

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

In 2011, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government passed a new law on trafficking in persons that covers all forms of child trafficking, including for commercial sexual exploitation, and ratified the CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict. However, gaps remain in the legal framework, as the minimum age for hazardous work falls below international standards and there is no law to prohibit the use of children in the production of drugs. While the country does not appear to have a widespread child labor problem, some children continue to be engaged in the worst forms of child labor.

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		94.2

Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's Analysis.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, some children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor. There are reports that minors continue to work informally and seasonally in dangerous activities in agriculture, including in the cultivation and trade of marijuana.(3-5) In addition to being an illicit activity, such work may put them at risk by requiring them to use dangerous tools, apply harmful pesticides and carry heavy loads.(6) Children also reportedly work on banana plantations and in family-owned cottage industries.(7)

There also have been reports of trafficking in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, including children who are trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and agriculture.(8) The Government has acknowledged that street children, particularly boys, are involved in prostitution.(9) Although evidence is limited, some NGO and government sources reported that girls may be encouraged by their mothers to prostitute themselves to older men as a way to earn

supplementary family income.(7) However, the full extent of trafficking in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is unknown.(8)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children (EWYPC) Act sets the minimum age for employment, including hazardous work, at age 14.(5, 10, 11) This law does not meet the international minimum age standard of 18 for hazardous work. Children below the age of 18 are prohibited from working at night.(10)

The EWYPC Act also authorizes the Governor-General to establish regulations regarding the health, welfare and safety of young persons and children. However, there are no regulations defining or prohibiting hazardous occupations or conditions for children.(5, 9)



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The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Law was passed during the reporting period.(5) This Law prohibits the involvement of any child in trafficking for forced labor, prostitution and pornography, as well as the use of a child in the trafficking of illicit goods.(12, 13) However, there remains no law against an adult using a child in illicit drug production.

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	14
	Compulsory Education Age	16
	Free Public Education	Yes

The minimum age for voluntary military recruitment is 19.(1) In 2011, the Government ratified the CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.(14)

The Education Act of 2006 provides for free and compulsory education and states that all children ages 5 to 16 must attend school.(10, 15)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

Research found no evidence that the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has established a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor. However, a ministerial-level task force has been created to coordinate government prosecution of trafficking cases.(5) In January 2012, the IOM provided anti-trafficking training to members of the task force, as well as to prosecutors and judges.(12)

The Ministry of Labor is responsible for enforcing child labor laws.(5) Within the Ministry, five inspectors are responsible for monitoring all labor issues and complaints, including child labor. In 2011, the Government budgeted \$366,443 to the Ministry for all enforcement activities.(16) The Ministry's inspections are carried out in response to complaints; however, no inspections were conducted related to child labor during the reporting period, nor were there any reports of child labor complaints.(5) No training on hazardous child labor was provided to inspectors during the reporting period.

The Royal Police Force is responsible for investigating criminal cases of the worst forms of child labor, including trafficking. There is a protocol in place for the Ministry of Labor and the Royal Police Force to refer victims to the Ministry of Social Development for social services.(5) Although there were no reported cases in 2011, there is still evidence of suspected trafficking.(5)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Although the worst forms of child labor do not appear to occur extensively in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, research found no evidence of policies to address existing child labor, including children working in agriculture and child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.(5) According to the Government, official statistics are not available on the prevalence and scope of the worst forms of child labor.(9)

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

The Children Against Poverty bridging program launched in 2010 is being implemented in 56 participating primary schools to develop children's skills through an engaging curriculum. The project goal is to use education as a means of breaking the cycle of poverty.(5) The Ministry of Education also operates five multipurpose centers that offer technical and vocational education services to children ages 15 to 17 to prevent school dropouts.(17) A government subsidy provides textbooks and school meals to impoverished children. The question of whether these programs have an impact on the worst forms of child labor does not appear to have been addressed.(5)

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Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Amend the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act to make 18 the minimum age for engaging in hazardous work.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Issue regulations defining a list of hazardous occupations and working conditions prohibited to children under the age of 18.	2009, 2011
	Outlaw the use of children by adults in illicit drug production.	2011
Coordination and Enforcement	Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat all worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Provide training to inspectors on hazardous child labor.	2011
Policies	Conduct a rigorous study to assess whether the worst forms of child labor are indicative of a small or hidden problem that requires further follow up.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Develop a national plan of action to address the worst forms of child labor, particularly for children engaged in marijuana cultivation and trade.	2009, 2010, 2011
Social Programs	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on addressing the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011

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