

In 2014, Nicaragua made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government passed the country's first Law Against Trafficking in Persons, which raises penalties for the trafficking of children and adolescents to 19 to 20 years of imprisonment. The Government also trained 6,082 officials on child labor issues, and the Ministry of Labor increased its number of labor inspectors from 90 to 97. With support from the World Food Program, the Government continued to expand its school meal program, which now reaches over one million children. However, children in Nicaragua are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and in commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking. National policies to eliminate child labor and protect children have not been fully implemented, and the Government appears to lack a specific and consistent mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor. In addition, the Government has not published national statistics on child labor since 2005.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Nicaragua are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and in commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking.(1-4) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Nicaragua.

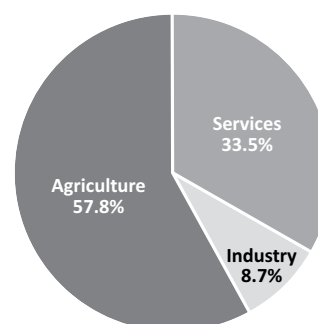
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10-14 yrs.	31.1 (218,892)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	87.8
Combining Work and School (%)	10-14 yrs.	25.3
Primary Completion Rate (%)		80.4

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(5)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Encuesta Continua de Hogares (ECH) Survey, 2010.(6)

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	Harvesting coffee, bananas, tobacco,† African palm,* and oranges* (2, 7-14)
	Harvesting sugarcane* (9, 15)
	Livestock breeding,† cattle raising*† (7, 9, 14)
	Production of beef products*† and dairy products* (7, 14)
	Collecting shellfish† (9, 10, 14)
Industry	Construction,† including transporting materials* (9, 16)
	Quarrying† of pumice, gypsum,* and limestone* (9, 10, 12, 14, 17)
	Production of crush stones (gravel)† (18-20)
	Mining† of gold (9, 10, 14)

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Table 2. Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity (cont)

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Domestic service (3, 9, 21)
	Work in transportation† (2, 9)
	Street vending,† performing at stoplights† (2, 3, 12, 22-24)
	Garbage scavenging† (2, 3, 23, 25)
	Work as couriers† (3, 7)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3, 4, 10)
	Domestic service as a result of human trafficking (26, 27)
	Used in the production of pornography* (28)

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

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

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

In Nicaragua, children are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation, particularly in Granada, Managua, the Caribbean Coast, and San Juan del Sur.(26, 29) It has been reported that children in Nicaragua who lack identification documents, sometimes because of a lack of birth registration, are at an increased risk of trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.(9) An estimated 20 percent of children born in Nicaragua lack birth certificates.(30)







Partial data on child labor is collected through the Continuous Household Survey (ECH), which is instituted periodically by the Government’s National Institute of Development Information (INIDE) and funded by the IDB. Comprehensive data on child labor is collected through the National Survey on Child and Adolescent Labor (ENTIA), which is also carried out by INIDE.(31) While the most recent ENTIA survey was conducted in 2009, its results have not been published. The most recent ENTIA survey whose results were published, and which serves as the public reference in Nicaragua, was conducted in 2005.(31, 32) That survey found that 238,827 children between the ages of 5 and 17 were economically active, with 36.1 percent of working children being under age 14.(32, 33) While current and official statistics remain unknown, unofficial reports indicate that child labor has increased since 2005.(31, 32)

Education is free and compulsory in Nicaragua. However, costs associated with school supplies and transportation make it difficult for some children, in particular those from poor backgrounds and rural areas, to attend.(24, 34) Some sources indicate that secondary schools have not received adequate assistance and that secondary school attendance remains low, increasing the risk that older children engage in exploitative work.(12, 29)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Nicaragua 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 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	Article 131 of the Labor Code; Article 73 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code; Article 84 of the Constitution (35-38)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 130 and 133 of the Labor Code; Article 1 of Ministerial Agreement No. JCHG-08-06-10; Articles 2 and 74 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code (35-37, 39)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Article 6 of the Ministerial Agreement No. JCHG-08-06-10; Article 133 of the Labor Code (35, 39)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 40 of the Constitution; Article 61 of the Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Article 315 of the Penal Code (38, 40, 41)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 61-63 of the Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Articles 182-183 and 315 of the Penal Code; Articles 5 and 28 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code (37, 40, 41)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 61 of the Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Articles 175-183 of the Penal Code; Articles 5 and 26 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code (37, 40, 41)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 61 of the Law Against Trafficking in Persons; Articles 358-359 and 362 of the Penal Code; Article 71 of Law 285 (Reform to the Narcotics Law); Article 79 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code (37, 40-42)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Annex 1 of the Code on the Organization, Jurisdiction, and Social Welfare of the Military (43)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	12	Article 121 of the Constitution; Articles 19 and 23 of the Education Law; Article 43 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code (37, 38, 44)
Free Public Education	Yes	17	Article 121 of the Constitution; Articles 8, 19, and 23 of the Education Law; Article 43 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code (37, 38, 44)

* No conscription, Article 96 of the Constitution (38, 45)

During the reporting period, the Government drafted and passed Nicaragua's first Law Against Trafficking in Persons. The law was approved in the National Assembly through a two-stage process in December 2014 and January 2015, and was enacted on February 25, 2015.(41, 46) The law amends Nicaragua's Penal Code by raising penalties for the procurement of prostitution from 4 to 6 years of imprisonment to 8 to 10 years; it also applies these penalties to an expanded set of criminal offenses that include benefitting commercially from, and managing, prostitution.(40, 41) These penalties are increased to 12 to 15 years when the victim is a child or adolescent. The law also raises penalties for the trafficking of children and adolescents from 10 to 12 years of imprisonment to 19 to 20 years.(40, 41) Additionally, the law specifies that exploitative child labor figures among an expanded set of criminal offences that may be prosecuted as trafficking.(41)

Nicaraguan law is not clear regarding the age up to which education is compulsory. Article 121 of the Constitution states that primary school education is compulsory without specifying an age.(38) Under Articles 19 and 23 of the Education Law, education is also compulsory only through the sixth grade, which it specifies is up to age 12 and the end of primary school.(44) Additionally, Article 43 of the Childhood and Adolescence Code states that both primary and secondary school education are compulsory, suggesting up to age 17, but does not specifically state an age.(37) The lack of clarity regarding the age up to which education is compulsory and the potential gap between the compulsory education age and the minimum age for work may leave children vulnerable to child labor, including its worst forms.(12, 47)

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 (MITRAB)	Enforce labor laws and set child labor policy priorities.(3, 48) Conduct labor inspections through its General Labor Inspectorate, including child labor inspections through its Child Labor Inspections Unit. Conduct training on child labor issues and inspections, and coordinate with other agencies, both public and private.(10, 49, 50) Maintain a mailbox in each of Nicaragua's 17 departments to receive complaints of child labor violations.(31)
Nicaraguan National Police (NNP)	Investigate cases of child labor and human trafficking through the Police Intelligence Unit, which detects crimes; the Special Crimes Unit, which investigates crimes; and 54 Women's Commissions, which work in prevention and protection.(3, 10, 49) Maintain a hotline for receiving reports on the welfare of children, including those in danger of exploitation.(31)
Ministry of Governance	Coordinate participation between MITRAB and NNP in labor inspections in which employers resist inspection.(31)
Prosecutor General's Office	Prosecute cases of child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities. Contains 2 national-level and 35 department-level prosecutors that prosecute these and other crimes.(3, 10, 49)
Human Rights Attorney for Children	Assist in the enforcement of laws relating to child labor and hazardous child labor.(3, 10)
Ministry of the Family, Adolescence, and Childhood (MIFAN)	Maintain a hotline for receiving reports on human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.(31) Assist in providing officials with training on child labor violations.(30)

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

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2014, the Ministry of Labor (MITRAB) employed 97 labor inspectors whose responsibilities included investigating child labor violations; 43 of these inspectors were based in Managua.(31) Although this number of inspectors is an increase from the 90 inspectors employed in 2013, reports indicate that the number of inspectors continues to be insufficient to address the scope of the child labor problem in Nicaragua.(3) MITRAB reported that 6,082 public officials, including its 97 labor inspectors, participated in child labor training during the reporting period.(31) The specific budget allocated for labor inspections in Nicaragua is not known; however, the overall budget for MITRAB was approximately \$3 million, reportedly the third lowest of all government ministries.(31) Government officials and child labor experts have previously reported that child labor inspections throughout the country, and those in agricultural areas in particular, are limited due to resource and personnel constraints.(3, 10)

In 2014, MITRAB conducted 1,205 child labor inspections, which resulted in the identification of 161 violations of child labor. The exact number of children who were found working and removed from work was not publicly available.(31) MITRAB also conducted 1,999 inspections of private homes to monitor the working conditions of child domestic workers. Although 17 violations were discovered through these inspections, the exact number of children removed from work was not publicly available.(31) Due to the scope and severity of child labor in the country, the number of inspections conducted is not considered sufficient. Complete information on the geographic distribution of labor inspections, the sectors in which they occurred, and how many children were referred for services was not publicly available.(31) In addition, no information on fines or penalties associated with child labor violations was publicly available.(31)

Criminal Law Enforcement

The Nicaraguan National Police (NNP) and the Prosecutor General's Office take the lead on investigating and prosecuting cases of human trafficking and other worst forms of child labor in Nicaragua. Research did not find the number of NNP criminal investigators employed in 2014.(46) Research also did not find whether the Government had trained its criminal investigators or prosecutors on issues related to the worst forms of child labor during the reporting period. However, some NGOs and the Institute for Strategic Research and Public Policy reported that they supported trafficking prevention and awareness training for government agencies, including public prosecutors and police.(46) In 2014, the budget for the NNP and the Prosecutor General's Office was not made publicly available. Reports indicate that the NNP has insufficient resources, including a lack of personnel, equipment, vehicles, and funding, to carry out trafficking investigations.(30, 46)

In 2014, the Government reported that it conducted 928 investigations for human trafficking, including for crimes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. The number of criminal violations found through these investigations, and the number of victims rescued, is not known.(46) The Government reported that during the reporting period, the Prosecutor General's Office prosecuted 17 active cases of human trafficking, 13 of which involved crimes of commercial sexual exploitation, and 4 of which involved crimes of forced labor.(46) Of the 13 cases involving commercial sexual exploitation, 7 cases resulted in convictions, and 4 of these cases involved a total of 8 underage victims. Of the four cases prosecuted for crimes of forced labor, a conviction was reached in only one of them, which also involved an underage victim.(46) Although the Government did not provide information on all of the sentences issued, it reported that the sentences ranged from 3.5 to 15 years of imprisonment.(46)

The Government and NGOs have reported that, according to a process developed by the National Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons (CNCTP), victims of the worst forms of child labor are referred by the NNP to the Ministry of the Family, Adolescence, and Childhood (MIFAN), who then refers them to NGOs for the provision of services. Reports indicate that this method of referral has been successful.(46)

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 Social Welfare System (SNBS)	Coordinate efforts on child labor and ensure that government institutions protect the rights of, and provide social services to, children and adolescents as part of its mandate to assist the Nicaraguan population. Composed of various government ministries, including MITRAB, MIFAN, the Ministry of Education (MINED), the Ministry of Health (MINSa), and the Ministry of Governance.(31)
National Commission for the Progressive Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of the Adolescent Worker (CNEPTI)	Coordinate the implementation of child labor policies and protect adolescent workers. Led by MITRAB and composed of various government ministries, including MIFAN, MINED, MINSa, as well as private sector and non-governmental institutions.(51, 52) Coordinate the implementation of awareness-raising strategies and direct action programs.(51, 52)
National Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons (CNCTP)	Coordinate efforts to address human trafficking for labor and commercial sexual exploitation, including the implementation of the Strategic Plan Against Trafficking in Persons. Led by the Ministry of Governance and comprising the police, governmental ministries, the Supreme Court of Justice, and civil society organizations.(3, 41, 53) Coordinate Nicaragua's participation in the Central American Regional Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons.(30)
Ministry of the Family, Adolescence, and Childhood (MIFAN)	Maintain a guide to assist victims of commercial sexual exploitation and help coordinate between agencies responsible for their care.(29) Part of the SNBS.(31)

In 2014, the Government reported that the National Commission for the Progressive Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of the Adolescent Worker (CNEPTI) had not convened regularly and was no longer the primary mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor. The Government also reported that coordination efforts have largely been transferred to the National Social Welfare System (SNBS), which is composed of various government ministries including MITRAB; MIFAN; and the Ministries of Governance, Health, and Education.(31) However, reports indicate that the SNBS does not comprise a specific and consistent coordinating mechanism to address child labor due to limited coordination among constituent ministries and a lack of resources dedicated to combating child labor.(31) Research also indicates that coordination between the SNBS and NGOs that address child labor is limited. In addition, research did not find that the SNBS had published any information on its child labor coordination efforts during the reporting period.(31) Research also did not find information on how the SNBS or its constituent ministries had monitored the implementation of national policies on child labor, for example the Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor and the Protection of Young Workers (PEPETI).(31)

The CNCTP met various times during the reporting period, in particular to coordinate the drafting and passage of Nicaragua's first Law Against Trafficking in Persons.(41, 46) The Government reported that the CNCTP had conducted outreach and trainings on trafficking issues in coordination with various government institutions, NGOs, and NNP units that targeted 40,761 citizens.(46)

While MIFAN maintains a guide to assist child victims of commercial sexual exploitation, reports indicate that the Government did not have formal procedures for the identification of human trafficking victims among high-risk populations, including children who

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are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation.(29, 46) MIFAN appears to be responsible only for the care of child trafficking victims under the age of 13, and the extent of its coordinating role is unclear.(29, 53)

In June 2014, MIFAN, in collaboration with MITRAB and workers associations, held a public forum to address child labor in street work named “United Against Dangerous Child Labor in the Streets, Stoplights, and Markets of Managua.”(54)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Roadmap for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Sets the goal of eliminating the worst forms of child labor by 2015, and all forms of child labor by 2020.(10, 31, 55-57)
Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor and the Protection of Young Workers (PEPETI) (2007–2016)	Aims to eliminate child labor and ensure protections for adolescent workers. Seeks to reintegrate child laborers into the school system and increase school enrollment.(29)
National Human Development Plan (2012–2016)	Sets the Government’s strategy for national development, including in poverty reduction, social well-being, and education. Includes efforts to eliminate child labor and uphold children’s and adolescents’ rights.(3, 58, 59)
National Plan of Youth Employment (2012–2016)	Seeks to eliminate child labor and protect the rights of working adolescents. Established by the National Commission of Youth Employment.(60-62)
Coffee Harvest Plan	Aims to develop a comprehensive approach to assist children whose parents work in the coffee harvest and to improve educational opportunities for children on coffee plantations; focuses on eliminating hazardous child labor in the coffee sector in the Department of Jinotega. Developed by the Government, in collaboration with the private sector and civil society.(3, 10, 62, 63)
Plan of Integrated Attention	Prioritizes assistance for children and adolescents who work in stone quarries, mines, and in African palm cultivation. Involves coordination among several national ministries and local municipalities in order to determine the extent of child labor; create an action plan to uphold the rights of working children and adolescents to education, recreation, and health care; and promote better livelihoods for the families of working children and adolescents.(48, 61, 62)
Inter-Ministerial Agreement on the Sustained Development of Children’s Rights (2013)	Aims to make Nicaragua a country free from child labor, including hazardous child labor, through inter-ministerial cooperation channeled through SNBS. Participating ministries agree to jointly create an action plan to address child labor and to generate dignified work for adolescents permitted to work.(64) Signed by MITRAB, MIFAN, MINED, Presidents of the National Assembly and the Supreme Court, as well as representatives from unions, the private sector, and NGOs.(64)
Policy on Special Protection for Children and Adolescents (Decreto No. 20-2006)	Focuses and consolidates the Government’s guiding principles, objectives, and strategies on children’s and adolescents’ rights. Seeks to mainstream the recognition and defense of child rights, among them protections against child labor and commercial sexual exploitation, in policy areas including social protection, development, and education.(65)
National Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons Strategic Plan (2012–2014)	Addresses human trafficking through directives shared by public and private actors, both national and international. Focuses on planning and monitoring regarding prevention, prosecution, assistance and reintegration of victims.(53, 66)
Strategic Education Plan (PEE) (2011–2015)*	Articulates national educational strategies with development objectives that prioritize the building of human capital. Plan is based on three core areas: (1) equality of access to free, universal education; (2) improved quality; and (3) increased institutional strength.(67, 68)
Declaration of the Regional Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labor (2014–2020)†	Aims to increase regional cooperation on eradicating child labor by 2020 through signatories’ efforts to strengthen monitoring and coordination mechanisms, government programs, and South-South exchanges. Reaffirms commitments made in the Brasilia Declaration from the Third Global Conference on Child Labor (October 2013), and signed by Nicaragua at the ILO’s 18th Regional Meeting of the Americas in Lima, Peru (October 2014).(69-71)
Panama Declaration (2012)	Establishes commitments among Central American countries, Belize, and the Dominican Republic to implement country-based actions to eradicate the worst forms of child labor. MITRAB highlighted good practices and lessons learned from its child labor programs in coffee plantations and stone quarries.(72-77)

* Child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into this policy.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

The Government's Roadmap for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor sets the goal of eliminating child labor in Nicaragua by 2020. However, research has not found a comprehensive action plan for its full implementation.(12, 56, 78) The Government reported that a Strategic Plan to combat human trafficking was developed through the CNCTP for 2014–2015.(46) However, research did not find information on this Strategic Plan publicly available, and the extent of its implementation is unknown.(46)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of Nicaragua funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms. The Government has other 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
Program Love‡ (<i>Programa Amor</i>)	MIFAN program that targets 20,000 children, primarily in Managua, who are impoverished or involved in child labor, including in street vending and garbage scavenging. Provides education for children and vocational training for parents.(3, 48, 53, 79-81) Overseen by Nicaragua's First Lady in coordination with the Ministries of Governance, Family, Health, Education, and Labor.(79) Since 2013 includes children from birth to age 6 through "Program Love for the Smallest Ones".(3, 82) In 2014, facilitated a media campaign, including in indigenous and creole languages, to raise awareness of children's rights, and assisted a total of 17,323 children and adolescents.(31, 83)
First, I Learn (<i>Primero, Aprendo</i>)	Regional project originally funded by USDOL and subsequently supported by the European Union that promotes the eradication of child labor through access to education, among other avenues, in support of the Roadmap to Eliminate Child Labor.(84, 85) In Nicaragua, serves children working in the agricultural sector in Jinotega for the period 2012–2014.(86)
Educational Bridges (<i>Puentes Educativos</i>)‡	MIFRAB and MINED public-private partnership that provides education to children of coffee workers to prevent child labor during coffee harvests.(78) In 2014, program has continued to maintain and secure commitments from coffee farms to eliminate child labor in coffee production.(87-89)
Integral School Meal Program*‡	MIFAN and WFP initiative that provides more than 1 million children and adolescents meals at school to address poverty and help bolster attendance.(90, 91) Program is 70 percent funded by the Government of Nicaragua.(92)
National School Supply Program*	MINED program to distribute packages of school supplies to preschool and primary school children in the poorest districts to increase attendance and completion rates. In 2014, assisted 400,000 children and made plans to assist 700,000 in 2015.(93)
La Chureca Project	\$50 million, Government of Spain-funded project that closed La Chureca garbage dump in Managua in 2013 and opened a recycling plant in its place. Accomplishments include the creation of a school that keeps children out of child labor, houses, and employment for 258 families who had worked scavenging in the garbage dump.(94-96) In 2014, continued to assist beneficiaries.(97)
Birth Registration Campaign (<i>Derecho a un Nombre</i>)*	Government initiative, in coordination with Save the Children and UNICEF, to advance birth registration campaigns.(30, 98)
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 Nicaragua.(99)
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 Nicaragua. Includes the objective of developing information systems on the worst forms of child labor.(99)

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

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Nicaragua.

The scope of current social programs does not appear to be sufficient to assist children who are trafficked or engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation.(3) While the Government provides medical and legal assistance to trafficking victims, as well as educational assistance to school-age victims, international organizations and NGOs provide shelter, food, clothing, and psychological assistance to trafficking victims.(4, 10, 46) Reports indicate that the regions most affected by human trafficking lack adequate care facilities, and that victims of the worst forms of child labor in these areas are referred to NGO shelters in Managua.(46)

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Reports also indicate that Program Love lacks overall effectiveness and requires greater transparency.(3, 7, 10) For example, while the Government reported that Program Love assisted a total of 17,323 children and adolescents during the reporting period, information on the kind of assistance provided to beneficiaries, including on whether beneficiaries were engaged in child labor, was not publicly available.(31)

While the Government's birth registration campaign is advancing, it does not reach all children, especially in remote areas, and many children lack the documentation needed to access basic services.(98, 100-102)

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 Nicaragua (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law is consistent and provides a compulsory education age that is not less than the minimum age for work.	2014
Enforcement	Dedicate more human and financial resources, such as hiring and retaining more labor inspectors, to the enforcement of child labor laws, in particular in agriculture.	2009 – 2014
	Publicly report on the geographic distribution of labor inspections, all sectors in which inspections occur, the number of children removed from child labor, and the number of children referred for services.	2014
	Publicly report on fines imposed for child labor violations.	2012 – 2014
	Publicly report on the number of criminal investigators employed to investigate the worst forms of child labor and ensure they have adequate training and resources to conduct their investigations.	2014
	Publicly report on the number of criminal violations found in investigations for the worst forms of child labor, including for crimes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor, as well as on the number of victims rescued.	2014
Coordination	Clarify the roles of SNBS ministries in addressing child labor; increase their collaboration and resources to ensure the Government has a specific and consistent mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor, including with NGOs; and publicly report on its efforts.	2014
	Enhance coordination and information sharing among actors involved in child labor issues and in efforts to identify and refer victims of child trafficking.	2009 – 2014
Government Policies	Finalize and begin implementation of a concrete action plan to achieve the objective of eliminating child labor by 2020.	2009 – 2014
	Make publicly available national plans that address human trafficking and publicly report on their implementation.	2014
	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Strategic Education Plan.	2014
Social Programs	Make publicly available the results of the latest national child labor survey.	2013 – 2014
	Develop strategies and devote resources to improve attendance in secondary school education.	2009 – 2014
	Expand programs to address the worst forms of child labor to more sectors in which exploitative child labor exists, such as commercial sexual exploitation.	2009 – 2014
	Dedicate greater resources to expand services that assist child trafficking victims.	2010 – 2014
	Assess the effectiveness of Program Love in reducing the worst forms of child labor and publicize its results in order to inform future efforts.	2010 – 2014
	Expand birth registration programs, in particular in remote areas, to ensure that children have access to basic services.	2009 – 2014
	Assess the impact of social programs, such as the MIFAN School Meal program, on reducing child labor.	2013 – 2014

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