

In 2017, the Dominican Republic made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. This year, the Dominican Republic is receiving an assessment of moderate advancement because, in contrast to previous years, research did not identify cases of children without identity documents being denied access to education and the government took new efforts to adequately address this unlawful practice, which mainly impacted children of Haitian descent. These efforts include designating a point of contact within the Ministry of Education to handle school denial cases for children without identity documents and reiterating a directive to public schools that all children



must be allowed to attend school, regardless of their documentation. In addition, the Government of the Dominican Republic created 19 Local Vigilance Committees to combat child labor in high-risk municipalities. The government also continued to fund and participate in multiple programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including two new programs that will strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Labor to enforce laws and regulations related to child and forced labor, particularly in the agricultural sector. However, children in the Dominican Republic engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. Other gaps remain, including limited human and financial resources for the enforcement of child labor laws and inadequate assistance for victims of commercial sexual exploitation and harmful agricultural work.

I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in the Dominican Republic engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. (1; 2; 3) Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. (4; 5; 6; 7; 8) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in the Dominican Republic.

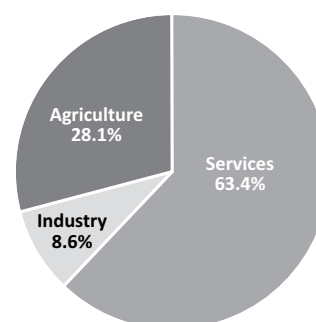
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10 to 14	2.1 (21,968)
Attending School (%)	10 to 14	98.4
Combining Work and School (%)	10 to 14	2.0
Primary Completion Rate (%)		93.3

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2016, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (9)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Encuesta Nacional de Fuerza de Trabajo Survey, 2014. (10)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14



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	Clearing land for sugarcane production, planting and harvesting sugarcane,† and collecting cut cane† (6; 11; 12; 13; 14)
	Producing coffee, cocoa, rice, tomatoes, bananas, beans, corn, garlic, onions, and potatoes (15; 16; 17; 7; 18; 19; 20; 21; 22; 8)
	Fishing† (20; 23)
Industry	Producing baked goods (4; 21)
	Mining† for larimar (a blue stone often used for jewelry) (4)
	Construction,† activities unknown (4)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Street work, including vending, † shining shoes, begging, washing car windows, and transporting packages in markets (15; 20; 24; 23; 25; 26; 21; 2)
	Working in beauty salons, restaurants, bars, † and coffee shops (27; 4)
	Working in woodworking shops, auto repair shops, and welding shops (18; 19; 24; 21; 8)
	Scavenging in landfills (24; 21; 28)
	Domestic work (15; 4; 26; 21; 2; 3)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, construction, street vending, and begging, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (15; 29; 1)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (30; 1; 2; 14; 3)
	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (31; 1)

† 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.

Children in the Dominican Republic engage in commercial sexual exploitation, particularly in coastal, touristic locations. The porous border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic has allowed some children to be trafficked into the Dominican Republic, where they have been engaged in commercial sexual exploitation or forced to work in agriculture, domestic work, street vending, or begging. (24; 32; 1; 14; 2; 33; 3) Some children, including Haitian children and Dominican-born children of Haitian descent, work in sugarcane production often alongside their parents, and live in communities that often lack basic services, including schools. (6; 11; 34; 13; 12; 14; 15; 35)

Children of undocumented migrant parents, many of Haitian descent, are particularly vulnerable to labor exploitation because many lack birth or residency documents. (34; 36; 37; 1; 28; 2; 38; 39) During the reporting period, the government extended the benefits of the National Regularization Plan to offer an additional year of legal residency status to approximately 240,000 individuals with irregular immigration status and issued birth certificates through the Central Electoral Board to more than 21,000. (40; 15; 41; 42; 43). Despite these efforts, many Dominican-born persons of Haitian descent, including children, continue to remain in undocumented status as a result of the 2013 Constitutional Tribunal Judgment and were not able to obtain legal residency documents under Law 169-14 or the National Plan to Regularize Foreigners during the reporting year. (15; 44; 45; 46; 41; 47) In addition, Haitian children who remain in the Dominican Republic after their parents have been repatriated to Haiti due to their undocumented status are more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. (34; 48; 49)







National law guarantees free public education, which requires that all children attend school until age 18, and prohibits the exclusion of children from the educational system based on a lack of identity documents. (48; 50; 51; 52; 53) However, the current Operations Manual of Public Education Centers of the Ministry of Education incorrectly requires school administrators to require children to present identity documents to enroll in school. (54; 55) Research did not identify cases of children without identity documents being denied access to education during the reporting period, or cases of schools requiring children to present identity documents to take the twelfth grade national exam to graduate from secondary school. (8; 56; 41; 40) During the reporting period, the Ministry of Education designated its Office of Community Participation as the point of contact to handle school denial cases for children without identity documents and reiterated a directive to all public schools that all children must be allowed to attend school, regardless of their documentation. (8; 56; 41; 57; 58; 40) Reports indicate that these efforts have improved access to education through secondary school for children without identity documents. (8; 56; 41; 40)

In general, many children continue to experience challenges in accessing education and high school dropout rates at the primary and secondary levels, in which there are shortages of teachers and a lack of school infrastructure. These issues particularly affect children living in rural areas and in communities predominantly of Haitian descent. Sources also indicate that some children of Haitian descent face discrimination by teachers and peers; travel long distances to schools; and are unable to afford school fees and supplies. (59; 60; 61; 15; 3) In addition, because the Ministry of Education requires that each student has a birth certificate on file to issue a high school diploma, children without identity documents are unable to document that they have completed high school. (43; 62)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Dominican Republic 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 the Dominican Republic's legal framework to adequately protect children from child labor, including the prohibition of military recruitment by non-state groups.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Article 245 of the Labor Code; Article 40 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (50; 63)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Sections 1–2 of the Resolution on Hazardous Work for Persons Under Age 18; Article 251 of the Labor Code (63; 35)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 1–3 of the Resolution on Hazardous Work for Persons Under Age 18 (35)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 1, 3, and 7 of the Law Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Articles 25 and 409 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents; Articles 40–41 of the Constitution (50; 64; 65)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 1, 3, and 7 of the Law Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Articles 25 and 409 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents; Article 41 of the Constitution (50; 64; 65)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 25 and 408–411 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents; Article 3 of the Law Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Article 24 of the Law on Technological Crime (50; 66; 64)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 85 of the Law on Drugs and Controlled Substances (67)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	Yes*	18	Articles 96–97 and 231–232 of the Organic Armed Forces Law (68)
State Voluntary	Yes	18†	Articles 26 and 96–97 of the Organic Armed Forces Law (68)
Non-state	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	18‡	Article 63 of the Constitution; Articles 33, 35, 37, and 40 of the Organic Law of Education; Articles 45–46 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (50; 51; 65)

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Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (cont)

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 63 of the Constitution; Articles 33, 35, 37, and 40 of the Organic Law of Education; Ministry of Education Circular No. 18 of 2011; Articles 45–46 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (50; 51; 53; 65)

* No conscription (68)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (51; 65)

In November 2017, during the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labor in Argentina, the Government of the Dominican Republic pledged to increase the minimum age for work to age 15. (69)

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 authority of the Ministry of Labor (MT) 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 (MT)	Lead efforts to eliminate child labor, conduct labor inspections, and direct the Child Labor Directorate (DTI) to investigate child labor. Refers children found in exploitative conditions to social services, mainly the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI). (15; 70; 71; 72; 24)
National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI)	Develop and implement policies and programs to eradicate all forms of violence against children, including child labor, as well as improve the employability of young people. Coordinate with the MT to protect children against labor exploitation and enforce labor laws. (15; 70; 73; 74)
Office of the Attorney General (AG)	Prosecute crimes involving children, including criminal violations related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children and other worst forms of child labor. Oversee the Special Prosecutor for Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking, which receives notifications of alleged violations related to the worst forms of child labor through a hotline. (75; 74; 1; 14)
National Police's Trafficking in Persons Unit and the Directorate of Migration	Enforce criminal laws, including those prohibiting the worst forms of child labor, and coordinate with the AG in the prosecution of perpetrators. Under the Ministry of the Interior. (20; 75; 1; 14)
Specialized Corps for Tourist Safety (CESTUR)	Prevent child sex abuse and commercial sexual exploitation in touristic areas, rescue child victims, and arrest and bring to justice child sex offenders. Overseen by the Ministry of Defense. (73; 14)
Local Vigilance Committees*	Prevent child labor at the local level by alerting law enforcement of activities linked to child labor, directing victims of child labor to social services, and working closely with the National Steering Committee to Eliminate Child Labor (CDN) to raise awareness of child labor. (76; 22) In 2017, 19 Vigilance Committees were created in municipalities with a high presence of child labor. (22)

* Agency responsible for child labor enforcement was created during the reporting period.

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2017, labor law enforcement agencies in the Dominican Republic took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of the MT that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including penalty assessment authorization.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$3.6 million (20; 23)	\$3.6 million (43)
Number of Labor Inspectors	183 (27; 18)	176 (8)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (20)	No (8)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	N/A	N/A
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (20)	Yes (22; 8)

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (cont)

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	93,104 (43)	83,436 (43)
Number Conducted at Worksites	93,104 (43)	83,436 (43)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	31 (20)	44‡ (8)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	Unknown (20)	44‡ (8)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that were Collected	Unknown (20)	Unknown (8)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (20)	Yes (8)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (18; 20)	Yes (22; 8)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (27; 18)	Yes (18; 8)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (18; 20)	Yes (18; 8)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (18; 20)	Yes (18; 8)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (23)	Yes (23; 8)

‡ Data are from January 1, 2017 to October 31, 2017. (8)

The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of the Dominican Republic’s workforce, which includes over 4.7 million workers. According to the ILO’s technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, the Dominican Republic should employ about 341 labor inspectors. (77; 78; 79) In 2017, the Child Labor Directorate received \$32,330 from the MT and \$389,578 from external donations to increase labor law enforcement actions to combat child labor and conduct awareness-raising activities, an increase from the \$140,000 that was allocated in 2016. (20; 23; 20)

The MT’s process for labor inspections includes a preliminary visit, during which inspectors inform employers of violations and establish periods for remediation but do not issue fines. Upon expiration of the remediation periods, inspectors conduct re-inspections to determine whether the violations have been remedied. (63; 80) If re-inspections find that the identified violations persist, the MT files infraction reports with its local office, which then transfers the infraction reports to the relevant local court for adjudication. (63; 80) This two-tiered inspection process puts a strain on the MT’s limited human and financial resources and may not sufficiently deter employers from exploiting children in the workplace, particularly in remote rural areas where re-inspections are more difficult and less consistent. In addition, evidence suggests that some inspection reports do not set a timeframe for the remediation of the violations identified. (81) Furthermore, the lack of published information on the results of inspections prevents a complete understanding of how adequate this inspection system is in practice. (20)

Although the 2008 General Inspection Protocol and the 2011 Inspection Protocol for Agriculture instruct inspectors to assess child labor violations by reviewing workers’ identity documents and employers’ records, making observations, and conducting interviews, the widespread lack of identity documents impedes both inspectors and employers from verifying the ages of workers and guaranteeing that children under age 18 are not participating in dangerous or unhealthy work. (6; 16; 82; 80) The MT indicated that improvements could be made with respect to how inspectors conduct interviews, ask follow-up questions, and use inspection data to strengthen the inspection system. (16) Moreover, reports indicate that in some cases, Spanish-speaking inspectors working without translation assistance have been responsible for interviewing Creole-speaking workers with limited or no Spanish-language abilities, which has further hindered the efficacy of those inspections. (20)

From January through October 2017, the MT conducted 66,840 labor inspections, including 27 targeted child labor inspections in high-risk sectors, such as agriculture, construction, mining, and services in both rural and urban areas, mainly in Santo Domingo, La Romana, Sanchez Ramirez, and Santiago Provinces. (20; 23; 22; 8) During this period, each inspector conducted an average of 380 inspections; it is unknown whether the high number of inspections per inspector affected the quality of these inspections. (8) Some NGOs and labor unions have reported that inspections are not always conducted in a timely manner after requests are made. In addition, evidence suggests that inspection reports often contain errors and contradictions that undermine the credibility of these reports, including by limiting the sample size of worksites for inspection in large rural facilities. (27; 83; 81) Reports also indicate that substandard labor inspections have hindered the ability of the Office of the Attorney General (AG) to pursue prosecutions on criminal matters involving child labor issues. (83)

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A formal referral mechanism is in place that allows the MT to refer child labor victims found during labor inspections to the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI) for social services. During the reporting period, the MT reported that it removed 319 victims of child labor, mainly from the agriculture and services sectors, and transferred them to CONANI, where they received social and reintegration services. (23; 22; 8)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in the Dominican Republic 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 the lack of publicly available enforcement information, coordination, and financial resources.

Table 7. 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	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (75)	Yes (75)
Number of Investigations	19 (84)	26 (8; 85)
Number of Violations Found	19 (84)	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	21 (84)	Unknown
Number of Convictions	13 (84)	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (27)	Yes (27; 8)

In 2017, the AG's Special Prosecutor for Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking employed 5 investigators and conducted 26 investigations regarding the worst forms of child labor, including on commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. (8; 85) The National Police maintains a Trafficking in Persons Unit that conducted 83 investigations during the reporting period. It is unknown how many of these investigations involved crimes against children. (85) Despite these efforts, reports indicate that the capacity of both enforcement agencies to identify, investigate, and prosecute criminal cases related to the worst forms of child labor are limited due to a lack of human and financial resources. (20; 1; 85) In addition, reports indicate that coordination between the MT and the AG has been limited due mainly to a lack of adequate case tracking systems and that not all criminal violations identified by the MT have been referred to, and subsequently investigated and prosecuted adequately by the AG. (83; 56; 8)

In 2017, the AG reported that it removed 35 child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking and transferred them to CONANI, where they received social and reintegration services. (75; 8) Despite these efforts, reports indicate that CONANI does not have the resources, facilities, and institutional capacity to meet the demand for services nationwide. (2; 5; 85; 3)

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 the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including insufficient funding for key coordinating bodies to carry out their mandates.

Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
National Steering Committee to Eliminate Child Labor (CDN)	Develop policies, approve programs, and coordinate, monitor, and evaluate efforts to combat child labor in the Dominican Republic. Overseen by the MT and composed of ministerial representatives, labor unions, private sector representatives, and NGOs. (15; 24; 70; 86; 72) In 2017, met several times to implement activities under national action plans, including awareness-raising campaigns in agricultural zones, trained government and non-governmental stakeholders on child labor laws, and built the institutional capacity of 25 of the 48 Local and Municipal Committees. In addition, coordinated the creation of 19 Local Vigilance Committees to combat child labor in high-risk municipalities. (22; 76)

Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor (cont)

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
Inter-Institutional Commission Against Child Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation	Coordinate actions to combat commercial sexual exploitation and child abuse. Led by CONANI and the MT, and includes representatives from the Ministries of Tourism, Education, and CESTUR, local and international organizations, and the Hotel and Restaurant Association. (75; 73; 1; 3) In 2017, launched a national awareness-raising campaign to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children and developed an online platform to train school officials on safe Internet usage and exploitation risks associated with new technologies. (1; 87; 22)
Inter-Agency Commission Against Trafficking in Persons (CITIM)	Coordinate efforts to combat human trafficking and responsible for developing and implementing national plans. Led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and comprises 14 government agencies, including the MT and law enforcement agencies. (88; 1) In 2017, met multiple times to draft a new national action plan on trafficking in persons and worked to develop a case management information system to improve tracking of human trafficking cases. (89; 85)
Social Policies Coordination Cabinet (GCPS)	Coordinate all social policies and conditional cash transfer programs, such as the Progressing with Solidarity Program (PROSOLI). Led by the Vice President. (20; 70) In 2017, implemented activities to expand access to PROSOLI by vulnerable groups, including by establishing a partnership with an international organization to provide reintegration services to child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking, as well as to children without identity documents. (90; 91)

Evidence suggest that the Local and Municipal Committees of the National Steering Committee to Eliminate Child Labor (CDN) face limitations in their coordination efforts due to a lack of financial resources to adequately carry out their mandates. (92)

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 insufficient funding for implementation.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Strategic Plan to Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor (PEN) (2006–2020)	Identifies the roles and responsibilities of government agencies and municipal representatives in eradicating the worst forms of child labor. Prioritizes prevention, protection, assistance, and the progressive eradication of the worst forms of child labor. (20; 71; 93) In 2017, conducted training sessions on child labor laws and programs for 499 members of the system to prevent and eradicate child labor. (22)
Roadmap Towards the Elimination of Child Labor in the Dominican Republic (2016–2020)	Aims to eliminate child labor by 2020. Sets targets and indicators for poverty reduction, health, education, institutional coordination, awareness raising, and information sharing. (23; 70; 94; 72; 3) In 2017, established 19 Local Vigilance Committees to combat child labor in high-risk municipalities. (22)
Education Pact (2014–2030)	Seeks to improve the quality of, and access to, primary and secondary education by increasing attendance and graduation rates and enrolling more students in the Extended School Day Program. Includes strategies to combat child labor. (70; 95; 96) Implemented by the Ministry of Education and supported by World Bank. In 2017, focused on improving recruitment and training of school teachers and increasing primary and secondary graduation rates. (97)
National Development Strategy 2030 (END)	Aims to reduce poverty and inequality and includes programs that aim to combat child labor and provide universal education to all children. Includes strategies to expand access to secondary school, including for students without identity documents. (23; 70; 98) Implemented by the Ministry of Economy. (98) (59)

In 2017, the government drafted a new National Action Plan against Human Trafficking, but it was not approved during the reporting period. (85) Insufficient allocation of resources has slowed efforts to fully implement key policies related to child labor, including conducting planned activities in a timely manner. (99; 100; 2)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2017, 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 efforts to address the problem in all sectors.

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Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor‡

Program	Description
Project to Reduce Child Labor and Working Conditions in Agriculture in the Dominican Republic (2017-2021)*	\$5 million USDOL-funded project implemented by the ILO to support the efforts of the Government of the Dominican Republic to combat child labor and strengthen labor law enforcement while helping businesses prevent, detect, and eliminate labor abuses in the agriculture sector, in addition to enabling better educational and livelihood opportunities to families vulnerable to labor exploitation. (101) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.
From Protocol to Practice: A Bridge to Global Action on Forced Labor (2015–2019)*	USDOL-funded global project implemented by the ILO to support global and national efforts to combat forced labor of adults and children under the 2014 ILO Protocol and supporting Recommendation to C.29 on Forced Labor. In the Dominican Republic, aims to build the capacity of the MT to enforce laws and regulations related to forced labor through improved data management systems and to work with labor inspectors. (102) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.
Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues Project	USDOL-funded project implemented by the ILO in approximately 40 countries, including the Dominican Republic, 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. Aims to build the capacity of the national government, develop strategic policies to address the elimination of child labor in the Dominican Republic, and improve the evidence base on child labor through research. Additional information is available on the USDOL website. (103)
Progressing with Solidarity (PROSOLI)†	Government program that provides conditional cash transfers for low-income families to increase children’s school attendance and reduce child labor. (70; 104; 90; 60; 3) The Vice President’s Office reported that PROSOLI’s School Attendance and School Subsidy Incentives in 2017 benefited 495,456 students, reducing school dropout rates among project participants by 3.8 percent and children’s vulnerability to child labor. (90; 105)
Extended School Day Program (<i>Jornada Escolar Extendida</i>)†	Ministry of Education program to extend school hours to a full day (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) to improve educational achievement and reduce child labor. (106; 2; 107) As of October 2017, the program covers nearly 60 percent of the nation’s school children and is aiming to provide coverage nationwide by the end of the 2018/2019 school year. (56; 8)
Regional Initiatives for the Elimination of Child Labor in Latin America and the Caribbean (2014–2018)	\$2.2 million Government of Spain-funded, 4-year project implemented by the ILO that aims to strengthen public policies and government capacity to combat child labor in 19 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, including the Dominican Republic. Seeks to develop information systems on the worst forms of child labor and increase youth employment in the Dominican Republic. (108)
Empowering and Supporting the Human Rights of Children and Youth (2012–2018)	\$1.2 million Government of Canada-funded, 6-year project that aims to build the capacity of government agencies and civil society organizations that are responsible for protecting children, especially those of Haitian descent, from sexual and labor exploitation. (109)
Line 700 Hotline†	Office of the First Lady’s free hotline to enable citizens to report cases of the worst forms of child labor. (73; 110)
Youth Alert Program (2012–2017)	USAID-funded project to protect at-risk youth from crime and promote access to education and vocational training programs, including for youth without identity documents. By the end of 2017, the program has benefited 140,204 youth, including by assisting 2,039 to obtain identity documents. (111; 112; 113)
UNICEF Country Program (2018–2022)*	\$15.4 million UNICEF-funded program that supports the government’s efforts to improve education, health, social inclusion, and protection for children in the Dominican Republic. Includes projects to increase birth registration rates and build the capacity of relevant government agencies to protect children, especially those without identity documents, from violence, sexual exploitation, and trafficking. (60; 114; 3)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of the Dominican Republic.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (18; 115; 116; 117; 118)

In an effort to improve the national education system, the government has allocated 4 percent of the national GDP in its budget for primary and secondary education for the fifth consecutive year. (23; 2; 8; 3) Although the Progressing with Solidarity (PROSOLI) program has been effective in reducing child labor and increasing school enrollment among its project participants, the program requires participants to present identification documents to access program benefits, which likely limits the participation of those individuals lacking such documentation, many of whom are particularly vulnerable to child labor. (16; 119) Although the Dominican Republic has programs that target the worst forms of child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, particularly to address commercial sexual exploitation of children and harmful work in agricultural areas. (32; 2; 3)

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 the Dominican Republic (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2017
Enforcement	Authorize the Labor Inspectorate to assess penalties.	2015 – 2017
	Publish information on the number of child labor penalties imposed that were collected, the initial training for new criminal law enforcement officers, the number of criminal labor violations found, the number of prosecutions initiated, and the number of convictions secured.	2009 – 2017
	Increase the number of labor inspectors in accordance with the ILO's technical advice to provide adequate coverage of the workforce, especially in remote rural areas.	2009 – 2017
	Increase the human and financial resources, as well as training for criminal law investigators to ensure adequate criminal law enforcement related to child labor.	2009 – 2017
	Reform the two-tiered inspection system to ensure that labor inspectors are able to promptly follow up on violation remediation to improve enforcement of laws prohibiting child labor and discourage the use of child labor by employers.	2012 – 2017
	Establish a system to verify the age of young workers to better protect children without birth certificates or other legal documentation from exploitation.	2012 – 2017
	Improve training of inspectors to increase the quality of interviews with employers and workers, gather consistent documentation, conduct timely re-inspection to ensure compliance, and use inspection data to enable prosecution.	2012 – 2017
	Ensure that labor inspectors are able to communicate with Creole-speaking workers, including those who may be underage, to adequately conduct inspections for child labor violations.	2012 – 2017
	Determine whether the inspection ratio for each labor inspector is appropriate to ensure the quality and scope of inspections.	2016 – 2017
	Ensure that CONANI has sufficient resources and facilities to provide the necessary care for victims of child labor.	2015 – 2017
	Improve coordination and case tracking systems between the Ministry of Labor and the Office of the Attorney General to ensure violations are adequately investigated and prosecuted.	2013 – 2017
Coordination	Ensure that the National Steering Committee to Eliminate Child Labor's Local and Municipal Committees have sufficient resources to effectively coordinate efforts to address child labor.	2013 – 2017
Government Policies	Ensure that appropriate funding exists to effectively implement and coordinate policies related to child labor.	2009 – 2017
	Revise the Ministry of Education's Operations Manual of Public Education Centers to reflect Dominican law and policies that allow children without birth certificates or other identity documents to enroll in primary and secondary education and complete schooling.	2017
Social Programs	Increase efforts to issue identity documents to all children to reduce their vulnerability to labor exploitation.	2011 – 2017
	Increase school infrastructure and teacher availability, especially in rural areas, remove supply and school-related fees, and expand efforts to reduce discrimination in schools.	2011 – 2017
	Address the specific educational needs of vulnerable populations, including unaccompanied migrant children, children of parents who have been deported, and undocumented children.	2011 – 2017
	Conduct regular training for school administrators and public awareness campaigns on Dominican law and policies that allow children without birth certificates or other identity documents to enroll in primary and secondary education and complete schooling.	2011 – 2017
	Expand social protection programs, particularly for child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and harmful agricultural work.	2010 – 2017

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