

In 2016, Rwanda made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. During the year, the Government earmarked approximately \$243,346 to provide rehabilitation services to children working on the streets and juvenile delinquents. The Ministry of Education also adopted Ministerial Order 001/2016, which imposes sanctions on parents who fail to send their children to school and fines individuals who employ children under the minimum age for work. In addition, the Ministry of Labor developed a memorandum of understanding with the business community to address child labor. However, children in Rwanda perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. Children also engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Enforcement and implementation of child labor laws and regulations remain problematic, and there are no social programs specifically targeting children engaged in domestic work.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Rwanda perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. Children also engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1, 2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Rwanda.

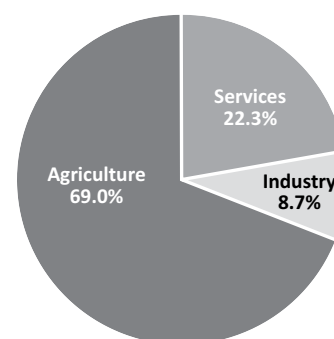
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	6 to 14	5.2 (151,257)
Attending School (%)	6 to 14	88.6
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	4.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		60.5

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2014, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016. (3)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey, 2013–2014. (4)

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	Farming, including carrying heavy loads,† applying pesticides† and fertilizers† (5-7)
	Production of sugarcane, bananas, and tea (5, 8-11)
	Planting and harvesting beans, cabbage, coffee, corn, manioc, peas, pineapple, potatoes, pyrethrum, sweet potatoes, and sorghum. (5, 6, 11)
	Herding cattle and caring for sheep, goats, rabbits, chickens, and pigs (5, 6)
	Production of charcoal (7)
	Fishing, activities unknown (12)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Industry	Construction,† including rock crushing (7, 9, 10)
	Digging pit latrines (13)
	Making bricks† (7, 13)
	Mining† coltan and chalk (14-16)
Services	Domestic work† (1, 7, 10, 17, 18)
	Portering goods across the border (7)
	Street work, including begging, collecting scrap metal,† lifting and carrying heavy loads,† portering, and vending (9, 19-23)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (7, 17, 24-27)
	Forced agricultural labor and domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (17, 18, 27-29)

† 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 Rwanda are trafficked internally for domestic work. Some Rwandan children are externally trafficked, primarily to Uganda, as well as other countries in East Africa, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, China, the United States, and Europe for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor in domestic work and in agricultural and industrial sectors.(27)

Although the Ministry of Education established a policy that provides free basic education for 12 years and aims to improve access to education by hiring new teachers and building schools (29, 30), in practice, the costs of uniforms, school supplies, and unofficial school fees may preclude some families from sending their children to school.(1, 20, 29-32)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Rwanda 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, including its worst forms (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Rwanda’s legal framework to adequately protect children from child labor.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	16	Article 4 of the Labor Law (33)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 4 of the Labor Law (33)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 4–6 of Ministerial Order 2010-06; Kigali City Guidelines 2012–02; Mimuri Sector Child Labor Guidelines for Sugar and Rice Production (34-36)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 8 and 72 of the Labor Law; Article 178 of the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (32, 33, 37)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 72 of the Labor Law; Article 28 of the Law on Prevention and Punishment of Gender-Based Violence; Articles 225, 251, and 258–261 of the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (32, 33, 37, 38)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 72 of the Labor Law; Articles 190, 211, and 260 of the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (32, 33, 37)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 72 of the Labor Law; Article 220 of the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (32, 33, 37)
Minimum Age for Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	N/A*		Article 5 of Presidential Order 72/01 (39)
State Voluntary	Yes	18	Article 5 of Presidential Order 72/01; Article 50 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (32, 39)
Non-state Compulsory	Yes		Article 221 of the Penal Code (37)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 47 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (32)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 47 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (30, 32)

* No conscription (17, 32, 40)

In 2016, the Ministry of Justice continued revising Rwanda's 2012 Penal Code with the aim of strengthening penalties for exploitative child labor and trafficking in persons. The revisions have yet to be approved.(41) In addition, the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) adopted Ministerial Order 001/2016, which imposes sanctions on parents who fail to send their children to school. It also fines individuals who employ children and prevent them from attending school or encourage children to drop out of school.(18, 42)

During the year, the Ministry of Public Service and Labor approved guidelines that determined light work activities for children between ages 13 and 15. Light work for children is restricted to a maximum of 20 hours per week and may include the following: internships, computer work, phone and electricity airtime and mobile money selling, radio and television repair, newspaper distribution, providing customer care services at a family business, Internet café activities, hairdressing- and barbershop-related work, and crafting and small trading business activities in a family business.(43) Labor laws are still unclear about minimum age protections for children in the informal sector.(33, 44, 45)

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). However, gaps in labor law and criminal law enforcement remain and some enforcement information is not available.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Public Service and Labor (MIFOTRA)	Enforce labor laws, including laws on child labor.(11, 46-48) In partnership with the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), children withdrawn from child labor are reintegrated with their families and enrolled in school.(29)
Rwandan National Police (RNP)	Enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor and operate a free hotline to report incidents of gender-based violence and child abuse, including child labor.(11, 12, 49) In the case of the RNP's Child Protection Unit and Anti-Trafficking Unit, enforce laws related to the worst forms of child labor.(1, 11, 51, 52, 29) In the case of the Directorate for Anti-Gender-Based Violence, assist victims of the worst forms of child labor through anti-gender-based violence officers at each of the 78 police stations.(9)

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Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (cont)

Organization/Agency	Role
National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA)	Prosecute violations of labor laws, including laws on child labor.(11, 46-48)
Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration	Receive referrals for trafficking cases and employ an anti-trafficking specialist.(12) Verify that children transported across the border are traveling with the permission of their parents or guardians. Train border and immigration officials to identify potential trafficking victims.(11, 50)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2016, labor law enforcement agencies in Rwanda took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	\$182,927 (29)
Number of Labor Inspectors	35 (1)	35 (29)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (1)	Yes (29)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (1)	Yes (29)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (1)	Yes (29)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (1)	Yes (29)
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown* (1)	1,051 (29)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown* (1)	1,051 (29)
Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown* (1)	N/A (29)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown* (1)	Unknown* (29)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown* (1)	Unknown* (29)
Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown* (1)	Unknown* (29)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (1)	Yes (29)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (1)	Yes (29)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (1)	Yes (29)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (1)	Yes (29)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (1)	Yes (29)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (1)	Yes (29)

* The Government does not publish this information.

The number of labor inspectors is insufficient for the size of Rwanda's workforce, which comprises more than 6 million workers. According to the ILO's recommendation of 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, Rwanda should employ roughly 151 labor inspectors.(56-58) According to the Ministry of Public Service and Labor (MIFOTRA), labor unions, and local human rights groups, the insufficient number of labor inspectors hamper the labor inspectorate's capacity to monitor and enforce child labor laws. However, sources report that MIFOTRA had adequate funding and transportation to carry out labor inspections in 2016.(1, 29) During 2016, 220 inspections were specific to child labor out of the 1,051 total inspections conducted. MIFOTRA also carried out 209 targeted inspections in 209 mines in the formal sector and found that of the 17,000 employees working, none were under the minimum age for work.(29)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2016, criminal law enforcement agencies in Rwanda took actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (1)	Yes (29)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (1)	Yes (29)

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor (cont)

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (1)	Yes (29)
Number of Investigations	Unknown* (1)	Unknown* (29)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown* (1)	Unknown* (29)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown* (1)	14 (29)
Number of Convictions	Unknown* (1)	8 (29)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (1)	Yes (29)

* The Government does not publish this information.

In 2016, Rwandan National Police (RNP) expanded its training curriculum by including police training on the commercial sexual exploitation of children, gender-based violence, and trafficking in persons. During the year, the RNP and immigration officials arrested perpetrators who attempted to commit child trafficking for labor exploitation while crossing the Burundi border.(29) Although the RNP operates a free hotline staffed by social workers to report incidences of gender-based violence and child abuse, including child labor, it is unknown how many of these complaints were related to child labor.(12, 17, 49)

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 8).

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Child Labor	Coordinate government efforts related to the worst forms of child labor, review child labor laws, advocate for the inclusion of child labor policies in national development plans, oversee the implementation of child labor interventions, and conduct field visits to assess the prevalence of child labor and to raise awareness of child labor. Met quarterly in 2016.(9, 51)
National Consultative Forum on Human Trafficking, Drug Abuse, and Gender-Based Violence	Enable national-level discussion and coordination of efforts to address human trafficking. Chaired annually by the First Lady of Rwanda and includes parliamentarians; representatives of the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), the Ministry of Justice, MINEDUC, and the RNP; NPPA prosecutors; NGOs; and faith-based and civil society leaders. MIGEPROF was selected to coordinate implementation of the 2014–2015 anti-human trafficking plan.(17) In 2016, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons assembly met and determined that some recommendations in the implementation were not fulfilled. As a result, the assembly adopted 18 resolutions and established a new deadline of June 2017.(52)
National Commission for Children	Monitor, promote, and advocate for children’s rights; develop action plans to protect children from abuse and exploitation. Overseen by MIGEPROF and supported by a board of directors and an advisory council of 14 institutions.(9, 53, 54)
Roundtable on the Elimination of Child Labor for Sustainable Tea Forum (REST)	Implement policies and programs related to child labor in the tea sector. Representatives include MIFOTRA, Winrock International, and tea industry and civil society groups. REST met on a quarterly basis.(29)
Local Committees	Monitor incidents of child labor nationwide through 149 local committees.(9, 51) In the case of the Child Labor Committees, implement policies developed by the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Child Labor in 30 districts and coordinate district labor inspectors, police, and social services officers in conducting inspections, enforcing labor laws, and providing social services to child labor victims. In the case of Gender-Based Violence Committees, operate at the district level to raise awareness about gender-based violence and coordinate social services to assist gender-based violence victims. In the case of Child Protection Committees, identify and report cases of child rights violations at the district, sector, and cell levels.(1, 55, 56)
Kigali City Council Task Force	Coordinate activities to combat child labor in the districts of Gasabo, Kicukiro, and Nyarugenge.(14, 56, 57) The Task Force met during the year to discuss strategies to combat child labor.(52)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

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Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor[‡]

Policy	Description
National Policy for the Elimination of Child Labor (2013) and 5-Year Action Plan to Combat Child Labor	Aims to prevent at-risk children from entering exploitative child labor; withdraw children engaged in exploitative labor through the provision of education; rehabilitate former child laborers through counseling, life skills training, and medical care; raise community awareness about child labor; and establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms on child labor. The Government committed more than \$4.2 million to implement the activities listed in the National Policy and the Action Plan.(11, 58-60)
Trafficking in Persons Action Plan	Aims to improve government efforts to combat human trafficking through awareness-raising, research, poverty reduction strategies, improved services provision, enforcement, and collaboration. Developed by the Consultative Forum on Human Trafficking, Drug Abuse, and Gender-Based Violence.(17, 61)
Government Policies Advancing Youth Employment and Social Protection	Aims to increase understanding of child labor and economic exploitation, and provides employment for school dropouts. Includes the National Employment Policy and National Youth Policy.(13, 62-64)

[‡] The Government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.(40, 65-68)

In 2016, the Government adopted guidelines to combat child labor, assisted in recruiting 30,000 village-level volunteers to address child labor, and increased its budget to provide child welfare services under the National Policy for the Elimination of Child Labor.(52) The Government has not included child labor elimination and prevention strategies in Vision 2020, the National Social Protection Strategy, and National Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy.(62, 69, 70) Sources indicate that the Government is drafting its Vision 2050 strategies to align with sustainable development goals; this should include child labor elimination and prevention strategies.(52)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2016, the Government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor[‡]

Program	Description
Programs to Combat Child Labor and Raise Awareness [‡]	Government-funded and implemented programs to combat child labor and raise awareness. Includes MIGEPROF's campaign to teach parents and community leaders to recognize risk factors for human trafficking and to identify victims.(17) Friends of the Family (<i>Incuti Z'Umuryango</i>) Program, which trains volunteers to provide social services to families and children who are victims of the worst forms of child labor, identifies children at risk of trafficking or forced labor, and reports them to district governments and the RNP. This program also establishes monitoring committees at the village, cell, sector, district, and national levels to combat child labor.(17) The Vision 2020 Umurenge Program provides cash and in-kind transfers to child-headed households and street children.(11, 62, 71, 72) MIFOTRA developed a memorandum of understanding that invited the business community to commit to eradicating child labor.(7)
Victim Assistance Programs [‡]	Gitagata Center provides education, vocational training, and psychosocial support, and reunites former street children in the Bugesera District with their families.(9, 73) "One-stop" centers are located in hospitals and district capitals for victims of gender-based violence and human trafficking, including individuals who have experienced child domestic work, commercial sexual exploitation, and forced labor. These centers provide medical care, counseling, legal aid, short-term shelter, and access to police services. In 2016, the number of centers increased from 21 to 28.(17)
USDOL-Funded Projects	USDOL projects aim to collect data on child labor, remove children from child labor, and provide technical assistance to the Government to develop policies to combat child labor. Includes Rwanda Education Alternatives for Children in Tea-Growing Areas (2013–2017), a \$5 million project implemented by Winrock International, and Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues (2011–2017), a \$15.9 million global project implemented by the ILO in 40 countries, including Rwanda.(74, 75) Additional information is available on the USDOL Web site .
McGovern-Dole School Feeding Program	\$25 million World Food Program and the U.S. Department of Agriculture pilot program that works with the Government of Rwanda to provide school meals to 83,000 children in 4 districts (Karongi, Rutsiro, Nyamagabe, and Nyaruguru).(29)
Books Can Open Closed Doors	Save the Children and Children's Voice Today to advocate for the rights of child domestic workers and offer services and support. Since 2015, the program has trained 42 children in vocational skills, provided social services to 98 children, withdrawn 5 children from child labor, and educated more than 6,000 children and 3,000 community members about child labor issues.(76)

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor[†] (cont)

Program	Description
Study on Violence Against Children*	The Government, in collaboration with UNICEF and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is conducting a 2-year study about violence against children, including child labor. The study's findings will be published in 2017. (29)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Rwanda.

‡ The Government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms. (9, 17, 77, 78)

Although Rwanda has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem of child labor in domestic work and agriculture.

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 Rwanda (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that relevant child labor laws and regulations apply equally to children working in non-contractual and contractual employment.	2009 – 2016
Enforcement	Ensure that labor law enforcement personnel have sufficient human resources to enforce child labor laws.	2009 – 2016
	Publish information about the number of child labor violations found, number of child labor penalties imposed, and penalties collected based on child labor violations.	2009 – 2016
	Publish information about the number of criminal investigations and violations found related to the worst forms of child labor.	2015 – 2016
	Disaggregate the number of complaints received by the RNP's hotline that relate to child labor.	2013 – 2016
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into Vision 2050, the National Social Protection Strategy, and National Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy.	2011 – 2016
Social Programs	Ensure that school costs, such as uniforms, school supplies, and unofficial school fees, do not diminish the impact of the 12-year education policy.	2010 – 2016
	Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem in domestic work and agriculture.	2015 – 2016

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