

In 2016, Namibia made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. During the year, the Government developed a draft National Action Plan Against Child Labor and Domestic Work, participated in the Combatting Human Trafficking Initiative implemented by the IOM, and reactivated the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Child Labor. Children in Namibia perform dangerous tasks in cattle herding. Children also engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. The key legislative gap is that hazardous work prohibitions for children in the agriculture sector are not comprehensive. There are no existing social programs that specifically target child labor in agriculture.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Namibia perform dangerous tasks in cattle herding. Children also engage in the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1-4) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Namibia. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

| Children | Age | Percent |
|-------------------------------|---------|-------------|
| Working (% and population) | 5 to 14 | Unavailable |
| Attending School (%) | 5 to 14 | Unavailable |
| Combining Work and School (%) | 7 to 14 | Unavailable |
| Primary Completion Rate (%) | | 86.5 |

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2013, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016.(5)
Data were unavailable from Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis, 2016.(6)

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 | Tending and herding livestock, including cattle, sheep, and goats (1, 4, 7-9) |
| Services | Domestic work (8-14) |
| | Working in bars called <i>shebeens</i> (9, 15) |
| | Street work, including selling candies, fruits, handicrafts, and cell phone air time vouchers (15, 16) |
| Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡ | Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4) |
| | Forced labor in agriculture, cattle herding, and domestic work, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4, 9, 15) |

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a) – (c) of ILO C. 182.

Children are trafficked within the country for forced labor in agriculture, cattle herding, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation. San and Zemba children are particularly vulnerable to forced labor on farms or in homes.(4) Children from Angola, Zambia, and Zimbabwe are sometimes trafficked into the country for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor in fishing and street work. Some Angolan children are trafficked into Namibia for forced labor in cattle

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herding.(4) Children orphaned as a result of HIV/AIDS are particularly vulnerable to child labor.(4, 8, 15) The Government has not collected and published data on child labor, including its worst forms, to inform policies and social programs.

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Namibia 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 Namibia'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 | Yes | 14 | Chapter 2, Article 3(2) of the Labor Act (17) |
| Minimum Age for Hazardous Work | Yes | 18 | Article 15(2) of the Constitution; Chapter 2, Article 3(4) of the Labor Act (17, 18) |
| Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children | Yes | | Chapter 2, Articles 3(3)(d) and 4 of the Labor Act; Section 234 of the Child Care and Protection Act (17, 19) |
| Prohibition of Forced Labor | Yes | | Article 9 of the Constitution; Chapter 2, Article 4 of the Labor Act; Section 15 of the Prevention of Organized Crime Act; Articles 202 and 234 of the Child Care and Protection Act (17-20) |
| Prohibition of Child Trafficking | Yes | | Section 15 of the Prevention of Organized Crime Act; Sections 202 and 234 of the Child Care and Protection Act (19, 20) |
| Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children | Yes | | Section 2 of the Combating of Immoral Practices Act Amendment Act; Section 234 of the Child Care and Protection Act (19, 21) |
| Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities | Yes | | Section 234 of the Child Care and Protection Act (19) |
| Minimum Age for Military Recruitment | | | |
| State Compulsory | N/A* | | |
| State Voluntary | Yes | 18 | Chapter 9 of the Namibian Defense Force Personnel Policies (22) |
| Non-state Compulsory | Yes | 18 | Section 234(1)(b) of the Child Care and Protection Act (19) |
| Compulsory Education Age | Yes | 16 | Section 53 of the Education Act (23) |
| Free Public Education | Yes | | Section 38 of the Education Act (23) |

* No conscription (24)

The types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not specifically include livestock herding, where there is evidence of work under particularly difficult conditions.(25) The MLIREC reported that it drafted additional hazardous work prohibitions, but these have not been approved.(16, 22, 26) The Government in 2015 drafted the National Human Trafficking Bill to extend protections to victims of trafficking and establish specific criminal penalties to punish traffickers, but it has not been finalized and passed into law.(13, 27)

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 Labor, Industrial Relations and Employment Creation (MLIREC) | Enforce child labor laws and investigate allegations of violations, including forced labor and cases involving human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children.(1, 10, 28) Work with the Ministry of Safety and Security (MSS); Ministry of Gender, Equality, and Child Welfare (MGECW); Namibia Central Intelligence Service; and Ministry of Education (MOE) on child labor matters.(1, 10) Lead these ministries in joint inspection teams.(1, 10, 28) |
| Ministry of Safety and Security (MSS) | Enforce criminal laws and conduct site visits with labor inspectors.(1, 10) The MSS through the Namibian Police handles enforcement.(10) |
| Ministry of Gender, Equality, and Child Welfare (MGECW) | Collaborate with the Namibian Police's Gender Based Violence Protection Units (GBVPU) on cases involving human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children.(10, 28, 29) Remove children from child labor situations during inspections and take them to a regional GBVPU to receive assistance from MGECW social workers or one of eight MGECW shelters in the country.(29) |
| Joint Child Labor Inspection Committee | Coordinate activities to enforce child labor laws. Committee includes MLIREC, MSS, and MGECW.(1) Refer children identified during labor inspections to MGECW social workers or to an MGECW shelter for care.(1) |

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2016, labor law enforcement agencies in Namibia 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 | \$3,750,000 [†] (22) | \$4,950,000 [‡] (30) |
| Number of Labor Inspectors | 97 (22) | 97 (30) |
| Number of Child Labor Dedicated Inspectors | 2 (22) | 2 (30) |
| Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties | No (22) | No (30) |
| Training for Labor Inspectors | | |
| Initial Training for New Employees | Yes (22) | Yes (30) |
| Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor | Yes (22) | Yes (30) |
| Refresher Courses Provided | Yes (22) | Yes (30) |
| Number of Labor Inspections | 6,073 (22, 30) | 3,988 (30) |
| Number Conducted at Worksite | 6,073 (22) | 3,988 (30) |
| Number Conducted by Desk Reviews | 0(22) | 0 (30) |
| Number of Child Labor Violations Found | 0 (22) | 0 (30) |
| Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed | N/A (22) | N/A (30) |
| Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected | N/A (22) | N/A (30) |
| Routine Inspections Conducted | Yes (22) | Unknown* (30) |
| Routine Inspections Targeted | Yes (22) | Unknown* (30) |
| Unannounced Inspections Permitted | Yes (22) | Yes (30) |
| Unannounced Inspections Conducted | Yes (22) | Unknown* (30) |
| Complaint Mechanism Exists | Yes (22) | Yes (30) |
| Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services | Yes (22) | Yes (30) |

* The Government does not publish this information.

† Data are from January 1, 2015 to December 31, 2015.

‡ Data are from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016.

Research indicates that MLIREC primarily conducts inspections in the formal sector in urban areas, leaving self-employed children and children working in rural areas unprotected.(9) MLIREC lacked clarity on international child labor definitions, especially concerning hazardous work for children, indicating a need for additional training.(9) Although

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inspectors have the legal authority to inspect private farms, they often encounter difficulties accessing the farms due to locked gates.(9, 14) NGOs also reported difficulties accessing such locations while accompanying inspectors on child labor investigations.(1, 26, 31) To address this challenge, MLIREC partnered with the Namibia Agricultural Union so that inspectors could access farms by giving farms advanced notice that inspections would be conducted in a certain time frame.(9)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2016, criminal law enforcement agencies in Namibia 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 | Unknown (22) | Unknown* (30) |
| Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor | Unknown (22) | Unknown* (30) |
| Refresher Courses Provided | Unknown (22) | Unknown* (30) |
| Number of Investigations | 0 (22) | Unknown* (30) |
| Number of Violations Found | 11 (22) | Unknown* (30) |
| Number of Prosecutions Initiated | 1 (22) | Unknown* (30) |
| Number of Convictions | 1 (22) | Unknown* (30) |
| Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services | Yes (22) | Yes (30) |

* The Government does not publish this information.

The Namibian Police operates a toll-free hotline to report crimes, including child trafficking. An NGO operates another hotline for victims of gender-based violence and child exploitation to access information about available resources and get referrals to relevant government organizations for social services.(30)

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 Committee on Child Labor | Coordinate government policies and efforts to combat child labor. The committee consists of MOE, MGECW, and MSS officials, as well as the Office of the Ombudsman.(26) The committee met during the reporting year and discussed roles and responsibilities of participating agencies.(4) |
| Gender Based Violence Protection Units | Provide victim protection services to children in the worst forms of child labor. There are 15 units that arrange lodging, medical, and psychosocial care for victims.(22) The units consist of personnel from MLIREC, Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration, Namibian Police, MGECW, and MOE.(10) |
| Child Care and Protection Forums | Organize forums to address child protection issues and services in the country, including regional councils, MGECW social workers, government agencies, NGOs, community leaders, churches, and other local-level stakeholders.(10) |

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).

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

| Policy | Description |
|--|---|
| National Plan of Action on Gender-Based Violence (2012–2016) | Establishes a plan for reducing incidences of gender-based violence and improving the country's understanding and response. The plan also addresses child protection and trafficking concerns.(1, 10, 32) Under the policy, an anti-trafficking strategy was developed.(27) |
| Decent Work Country Program (2010–2016) | Outlined strategies to promote decent work in Namibia. Prioritized employment promotion, enhanced social protections, and strengthened social dialog and tripartism. Outcome included the elimination of forced labor and child labor.(33) |
| National Development Plan IV (2012/2013–2016/2017) | Includes goals for addressing child protection and trafficking concerns.(1, 34) |

[‡] The Government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.(35)

In 2016, child labor elimination and prevention strategies were not integrated into the National Agenda for Children, the National Protection Referral Network, or the Education for All National Plan of Action.(36-38) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Plan of Action on Gender-Based Violence, Decent Country Work Program, and the National Development Plan IV during the reporting period.

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 |
|---|---|
| Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues (2011–2017) | USDOL-funded program implemented by the ILO in approximately 40 countries to support the priorities of the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor by 2016, a project established by The Hague Global Child Labor Conference in 2010. Aims to build government capacity and develop strategic policies to address the elimination of child labor while strengthening legal protections and social services delivery for child domestic workers.(39) During the reporting year, ILO held two workshops to train 114 participants from MLIREC on child labor and domestic work. The program also drafted a National Action Plan on Child Labor and Domestic Work but it has yet to be adopted. (40) |
| Combatting Human Trafficking Initiative (2016–2019)* | USDOS-funded project implemented by IOM, in collaboration with the host Government, to combat trafficking in persons.(36) |
| Namibian School Feeding Program† | Government program provides mid-morning meals to school children.(41) Research could not find information about the number of children that benefitted from the program during the reporting period. |
| National Youth Service [‡] | Government program offers training in civic education, national voluntary service, and job skills to unemployed youth, some of whom have never attended school.(41) Research was unable to determine whether activities were taken to implement the National Youth Service. |
| Shelters and victim services [‡] | Six operational government-established shelters for women and children that assist victims of sexual assault, gender-based violence, and the worst forms of child labor.(10) A source indicates that the shelters are not staffed and therefore are not fully operational. The Government, however, provides a subsidy to an NGO that caters to victims of the worst forms of child labor.(42) |

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Namibia.

Although the Government of Namibia provides assistance to vulnerable children and services to some victims of child labor, research found no evidence of programs specifically addressing children working in agriculture or domestic work.

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 Namibia (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 the hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children are comprehensive. | 2014 – 2016 |
| Enforcement | Publish information about whether the labor inspectorate conducts routine inspections, targeted inspections, and unannounced inspections related to child labor. | 2016 |
| | Authorize the inspectorate to assess penalties. | 2016 |
| | Ensure a sufficient number of inspections are conducted in the rural areas. | 2016 |
| | Publish information about the child labor related trainings that criminal investigators receive. | 2015 – 2016 |
| | Publish information about criminal law enforcement's, number of investigations, number of violations found, number of prosecutions initiated, and number of convictions related to the worst forms of child labor. | 2016 |
| Government Policies | Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into existing education and youth policies. | 2013 – 2016 |
| | Adopt and implement the National Action Plan on Child Labor and Domestic Work. | 2016 |
| | Publish information about the implementation of the National Plan of Action on Gender-Based Violence, the Decent Country Work Program, and the National Development Plan IV. | 2016 |
| Social Programs | Conduct research on the prevalence of child labor to inform the development of policies and social programs. | 2013 – 2016 |
| | Publish information about the implementation of social programs such as the Namibian School Feeding Program and the National Youth Service. | 2016 |
| | Ensure shelters are fully operational to cater to victims of child labor, including its worst forms. | 2016 |
| | Institute programs to address child labor in agriculture and domestic work. | 2009 – 2016 |

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