

In 2013, 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 some working children. However, children in Venezuela continue to engage in child labor in domestic service and in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation. The Government does not have sufficient efforts in place to protect children in key sectors where child labor is prevalent. In addition, information is not available on the effectiveness of the Government's coordinating body on child labor, and the Government has not established a list of hazardous occupations prohibited for children.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Venezuela are engaged in child labor in domestic service and in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation.(1-5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Venezuela.

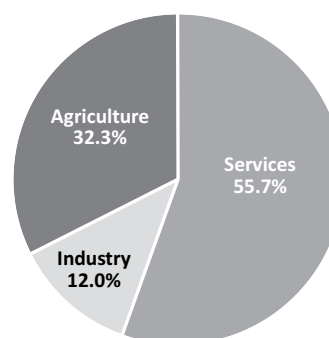
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10-14 yrs.	5.1 (138,641)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	96.0
Combining Work and School (%)	10-14 yrs.	4.1
Primary Completion Rate (%)		96.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(6)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Encuesta de Hogares por Muestreo Survey, 2006.(7)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14



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	Activities unknown* (5, 8-10)
Industry	Mining, activities unknown* (10, 11)
Services	Domestic service (1, 3-5, 8, 10, 11)
	Street peddling, street begging (4, 5, 10, 12, 13)
	Garbage scavenging, recycling (5)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced labor in domestic service* and street begging* (4, 11)
	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2, 4, 5, 14)

* 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.

Children are sometimes trafficked to urban areas, such as Caracas and Maracaibo, or to resort destinations, such as Margarita Island, for commercial sexual exploitation.(4, 13)

It has been reported that the Government's 2011 census found approximately 262,000 children and adolescents between the ages of 10 and 17 working in Venezuela. Research could not determine the extent to which the survey encompassed the informal sector, or whether there are studies that target the worst forms of child labor.(10)







Venezuela

NO ADVANCEMENT

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Venezuela 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 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	14	Labor Law; Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (15, 16)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Regulations on Occupational Safety and Health Conditions; Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (16, 17)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Constitution; Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (16, 18)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Constitution; Law for the Protection of Women's Right to a Life Free from Violence (18, 19)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents; Law Against Organized Crime and Terrorism; Special Law against Computer Crimes (16, 20, 21)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Drug Act (22)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		Constitution; Partial Reform of the Military Enlistment Law (18, 23)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Partial Reform of the Military Enlistment Law (23)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Constitution; Education Law; Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (16, 18, 24)
Free Public Education	Yes		Education Law; Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (16, 24)

* No conscription or no standing military.

Articles 79 and 80 of the Regulations on Occupational Safety and Health Conditions prohibit activities considered to be dangerous or unhealthy for children under 18 years of age, but do not specify or incorporate a list of these activities. Similarly, Article 96 of the Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents prohibits children under 18 from working in activities not permitted by law, but does not specify which activities are considered hazardous. (16, 17, 25) The Government has yet to establish a list of hazardous occupations prohibited to children under age 18. (2, 5, 25, 26)

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).

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Popular Power for Labor and Social Security (MINPPTRASS)	Enforce labor laws, including child labor laws. Develop policies and projects regarding child labor.(5, 27)
National Institute for Prevention, Safety, and Health at Work (INPSASEL)	Assist MINPPTRASS in enforcing labor laws and conditions of work in Venezuela. Help develop labor inspection apparatus as well as implement national labor policies.(28)
Ministry of Popular Power of the Interior, Justice, and Peace (MPPRIJP)	Investigate trafficking in persons cases through its Criminal Investigative Division and its Scientific, Penal, and Criminal Investigative Corps (CICPC). Role of CICPC is to help enforce laws related to commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities.(5, 10)

Although the Government has stated that the Ministry of Popular Power for Labor and Social Security (MINPPTRASS) and the National Institute for Prevention, Safety, and Health at Work (INPSASEL) carry out child labor inspections in the formal and informal business sectors, there was no publicly available information regarding the number of labor inspections conducted, or the sanctions applied, during the reporting period.(5, 10, 29) It is also unknown whether labor inspectors received training on child labor or had adequate resources. Similarly, there was no publicly available information regarding criminal law enforcement, including the number of victims, convictions, or prosecutions for trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation.(10) No information was publicly available on the number of investigators employed, or on their training and resources.(10)

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
System for the Protection of Children and Adolescents	Coordinate and protect children's rights and address child labor issues through policies and programs at the national and state levels. Comprised of several government ministries, government councils, and representatives from civil society.(16, 30) Provided for by the Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents.(16)

Research could not determine the extent to which the System for the Protection of Children and Adolescents was active during the reporting period. Research could also not determine whether the Government maintains a coordinating body that addresses the trafficking of children, including for commercial sexual exploitation.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Second Socialist Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the Nation (2013-2019)*†	Provides a roadmap for reducing poverty by improving economic opportunity, access to health care, education, and housing. Does not contain language on the elimination of child labor.(31)
National Plan of Action Against Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation (PANAESC)	Addresses the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation of children under age 18 and rehabilitation of victims.(32)
National Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons	Provides strategies for the removal of children from trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, as well as for their social reintegration.(2, 32)
UNICEF Action Plan for Venezuela (2009-2013)	Promotes education, violence prevention, and the protection of children's rights. Does not specifically target child labor, but does highlight lack of child labor data and identifies child labor indicators as one of its evaluation and monitoring components.(33)

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
MERCOSUR United Against Child Labor Campaign	Develops public awareness about the need to combat child labor in MERCOSUR. Addresses child labor in agriculture, domestic work, and sexual exploitation, with particular emphasis on communities along country borders.(34)
Second Presidential Declaration on the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor in MERCOSUR (2012)	Promotes greater articulation between governmental agencies, levels of government, and with civil society among MERCOSUR members.(35)
MERCOSUR's Southern Child Initiative	Aims to defend the rights of children and adolescents in the region by raising awareness and seeking coordination among member states regarding the commercial sexual exploitation of children, child trafficking and pornography, child labor, and migrant labor; by improving country legal frameworks to harmonize them with international conventions affecting children, and by exchanging best practices.(36-38)

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

† Policy was launched during the reporting period.

In 2013, President Nicolas Maduro announced his intent to implement the Second Socialist Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the Nation, a six year plan with broad goals that include the promotion of educational activities for youth. However, it is not yet clear how the Plan is being implemented, or the extent to which it will impact child labor.(10) While the Government has adopted poverty reduction strategies, as well as policies that target the trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children, research found no evidence of a national policy that targeted other forms of child labor, such as domestic service and garbage scavenging.

In November 2013, 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.(39)

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

In 2013, the Government of Venezuela funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Program to Dignify Working Children and Adolescents (PRODINAT)†	National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (IDENA) administered program that aims to eradicate exploitative working conditions and establish safe business environments where children above the legal age may work.(5, 10, 26, 40)
Children of the Barrio Mission (<i>Misión Niños del Barrio</i>)‡	IDENA-administered program that provides services to at-risk and under-privileged children, including child laborers. Primary goal is to eradicate exploitation, abuse, and the psychological and physical mistreatment of children from birth to age 17.(5, 10, 41)
Negra Hipólita Mission (<i>Misión Negra Hipólita</i>)‡	Governmental program that provides assistance to vulnerable groups, including street children.(42) Assists children engaged in child labor, including those working at garbage collection sites and on the street.(43, 44) Has assisted more than 50,000 children since its inception in 2006.(44)
Communal Centers for Comprehensive Care (CCPI)*‡	IDENA-supervised centers that provide meals and educational assistance to at-risk children from birth to age 12. CCPI also partner with the Ministry of Popular Power, Health, and Social Development to provide medical and dental care to children.(45)
National Day Camps*‡	IDENA-administered program under the Community Vacation Plan that provides summer day camps to children with a focus on athletic, artistic, and cultural activities. In 2013, program reached 1.6 million children and adolescents.(10)
Regional Action Group for the Americas (<i>Grupo de Acción Regional para las Américas</i>)	Conducts prevention and awareness-raising campaigns to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Latin America. Members include Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela.(46, 47)

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)

Program	Description
Elimination of Child Labor in Latin America (Phase 4)	\$4.5 million Government of Spain-funded, 4-year project implemented by ILO-IPEC to combat child labor in 19 countries, including Venezuela.(48)
Education and Monitoring Program for the Eradication of Child Labor	\$1.3 million Government of Spain-funded, 2-year project implemented by ILO-IPEC that aims to strengthen public policies and government capacity to combat child labor in 19 countries in Latin America, including Venezuela. Includes the objective of developing information systems on the worst forms of child labor.(48)

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

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Venezuela.

In 2013, it was reported that the Program to Dignify Working Children and Adolescents (PRODINAT) had lost efficacy due to a lack of governmental funding. It was also reported that the Communal Centers for Comprehensive Care (CCPI) lacked the capacity to carry out their missions and that their coordination with the National Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (IDENA) had deteriorated.(10) Research could not identify government programs that targeted children engaged in other forms of child labor, for example in domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation.

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 Venezuela (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Specify and adopt a comprehensive list of hazardous occupations and activities prohibited to children.	2009, 2011 – 2013
Enforcement	Make information on the enforcement of child labor laws publicly available, including funding, the number of inspections and convictions, and whether inspectors receive adequate training.	2009 – 2013
Coordination	Make information on the activities of the System for the Protection of Children and Adolescents publically available.	2013
	Publish activities of any coordinating mechanism that addresses the trafficking of children, including for commercial sexual exploitation.	2013
Government Policies	Assess the impact of the national Socialist Plan for the Economic and Social Development of the Nation.	2009 – 2013
	Adopt a national policy that addresses all forms of child labor, including domestic service and garbage scavenging.	2013
Social Programs	Ensure that child labor censuses cover all children under age 18 in both the formal and informal economy, and make the results publicly available.	2010 – 2013
	Conduct additional surveys on the worst forms of child labor, particularly commercial sexual exploitation and forced domestic service, and make the results publicly available.	2010, 2011, 2013
	Assess the impact the Communal Centers for Comprehensive Care and the National Day Camps have on child labor.	2013
	Expand existing programs and develop additional programs that target children involved in the worst forms of child labor, particularly in domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation.	2009 – 2013

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