

Dominican Republic

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2013, the Dominican Republic made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Despite several initiatives to address child labor, the Dominican Republic received this assessment because of significant limitations on educational opportunities for certain children, which increases their vulnerability to labor exploitation.

In 2013, the Government expanded some of its social programs, including its conditional cash transfer program that requires children in families receiving benefits to stay in school and out of work. In addition, the Government allocated 4 percent of national GDP for primary and secondary education, an increase from 2.4 percent in 2011. It also launched public campaigns to raise awareness about child labor. However, children in the Dominican Republic continue to engage in exploitative child labor in agriculture and commercial sexual exploitation. Moreover, due to frequent misinterpretations and misapplication of Dominican law and policies on the right to education, school officials do not permit many children, particularly those of Haitian descent, to enroll in primary and secondary education without birth certificates or other identifying documentation. These incorrectly-applied provisions may prevent or discourage children not entitled to Dominican documents or unable to obtain documents from their countries of nationality from enrolling in or completing school.

In addition, the Government's steps to address child labor may be further undermined by the September 23, 2013, Constitutional Tribunal ruling that impacted the citizenship status and, consequently, access to education of Dominican-born descendants of foreign parents "in transit", including both documented and undocumented migrants. In May 2014, Dominican President Medina signed a naturalization law approved by Congress that may restore nationality to some affected by the ruling, which may potentially enable access to education for some affected children.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in the Dominican Republic are engaged in exploitative child labor in agriculture and commercial sexual exploitation. (1-3) The 2009-2010 National Household Survey found that although the overall incidence of child labor has decreased in the past decade, incidence of child labor in agriculture has increased. (4, 5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in the Dominican Republic.

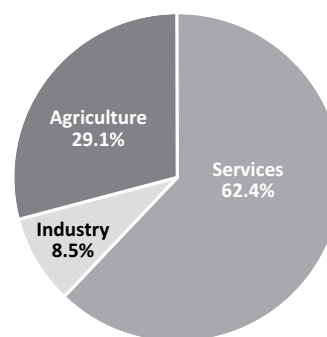
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10-14 yrs.	5.3 (54,850)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	96.1
Combining Work and School (%)	10-14 yrs.	4.8
Primary Completion Rate (%)		90.3

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(6)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Encuesta Nacional de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples (ENHOGAR) Survey, 2011.(7)

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	Harvesting sugarcane, collecting cut cane, clearing land, and planting for sugarcane production† (8-16)
	Producing coffee, rice, tomatoes, garlic,* onion,* and potatoes* (1, 3, 5, 9, 17-21)
Industry	Working in restaurants, bars, cantinas, and coffee shops in the food service industry (4)
	Producing baked goods† (bread, cakes, and pastries) (4)
	Mining for larimar*† (a blue rock often used for jewelry) (17)
	Construction, activities unknown (3, 4, 19, 22, 23)
Services	Street work,† including vending, shining shoes, and washing car windows (1-3, 19, 21, 24)
	Scavenging in landfills† (25)
	Domestic service in third-party homes* (2, 3, 21)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced domestic service* (3, 22, 26, 27)
	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (3, 14, 18, 26-31)
	Domestic service, agricultural labor, and begging as a result of human trafficking* (3, 21, 26, 28, 31-34)
	Use of children for illicit activities,* including drug trafficking and illegal sales at border areas (21, 35, 36)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

† 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 are exploited in commercial sexual exploitation, particularly in tourist locations and major urban areas.(3, 26, 31) There are also incidences of children trafficked internally for sex tourism.(24, 29)

Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic is a longstanding phenomenon; although estimates vary, approximately 900,000 to 1.2 million Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent live in the Dominican Republic.(18, 23, 26, 37, 38) Many Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent, including children, live in communities known as *bateyes* that traditionally have housed sugarcane workers and often lack adequate housing, medical services, and other basic services.(3, 9, 17, 18, 39) Some children harvest sugarcane, collect cut cane, clear land, or plant for sugarcane production, sometimes alongside their parents.(8-16) The porous border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic has enabled children, accompanied or not, to be trafficked into the Dominican Republic without coming to the attention of authorities.(26, 40, 41) Some Haitian children who are trafficked to the Dominican Republic are forced to work in agriculture, domestic service, or begging.(26, 32-34)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Dominican Republic 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 relevant laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Dominican Republic

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Article 245 of the Labor Code; Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (42, 43)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Resolution on Hazardous Work for Persons under Age 18 (19)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	Yes		Resolution on Hazardous Work for Persons under Age 18 (19)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Constitution; Law Against Trafficking in Persons and Migrant Smuggling (44-46)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Law Against Trafficking in Persons and Migrant Smuggling; Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents Law (43-45)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents Law; Technology Crime Law (child pornography) (43, 45, 47)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Law on Drugs and Controlled Substances (48)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		Armed Forces Law (25, 49)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	16	Armed Forces Law (25, 49)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	18	Article 63 of the Constitution (46, 50)
Free Public Education	Yes	18	Article 63 of the Constitution (46, 50)

* No conscription in peacetime. However, the Armed Forces Law establishes the minimum age for recruitment in times of war.(49)

The 2010 Constitution declares the eradication of child labor as a national priority.(46) The Constitution guarantees free public education and requires that all children attend school until age 18.(2, 46, 50) However, in practice, associated school costs, such as transportation and books, and misinterpretation and misapplication of student documentation requirements by school officials may prevent or discourage some children from attending or completing school.(31, 39, 51-55) In practice, some primary or secondary schools deny access to children who cannot present birth certificates, putting such children in precarious situations in which they are more likely to work.(18, 20, 39, 53) Other secondary schools permit access absent birth documentation but deny high school diplomas.(53) Without the opportunity to receive high school diplomas and, as a result, pursue higher education and thereby improve access to formal sector employment as adults, individuals without identity documents have significantly less incentive to remain in school, which increases their vulnerability to entry into the worst forms of child labor.(2, 3, 18, 26, 31, 38, 53, 55-57) An estimated 13 percent of all children younger than age 15 have no birth documents.(18, 31) The lack of documentation also impedes age verification of working adolescents, making them more likely to perform work considered hazardous for minors.(18, 20, 38)

Children of parents with irregular migration status are particularly vulnerable to labor exploitation due to a lack of identity documents.(3, 18, 52, 58, 59) The 2010 Constitution stipulates that children born in the Dominican Republic can receive Dominican citizenship if one of their parents is a Dominican citizen.(46) However, the 2010 Constitution clarified that anyone born in the country is considered a Dominican national except children born to diplomats, parents who are “in transit,” or parents who are in the country illegally.(46) At the same time, the Constitution adopted the 2004 Migration Law’s definition of “in transit,” which had been upheld in 2005 by the Supreme Court of Justice, meaning that anyone born in the Dominican Republic to parents without valid resident status would not qualify as a Dominican citizen.(3, 46, 52, 55, 58, 59) On September 23, 2013, the Constitutional Tribunal, the highest judicial court in the Dominican Republic, upheld the definition of “in transit” and ruled that children born in the Dominican Republic to any foreigners “in transit” (going back to 1929) are not considered Dominican nationals, potentially impacting an estimated 200,000 individuals.(39, 60) The option of obtaining birth certificates from the countries from where their parents originated is also not viable for many children born in the Dominican Republic, particularly if their parents are no longer citizens of or have lost ties with their countries of origin as a result of their long-established presence in the Dominican Republic or, as in the case of Haiti, the countries of origin have suffered natural disasters resulting in the destruction of birth records that would have demonstrated citizenship.(3) In November, President Medina issued a presidential decree to promulgate the National Regularization Plan for Foreigners as a mechanism to recognize, document, and regularize undocumented migrants in the Dominican Republic.(60) In May 2014, the President signed a naturalization law approved by Congress that may restore nationality to some affected by the ruling, which may potentially enable access to education for some affected children.(61)

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 (SET)	Lead government efforts to eliminate child labor, conduct labor inspections to identify and document offenses, and direct the Child Labor Unit to investigate and eradicate child labor.(2, 10, 22, 24) Implement the Institutional Strategic Plan (2013–2016) approved in 2013, which outlines objectives to improve the number and quality of labor inspections overall, offer better service to workers, coordinate Labor Code reform, integrate the Child Labor Inspection Unit into existing enforcement efforts, and provide improved vocational training for vulnerable populations, including children.(10)
National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI)	Promote policies to eradicate all forms of violence against children and child labor.(62) Coordinate with SET to protect children against labor exploitation, as well as promote policies designed to improve the employability of young people and reduce barriers to entry into the labor market.(58, 62, 63) Receive victims of child labor for psychological evaluation and possible institutionalization while the Attorney General's Office undertakes the judicial and prosecutorial processes.(11)
Specialized Corps for Tourist Safety (previously POLITUR)	Prevent child sex abuse in tourist areas, rescue minors, and arrest and bring to justice the child sex offenders.(62)
Ministry of the Interior's National Police (PN), PN's Trafficking in Persons Unit (TIP), and Directorate of Migration (DGM)	Enforce criminal laws, including those prohibiting and punishing the worst forms of child labor, and coordinate with the Attorney General's Office in the prosecution of perpetrators.(10)
Attorney General's Office and Trafficking in Persons Unit	Train investigators on child labor issues and prosecute the perpetrators of crimes involving children.(10, 45)

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

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2013, the SET employed 207 labor inspectors, all of whom receive training to detect child labor.(25, 62–64) The Government of the Dominican Republic reported that around 98,000 labor inspections (an average of 473 inspections for each SET labor inspector) were conducted in 2013 to verify compliance with labor laws, including child labor laws.(25, 62, 64, 65) These figures indicate an increase of 15 inspectors and 30,000 inspections from 2012.(62) The Ministry of Labor reported that its Inspection Unit removed a total of 317 minors from exploitative labor situations through 22 of its inspections conducted in 2013; however, no information was provided on whether any sanctions were issued or penalties assessed and collected for these or other child labor violations.(62, 66) In addition, no information was provided about whether the inspections conducted in 2013 were planned inspections or reactive inspections at the request of employers or employees or what sectors or geographical areas were targeted.(62)

Furthermore, although the 2008 General Inspection Protocol and 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 18 are not participating in dangerous or unhealthy work.(11, 20, 38, 67, 68) Further, it is unknown how the high number of inspections conducted by each SET inspector may impact the quality of such inspections. Additionally, the Ministry of Labor has indicated that improvements are needed in how inspectors conduct interviews, ask follow up questions, and use inspection data to strengthen the inspection system.(20) The Ministry of Labor has also indicated that resources, such as vehicles and fuel, are insufficient for inspectors to perform field visits on a regular basis.(10)

Moreover, the process developed by SET for inspections to enforce labor laws includes a preliminary visit, during which inspectors inform employers of violations but do not issue fines. Inspectors then conduct a re-inspection to determine if the violations have been rectified.(42, 67, 68) If violations are found during re-inspection, the Ministry of Labor is required to file the infraction with the court.(42, 67, 68) This two-tiered inspection process puts a strain on the inspectorate'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. Furthermore, the lack of publicly-available information on the results of inspections prevents a complete understanding of how effective this inspection system is in practice.

Dominican Republic

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

Criminal Law Enforcement

Although complete information on convictions and prosecutions related to the worst forms of child labor is not systematically published, in 2013, the Dominican Government reported on the status of a number of criminal cases involving the worst forms of child labor.(17, 62, 69) In 2013, the Government initiated prosecutions in several criminal cases involving the worst forms of child labor, such as forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation; most of these cases resulted in prison sentences.(62, 64) In May 2013, four individuals were convicted and received 2-year prison sentences for forcing a group of children to beg in the streets of Santo Domingo. Additionally, during 2013, the Specialized Corps for Tourist Safety detained eight foreign tourists for investigation of child sex tourism; however, the status of the individual cases is unknown.(62)

The Government of the Dominican Republic maintains that there is no current forced labor in the production of goods; therefore, the Government takes no measures to prevent or combat it.(45) The Government provides anti-trafficking training to officials, including anti-trafficking, judicial, immigration and migration officials and those posted overseas, on how to recognize and assist Dominican nationals in other countries who are trafficking victims.(28, 45) The Government has a zero-tolerance policy for public officials who are complicit in trafficking or migrant smuggling activities.(45, 63, 70, 71) In 2013, the Government sentenced a National Police official and four other individuals to a year in prison for their involvement in a network of smuggling women and girls across the border to Haiti for commercial sexual exploitation.(62) The Government reports investigations and prosecutions conducted under the Law Against Trafficking in Persons and Migrant Smuggling, including commercial sexual exploitation of minors. However, the statistics are not disaggregated to distinguish between trafficking versus smuggling or adult versus child victims.(26, 28, 45, 72)

Coordination between the Ministry of Labor and Attorney General's Office is limited.(10) In 2013, the Minister of Labor stated in the local press that the Ministry's role is to identify child labor violations and criticized the Attorney General's Office for not fulfilling its responsibilities to investigate and prosecute criminal cases of the worst forms of child labor.(10, 21)

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 Steering Committee to Eliminate Child Labor (CDN)	Coordinate all child labor initiatives in the country; established by SET in 1997.(2, 22, 24) Convene regular meetings, including the 34 local and municipal committees around the country, to develop strategies to combat child labor.(22, 24, 62, 64, 73)
Inter-Institutional Commission against Child Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation	Coordinate and implement actions to confront commercial sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by CONANI and SET, includes representatives from various ministries, the National and Tourism Police, the Attorney General's Office, NGOs, and the Hotel and Restaurant Association, in addition to representatives of UNICEF and the ILO as advisors.(10, 25, 62-64)
Social Policies Coordination Cabinet	Coordinate all social policies and conditional cash transfer programs, such as the Progressing with Solidarity Program led by the Vice President.(10)
Local Committees for the Protection and Restitution of Children's Rights	Ensure that children's rights are not being violated; consists of community volunteers in 10 municipalities.(62)

In 2013, the Inter-Institutional Commission against Child Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation reported that it provided guidance to over 300 professionals, including healthcare workers and the National Police, to train committee members that form municipal-level networks to protect children against commercial sexual exploitation and abuse.(62) Subsequently, more than 3,000 community members received training in an effort to strengthen municipal networks.(62) However, the local and municipal committees' existing mechanisms face limitations in their coordination efforts. The ILO Committee of Experts has indicated that insufficient resources limit the effectiveness of the CDN and local and municipal committees.(2, 20, 74)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Strategic National Plan to Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2006–2016)	Identifies the roles and responsibilities of government agencies and municipal representatives to eradicate the worst forms of child labor.(10, 24, 62)
Action Plan for the Eradication of Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents (2009–2014)	Identifies the roles and responsibilities of government agencies and municipal representatives to eradicate commercial sexual exploitation of children.(10, 62)
Roadmap Towards the Elimination of Child Labor in the Dominican Republic	Outlines a plan to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in the country by 2015 and all other types of child labor by 2020.(2, 75) Designates the roles of various government agencies and sets targets and indicators for each area of responsibility, specifically poverty reduction, health, education, institutional coordination, awareness raising, and information sharing.(10) A lack of coordination between the various agencies and limited resources have hindered implementation of the Roadmap.(10)
National Development Plan (2010–2030)	Includes policies and programs that encourage families to keep their children out of the workforce and in school.(10)
National 10-year Education Plan and 5-year Strategic Plan	Coordinated and executed by the Ministry of Education, these plans include child labor provisions.(45, 76)
Quality Education for All (END)*	Specific objective to provide quality, universal education through middle school, including to students without identity documents and with disabilities.(62)
National Plan on Gender Equality (2006–2016)*	Promotes child care for working mothers so that children do not have to be in the workplace.(63)
National Anti-Poverty Plan	Includes child labor provisions to protect children from exploitation.(2, 25, 63)
Government Plan (2012–2016) under President Medina	Focuses on the development of 400,000 new jobs and integrates the elimination of child labor.(10)

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

However, there are insufficient resources allocated to implement child labor elimination strategies. Moreover, a 2010 ILO evaluation suggested that additional personnel are needed to implement the national child labor elimination strategies, but there is no evidence that such personnel have been hired since then.(77)

The National 10-year Education Plan and 5-year Strategic Plan have identified educational challenges, including inadequate classroom space, insufficient classroom time, and inadequate strategies to address the special educational needs of children who are behind in school because of work.(43, 73) Deficiencies in the national education system have also been identified as contributing to children’s engagement in the worst forms of child labor.(10, 31, 54, 78-81) UNESCO has reported that the percentage of children completing primary school has been declining and that the country is not likely to meet the Education for All goal of universal primary enrollment by 2015.(78, 80, 82) Furthermore, a short school day prompts some parents to take their children to work rather than leave them unattended outside of school hours.(83) In 2013, the Government’s budget allocated 4 percent of national GDP for primary and secondary education, an increase from 2.4 percent in 2011. Plans for the increased budget include constructing 29,000 additional classrooms, extending school hours nationwide, providing breakfast, improving teacher training, and raising the quality of education. However, these plans have not been fully implemented.(2, 20, 54, 84-88)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

In 2013, the Government of the Dominican Republic participated in and funded programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Dominican Republic

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Progressing with Solidarity*‡	Government program with conditional cash transfers to promote the well-being of families living in extreme poverty through an integrated approach. Aims to increase the number of students who attend school and to reduce child labor by requiring that child beneficiaries attend school regularly and that parents protect their children from the worst forms of child labor. Assists the families of poor children ages 4 to 21 through the provision of funds for school supplies and food.(45, 62-64, 82, 89, 90) The Government reported in 2013 that 778,606 children and adolescents benefited from at least one of the components of the program.(10, 62) More than 288,000 beneficiaries received monetary assistance to attend school, which was up from approximately 212,000 in 2012.(91) In June 2013, the ILO and Dominican Vice President announced a project to withdraw 38,000 beneficiaries of the program from child labor; this action supports the 2012 letter of agreement between the Vice President and the ILO to remove 100,000 children from exploitative work over the next four years.(92-94)
Youth Development and the Youth and Employment Projects*	Government projects supported by the World Bank and the Chilean Government that improve the employability of disadvantaged, at-risk youth through training and internship opportunities to promote entrepreneurial and job-related skills.(58, 64, 83) Offers training courses in 10 provinces throughout the country. A total of 942 youth ages 14 and older have received entrepreneurship training. Of the 901 youth who finished the course, 42 percent are employed or have their own businesses; the others are waiting for microcredit through a government small business program (PROMIPYME).(62)
At-Risk Youth Initiative*	USAID-funded project to protect youth from crime and promote access to education, including through participation in afterschool programs (Spaces for Growth) and other social services.(95)
Let's Work for Our Rights Project†	\$10 million USDOL-funded, 4-year project awarded to Catholic Relief Services to reduce child labor and improve respect for labor rights and working conditions in the agriculture sector, including sugar. Targets more than 18,000 children for provision of educational services and almost 6,000 households for provision of livelihood services.(96) ¹
Child Labor Elimination Project	\$9.4 million multi-year regional project implemented funded by the Government of Spain and implemented by the ILO-IPEC that aims to eradicate child labor in 18 countries in Latin America, including in the Dominican Republic.(97-100)
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 and develop strategic policies to address the elimination of child labor in the Dominican Republic and improve the evidence base on child labor through data collection and research.(101)
Child Domestic Work Awareness-raising Campaign	SET and ILO child labor eradication campaign launched in 2013 that supports reaching the goals outlined in the Roadmap with an emphasis on the elimination of child domestic work.(62)
Awareness-raising Campaign on Child Labor	SET and the Foundation for Peace and Democracy (FUNPADEM) public awareness-raising campaign to mobilize communities to report cases of child labor, launched in January 2014.(62, 66)
"Line 700" Hotline*‡	Office of the First Lady's free hotline to enable citizens to report cases of child labor, in addition to child abuse.(62) From January through September 2013, more than 700,000 calls were received.(62)
Extended School Day‡	Ministry of Education pilot program to extend school hours to a full day (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) in order to improve educational achievement and reduce child labor.(10, 20, 25, 102)
Spaces for Growth and Homework Rooms‡	Government afterschool programs that seek to prevent children from working by keeping them in a creative learning environment outside of normal classroom hours.(2, 20, 45, 64, 103)
Spaces for Hope*	Government early educational centers to promote integrated attention and positive stimulation to pre-school aged children. During 2013, the Government increased funding for early childhood development, including the operation of 71 Spaces for Hope.(10, 62, 104)
Childcare Facilities*‡	Government childcare facilities to provide comprehensive attention to children under age 5 of adult workers. In 2013, SET worked to build the capacity of these facilities.(62)
Presidential Microcredit Initiative*‡	Government program to provide microcredit to small businesses in the disadvantaged regions in order to increase employment and provide improved livelihoods for families.(10)
Literacy Campaign†	Government major literacy campaign instituted in 2013 to promote the importance of education among families.(10, 105)

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

† Program was launched during the reporting period.

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

¹Implementation has been delayed due to governmental opposition to project activities in the sugar and banana sectors.

In November, the Government participated in the XVIII Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor to foster continued dialogue and cooperation on labor issues throughout the Americas. The joint declaration of the Conference promotes social dialogue to address child labor and reaffirms country participants' commitment to work with civil society organizations to advance efforts toward the eradication of child labor.(106)

A study commissioned by the IDB indicated that the Progressing with Solidarity Program increased school enrollment and attendance among beneficiaries.(64, 99) Another study indicated an increase in beneficiaries' abilities to read and write.(62) An evaluation conducted in the province of Montecristi showed a decline in child labor among program beneficiaries compared to a control group in the same province.(62) However, the Progressing with Solidarity Program requires participants to present identification documents in order to access program benefits, which would limit the participation of those individuals lacking such documentation, many of whom are the most vulnerable to child labor.(20)

While the Government has committed to expanding the Spaces for Growth model, it has not yet allocated the resources needed to scale-up and sustain the program.(45, 77, 107)

Despite the efforts described above, current programs do not appear to be sufficient to adequately address the extent of the worst forms of child labor in the Dominican Republic, particularly the commercial sexual exploitation and harmful work in agricultural areas.(26) Further, there are insufficient efforts to reduce the demand for child sex tourism. In addition, governmental assistance to trafficking victims is minimal and inadequate, with civil society organizations as the principal service providers assisting trafficking victims.(10, 26)

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 the Dominican Republic (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Correctly interpret and apply the law to allow all children without birth certificates to enroll in primary and secondary education and obtain high school diplomas.	2011 – 2013
	Publish statistics on inspections conducted, including by type and by sector, violations identified, penalties imposed and collected, and prosecutions and convictions for criminal child labor violations, including its worst forms.	2009 – 2013
	Strengthen the enforcement of labor provisions that establish 14 as the minimum age for legal employment, limit the workday to 6 hours for children under 16, and ban dangerous and unhealthy work for children under 18 by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Establishing a system to verify the age of young workers in order to protect children without birth certificates or other legal documentation from exploitation; ■ Determining whether the inspection ratio for each SET inspector is appropriate to ensure appropriate quality and scope of inspections; ■ Allocating adequate resources for inspectors to conduct inspections on a regular basis; and ■ Following the Ministry of Labor's 2008 General Inspection Protocol and 2011 Inspection Protocol for Agriculture when conducting inspections and providing related training for labor inspectors on methods and best practices for identifying child labor. 	2012 – 2013
	Ensure that the two-tiered inspection system does not restrict the Ministry of Labor's ability to enforce its laws prohibiting child labor.	2013
	Disaggregate statistics on trafficking in persons and smuggling and disaggregate for cases involving children.	2012 – 2013
	Improve coordination between the Ministry of Labor and Attorney General's Office to ensure violations are effectively investigated and prosecuted.	2013
Coordination	Ensure the CDN and local and municipal committees have sufficient resources to effectively coordinate efforts to address child labor.	2013

Dominican Republic

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Government Policies	Take measures to protect all children without birth certificates from exploitation, and in particular, enable access to and completion of education.	2009 – 2013
	Allocate additional personnel to support national plans and strategies to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2009 – 2013
	Address deficiencies in the education system, increase school enrollment and meet Education for All goals, and continue to take additional steps to reverse the decline in the percentage of students completing primary education.	2011 – 2013
	Further expand implementation of existing plans to use the increased budget for education to add classroom space, increase the amount of time that students are in school, improve teacher training, and raise the quality of education.	2010 – 2013
	Assess the effectiveness of the Ministry of Education's extended school hours pilot program on reducing the worst forms of child labor and scale-up, as appropriate.	2011 – 2013
	Assess the impact that existing policies may have on child labor.	2013
Social Programs	Eliminate the requirement that individuals present Dominican identification documents to participate in social programs intended to combat child labor, including in the Progressing with Solidarity program.	2012 – 2013
	Allocate additional resources to scale up and sustain programs to eliminate child labor, such as the Spaces for Growth and Homework Rooms, in more sectors and additional regions, including in agricultural areas and in tourist regions where commercial sexual exploitation is prevalent.	2009 – 2013
	Further expand social protection programs and increase access to them by more impoverished families that rely on child labor, particularly in commercial sexual exploitation and agriculture.	2010 – 2013
	Assess the impact of the Government's social programs, in particular, the Youth Development and the Youth and Employment Projects, on child labor.	2012 – 2013
	Increase awareness raising and other strategies to reduce child trafficking and the demand for child sex tourism, and provide services to child trafficking victims.	2009 – 2013

REFERENCES

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