

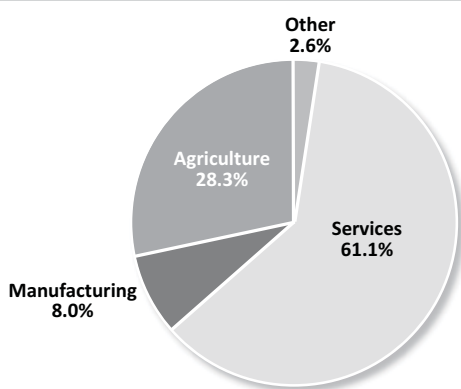
In 2011, Venezuela made no advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. While the Government's current policies and programs aim to alleviate poverty and improve conditions for older working children, there is little evidence of initiatives to protect children from the worst forms of child labor in domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation. The Government collects some data on the prevalence and nature of the worst forms of child labor, but these data are incomplete and do not include data on young children. Venezuela also lacks a comprehensive list of hazardous work prohibited to children. Children in Venezuela continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in dangerous activities in agriculture.



Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	10-14 yrs.	5.1 (138,641)
Attending School	10-14 yrs.	96.0
Combining Work and School	10-14 yrs.	4.1
Primary Completion Rate		93.8

Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14



Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from HHS Survey, 2006.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Venezuela are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in dangerous activities in agriculture.(3-6) Children, primarily boys, working in agriculture have been known to use dangerous tools, carry heavy loads and apply harmful pesticides.(3, 4) Girls work primarily as domestic servants, which causes them to often be isolated in private homes working long hours; they are also susceptible to physical and sexual abuse.(3, 6, 7)

According to a Venezuelan NGO, an estimated 15,000 children live on the streets in Caracas and other Venezuelan cities.(6) Street children in Venezuela sell flowers or other small merchandise, transport items, load merchandise or are forced to work as street beggars.(8, 9) These children often carry heavy loads and suffer from respiratory and skin diseases from exposure to unsanitary conditions on the street.(8)

Statistics from the Government of Venezuela in 2006 indicate that children are employed in the construction and industrial manufacturing sectors.(10) Children, especially girls, are trafficked to and from various Venezuelan cities for the purpose of prostitution.(11, 12) Children trafficked for sexual exploitation may be sent to urban areas, such as Caracas and Maracaibo, or to resort destinations, such as Margarita Island.(9)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Organic Labor Law (LOT) and the Organic Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (LOPNA) set the minimum age for work at 14.(13, 14) The LOT allows children from age 14 to 16 to work only with the consent of their legal guardian.(14) It also establishes that children from age 12 to 14 can work with authorization from the National Institute for Minors if their education is guaranteed and the work is commensurate with their physical abilities.(14) The Constitution and the Organic Education Law mandate compulsory primary and secondary education.(15, 16) Children attend compulsory schooling from approximately age 6 until age 17.(17) The LOPNA guarantees free education for all children and adolescents.(13)

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	17
	Free Public Education	Yes

The LOT also establishes other measures that regulate the employment of minors, including mandatory pre-employment and periodic health screenings, limits on the number of working hours and conditions of remuneration.(14) Under the LOT's provisions, children who work as street vendors must carry an identification card that indicates the name of the school they attend as well as their school's hours.(14)

The LOT prohibits minors under 18 from working in mining; welding; on ships; and in other dangerous activities that endanger their lives or health, threaten their intellectual or moral development or delay their physical development.(14, 18) Venezuelan law does not provide a

comprehensive list of hazardous occupations prohibited to children.

The National Constitution and the LOPNA prohibit forced labor, debt bondage, slavery and trafficking of persons, including of children.(13, 15) The LOPNA forbids all forms of sexual exploitation and states that the Government must offer free assistance to children who have been victims of such acts.(13) The Special Law against Computer Crimes prohibits electronic pornography involving children, while the LOPNA makes it illegal to photograph or videotape minors for pornographic scenes.(13, 19) Venezuelan law also forbids solicitation for the prostitution and the corruption of minors, with penalties depending on the severity of the crime.(6) The law also provides additional penalties for those who involve children in the production and trafficking of illicit drugs.(20)

Venezuela does not have compulsory recruitment into the armed forces, and the minimum age for voluntary recruitment is 18.(21, 22)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The System for the Protection of Children and Adolescents is charged with coordinating and protecting children's rights and addressing child labor issues. The system is made up of several government ministries, councils and representatives from civil society.(13)

The Ministry of Popular Power for Labor and Social Security (MINPPTRASS) enforces labor laws, including child labor laws.(23, 24) Although the Government has stated that the National Institute for Prevention, Safety and Health at Work and MINPPTRASS carry out child labor inspections in the formal and informal business sectors, there was no publicly available information regarding the number of inspections conducted or the sanctions applied during the reporting period.(25)

Cases of trafficking in persons are handled by the Ministry of Popular Power of the Interior and Justice (MPPRIJ)'s Criminal Investigative Division and by the MPPRIJ's Scientific, Penal and Criminal Investigative Corps (CICPC).(23) The CICPC is also responsible for enforcing laws related to sexual exploitation and other illicit activities.(23) During the reporting period, the Government investigated and made arrests in a small number of trafficking cases involving the forced prostitution of women and children, but there was no publically available information on the number of convictions for trafficking or the commercial sexual exploitation of children.(9, 23)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Simón Bolívar First Socialist Plan (2007-2013) is an economic and social development roadmap to eradicate extreme poverty by improving access to health care, education and housing.(26) There is no evidence that the impact of this Plan on the worst forms of child labor has been evaluated.

The Government of Venezuela and UNICEF launched a Plan of Action 2009-2013 for children and adolescents that focuses on education, violence prevention and children's rights protection.(27) While the Plan does not specifically target child labor, it does highlight the paucity of child labor data and identifies child labor indicators as one of its evaluation and monitoring components.(27) Although the Government's National Statistical Institute conducts household surveys that include questions about child labor for children age 10 and older, these surveys provide no data on labor by children ages 5 to 9.(28)

The Government reports adopting a national plan to prevent, combat and sanction the trafficking of persons, and to assist victims, which includes as an objective the rehabilitation of child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.(29) Details of the plan or information on measures taken to implement it during the reporting period were not made publicly available.(29)

Venezuela continued its participation in MERCOSUR's Southern Child Initiative and the Regional Action Group for the Americas.(30, 31) The Southern Child Initiative aims to defend the rights of children and adolescents in the region by raising awareness about the commercial sexual exploitation of children, improving country legal frameworks and exchanging best practices.(32) During the reporting period, MERCOSUR member countries met to exchange good practices on policies

to protect children and adolescents.(33) Venezuela is a member of the Joint Regional Group for the Americas, which conducts child labor prevention and awareness-raising campaigns in tourism; its other members include Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname and Uruguay.(31)

Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Efforts to improve working conditions for child workers continued through the Government's Program to Dignify Working Children and Adolescents (PRODINAT). PRODINAT aims to eradicate exploitative working conditions and establish businesses in which children above the legal working age may work in healthy and safe environments.(34) For example, PRODINAT led to the establishment of the Frutinats production facility, which employed approximately 25 adolescents from age 14 to 17 during the reporting period to extract fruit pulp.(23, 34, 35) The adolescents working at Frutinats continued to attend school or to receive formal education through various programs.(35) Since PRODINAT's launch in 2008, the Program has helped at least 427 young workers.(25)

The Government also operates a network of social programs called Social Missions, which aim to address poverty and related issues.(23) One of the objectives of the Negra Hipólita Mission is to rehabilitate and socially integrate street children and child and adolescent victims of the worst forms of child labor, including children working in garbage dumps.(22, 36) The Children of the Barrio Mission works with at-risk and under-privileged children, including child laborers.(37)

Research did not identify any programs targeting children in other worst forms of child labor, particularly in domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation.

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Venezuela:

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Develop a comprehensive list of hazardous occupations and activities prohibited to children.	2009, 2011
Coordination and Enforcement	Make information publicly available on enforcement of child labor, human trafficking and other laws related to the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
Policies	Assess the impact of the Simón Bolívar First Socialist Plan in addressing the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Policies	Conduct additional surveys on the worst forms of child labor, particularly in agriculture, domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation, and make the results publicly available.	2010, 2011
	Ensure that child labor surveys cover all children under age 18.	2010, 2011
Social Programs	Expand existing programs and develop additional programs targeted to children involved in the worst forms of child labor, particularly in agriculture, domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation.	2009, 2010, 2011

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