for the elimination of child labor in those sectors.(53, 55) In addition, MIES entered into 206 agreements with local governments and organizations throughout the country to help up to 41,000 children by increasing assistance to children and families and improved protection and shelter to trafficking victims.(43)
Agenda for the Equality of Children and Adolescents in Ecuador	Outlines strategies to assist children and help their families overcome poverty, remove children from work, and prevent children from entering the workforce.(10, 64) This Agenda also outlines specific goals for the Government of Ecuador to eradicate the worst forms of child labor, such as by having a dedicated child labor inspector in each province.(64)
National Plan for Good Living	Seeks to improve living conditions for all citizens and promote social inclusion and decent work.(65) Eradicating child labor and providing access to decent work for adolescents of legal working age are guiding policies under Objectives Two and Nine of the National Plan, which was renewed to cover the period from 2013 to 2017.(65)
10-year National Plan for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents	Seeks to protect the rights of children and adolescents. Under Objective 18, for children between the ages of 6 and 12, the plan addresses the eradication of child labor and hazardous child labor.(66) For adolescents between the ages of 12 and 18, Objective 26 focuses on protection against commercial sexual exploitation, and Objective 27 focuses on the eradication of hazardous work and prevention of labor exploitation.(66)
Social Agenda for Children and Adolescents	Aims to ensure, as part of the main objectives of the Agenda, that the rights of children are protected and that they are prevented them from performing hazardous labor. It also sets out to reinforce the protection of children against exploitative labor as set out in the Child and Adolescent Code.(67)

During the reporting period, the Government released the results of the First Child Labor Survey (ENTI 2013). It also prioritized eradicating child labor from agriculture and street begging, and pledged to continue working toward eliminating child labor throughout the country.(10, 23, 43, 53-56, 58, 68)

## VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

In 2013, the Government of Ecuador funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

**Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Grants for Human Development‡	Ministry of Economic and Social Inclusion conditional cash transfer program that supplements household income. It also targets vulnerable families and conditions payments on keeping children under age 15 in school and taking them for medical checkups.(9, 10, 69-71) The payments assisted 1.5 million families in 2013.(43) Working children whose families receive the Grants for Human Development are more likely to stay in school rather than work, particularly children ages 11 to 15.(71-73)
National Program to Combat Child Begging‡	Government awareness-raising program in origin and receiving communities that send and receive child beggars.(7, 27, 61, 74) Although the Government has not eliminated child labor in begging, reports indicate that there has been a significant reduction in child begging over the last 3 years.(10)
School Meals Program*‡	Government program that provides free meals to 1.6 million school children across the country.(7, 74)
Business Network for a Child Labor Free Ecuador‡	Initiative that seeks to gain commitment from participating industries to promote the prevention and elimination of child labor in their supply chains. By 2013, 27 businesses had joined, up from 14 in 2012.(52, 75, 76) Businesses participating in the program, have three commitments: zero tolerance of child labor, conduct a supply-chain analysis to determine if there is child labor, and develop strategies to prevent and eradicate child labor in the supply chain.(76)
Education and Monitoring Program for the Eradication of Child Labor	\$1.3 million Government of Spain-funded, 2-year multi country education and monitoring program for the eradication of child labor.(77)
Eradication of Child Labor in Latin America	\$4.5 million Government of Spain-funded, 3-year multi-country project for the eradication of child labor.(77)

**Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)**

Program	Description
Project for the Reduction of Child Labor through South-South Cooperation in Ecuador	\$700,000 Government of Brazil-funded, 4-year project to support exchange of good practices to combat child labor through South-South Cooperation.(77)
Support to the Partnership Program to Prevent and Eliminate Child Labor in the Americas.	\$2.2 million Government of Brazil-funded, 4-year project to support exchange of good practices to combat child labor between Paraguay, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Timor-Leste.(77)
Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues Project	USDOL-funded project implemented by the ILO in approximately 40 countries, to support the priorities of the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor by 2016; established by the Hague Global Child Labor Conference in 2010. In Ecuador, the project aims to build the capacity of the national government and develop strategic policies to address the elimination of child labor. The project also aims to strengthen legal protection of and social service delivery for child domestic workers.(78)
Combating WFCL Promoting Horizontal Cooperation in South America (Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Paraguay)	\$6.75 million USDOL-funded, 4-year project implemented by ILO-IPEC regional project to promote collaboration across four countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, and Paraguay) to combat the worst forms of child labor among the most socially excluded populations, including indigenous children and Afro-descendants.(79) The project, which began in 2009, aims to rescue 6,600 children in the four target countries from the worst forms of child labor through education interventions. It also supports capacity-building of government and civil society organizations, raises awareness, and conducts research.(79)
Building Effective Policies against Child Labor in Ecuador and Panama	\$3.5 million USDOL-funded, 4-year project implemented by ILO-IPEC to strengthen policy and enforcement of child labor laws as well as occupational health and safety services.(80) The project also promotes lesson sharing between Panama, Ecuador, and other countries. In Ecuador, the project is piloting efforts to address the link between child labor and disabilities.(80)
Educafuturo Project	\$6.5 million USDOL-funded, 4-year project implemented by Partners of the Americas to combat the worst forms of child labor among the most vulnerable populations, including Afro-descendants, migrants, and indigenous children, by providing them with educational and livelihood services in Ecuador and Panama.(81) The project also promotes lesson sharing between Panama, Ecuador, and other countries. In Ecuador, the project is piloting efforts to address the link between child labor and disabilities.(81) The Project targets approximately 2,000 children and 1,000 households.(81)
Project to Combat Human Trafficking and Exploitation	INFA program to assist children who are engaged in child labor or who are victims of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation works closely with law enforcement officials to protect children and provide social services at 86 INFA centers across the country.(7, 10, 12) Additionally, the Government of Ecuador works with four NGOs to provide services to child victims of trafficking. These services include shelter, food, job training, legal assistance, and physical and psychological medical care.(25) The Government continues to receive technical support from international organizations to combat trafficking in persons.(82, 83)

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

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Ecuador.

The Government has partnered with NGOs to combat child labor by raising awareness in local communities and providing educational opportunities to children, particularly indigenous children, who work or are at risk of working.(7, 10, 84) Despite these efforts, current programs do not appear to be sufficient to address the extent of the worst forms of child labor in Ecuador, particularly in agriculture and street work.(3)

## 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 Ecuador (Table 9).

**Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Allocate sufficient resources to ensure that labor inspectors are able to conduct inspections and enforce child labor laws.	2009 – 2013
Social Programs	Support local governments in monitoring child labor in new priority sectors following the protocol established in landfills and slaughterhouses.	2010 – 2013
	Assess the impact that the School Meals Program may have on reducing child labor.	2011 – 2013



**Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
	Conduct research to determine the activities carried out by children working in unknown sectors as a result of trafficking to inform policies and programs.	2013
	Expand child labor programs that particularly target the worst forms of child labor in agriculture and street work, and in areas with recently documented high rates of child labor, such as Cotopaxi Province.	2009 – 2013

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