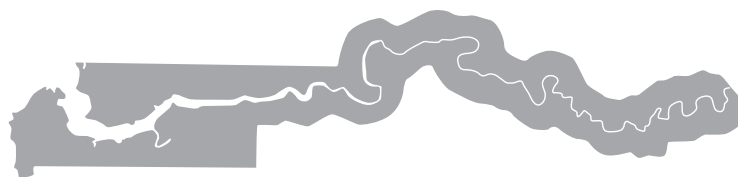


In 2017, The Gambia made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. During the year, the government signed the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. The Gambia also created the National Coordination Committee on Child Labor to conduct child labor investigations and streamline the process to prosecute child labor perpetrators. Furthermore, the government increased the number of Community Child Protection Committees from 31 to 70 and initiated 15 child protection centers to monitor, identify, and report potential cases of the worst forms of child labor. However, children in The Gambia engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced begging. Gaps in the law remain, including a need to increase the compulsory education age to the minimum age for work. In addition, labor law and criminal law enforcement efforts are limited.



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### I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in The Gambia engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and forced begging. (1; 2; 3; 4) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in The Gambia.

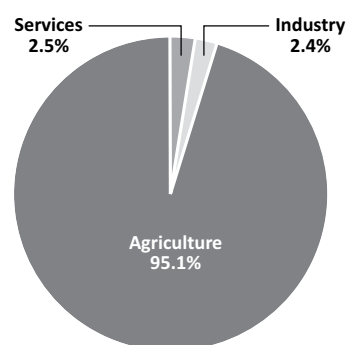
**Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	20.1 (105,013)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	63.6
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	10.3
Primary Completion Rate (%)		70.2

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2016, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (5)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Integrated Household Survey on Consumption, Expenditure and Poverty Level Assessment Survey, 2015–2016. (6)

**Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14**



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 protecting crops by chasing animals (1; 7)
Industry	Working in carpentry, masonry, sewing, plumbing, and in metal welding workshops† (1; 8; 4) Mining† and quarrying† (4)
Services	Domestic work (1; 2; 4) Street work, including begging and vending (1; 2; 9; 10; 4) Scavenging for scrap metal and jewelry at dump sites (1; 11) Working as taxi and bus attendants (1) Working as auto mechanics† (1; 8; 12; 4)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1; 2; 10; 13; 3; 4) Forced begging by Koranic teachers (1; 2; 7; 4) Forced labor in domestic work and street vending, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2; 3)

† 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.

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In The Gambia, children are internally trafficked and subjected to commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, and domestic work. Girls and boys from West African countries, including Benin, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal, and Sierra Leone, are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation in The Gambia. (3; 4) Tourists from Britain, Germany, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, and Canada also subject children to commercial sexual exploitation in brothels and motels in tourist areas. (14; 3) In The Gambia, it is a common practice to send boys to receive education from Koranic teachers, or *marabouts*, who sometimes force Koranic students, or *almudus*, to beg in the streets for money and food and conduct street vending. (14) However, a source indicated that reported incidents had reduced during the year. (15)




Article 30 of the Constitution mandates free compulsory education; however, families are sometimes required to buy books and uniforms, as well as contribute to the school fund and examination fees, which families often cannot afford. Absence from school due to unpaid school fees increases children’s vulnerability to child labor. (16; 15) Also, inadequate teaching facilities, low numbers of teachers in rural areas, and limited access to clean water in schools create barriers for children to access education. (4)

The government has not conducted research to determine the activities carried out by children, including in agriculture, domestic work, and forced begging to inform policies and social programs.

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Gambia has ratified most 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 Gambia’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the minimum age for compulsory education.

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 43 of the Children’s Act (17)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 44 of the Children’s Act; Article 46 of the Labor Act (17; 18)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 44–45 of the Children’s Act (17)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 20 of the Constitution; Article 41 of the Children’s Act (16; 17)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 30 and 39 of the Children’s Act; Articles 28 and 56 of the Trafficking in Persons Act; Article 13 of the Tourism Offences Act (17; 19; 20)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 26–27, 29–32, and 34 of the Children’s Act; Articles 7–9 of the Tourism Offences Act (17; 20)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 31 and 36–37 of the Children’s Act (17)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	N/A*		Article 59 of the Children's Act (17)
State Voluntary	Yes	18	Article 59 of the Children's Act (17)
Non-state	Yes	18	Article 31(c) of the Children's Act (17)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16‡	Article 30 of the Constitution; Article 18 of the Children's Act (16; 17)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 18 of the Children's Act (17)

\* No conscription (21)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (16; 17; 22; 23; 24)

In 2017, the government signed the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. The government also signed the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which states in part that children of migrant families cannot be denied access to education in the host country. (4)

In The Gambia, children may commence an apprenticeship in the informal sector at the age of 12 which makes them vulnerable to engage in child labor and not complete basic education. (17)

### 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 operations of the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment that hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

Organization/Agency	Role
Department of Social Welfare (DSW)	Combat forced child labor and coordinate the handling of trafficking victims, including working closely with social welfare officers in police units. (25) Operate a 24-hour hotline to address human trafficking and maintain a database of individuals suspected of pedophilia or child trafficking, in collaboration with The Gambia Tourism Board. (3) Maintain an electronic database that contains information on cases requiring child protection, including those involving labor and human trafficking violations. (3) Housed under the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare. (4)
Department of Labor	Conduct labor inspections and enforce labor laws pertaining to hazardous child labor. (4; 26) Housed under the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment. (26)
Child Protection Alliance (CPA)	Promote children's rights and child protection services. Raise awareness about child exploitation. (27; 28; 29) Members include government departments, civil society organizations, UN agencies, NGOs, child and youth organizations, and bilateral institutions. (28) Train journalists about child sex tourism and government officials on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. (30; 31)
National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP)	Investigate suspected cases of human trafficking. Members includes investigators, police, members of the National Intelligence Agency, and five prosecutors. (32) Gather evidence for the NAATIP director, who can recommend that the NAATIP prosecutor file charges for human trafficking violations. (32) In 2017, trained two new investigators and met quarterly. (4)
Children's Court	Under the jurisdiction of the National Assembly's Committee on Health, Women, Children, Disaster and Refugees, and Humanitarian Relief, adjudicate cases involving children and determine guardianship of child abuse victims, including child laborers, referred to the court by the DSW. (33) Currently, there are three courts for seven regions in the country. (4)
The Gambia Tourism Board	Combat commercial sexual exploitation of children in tourist areas. (14) Educate the public about child sex tourism and the consequences for violating the Code of Conduct for the Protection of Children and the Tourism Act. (34)
Tourism Security Unit	Prevent unaccompanied children from entering tourist areas and patrol tourist areas for child labor and criminal violations, such as commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Has a dedicated child protection division. (14; 25)
Gambia Police Force Child Welfare Unit	Oversee all situations involving children's welfare. (29) Collaborate with the CPA, the DSW, NGOs, and other agencies to assess and identify children engaged in the worst forms of child labor. (4)

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

Organization/Agency	Role
Community Child Protection Committees	Raise awareness and report cases of labor issues, including child labor, to the authorities.
Village Development Committees	Serve as volunteer arbitrators and mediators for community disputes involving children and other matters. (4)
Neighborhood Watch Groups	Monitor neighborhoods for child exploitation. Maintain five existing groups established by the DSW in urban areas near tourist resorts. (25) Supported by the DSW, which pays allowances to Neighborhood Watch Group members and pays the cell phone credit to report child labor violations. (25)

In 2017, the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) had limited human and financial resources to combat child labor. During the reporting period, the agency reported developing a database to record complaints, investigations, prosecutions, and convictions of child labor. (4) The National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP) reported a lack of financial resources to conduct investigations. It received a budget of \$35,000, which was sufficient to cover only salaries and insufficient for transportation and fuel expenses. Due to insufficient funding, NAATIP did not investigate new cases in 2017. (4)

In 2017, the DSW created an additional Neighborhood Watch Group, and Community Child Protection Committees increased from 31 to 70. (1; 12; 11; 4) The government also initiated 15 child protection centers to monitor, identify, and report potential cases of the worst forms of child labor. In 2017, many of the 1,500 Village Development Committees were not trained on child protection and the worst forms of child labor. (4)

### *Labor Law Enforcement*

In 2017, labor law enforcement agencies in The Gambia took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including investigation planning.

**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown* (35)	Unknown (4)
Number of Labor Inspectors	5 (35)	7 (4)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (35)	Yes (4)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (35)	Yes (4)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown* (35)	Unknown (4)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown* (35)	Unknown (4)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown* (35)	Unknown (4)
Number Conducted at Worksites	Unknown* (35)	Unknown (4)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown* (35)	Unknown (4)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	Unknown* (35)	Unknown (4)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that were Collected	Unknown* (35)	Unknown (4)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (35)	Yes (4)
Routine Inspections Targeted	No (35)	No (4)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (35)	Yes (4)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (35)	Yes (4)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (35)	Yes (4)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (35)	Yes (4)

\* The government does not publish this information.

The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of The Gambia's workforce, which includes more than 700,000 workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 40,000 workers in less-developed economies, The Gambia would employ about 19 inspectors. (36; 37) Although enforcement data were unavailable, the Department

of Labor and an NGO reported that the agency had sufficient resources to conduct inspections. (4) However, inspectors are unauthorized to inspect private farms in which children may be working in violation of the minimum age for work. (4)

### *Criminal Law Enforcement*

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in The Gambia 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 investigation planning.

**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	Yes (35)	Yes (4)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (35)	Unknown (4)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (35)	Yes (4)
Number of Investigations	2 (35)	Unknown (4)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown* (35)	Unknown* (4)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown* (35)	Unknown* (4)
Number of Convictions	Unknown* (35)	0 (38)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (35)	Yes (4)

\* The government does not publish this information.

In 2017, the DSW reported that the Gambia Police Force Child Welfare Unit identified 88 children subjected to human trafficking and reunited them with their families. Children identified were from Senegal, Guinea Bissau, and Sierra Leone. (4)

Although Articles 39 and 40 of the Children's Act prohibit human trafficking and slave dealing of children and carry a penalty of life imprisonment, a source indicates that, in practice, perpetrators are convicted to only 2 years or a fine, or both. These penalties, in practice, are not harsh enough to deter violations. (17; 4)

## 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 capacity for coordination of efforts to address child labor, including the efficacy of coordination efforts.

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

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
National Coordination Committee on Child Labor	Coordinate child labor enforcement processes, including prosecutions of the worst forms of child labor. Led by the DSW, comprises representatives from UNICEF, Department of Labor, NAATIP, Action Aid, Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education, Gambia Teachers Union, Young People in the Media, and the Inspector General of Police. (4) Established in 2017 and held meetings. (4)
DSW	Coordinate government efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor. (14) Leads the National Coordination Committee on Child Labor and operates five neighborhood watch groups to identify and report the worst forms of child labor. (3; 4)
NAATIP	Coordinate, administer, and monitor the implementation of the Trafficking in Persons Act and share information among law enforcement agencies. Created under the Ministry of Justice. Convenes and leads monthly meetings with the National Trafficking in Persons Task Force; a task force focusing on multiple sectors in which human trafficking occurs across the country. (14; 25) The task force includes NAATIP, Ministry of Justice, Department of Immigration, Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Women's Bureau, Gambia Radio and Television Services, Center for Street Children, and Gambia Police Force. (38)

## 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 the lack of a national child labor policy.

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**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor‡**

Policy	Description
Child Protection Strategy (2016–2020)	Outlines strategies to improve child protection, including addressing the worst forms of child labor, by increasing awareness and strengthening coordination among government agencies. (39) Research was unable to determine whether action was taken to implement this policy in 2017. (38)
Code of Conduct of The Gambia Tourism Authority for the Protection of Children	Raises awareness of commercial sexual exploitation of children in the tourism industry and among tourists. (14; 40) Requires new hotel staff to be trained on the Code at the beginning of the annual peak tourism season. (14) Research was unable to determine whether action was taken to implement this policy in 2017.

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (41)

Research was unable to determine whether the government renewed the National Trafficking In Persons Action Plan. (38)

Child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to be integrated into the Education Sector Policy. Although the government has adopted the Trafficking MOU with Senegal, research found no evidence of a policy on other worst forms of child labor. (1)

## 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 programs to address the full scope of the problem.

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor‡**

Program	Description
Combating Child Sex Tourism Project	CPA project, funded by ECPAT Netherlands, that raises awareness about commercial sexual exploitation of children, the Tourism Offences Act, and the Code of Conduct among Tourism Security Unit personnel, hoteliers, travel agencies, and other tourism stakeholders. (1; 42) Program reported not meeting its target because there were incidences of child sex tourism in 2017. (4)
Results for Education Achievement and Development (READ)	\$8.5 million World Bank-funded project that focuses on increasing access to basic education and improving the quality of education in lower basic schools. (43) Research was unable to determine actions taken in 2017.
Street Children Center†	DSW-run, with support from international organizations, foreign NGOs, and local businesses, drop-in center in Talinding Kunjang that provides medical care, food, and counseling to street children, including human trafficking victims and almodus. (14; 25) Works to prevent children from returning to street begging. (44) Received continued financial support from the government during the year. (4) Research was unable to determine the number of children who benefited from the program in 2017.
Conditional Cash Transfers to the Majaalis†	Ministry of Education program that gives marabouts food rations and approximately \$2.56 monthly for each student if the marabouts do not force students to beg. (25) Provides teachers for English, mathematics, and science subjects to Koranic schools. More than 1,000 children have benefited from the program. (1; 14; 45) Received continued financial support from the government in 2017. Research unable to determine program achievements in 2017. (4)

† Program is funded by the Government of The Gambia.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (46; 47; 48)

In 2017, Child Fund Gambia, in partnership with TOMS, sponsored 189,600 shoes to the Ministry of Education to assist with improving access to education for children throughout all regions in the country. (49)

Although The Gambia has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, as programs do not reach all children working in agriculture and domestic work or those vulnerable to human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, forced begging, and street work.

## 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 Gambia (Table 11).



**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Harmonize provisions of the Children's Act and the Labor Code that regulate apprenticeships and ensure that children are at least 14 years of age in workplace-based apprenticeships.	2017
Enforcement	Ensure that the Village Development Committees receive training on the worst forms of child labor.	2017
	Employ enough labor inspectors to provide sufficient coverage for the workforce.	2016 – 2017
	Strengthen the Labor Inspectorate by initiating targeted inspections based on analysis of data related to risk-prone sectors and patterns of serious incidents.	2016 – 2017
	Publish information about the Labor Inspectorate's funding, training related to child labor, inspections conducted, violations found, and penalties imposed and collected.	2012 – 2017
	Ensure the DSW has sufficient human and financial resources to combat child labor.	2017
	Ensure the Labor Inspectorate has authority to conduct inspections at private farms.	2017
	Publish information about criminal law enforcement efforts, including training on new laws, investigations conducted, violations found, prosecutions initiated, and convictions achieved concerning the worst forms of child labor.	2015 – 2017
Coordination	Ensure NAATIP has sufficient funding to conduct investigations on trafficking in persons.	2016 – 2017
	Ensure NAATIP has sufficient funding to conduct investigations on trafficking in persons.	2012 – 2017
Government Policies	Ensure that child labor elimination and prevention strategies are integrated into the Education Policy.	2015 – 2017
	Publish information about the implementation of policies related to the elimination of child labor, such as the Code of Conduct of The Gambia Tourism Authority for the Protection of Children.	2017
	Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, such as commercial sexual exploitation.	2015 – 2017
Social Programs	Publish information about the implementation of social programs, such as the Street Children Center.	2017
	Expand existing programs to address child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation of children, and children working in the street.	2010 – 2017
	Enhance opportunities for children to access education by providing adequate teaching facilities and assigning teachers to rural areas.	2017
	Ensure that children can complete primary school by subsidizing or defraying the cost of books, uniforms, and other fees.	2010 – 2017
	Expand existing programs to address children working in agriculture and domestic work.	2015 – 2017
	Conduct research to determine the activities carried out by children, including in agriculture, domestic work, and forced begging, to inform policies and social programs.	2017

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