

In 2012, Barbados made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government established a National Task Force for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons and began organizing a Trafficking Unit within the police force. However, remaining gaps in the legislative framework leave some children without adequate protection against all forms of exploitative work. For example, Barbados lacks a legally enforceable list of hazardous occupations for children. Although Barbados does not appear to have a widespread child labor problem, some children are victims of commercial sexual exploitation and drug trafficking.



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		111.3

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, 2013.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Although Barbados does not appear to have a widespread child labor problem, some children may be engaged in the worst forms of child labor, namely in drug trafficking and as victims of commercial sexual exploitation.(3-6)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act sets the minimum age for employment at 16. However, under the Recruiting of Workers Act, children between the ages of 14 and 16 can be engaged in light work with parental consent.(7-9) The Employment Act prohibits the engagement of children in night work and any occupation that is likely to harm their safety, health, or morals. Occupations that merit such prohibitions, besides industrial undertakings such as mining and quarrying, were not specified in the Act.(7, 9)

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	No
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	No
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	No
	Minimum Age for Work	16
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	16
	Free Public Education	Yes

A list of occupations constituting light work has not been established.(10) Similarly, while the Ministry of Labor (MOL) reports to have created a hazardous list of occupations and activities prohibited to all children under the age of 18, research uncovered no evidence of its official promulgation. The Government indicates that the list includes construction; work conducted underwater, underground, at dangerous heights, or in confined spaced spaces; agricultural work; and handling of heavy loads.(7, 11)

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The Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act of 2011 prohibits the trafficking of persons for the purposes of labor and sexual exploitation. Perpetrators are subject to life imprisonment if the trafficked victim is a child.(11-13) Under the Sexual Offences Act, it is prohibited to use or procure a child for prostitution or engagement in sexual relations.(14) The Protection of Children Act prohibits the use of children in pornographic activities, including indecent photographs and film. With the exception of indecent photographs, distribution of pornographic films that use children is not prohibited.(15)

The Constitution of Barbados prohibits forced and compulsory labor.(16, 17) The Offenses Against a Person Act penalizes slavery, including importing and exporting a person as a slave.(18)

The Defence Act sets the minimum age for voluntary enlistment at 18. 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, 19) The Drug Abuse (Prevention and Control) Act prohibits the use, procurement, or soliciting of children for any drug-related activities.(20)

Under the Education Act, schooling is free and compulsory for children between the ages of 5 and 16.(5, 21)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The MOL established a Child Labor Committee in 2004 that is responsible for coordinating efforts to abolish child labor in the country. Committee members include government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and civil society organizations.(5) However, it has not been active for several years.(5, 22)

The MOL is responsible for enforcing child labor laws. There are 19 labor inspectors who investigate any violations, including child labor reports.(5) They did not receive any child labor training this reporting period. The budget for the MOL is also unknown.(5) There were no identified or reported cases of child labor this year. Accordingly, there were no violations cited.(5)

The Royal Barbados Police Force makes all criminal arrests for infractions involving the trafficking, use in illicit activities, and commercial sexual exploitation of children. There were no cases

reported, and consequently no investigations or prosecutions transpired during the reporting year.(5) This year, a National Task Force for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons was created. It is a 13-member body with representatives from several government agencies, NGOs, and interest groups.(5) As a means to implement and carry out its mandate, it initiated an Anti-Trafficking Unit within the police force that will investigate cases of child trafficking as part of its broader directive.(5)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

While the worst forms of child labor do not appear to be a widespread problem in Barbados, the Government does not have a comprehensive policy framework to combat commercial sexual exploitation or the use of children in drug trafficking.(5) It has acknowledged that these are areas of concern and recognizes the need to conduct a national child labor survey to assess the magnitude of the problem.(6, 11, 23) However, it does not appear that the Government has undertaken such research.(5, 11)

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

The Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, and Community Development began implementing the Identification, Stabilization, Enablement, and Empowerment (ISEE) Bridge Program. It was designed to reduce poverty by addressing seven aspects of family life, including employment and education.(24, 25) There are currently 30 families that are working closely with social workers to learn how to empower themselves and break the psychosocial barriers of poverty. It is unknown how many children will be served by the program and it is too soon to evaluate its impact.(5, 25, 26)

The Government has been working closely with UNICEF to carry out several educational initiatives.(6) It also continues to implement their school meal program for low-income children in an effort to encourage school attendance. These initiatives are targeted at impoverished children, those believed to be the most at risk for child labor.(5) Their effect on child labor and its worst forms has not been assessed.

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

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Amend the Employment Act to establish a minimum employment age of 16 for all sectors of economic activity.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Officially incorporate into the legal framework and make publicly available the Ministry of Labor's list of occupations and activities considered hazardous.	2011, 2012
	Draft and adopt a list of occupations constituting light work.	2012
	Amend legislation to prohibit the distribution of child pornographic films.	2011, 2012
Coordination and Enforcement	Reactivate the Child Labor Committee to coordinate government efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2011, 2012
	Ensure that child labor inspections are carried out to prevent the worst forms of child labor, especially the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in drug trafficking.	2010, 2011, 2012
Policies	Conduct a comprehensive study to update and 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.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Use the results of the study to develop a national plan of action to address the worst forms of child labor, especially the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in drug trafficking.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
Social Programs	Assess the impact that the existing school meals programs may have on addressing the worst forms of child labor, especially the commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2010, 2011, 2012

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