

In 2017, Dominica made a minimal advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. Following the devastation of Hurricane Maria, which damaged or destroyed most schools on the island, the government collaborated with UNICEF to provide temporary learning spaces for children. However, many schools remained closed, and the government lacked funding to rebuild schools. Children experienced long interruptions to their education and may be more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor due to the disaster. Although research is limited, there is some evidence that suggests that children in Dominica engage in the worst forms of child labor, including girls under age 16 who are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. The government's ability to prevent children from becoming engaged in exploitative work is limited due to exceptions to the minimum age for hazardous work. The country also lacks prohibitions against the use of children in prostitution, pornography, or pornographic performances, and the use of children in illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although research is limited, there is some evidence that children in Dominica engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Limited evidence suggests that girls under age 16 are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation in Dominica, with remuneration including rides, clothing, or cell phones. However, no current research on the child labor situation in Dominica is available. (1; 2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Dominica. 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 (%)		117.9

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2016, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (3) Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2016. (4)

In September 2017, Hurricane Maria devastated Dominica, damaging or destroying roads and most buildings on the island. The government estimated that 20,000 people fled the island and that, by the end of the year, an additional 20,000 remained homeless. (5; 6) The government converted some schools into emergency shelters and collaborated with UNICEF to provide temporary learning spaces for children. (5) Although some schools reopened in November, the government lacked funding to rebuild schools, and children experienced long interruptions to their education due to the destruction. Many children left Dominica to attend school in other Eastern Caribbean states. (6; 5; 7) Although there were no reports of increased commercial sexual exploitation of children after the hurricane, children in Dominica may be more vulnerable to child labor and the worst forms of child labor following the disaster. (8)




II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Dominica has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 2).

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Table 2. 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 3). However, gaps exist in Dominica's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the minimum age for work.

Table 3. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Articles 2 and 46 of the Education Act 1997 (9)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No		
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 4 of the Constitution; Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act (10; 11)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act (11)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Sections 2, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act; Article 18 of the Sexual Offenses Act (11; 12)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	N/A†		
State Voluntary	N/A†		
Non-state	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 2 of the Education Act 1997 (9)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 15 of the Education Act 1997 (9)

† No standing military (13)

Article 46 of the Education Act prohibits the employment of children ages 5 to 16 during the school year, but allows students ages 14 and older to work during school vacations or in school-sponsored employment training programs without defining the conditions, specific activities, or number of hours permissible for light work. (9)

Article 7 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act prohibits children under age 18 from working at night, unless they are working with members of their family, but the law does not otherwise prohibit the employment of children in work that is likely to jeopardize their health, safety, or morals. (14) The government has not enacted laws or regulations explicitly prohibiting the use of children in prostitution, pornography, pornographic performances, or illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs. (15)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Justice, Immigration and National Security that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 4. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Labor Division, Ministry of Justice, Immigration and National Security	Conduct inspections and enforce laws related to child labor. Authorized to conduct unannounced inspections at any location with employees and to take legal action against employers violating child labor laws. (16; 17; 18) Report cases in which children are found in exploitative labor situations to police and social services. (16; 17; 18)
Ministry of Health and Social Services	Conduct inspections and enforce laws related to child labor. Report cases in which children are found in exploitative labor situations to police. (16; 17) Provide social services, including education, housing, counseling, and financial aid in child labor cases. (16; 18; 19)
Police Force	Enforce criminal laws, including those related to child labor. (17)

Labor Law Enforcement

Research did not find information on whether labor law enforcement agencies in Dominica took actions in 2017 to combat child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Justice, Immigration and National Security that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including penalty assessment authorization.

Table 5. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (1)	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	4 (1)	Unknown
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (1)	No (1)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	Unknown
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	480 (1)	Unknown
Number Conducted at Worksites	480 (1)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (1)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	N/A	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that were Collected	N/A	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (1)	Unknown
Routine Inspections Targeted	No (1)	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (1)	Yes (1)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (1)	Unknown
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (1)	Yes (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (1)	Yes (1)

In addition to the labor inspectors employed by the Ministry of Justice, Immigration and National Security, the Ministry of Health and Social Services employs health and safety inspectors and fire inspectors who also inspect for labor violations. (18) Government officials report that although the number of labor inspectors is sufficient to inspect labor violations, too few technical officers are available to adequately enforce labor laws. (18)

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Criminal Law Enforcement

Research did not find information on whether criminal law enforcement agencies in Dominica took actions in 2017 to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including financial resources.

Table 6. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	Unknown
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Investigations	0 (1)	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	0 (1)	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (1)	Unknown
Number of Convictions	0 (1)	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (1)	Yes (1)

The Police Force budget is insufficient, and police lack the transportation and equipment needed to adequately enforce criminal laws. (1)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that the government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that the government has established policies to address child labor.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

Although the Government of Dominica has implemented programs that may contribute to preventing or eliminating child labor (Table 7), research found no evidence that it has carried out programs specifically designed to assist children subjected to commercial sexual exploitation.

Table 7. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Basic Needs Trust Fund	Caribbean Development Bank-implemented program that aims to reduce poverty through livelihood services, improved infrastructure, capacity-building projects, and technical services. (20; 21)
Education Trust Fund†	Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (MOE) program that provides financial assistance for textbooks, transportation, and registration and exam fees to students in secondary school who would otherwise be unable to complete their education. (17; 22)
School Textbook Provision Scheme†	MOE program that subsidizes the cost of textbooks for primary and secondary school students. (17; 23)
School Feeding Program†	MOE program that provides lunch to primary school students in targeted areas. (17; 24)
CHANCES†	Ministry of Health and Social Services program that supports an emergency residential shelter to provide short-term services to abused and neglected children. May accept victims of the worst forms of child labor. (16; 18; 25; 26)
Break the Silence Awareness Program†	Ministry of Health and Social Services program that raises awareness and encourages reporting of child abuse cases. (18) Managed by the Child Abuse Prevention Unit in the Social Welfare Division. (26)

† Program is funded by the Government of Dominica.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of child labor in Dominica (Table 8).

Table 8. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Define the conditions, activities, and number of hours permissible for light work.	2014 – 2017
	Ensure that the minimum age for hazardous work is 18 for all children.	2015 – 2017
	Enact legislation to expressly prohibit child prostitution and the using, procuring, or offering of a child for the production of pornography or pornographic performances.	2011 – 2017
	Prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs.	2014 – 2017
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2017
Enforcement	Authorize the Labor Inspectorate to assess penalties.	2016 – 2017
	Make labor and criminal law enforcement data publicly available.	2014 – 2017
	Employ enough technical officers to provide sufficient labor law enforcement.	2015 – 2017
	Ensure that labor inspectors and criminal investigators receive training on the worst forms of child labor.	2015 – 2017
	Ensure that the police have sufficient funding to enforce criminal laws.	2016 – 2017
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation.	2016 – 2017
Government Policies	Adopt policies to address the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation.	2016 – 2017
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2014 – 2017
	Institute programs to address commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2017
	Continue to reopen and rebuild schools, and ensure that disaster relief efforts include measures to prevent children from engaging in child labor and the worst forms of child labor.	2017

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