

In 2014, Barbados made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government created the National Committee for Monitoring the Rights of the Child to protect the rights of children and to implement the UN CRC. The Government also supported and continued social programs that may help prevent child labor. However, although the problem does not appear to be widespread, children in Barbados are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in drug trafficking and in commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Important legislative gaps remain. For example, Barbados lacks a legally enforceable list of hazardous occupations prohibited for children. In addition, the Government does not have a comprehensive policy framework to address all relevant forms of child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although the problem does not appear to be widespread, children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in drug trafficking and in commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking, in Barbados.(1-7) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Barbados. 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)	5-14 yrs.	3.5 (1300)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	99.3
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	3.9
Primary Completion Rate (%)		104.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2011, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(8)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4, 2015.(9)

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
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Used in illicit activities, including drug trafficking* (1-5, 10)
	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (3-5, 7, 10)

* 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.

Older men reportedly engage children in commercial sexual exploitation in exchange for material goods.(7) The Government has acknowledged the need to conduct a national survey to assess the prevalence of the worst forms of child labor in Barbados.(11) However, it does not appear that the Government has undertaken such research.(2, 11, 12)




II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Barbados has ratified some key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

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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 of Barbados has not ratified the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography or the 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	16	Articles 2, 10-12, and 14 of the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act; Article 5 of the Recruiting of Workers Act (13, 14)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 2 and 8 of the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (13)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 14 of the Constitution; Articles 33-34 of the Offenses Against the Person Act (15, 16)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 2, 8, and 10 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act (17)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 13 and 16-17 of the Sexual Offenses Act; Articles 2-3 of the Protection of Children Act (18, 19)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 22 of the Drug Abuse (Prevention and Control) Act (20)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Article 19 of the Defence Act (21)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Articles 2, 41, 41A, and 43 of the Education Act (22)
Free Public Education	Yes		Articles 2 and 52 of the Education Act (22)

* No conscription (23)

Part IV of the Employment Act sets the minimum age of employment at 16 for industrial undertakings, but not for all kinds of work.(13) The Recruiting of Workers Act specifies that children between the ages of 14 and 16 can be engaged in light work with parental or guardian consent.(14) However, a list of occupations constituting light work has not been established.(5, 24) The Employment Act prohibits the engagement of children below the age of 18 in night work and any occupation that is likely to harm their safety, health, or morals. This includes industrial undertakings such as mining and quarrying.(13) However, despite reports that the Ministry of Labor (MOL) has created a comprehensive list of hazardous occupations prohibited to all children under the age of 18, it does not appear that this list has been incorporated into law or regulation.(4, 11, 25)

The Defence Act sets the minimum age for voluntary enlistment at 18.(21) However, those who wish to enlist before age 18 can do so with parental consent if they are at least 17 years and 9 months old.(4, 23)

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 (MOL)	Conduct labor inspections and enforce child labor laws.(2, 4)
Royal Barbados Police Force (RBPF)	Make criminal arrests, in part through its Sex Crimes and Trafficking Unit, for infractions involving the trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children, as well as the use of children in illicit activities, including drug trafficking.(2, 4, 26)
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	Prosecute criminal offenses, including cases of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking.(27)

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

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2014, the MOL employed 16 labor inspectors to enforce labor laws, which is one less than the 17 labor inspectors it employed in 2013. Inspectors did not receive training on child labor issues during the reporting period.(6) Although information on the MOL's budget was not made publicly available, the Government reported that the level of funding was sufficient with regard to the scope of child labor in Barbados.(6)

Research could not determine the number of labor inspections conducted by the MOL's inspectors during the reporting period. Information was also not publicly available on the sectors or geographic areas in which these inspections were carried out.(6) The MOL reported that it did not conduct inspections specifically devoted to child labor, but checked for child labor during routine inspections. There were no reported violations of child labor laws during these inspections, and there were no complaints of child labor reported to the MOL or the Royal Barbados Police Force (RBPF).(6)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2014, the MOL's 16 inspectors also enforced criminal laws prohibiting the worst forms of child labor in conjunction with the RBPF.(6) Research did not identify the number of criminal investigators employed by the RBPF. Research could also not determine whether criminal investigators received training on the worst forms of child labor during the reporting period.(6) Although information on the level of funding for criminal investigations, including of the worst forms of child labor, was not publicly available, the Government reported that its resources were sufficient with respect to the scope of the problem.(6)

The MOL recognizes the existence of some of the worst forms of child labor in Barbados, including limited commercial sexual exploitation and drug trafficking. However, the MOL reported that there were no investigations of the worst forms of child labor conducted in 2014.(6) The RBPF reported that its Sex Crimes and Trafficking Unit investigated eight suspected cases of sex trafficking during the reporting period; only one case qualified for prosecution under trafficking legislation, and its investigation is ongoing. However, research could not determine whether any of these cases involved children.(27) In Barbados, victims of trafficking and related crimes are referred by law enforcement agencies to the Bureau of Gender Affairs, which coordinates further assistance with NGOs.(27)

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
National Task Force for the Prevention of Human Trafficking	Train personnel to identify victims of trafficking among vulnerable populations and sensitize government officials to trafficking issues. Composed of representatives of 13 agencies, including several government ministries, law enforcement agencies, and NGOs. Initiated the Sex Crimes and Trafficking Unit within the Police force.(2, 6, 26, 28) Led by the Office of the Attorney General.(27)

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Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor (cont)

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Child Labor Committee	Coordinate efforts to eliminate child labor among government agencies, law enforcement, NGOs, and other civil society organizations. Established by the MOL in 2004.(2, 10)
National Committee for Monitoring the Rights of the Child*	Advocate, advise, and make recommendations on issues and policies aimed at protecting and promoting the rights of children. Facilitate public outreach to sensitize communities and build partnerships with respect to the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes protections against the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in illicit activities, such as drug trafficking.(29)

* Mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor was created during the reporting period.

It has been reported that the Child Labor Committee has not been active for several years due to a reported absence of child labor cases.(2, 4, 6)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Work Plan on Human Trafficking	Addresses human trafficking in Barbados, including of children, and contains specific measures with regard to the prosecution of violators, the protection of victims, and the prevention of trafficking.(4, 26)

In September 2014, Barbados hosted and participated in the First Meeting of the Working Groups of the XVIII Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor to foster continued cooperation on labor issues throughout the Americas, including on the exchange of information on policies and programs that seek to formalize the informal sector. Specific discussions were held on strategies for the prevention and elimination of child labor.(30-32)

The Government does not have a comprehensive policy framework to address all worst forms of child labor.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of Barbados funded programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms. The Government has other programs that may have an impact on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Identification, Stabilization, Enablement, and Empowerment Bridge Program*‡	Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, and Community Development program that aims to reduce poverty by addressing employment and education.(33, 34) Targets 30 families to work closely with social workers.(2, 4, 34, 35)
UNICEF Multi-Country Program for the Eastern Caribbean (2012 – 2016)*	Government of Barbados and UNICEF initiatives that address women’s and children’s issues. Includes the Health and Family Life Education Curriculum and the Schools Positive Behavior Management Program (formerly the Child Friendly School Initiative).(3, 36)
School Meal Subsidy*‡	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation program that targets low-income families to encourage school attendance.(2, 4)
Child Labor Awareness Campaign	National Task Force for the Prevention of Human Trafficking campaign to raise public awareness of child labor. Aired over the radio.(6)

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

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Barbados.

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 Barbados (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.	2013 – 2014
	Ensure the minimum age for employment is 16 for all sectors of economic activity.	2009 – 2014
	Adopt a list of occupations or activities constituting light work permissible for children authorized to conduct light work.	2012 – 2014
	Officially incorporate into the legal framework and make publicly available a list of hazardous occupations prohibited for children.	2011 – 2014
Enforcement	Ensure that labor inspectors and criminal investigators receive training on child labor, including its worst forms.	2013 – 2014
	Publicly report on the number of labor inspections conducted, including for child labor, and report on the sectors and geographic areas in which inspections are carried out.	2013 – 2014
	Publicly report on the number of criminal investigators employed by the RBPF to investigate the worst forms of child labor.	2014
	Ensure that inspections are conducted to identify children in the worst forms of child labor, in particular the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in drug trafficking, and make their results publicly available.	2010 – 2014
Coordination	Reactivate the Child Labor Committee to coordinate government efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2011 – 2014
Government Policies	Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in drug trafficking.	2013 – 2014
Social Programs	Conduct a comprehensive study to assess the nature and extent of the worst forms of child labor, in particular the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in drug trafficking. Use the results of this study to develop policies and programs that address the worst forms of child labor.	2009 – 2014
	Assess the impact that the existing school meals and poverty reduction programs may have on addressing the worst forms of child labor, especially the commercial sexual exploitation of children and drug trafficking.	2010 – 2014

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