

Saint Lucia

In 2011, Saint Lucia made no advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. While the Government continued to implement an afterschool program for underprivileged children, gaps remain in legislation, research and policy. The Labor Act passed by Parliament in 2006, which would raise the minimum working age to 15, still has not been implemented. In addition, there is no evidence of any policies to address the worst forms of child labor and there is no indication that research has been conducted by the Government to assess the scope of the problem. Although the scope of the problem appears to be limited, children are involved in the worst forms of child labor in dangerous activities in agriculture and street work.

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		Unavailable

Sources:

Primary completion rate: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Although information on the prevalence of the worst forms of child labor in Saint Lucia is limited, children reportedly engage in dangerous activities in agriculture and street work.(3) There is some information that children help harvest bananas in rural areas.(4, 5) Children working in banana harvesting may use machetes, suffer falls or injury from falling objects and apply harmful pesticides.(3) In November 2010, Hurricane Tomas caused widespread damage to the banana sector, ending the year's harvest. Despite the severity of the damage, work on banana plantations resumed during the reporting period.(4, 6, 7) The overall impact of this event on the prevalence of child labor is unknown. Children are also reported to work at roadside handicraft shops and urban food stalls, and sell confectionery on sidewalks.(5, 8, 9) Children working on the streets are vulnerable to severe weather, traffic accidents and crime.(10)



Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Law Revised Ordinances of 1957 sets the minimum age for employment at 14. The Education Act No. 41 of 1999 prohibits the employment of children under age 16 during the school week, but allows for employment of children ages 14 and 15 during weekends and vacation periods or as part of a job preparedness program.(11) The International Labor Organization reported that enactment of the Labor Code No. 37, proposed in 2006, would increase the minimum age for employment to 15, thereby aligning eligibility for employment with the age at which compulsory education ends.(8) However, although Parliament passed the Code, subsequent changes in leadership due to the general elections resulted in Parliament's failure to implement it.(12) In 2011, Parliament passed a newer version of the Labor Code but, despite promises to enact the it during the 2011 session, Parliament has yet to implement the legislation.(8, 13)

The Education Act No. 41 of 1999 provides for compulsory education from ages 5 to 15.(11) The Occupational Health and Safety Act prohibits the employment of persons under age 18 in industrial undertakings.(4, 14, 15) Research found no evidence that there are prohibitions on hazardous work in other sectors of the economy.

In 2010, the Government enacted the Counter-Trafficking Act No. 7, which criminalizes the trafficking of children for labor or commercial sexual exploitation.(4) The Government

passed the Counter-Trafficking Act in order to implement its commitments under the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons.(16, 17)

	C138, Minimum Age	No
	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	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	15
	Free Public Education	Yes

Saint Lucia does not have a military force, as the police force is responsible for the security of the country. The minimum age for recruitment to the police force is 18.(18)

The Constitution prohibits slavery, servitude and forced labor for children of all ages.(19) The Criminal Code bans prostitution and the procurement of or engagement in sexual relations with any male or female under age 18.(20) However, the Government lacks adequate protections for children involved in child pornography and drug trafficking.(14)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The Government of Saint Lucia continued to support the National Coalition against Trafficking in Persons, which coordinates efforts to detect and investigate trafficking cases and protect victims. The Coalition consists of representatives from the Gender Relations Division, the Human Services Division, the Police and the Immigration Service.(10, 21) The Coalition, chaired by the Division of Gender Relations, met regularly and worked with NGOs to develop a national anti-trafficking action plan.(22) Although the Government of Saint Lucia has established the National Coalition against Trafficking in Persons, research found no evidence of coordinating mechanisms to combat worst forms of child labor other than trafficking in persons.

Child labor law enforcement is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development and Labor and the Ministry of Health, Wellness, Human Services and Gender Relations.(4, 5) Seven labor inspectors are in charge of all aspects of labor violations, including child labor. Inspectors conduct spot investigations, check records to verify compliance with the law and take legal action against employers found employing underage workers.(4) Ministry representatives noted that the current number of inspectors is insufficient to carry out their responsibilities. During the reporting period, there were no reports of child labor inspections conducted or of penalties and citations issued for child labor violations.(4) Additionally, research did not find the amount of funding allocated for child labor inspections.

The Royal Saint Lucia Police Force, in collaboration with the Division of Human Services, has a Vulnerable Persons Unit that investigates all cases of child abuse and neglect, including instances of child labor.(4, 23) This Unit receives specific child labor training.(4)

Anti-trafficking enforcement is included among the responsibilities of the Police Department. The Police Department refers suspected cases of child trafficking to the Child Welfare Board, which oversees child abuse cases.(24) During the reporting period, the Director of Gender Relations developed sensitization trainings to educate police officers and social workers on child labor issues, including trainings on how to react to and identify possible victims, referral protocols, and victim protection.(9, 25)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Research found no evidence of any policies to address the worst forms of child labor, including in dangerous activities in agriculture or street work, nor of any research conducted by the Government to assess the scope of these problems.

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

The Government supported efforts that may indirectly address child labor through initiatives to keep children in school. In particular, it continued to support an afterschool pilot program initiated in 2009 to target underprivileged children between ages 8 and 16.(26) Enacted by the Ministry of Social Transformation, Youth, and Sports, the program engages approximately 108 children in three deprived communities in various after school activities; it is expected to continue until 2013.(26) To date, the impact of the program on child labor is unknown.

Saint Lucia

Research found no evidence that the Government of Saint Lucia carried out programs during the reporting period to assist

children involved in dangerous forms of agriculture or street work.

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

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Implement the recently passed Labor Code amendment increasing the minimum age for employment to 15.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Ensure prohibitions on hazardous work in sectors other than industrial undertakings for children under age 18.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Draft and adopt legislation barring the use of children in pornography and drug trafficking.	2011
Coordination and Enforcement	Establish a specific coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Increase the number of labor inspectors so that child labor laws are adequately enforced.	2011
Policies	Adopt policies to combat the worst forms of child labor in dangerous forms of agriculture and street work.	2010, 2011
	Conduct a comprehensive study to assess the nature and extent of the worst forms of child labor in the country.	2009, 2010, 2011
Social Programs	Use the results of any studies conducted on the worst forms of child labor to assess the need for social programs to assist children working in agriculture and street work.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Determine the impact of the new Ministry of Social Transformation, Youth and Sports after school program on child labor.	2011

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