

In 2012, the Solomon Islands made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government ratified ILO C. 182. However, education is not compulsory, and laws do not adequately protect all children from hazardous work and commercial sexual exploitation. Also, the Government has not established a body to coordinate efforts to combat child labor, and resources for enforcement are lacking. Children in the Solomon Islands continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, particularly in association with the fishing and logging industries.

Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate		Unavailable

Sources:

Primary completion rate: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from National Household or Child Labor Surveys, 2012.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Some children in the Solomon Islands are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, primarily commercial sexual exploitation.(3-6) Both boys and girls are engaged in commercial sexual exploitation associated with the logging, tourism, and fishing industries in areas near logging camps, on fishing boats, and in the capital city of Honiara.(4, 6-10) In particular, girls are trafficked within the Solomon Islands to logging camps for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation.(4) There are reports that some children are brought by their parents to foreign and local fishing ships for commercial sexual exploitation with fishermen.(4, 7) Although evidence is limited, there is some information of forced child labor on plantations.(11)

Although information is limited, there are reports that children are used in pornography.(5) Additionally, some evidence suggests that children are forced to work as domestic servants and on plantations.(4) They may be required to work long hours, performing strenuous tasks, without sufficient food or shelter. These children may be isolated in private homes and are susceptible to physical and sexual abuse.(12, 13)



Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In April 2012, the Government ratified ILO Convention 182.(14, 15) The Labor Act permits children as young as age 12 to work.(16) This is not consistent with international standards, which require a minimum age no lower than 14 for admission to employment. Children under age 15 are prohibited from working in the industrial sector or on ships, and children under age 16 are prohibited from working in underground mines.(16) Further, children between ages 16 and 18 are prohibited from working in mines or on ships without a medical certificate, and are prohibited from working at night without specific written permission from the Commissioner of Labor.(16) Despite these provisions, the Solomon Islands does not have a comprehensive law protecting children under age 18 from hazardous work, or a comprehensive list of hazardous occupations and activities from which children are prohibited.(6, 13) In addition, according to the Commissioner of Labor, the existing penalties and fines for employing children in hazardous conditions are too insignificant to serve as deterrents.(6)

The Constitution prohibits slavery and forced labor.(17) The Penal Code criminalizes the production and possession of obscene material if the purpose is to distribute or publicly exhibit the material.(18) It does not, however, specifically prohibit the use, procurement, or offering of a child for the production of pornography. Selling or hiring minors under age 15 and girls under age 18 for prostitution is punishable as a criminal offense.(18) However, these prostitution laws do not cover boys between the ages of 15 and 18 and therefore leave them without legal protection.(18) Laws do not specifically prohibit the use of children in illicit activities such as drug trafficking.(6, 18)

In March 2012, the Government enacted the Immigration Act of 2012. The Act prohibits and punishes all forms of trafficking in persons and provides specific legal protections against the trafficking of children. However, the Act has not been implemented, and no implementing regulations accompany the legislation.(6, 19, 20)

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There are no government armed forces in the Solomon Islands.(6, 21) The law allows for forces to be drawn from the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, if necessary. The police force has a minimum recruitment age of 18.(22)

International Conventions and Selected Laws on Child Labor and Education

	C138, Minimum Age	No
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	No
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	No
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	No
	Minimum Age for Work	12
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	15
	Compulsory Education Age	No
	Free Public Education	Yes

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The National Advisory Committee on Children advises the Cabinet on issues affecting children, coordinates the implementation of the CRC, and develops advocacy materials to promote the rights of children.(23) However, research found no evidence that the Government has established a coordinating mechanism to combat child labor.(6)

The Commissioner of Labor—the head of the Labor Division in the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor and Immigration (MOCILI)—is responsible for enforcing child labor laws.(5, 6) The most recent data indicate that in 2010 the Labor Division was allocated \$3,252 for all of its operations, including conducting inspections. In 2011, MOCILI employed only three labor inspectors to enforce all labor laws, including those related to child labor.(6) Additionally, the Ministry of Labor employs a desk officer to work on ILO labor standards and child labor issues.(24) Research did not uncover the number of inspections, investigations and/or prosecutions, violations, and citations and/or penalties related to child labor during the reporting period.(5, 6) Sources, including the

Government, note that inadequate capacity and resources have prevented meaningful enforcement of the laws.(5, 6, 25, 26)

During the reporting period, Customs and Immigration officials arrested—and a court initiated prosecution of—a naturalized citizen and a noncitizen for forcing an unknown number of women and girls into prostitution. Those arrested were charged with offenses of living on the earnings of prostitution, aiding prostitution, and receiving funds derived from prostitution; prosecution is ongoing as of the writing of this report.(4, 20)

The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, in partnership with the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands Participating Police Force, appears to be the only body responsible for enforcing laws related to trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.(6) During the reporting period, the Government of Solomon Islands did not investigate or prosecute any trafficking cases, including sex trafficking.(26) Moreover, research did not uncover the number of investigations of commercial sexual exploitation of children in 2012.

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The National Children's Policy establishes the National Plan of Action for 2010-2015, which acknowledges existing gaps in legislation, enforcement, and programs for the protection of children. It commits the Government to substantially improving services and the legal framework over a 5-year period.(23) Objectives of the policy include ratifying the CRC Optional Protocols, raising the minimum age for employment to 18, achieving universal primary education, registering all births by 2015, and creating a mechanism for the coordination and enforcement of child protection laws and policies.(23) However, the National Plan does not specify relevant agencies in its intended coordination mechanism, and it is unclear that relevant agencies are participating in this coordinating mechanism for enforcement. During the reporting period, the Government did not ratify the CRC Optional Protocols or raise the minimum age for work.(23)

Education in the Solomon Islands is not compulsory.(5) In 2012, the Government continued to implement the Free Fee Basic Education (FFBE) Policy, which covers the operational costs for children to attend school, but allows for school management to request additional contributions from families such as cash, labor, and school fundraising.(3, 20, 27, 28) The FFBE Policy is intended to increase educational access by subsidizing school fees for grades one through nine.(27) In 2011, the FFBE Policy enabled the Government to

provide primary schools in rural areas with \$320 per child, and in urban areas with \$520 per child. Further, rural community high schools (years 7 to 9) received \$800 per student, and urban community high schools received \$1,000 per student.(27) This policy may not sufficiently cover all costs for schools, depending on their location; additional school fees, uniform costs, book fees, and transportation needs may still prevent some children from attending school.(27, 28) Attendance and dropout rates indicate that girls in the Solomon Islands are less likely than boys to finish school.(27, 29) Research was unable to uncover details about the degree to which the Government continued to support this program in 2012.

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

The Government of Solomon Islands collaborated with the ILO to implement its Decent Work Program for

2009-2012.(30) The program’s priorities include promoting decent employment for youth and designing an expanded social protection system.(30) Research has not uncovered whether any child labor-specific activities were implemented, or whether the program concluded in 2012.

Moreover, research found no evidence that the Government carried out programs in 2012 to combat the worst forms of child labor, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children. However, during 2011, the Government supported the American Bar Association’s Rule of Law Initiative (ROLI), funded by the U.S. Department of State’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, to address the issue of human trafficking through workshops and training programs using multi-stakeholder solutions.(3, 20) It is unclear whether ROLI has had an impact on the trafficking of children.

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

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Increase the minimum age for employment and hazardous work to 14 and 18, respectively, and institute a comprehensive list of hazardous occupations and activities from which children are prohibited.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Strengthen penalties for violating child labor laws.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Adopt laws to forbid the use, procuring, or offering of a child for illicit activities, such as the production and trafficking of drugs and the production of pornography.	2011, 2012
	Establish a compulsory age for education that is consistent with the minimum age for employment to meet international standards.	2009, 2011, 2012
	Amend laws to prohibit the prostitution of boys under age 18.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Implement the Immigration Act of 2012 to punish all forms of trafficking in persons, including the trafficking of children.	2012
Coordination and Enforcement	Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2010, 2011, 2012
	Make information on inspections and investigations regarding the worst forms of child labor publicly available.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Ensure that relevant agencies participate in the coordination mechanism for enforcement outlined in the National Plan of Action for 2010-2015.	2010, 2011, 2012

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Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Coordination and Enforcement	Allocate sufficient funds to ensure that enforcement agencies have adequate resources and capacity to effectively enforce laws that prevent the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
Policies	Meet the goals outlined in the National Children's Policy with a National Plan of Action for 2010-2015, including ratifying the CRC Optional Protocols.	2010, 2011, 2012
Social Programs	Initiate programs to address the worst forms of child labor, particularly the commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2011, 2012

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