

In 2011, Honduras made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. During the reporting period, the Government approved the Road Map for the Eradication of Child Labor in Honduras as national policy. The Secretariat of Labor also opened an office in the rural department of Gracias a Dios to better address concerns regarding child labor violations in the lobster-harvesting sector. In addition, all labor inspectors received training on how to enforce child labor laws while immigration officials received training on how to identify trafficking victims. The Government also trained municipal employees and community stakeholders on how to process trafficking complaints. However, laws regarding the minimum age for work are inconsistent and the inspections process may not sufficiently deter employers from exploiting children. Children continue to be engaged in dangerous activities in agriculture and commercial sexual exploitation.



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Honduras are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in dangerous activities in agriculture and commercial sexual exploitation.(3-8) Children work in melon and coffee fields. They also reportedly work in the worst forms of child labor in the production of sugarcane.(9-12) Children working in agriculture may use dangerous machinery and tools, carry heavy loads and apply harmful pesticides.(7) Recent data from the Government of Honduras indicate that 62.3 percent of working children work in agriculture, hunting, fishing or forestry.(5) In the fishing industry, children also work as deckhands and dive for lobster.(9, 10) Children working in fishing are exposed to risks, such as severe weather conditions and drowning.(6, 13) Indigenous children are especially vulnerable to working in agriculture and fishing.(14)

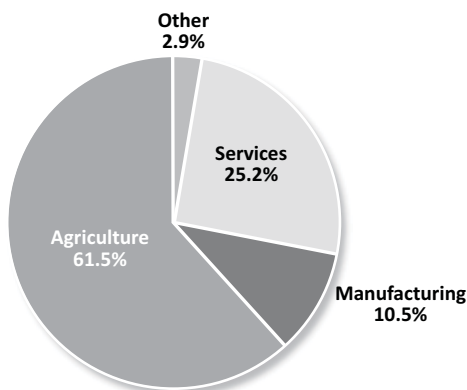
Children are reported to be working in the production of limestone and lime.(6, 15) Mining and quarrying expose children to dangerous activities such as carrying heavy loads as well as being exposed to toxic dust, chemicals and extreme weather.(6, 16) Children are also found begging on the streets, and scavenging in garbage dumps and in neighborhood dumpsters.(6, 12, 15, 17) In urban areas, child labor is prominent in the construction and food vending industries, as well as window-washing at stop lights.(6, 18) Children working on the streets may be vulnerable to dangers including severe weather, vehicle accidents and crime.(19) In addition, children, predominantly girls, work as domestic servants.(12, 20, 21) Child domestic labor commonly involves long working hours and the risk of physical and sexual exploitation by their employer.(6, 22) Children are also reported to work as drug mules in urban areas.(15, 18)

Honduras is principally a source and transit country for children subjected to trafficking in persons, including for the purpose of forced prostitution.(18, 23) Children are generally

Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	7.2 (151,468)
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	83.7
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	4.8
Primary Completion Rate		98.5

Working Children by Sector, ages 5-14



Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from HHS Survey, 2007.(2)

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trafficked from rural areas into commercial sexual exploitation in urban and tourist spots, such as Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula and the Bay Islands.(21, 23)

In addition, reports indicate that Honduran children are trafficked to Central and North America for sexual exploitation. Limited evidence suggests that girls from neighboring countries, including Guatemala and Mexico, are subjected to sexual servitude in Honduras.(23)

According to the National Institute of Statistics (INE), 14.3 percent of children between ages 5 and 17 work in Honduras, for a total of 377,150. The report also indicates that 24.7 percent of working children can be found in urban areas and 75.3 percent in rural areas.(5)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Honduran legislation is contradictory regarding the legal age for work. The Constitution and Labor Code prohibit the employment of persons younger than age 16, but children ages 14 to 15 may work with written parental consent and permission from the Secretariat of Labor (STSS).(18, 24-26) The Children’s Code prohibits children age 14 and younger from working, even with parental permission, and establishes prison sentences of 3 to 5 years for individuals who allow children to work illegally.(24) A 2007 government analysis of the legal minimum age for employment placed the minimum age at 14.(27) An employer who legally hires a person age 14 or 15 must certify that the young person has finished or is finishing compulsory schooling.(24)

Executive Agreement STSS-211-01 prohibits all persons younger than age 18 from night work, full-time work and hazardous work, which includes working in construction, manufacturing, hunting, mining, fishing, street cleaning and quarrying.(18, 21, 28) Despite the Agreement, minors aged 16 and 17 may receive authorization from the STSS to perform dangerous labor under certain circumstances.(18, 29)

All forms of forced or bonded labor are prohibited.(28, 30) The Penal Code criminalizes procuring, recruiting or submitting children to commercial sexual exploitation. Executive Agreements and the Children’s Code prohibit the use of children in illegal activities, such as drug trafficking, and protect children from being trafficked, but there is no specific provision prohibiting trafficking into exploitative labor situations.(18, 28, 31) During times of conflict, military service is compulsory for all capable Hondurans ages 18 to 30. However, during times of peace, military service is voluntary.(32, 33) The minimum age for voluntary service is 18.(34)

The Government sets the compulsory school age at 17.(35) The Constitution establishes the right to free primary education.(33) However, associated school costs, such as matriculation fees, uniforms and transportation fees, may prevent some children from attending.(17, 36-38)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

A national commission created under the National Plan of Action to Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor II (NPAPECL II) coordinates all matters related to child labor. Members of the national commission include the STSS, the Honduran Institute for Children and the Family (INHFA), the Supreme Court, the Social Security Administration, the Public Ministry and other government entities.(21, 39) The Inter-Institutional Commission Against Exploitation and Commercial Sex Trafficking (CICESCT) coordinates the efforts of government institutions and civil society groups to combat commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking.(18, 21) CICESCT consists of representatives from 52 partners, including several government ministries and various NGOs.(18, 21)

The STSS is the primary government agency responsible for inspecting labor conditions and enforcing child labor laws.(21) The INHFA is charged with supervising and providing technical assistance to private and public institutions that work to protect the well-being of children, including victims of child labor, and their families.(21, 39) In 2011, the STSS employed 118 inspectors, all of whom were trained to enforce child labor laws.(18)

	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	17
	Free Public Education	Yes

During 2011, 3,736 labor inspections were conducted, more than six times the 556 labor inspections conducted in 2010.(40) According to the STSS, no violations of the worst forms of child labor were found during the reporting period.(18) It is unknown why no violations of the worst forms of child labor were found. However, the STSS assisted 11 children who were found to be working, but not in the worst forms of child labor. In 2010, 96 working children were found.(18)

The process for inspections includes a preliminary visit, when inspectors inform companies of violations but do not issue fines or provide assistance to children who are found working.(41) Employers have 3 days to address violations and make corrections.(42) Inspectors then conduct a re-inspection to determine if the violations have been rectified. If violations are found during the re-inspection, inspectors proceed to issue penalties.(42) However, reports indicate that if serious violations involving underage children or hazardous conditions are found during the preliminary visits, they are immediately reported and corrected.(40) By providing guidance to employers to correct problems identified during the initial visit, inspectors enable more companies to be in compliance, which results in fewer children being present and assisted during the re-inspection.(41) This 2-tiered inspection process does not penalize violators on their first offense, and may not sufficiently deter employers from exploiting children in the workplace.

In 2011, the STSS included the topic of child labor on the STSS Web site. It provided the public with information on child labor, the Roadmap (discussed below), laws and regulations, inspection information and events.(5, 43) Additionally, the STSS opened a new office in the rural department of *Gracias a Dios* in 2011 to better serve the area where violations concerning lobster harvesting are most prevalent.(18) However, the ILO Committee of Experts reported that resource constraints limited labor inspections in rural areas and in indigenous communities, where hazardous activities in agriculture and fishing/diving exist.(44)

The Public Ministry's Office of the Special Prosecutor for Children (OSPC) prosecutes criminal cases against those alleged to have involved children in trafficking, hazardous and forced child labor and commercial sexual exploitation.(45)

The OSPC currently is staffed by two prosecutors and four investigators to address and prosecute child labor and trafficking cases in the country.(18) According to the OSPC, there were no prosecutions reported under child labor laws in

2011. However, child labor cases were addressed as violations of other laws, such as the sexual exploitation of a minor.(18, 46)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The 7-year NPAPECL II aims to prevent children from dropping out of school before they can legally work, withdraw children who are currently engaged in the worst forms of child labor, and ensure that the laws that protect children are enforced.(21, 39, 47) The STSS reported that the implementation of NPAPECL II has been slow due to budgetary constraints. The Inter-Institutional Commission Against Exploitation and Commercial Sex Trafficking (CICESCT) also has regional sub-committees in San Pedro Sula, Choluteca and Danlí to oversee local implementation of NPAPECL II.(17)

A joint effort by the ILO and the Government, called the Roadmap for the Eradication of Child Labor in Honduras, aims to improve coordination of the Government's responses to child labor issues.(21) The Roadmap works at the national, regional and sub-regional levels and incorporates issues related to poverty, education, health and social mobilization.(21) The national poverty reduction strategy incorporates child labor issues.(21) In February 2011, the Government of Honduras, under Executive Decree PCM-011-2011, approved the Roadmap for the Eradication of Child Labor in Honduras as national policy. Under article 2, the Government instructs all Secretariats and their dependencies to incorporate the issue of child labor elimination and prevention into their institutional strategic planning in accordance with the framework of the National Plan.(5, 6, 48, 49)

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

The Government of Honduras has implemented the conditional cash transfer program Voucher 10,000 that aims to reduce poverty by providing financial assistance to the head of household, provided that children meet educational and health requirements.(21, 29, 50) During the reporting period, the Voucher 10,000 Program had reached over 164,000 beneficiaries.(50) The Government aims to ensure that indigenous and Afro-Honduran households have access to the Program.(50) The STSS also implements My First Job, a program that connects disadvantaged youth with vocational opportunities.(18, 21, 51) Strategies of the My First Job Program include job skills and vocational training, internships, job placement and public-private partnerships to support

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on-the-job training.(18) In 2011, the Program reached about 4,800 at-risk youth.(18) Although such programs could reduce youth's vulnerability to the worst forms of child labor, the impact of these programs on child labor does not appear to have been assessed.

During the reporting period, the Government of Honduras held an awareness-raising campaign called “No More Trafficking in Persons” in the capital and in prominent border crossing towns. The Government provided training to immigration officials on how to identify trafficking victims.(30) Additionally, the Government of Honduras, provided training for 135 municipal employees specializing in children and 350 community members throughout the country on how to

process trafficking complaints. The Government continues to participate in a pilot program targeting the tourism industry to engage tourism sector workers in identifying victims of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking and in reporting crimes.(30)

The Government of Honduras also continued to participate in a 4-year regional initiative to eradicate child labor, funded by the Government of Spain.(52)

Even though the Government of Honduras has undertaken efforts to reduce child labor, additional efforts are needed to reach all of the children involved in dangerous agricultural work, fishing and commercial sexual exploitation.

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

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Harmonize legislation addressing the minimum age for work, with the goal of setting it at age 16.	2009, 2011
	Ensure that minors ages 16 and 17 performing hazardous work have authorization from the STSS.	2011
Coordination and Enforcement	Increase resources for inspections in areas where exploitative child labor occurs, such as in rural areas and indigenous communities, where hazardous activities in agriculture and fishing/diving exist.	2010, 2011
	Penalize labor law violators on their first offense to create a stronger disincentive to illegally employ children	2011
Policies	Dedicate more resources to and document the progress of the implementation of the NPAPECL II.	2009, 2010, 2011
Social Programs	Assess the impact of social programs, such as Voucher 10,000 Program and the My First Job Programs, on reducing child labor	2010, 2011
	Implement targeted programs to address the worst forms of child labor in agriculture, fishing and commercial sexual exploitation	2009, 2010, 2011

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