

Barbados

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2013, Barbados made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government has conducted its first prosecution of commercial sexual exploitation of children under the Transnational Organized Crime Act, and began a community outreach program to raise public awareness of human trafficking. However, although evidence is limited, children in Barbados are reported to engage in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation and drug trafficking. The Government does not currently have a comprehensive policy framework to address all worst forms of child labor, and legislative gaps remain. For example, Barbados lacks a legally enforceable list of hazardous occupations prohibited for children.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although evidence is limited, children in Barbados are reported to engage in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation and drug trafficking.(1-6) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Barbados. 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)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		104.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2011, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(7)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis, 2014.(8)

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
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Used in drug trafficking* (2-6)
	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (1, 4-6)

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







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

Older men reportedly engage children in commercial sexual exploitation in exchange for material goods.(1) The Government has acknowledged the need to conduct a national child labor survey to assess the magnitude of the problem.(9, 10) However, it does not appear that the Government has undertaken such research.(3, 9)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Barbados has ratified some 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 of Barbados has not ratified the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography or the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

The Government has established relevant laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act; Recruiting of Workers Act (11, 12)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act (11)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Constitution; Offences Against the Person Act (13, 14)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act (15)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Sexual Offences Act (16)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Protection of Children Act; Drug Abuse (Prevention and Control) Act (17, 18)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Defence Act (19)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Education Act (20)
Free Public Education	Yes		Education Act (20)

* No conscription or no standing military.

Part IV of the Employment Act sets the minimum age of employment at 16 for industrial undertakings, but not for all kinds of work.(11) The Recruiting of Workers Act specifies that children between the ages of 14 and 16 can be engaged in light work with parental consent.(12) However, a list of occupations constituting light work has not been established.(6, 21) The Employment Act prohibits the engagement of children below the age of 18 in night work and any occupation that is likely to harm their safety, health, or morals. This includes industrial undertakings such as mining and quarrying.(11) However, despite reports that the Ministry of Labor has created a comprehensive list of hazardous occupations prohibited to all children under the age of 18, it does not yet have legal effect.(5, 9, 22)

The Defence Act sets the minimum age for voluntary enlistment at 18.(19) However, those who wish to enlist before age 18 can do so with parental consent if they are at least 17 years and 9 months old.(5, 23)

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).

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Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor (MOL)	Conduct labor inspections and enforce child labor laws.(3, 5)
Royal Barbados Police Force	Make criminal arrests for infractions involving the trafficking, use in illicit activities, and commercial sexual exploitation of children. Maintain a Sex Crime and Trafficking Unit, which was further consolidated in 2013.(3, 5, 24)

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

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2013, the Ministry of Labor (MOL) employed 17 inspectors to enforce labor laws, and there were no reported child labor violations. The government did not carry out inspections specifically devoted to child labor but checked for the problem during routine inspections. This number of inspectors and their resources were deemed sufficient with respect to the scope of the problem.(5) Inspectors did not receive training specific to child labor during the reporting period.(5)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2013, the MOL's 17 inspectors also enforced criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. While this number of inspectors was deemed sufficient with respect to the scope of the problem in Barbados, the government did not carry out criminal inspections specific to child labor.(5) During the reporting period, the Government led an anti-trafficking operation that removed one child from commercial sexual exploitation. As of the writing of this report, the perpetrators are facing charges under the Transnational Organized Crime Act, which would be the first prosecution under this law.(5) Officers from the Police Force, the Immigration Department, and other agencies received training in the prevention of human trafficking, anti-trafficking laws, and in identifying victims and referring them for services.(24)

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 Task Force for the Prevention of Human Trafficking	Train personnel to identify victims of trafficking among vulnerable populations; sensitize government officials to trafficking issues. Composed of 11 members with representatives from several government agencies, NGOs, and interest groups. Initiated the Sex Crime and Trafficking Unit within the Police force.(3, 24)
Child Labor Committee	Coordinate efforts to abolish child labor between government agencies, NGOs, and other civil society organizations. Established by the Ministry of Labor in 2004.(3, 25)

In 2013, the National Task Force for the Prevention of Human Trafficking, along with the Bureau of Gender Affairs, continued an extensive outreach program to raise public awareness of human trafficking, entitled “Not Again: Trafficking in Persons – Modern Day Slavery.”(24) The National Task Force also facilitated dialogue on ways to improve labor legislation.(5) It has been reported that the CLC has not been active for several years due to a reported absence of child labor cases.(3, 5)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Work Plan on Human Trafficking†	Addresses human trafficking in Barbados and contains specific measures with regard to the prosecution of violators, the protection of victims, and the prevention of trafficking.(5, 24)

† Policy was launched during the reporting period.

In October 2013, the Government hosted a regional capacity-building conference to combat trafficking in select Eastern Caribbean countries.(5, 26) 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.(27) The Government does not have a comprehensive policy framework to address all worst forms of child labor.

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

In 2013, the Government of Barbados funded and participated in programs that may have an impact on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Identification, Stabilization, Enablement, and Empowerment (ISEE) Bridge Program*‡	Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, and Community Development program that aims to reduce poverty by addressing employment and education.(28, 29) Targets 30 families to work closely with social workers.(3, 5, 29, 30)
UNICEF Multi-Country Programme for the Eastern Caribbean 2012-2016*	Government of Barbados and UNICEF initiatives that address women's and children's issues. Includes the Health and Family Life Education Curriculum and the Schools Positive Behaviour Management Programme (formerly the Child Friendly School Initiative).(4)
School Meal Subsidy*‡	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation program that targets low income families to encourage school attendance.(3, 5)

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

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Barbados.

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 Barbados (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography and the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.	2013
	Amend the Employment Act to establish a minimum employment age of 16 for all sectors of economic activity and adopt a list of occupations constituting light work permissible for children below age 16.	2009 – 2013
	Officially incorporate into the legal framework and make publicly available a list of hazardous occupations prohibited for children.	2011 – 2013
Enforcement	Ensure that labor inspectors receive training specific to child labor violations.	2013
	Ensure that inspections are carried out to identify children in the worst forms of child labor, especially the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in drug trafficking.	2010 – 2013
	Publicly report on the number of child labor inspections conducted, including inspections of child commercial sexual exploitation and children's involvement in illicit activities.	2013
Coordination	Reactivate the Child Labor Committee to coordinate government efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2011 – 2013

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Government Policies	Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in drug trafficking.	2013
Social Programs	Conduct a comprehensive study to assess the nature and extent of the worst forms of child labor, especially the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in drug trafficking. Use the results of this study to develop policies and programs that address the worst forms of child labor.	2009 – 2013
	Assess the impact that the existing school meals and poverty reduction programs may have on addressing the worst forms of child labor, especially the commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2010 – 2013

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