

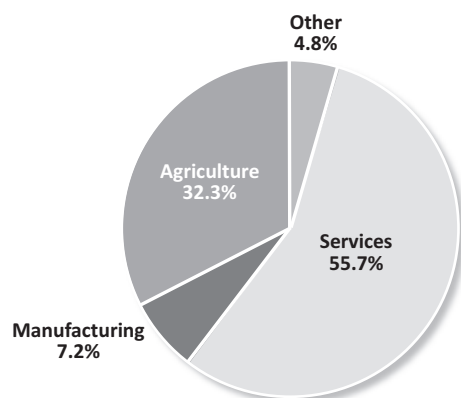
*In 2012, Venezuela made no advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government's current policies and programs aim to alleviate poverty and improve conditions for older working children. However, the Government has not created initiatives to protect children from the worst forms of child labor in domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation. The Government collects some data on the prevalence and nature of the worst forms of child labor, but these data are incomplete and do not address young children. Venezuela also lacks a comprehensive list of hazardous work prohibited to children. Children in Venezuela continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in dangerous activities in agriculture.*



### Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	10-14 yrs.	5.1 (138,641)
Attending School	10-14 yrs.	96.0
Combining Work and School	10-14 yrs.	4.1
Primary Completion Rate		95.1

### Working children by sector, Ages 10 to 14



**Sources:**

**Primary completion rate:** Data from 2011, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.(1)

**All other data:** Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from HHS Survey, 2006.(2)

### Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Venezuela are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in dangerous activities in agriculture.(3-6) Children, primarily boys, are found working in agriculture and may use dangerous tools, carry heavy loads, and apply harmful pesticides.(3, 4, 7, 8) Girls often work as domestic

servants.(3, 5, 6) 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.(8)

National statistics quantifying the current scope of child labor are unavailable. However, the prevalence of children working on the street continues to be a serious problem for the country.(9) According to a Venezuelan NGO, an estimated 15,000 children live and work on the streets in Caracas and other Venezuelan cities.(5) There are reports of children working on the streets selling flowers or other small merchandise, transporting items, and being forced to work as street beggars.(6, 10, 11) These children often carry heavy loads and suffer from respiratory and skin diseases as a result of exposure to unsanitary conditions on the street.(10)

Children are also engaged in dangerous activities at garbage collection sites. They forage through trash for recyclable materials such as aluminum, copper, bronze, paper, and plastic.(6) They are paid very little despite the value of the collected items, frequently work long hours, and are exposed to violence and dangerous conditions.(6)

Children, especially girls, are trafficked within the country for the purpose of sexual exploitation and prostitution.(6, 11, 12) They may be sent to urban areas, such as Caracas and Maracaibo, or to resort destinations, such as Margarita Island.(11)

# Venezuela

## Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Organic Labor Law (LOT) and the Organic Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (LOPNA) set the minimum age for work at 14.(13, 14). The LOT allows children between the ages of 14 to 16 to work if consent from their legal guardian is obtained. It also stipulates that children between the ages of 12 to 14 can work with authorization from the National Institute for Minors, if the children continue their studies and the work is commensurate with their physical abilities.(14) The LOT prohibits children under age 18 from working in mines, on ships, or in welding, and from engaging in other dangerous activities that endanger their lives or health, threaten their intellectual or moral development, or delay their physical development.(14, 15) A comprehensive list defining hazardous activities and occupations prohibited to children has not been established.(6, 16)

## International Conventions and Selected Laws on Child Labor and Education

	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	18
	Compulsory Education Age	15
	Free Public Education	Yes

The LOT also establishes other measures that regulate the employment of minors, including mandatory pre-employment and periodic health screenings, limits on the number of working hours, and conditions of remuneration. Under the LOT's provisions, children who work as street vendors must carry an identification card that indicates the name of the school they attend and their school's hours.(14)

The Constitution and the LOPNA prohibit forced labor, debt bondage, slavery, and the trafficking of persons, including children.(13, 17) The LOPNA forbids all forms of sexual exploitation and states that the Government must offer free assistance to children who have been victims of such acts.(17) The Special Law against Computer Crimes prohibits the creation and distribution of electronic pornography involving children, while the LOPNA makes it illegal to photograph or videotape minors for pornographic scenes.(13, 18) Venezuelan law also forbids the solicitation of minors for engagement in sexual acts, including prostitution.(5) The Drug Act prohibits the use, procurement, and offering of a child for illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs.(19)

Venezuela does not have compulsory recruitment into the armed forces. The minimum age for voluntary recruitment is 18.(20, 21)

The Constitution and the Organic Education Law mandate compulsory primary and secondary education.(17, 22) The LOPNA and the Organic Education Law guarantee free schooling for all children and adolescents.(13, 22) Children generally attend school from age 5 to age 15, but many stop their formal education after the ninth grade.(6, 23)

## Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The System for the Protection of Children and Adolescents is charged with coordinating and protecting children's rights and addressing child labor issues. The system comprises several representatives from civil society, government ministries, and government councils.(13)

The Ministry of Popular Power for Labor and Social Security (MINPPTRASS) enforces labor laws, including child labor laws.(6, 24) Although the Government has stated that the National Institute for Prevention, Safety, and Health at Work (INPSASEL) and MINPPTRASS carry out child labor inspections in the formal and informal business sectors, there was no publicly available information regarding the number of inspections conducted or the sanctions applied during the reporting period.(6, 25)

Cases of trafficking in persons are handled by the Ministry of Popular Power of the Interior, Justice, and Peace's (MPPRIJP) Criminal Investigative Division and by the MPPRIJP's Scientific, Penal, and Criminal Investigative Corps (CICPC).

The CICPC is also responsible for enforcing laws related to sexual exploitation and other illicit activities.(6) There was no information publicly available on the number of identified victims, convictions, or prosecutions for trafficked or sexually exploited children.(6, 11)

### **Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor**

The Simón Bolívar First Socialist Plan (2007-2013) provides an economic- and social- development roadmap aimed at eradicating extreme poverty by improving access to health care, education, and housing.(26) There is no evidence that the impact of this Plan on the worst forms of child labor has been evaluated.

The Government has a National Plan of Action against the abuse and commercial exploitation of women (PANAESC). Its objectives include preventing the sexual exploitation of children under the age of 18, protecting children from such exploitation, and rehabilitating child victims of sexual exploitation.(27) Similarly, the Government has a National Plan to combat trafficking, which focuses on rehabilitating child victims and providing them with direct assistance for social reintegration.(27, 28)

The Government of Venezuela and UNICEF have a Plan of Action (2009-2013) for children and adolescents that focuses on education, violence prevention, and children's rights protection. While the Plan does not specifically target child labor, it does highlight the paucity of child labor data and identifies child labor indicators as one of its evaluation and monitoring components.(29) As part of its annual work plan, the Venezuelan National Institute of Statistics will be collaborating with UNICEF to create a centralized system that will allow users to report violations of the rights of children and adolescents. The 2011 census data should have included the number of children above the age of 9 employed in the formal sector, but will not capture information on children engaged in the informal economy or those engaged in economic activities between the ages of 5 and 9.(6, 27, 30). The results of the 2011 census have not yet been published.

Venezuela continued its participation in MERCOSUR's Southern Child Initiative to defend the rights of children

and adolescents in the region. The initiative includes public campaigns against commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, and child labor; mutual technical assistance activities focused on raising domestic legal frameworks to international standards on those issues; and the exchange of best practices related to victim protection and assistance.(31-33)

Venezuela is a member of the Joint Regional Group for the Americas. The Joint Group, whose members also include Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Suriname, and Uruguay, conducts prevention and awareness-raising campaigns to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Latin America.(34, 35)

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

The Government continued to implement the Program to Dignify Working Children and Adolescents (PRODINAT). It aims to eradicate exploitative working conditions and establish healthy and safe business environments in which children above the legal working age may work.(6, 16, 36) Research was unable to confirm how many young workers were assisted through PRODINAT in 2012.

The Government continued to operate the “*Negra Hipólita* Mission,” which was created to coordinate, promote, and assist vulnerable groups, including street children. One of the Mission's objectives was to rehabilitate and socially integrate children engaged in the worst forms of labor, including those working at garbage collection sites and on the street, back into society.(9, 37) Since the inception of the Mission in 2006, more than 50,000 children have been assisted.(37) The “Children of the Barrio Mission” focused on providing services to at-risk and under-privileged children, including child laborers. Its primary goal was to eradicate exploitation, abuse, and the psychological and physical mistreatment of children.(6, 38) It is unclear how effective the Mission has been at meeting its goals.

Research did not identify any programs targeting children who work in other worst forms of child labor, particularly in agriculture, domestic service, and commercial sexual exploitation.

# Venezuela

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

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Develop a comprehensive list of hazardous occupations and activities prohibited to children.	2009, 2011, 2012
Coordination and Enforcement	Make information on enforcement of child labor, human trafficking, and other laws related to the worst forms of child labor publicly available.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
Policies	Assess the impact of the Simón Bolívar First Socialist Plan in addressing the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Conduct additional surveys on the worst forms of child labor, particularly in agriculture, domestic service, and commercial sexual exploitation, and make the results publicly available.	2010, 2011, 2012
	Ensure that child labor censuses cover all children under age 18.	2010, 2011, 2012
Social Programs	Expand existing programs and develop additional programs targeted to children involved in the worst forms of child labor, particularly in agriculture, domestic service, and commercial sexual exploitation.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012

## REFERENCES

- UNESCO Institute for Statistics. *Gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary. Total.*; accessed February 4, 2013; <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx?SPSLanguage=EN>. Data provided is the gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary school. This measure is a proxy measure for primary completion. For more information, please see the “Children’s Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions” section of this report.
- UCW. *Analysis of Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Statistics from National Household or Child Labor Surveys.* February 5, 2013. Reliable statistical data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics on children’s work in general are reported in this chart, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used, the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the “Children’s Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions” section of this report.
- Centro de Investigación Social. *El Trabajo infanto-adolescente en Venezuela: Estado de la cuestión.* Caracas, Fundación Telefónica; 2009. <http://bit.ly/yFWa20>.
- UNICEF. *No más trabajo infantil: una meta posible de alcanzar: Estudio sobre Educación y Trabajo infantil en la República Bolivariana de Venezuela.* Caracas; 2009. [http://www.unicef.org/venezuela/spanish/No\\_mas\\_trabajo\\_infantil\\_UNICEF.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/venezuela/spanish/No_mas_trabajo_infantil_UNICEF.pdf).
- U.S. Department of State. “Venezuela,” in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2012.* Washington, DC; April 19, 2013; <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>.
- U.S. Embassy- Caracas. *reporting, February 1, 2013.*
- International Labour Office. *Children in hazardous work: What we know, what we need to do.* Geneva, International Labour Organization; 2011. [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_155428.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_155428.pdf). While country-specific information on the dangers children face in agriculture is not available, research studies and other reports have documented the dangerous nature of tasks in agriculture and their accompanying occupational exposures, injuries and potential health consequences to children working the sector. .
- International Labour Office. *Children in hazardous work: What we know, What we need to do.* Geneva, International Labour Organization; 2011. [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_155428.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_155428.pdf). While country-specific information on the dangers children face in domestic work is not available, research studies and other reports have documented the dangerous nature of tasks in domestic work and their accompanying occupational exposures, injuries and potential health consequences to children working in the sector.
- ILO Committee of Experts. *Individual Direct Request Concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (ratification: 2005) Published: 2012;* accessed February 19, 2013; <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:20010:0::NO:20010::>.
- Meneses, D. “La calle como casa y escuela.” El Universal, Caracas, January 25, 2009; Caracas. [http://www.eluniversal.com/2009/01/25/imp\\_ccs\\_art\\_la-calle-como-casa-y\\_1241334.shtml](http://www.eluniversal.com/2009/01/25/imp_ccs_art_la-calle-como-casa-y_1241334.shtml).
- U.S. Department of State. “Venezuela,” in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2012.* Washington, DC; June 19, 2012; <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2012/>.
- U.S. Embassy- Caracas. *reporting, February 28, 2013.*
- Government of Venezuela. *Ley Organica para la Proteccion del Niño y del Adolescente,* enacted June 28, 2006. [http://www.oas.org/juridico/spanish/cyb\\_ven\\_LEY\\_ORG\\_PARA\\_PROTEC\\_NINO\\_ADOLE.pdf](http://www.oas.org/juridico/spanish/cyb_ven_LEY_ORG_PARA_PROTEC_NINO_ADOLE.pdf).
- Government of Venezuela. *Ley Organica del Trabajo,* enacted June 19, 1997. <http://www.tsj.gov.ve/legislacion/lot.html>.
- Government of Venezuela. *Código Civil de Venezuela,* enacted July 26, 1982. <http://photos.state.gov/libraries/venezuela/325692/fleitasmd/Codigo%20Civil%20Venezolano.pdf>.
- ILO Committee of Experts. *Individual Observation Concerning Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (ratification: 1987) Published: 2012;* accessed February 19, 2013; <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:20010:0::NO:20010::>.
- Government of Venezuela. *Constitución de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela,* enacted 2000. <http://www.tsj.gov.ve/legislacion/constitucion1999.htm>.
- Government of Venezuela. *Ley Especial Contra los Delitos Informáticos,* enacted 2001. <http://www.tsj.gov.ve/legislacion/ledi.htm>.

19. Government of Venezuela. *Ley Organica sobre Sustancias Estupefacientes y Psicotropicas*, enacted September 30, 1993. <http://www.contralorianaguanagua.gob.ve/LEYES/LeyesPenal/leysusest.pdf>.
20. Child Soldiers International. "Appendix II: Data Summary Table on Recruitment Ages of National Armies," in *Louder than Words*. London; 2012; [http://www.child-soldiers.org/global\\_report\\_reader.php?id=562](http://www.child-soldiers.org/global_report_reader.php?id=562).
21. ILO Committee of Experts. *Individual Direct Request concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (ratification: 2005) Submitted: 2011*; accessed November 20, 2011; <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/pdconv.pl?host=status01&textbase=iloeng&document=27107&chapter=9&query=%28venezuela%29+%40ref+%2B+%23YEAR%3D2011&highlight=&querytype=bool&context=0>.
22. Government of Venezuela. *Ley Orgánica de Educación*, enacted August 13, 2009. [http://www.me.gob.ve/ley\\_organica.pdf](http://www.me.gob.ve/ley_organica.pdf).
23. UNESCO. *Education for All Global Monitoring Report*. Paris; 2008. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001547/154743e.pdf>.
24. Government of Venezuela. *Dirección General de Relaciones Laborales*, [online] [cited February 6, 2012];
25. ILO Committee of Experts. *Individual Observation concerning Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (ratification: 1987) Published: 2011*; accessed February 19, 2013; <http://bit.ly/HXkrDX>.
26. Government of Venezuela. *Proyecto Nacional Simón Bolívar Primer Plan Socialista 2007-2013*. Caracas, September. [http://www.cendit.gob.ve/uploaded/pdf/Proyecto\\_Nacional\\_Simon\\_Bolivar.pdf](http://www.cendit.gob.ve/uploaded/pdf/Proyecto_Nacional_Simon_Bolivar.pdf).
27. ILO Committee of Experts. *Individual Observation Concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (ratification: 2005) Published: 2012*; accessed November 7, 2012; <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:20010:0::NO:20010::>.
28. ILO Committee of Experts. *Individual Observation concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (ratification: 2005) Published: 2011*; accessed February 19, 2013; <http://bit.ly/HuyHaN>.
29. UNICEF, Government of Venezuela. *Plan de Acción del Programa País, 2009-2013*. Caracas; 2009. <http://www.unicef.org/venezuela/spanish/CPAP2.pdf>.
30. Blanco-Allais, F. *Trabajo infantil en Venezuela: 1998-2007* Understanding Children's Work; November 2009. <http://bit.ly/w09jyD>.
31. Niñ@Sur. *Quiénes Participan?*, Niñ@Sur, [online] [cited February 13, 2013]; <http://www.niniosur.com/index2.asp?id=124>.
32. CRIN. *¿Qué es MERCOSUR?*, CRIN, [online] [cited February 13, 2013]; <http://www.crin.org/espanol/RM/mercosur.asp>.
33. Niñ@Sur. *Trata, Tráfico y Venta*, Niñ@Sur, [online] [cited February 19, 2013]; <http://www.niniosur.com/index3.asp?id=126>.
34. Grupo de Acción Regional de las Américas. *Países Participantes*, Grupo de Acción Regional de las Américas, [online] 2010 [cited February 13, 2013]; [http://www.grupodeaccionregional.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=52%3AQuiénes-somos&catid=38&Itemid=73&lang=es](http://www.grupodeaccionregional.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52%3AQuiénes-somos&catid=38&Itemid=73&lang=es).
35. Grupo de Acción Regional de las Américas. *Que Hacemos*, Grupo de Acción Regional de las Américas, [Online] [cited February 13 2013]; [http://www.grupodeaccionregional.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1&lang=es](http://www.grupodeaccionregional.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1&lang=es).
36. Government of Venezuela. *Programa para la Dignificación de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes Trabajadores (Prodinat)*, IDENA, [online] August 10, 2009 [cited February 6, 2012]; <http://www.idena.gob.ve/index.php/proyectos-y-programas/programa-para-la-dignificacion-prodinat>.
37. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. *Consideration of Reports of States Parties (continued) Second Periodic Report of Venezuela*. Geneva; March 30, 2010. Report No. CRC/C/SR.1274. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G07/442/79/PDF/G0744279.pdf?OpenElement>.
38. Government of Venezuela. *Misión Niños y Niñas del Barrio*, IDENA, [online] [cited February 19, 2013]; <http://www.idena.gob.ve/index.php/la-institucion/mision-ninos-y-ninas-del-barrio>.