

In 2013, Burkina Faso made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government rescued more than 1,000 victims of child trafficking and provided child labor training to all the labor inspectors. It also launched and continued to operate key social programs that address the root causes of child labor, including birth registry and food-aid programs. However, children in Burkina Faso continue to engage in child labor in agriculture and in the worst forms of child labor in mining. Limited resources for the systematic enforcement of child labor laws impede government efforts to protect children from the worst forms of child labor. In addition, the lack of funding has hampered the implementation of child labor policies. Moreover, the social programs related to the worst forms of child labor do not match the scope of the problem.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Burkina Faso are engaged in child labor in agriculture and in the worst forms of child labor in mining. (1, 2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Burkina Faso.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	42.1 (2,116,752)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	41.9
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	21.7
Primary Completion Rate (%)		57.6

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(3)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Enquête Démographique et de Santé et à Indicateurs Multiples, 2010.(4)

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	Planting, weeding, and harvesting crops, including cotton (5-8)
	Harvesting mangos* (9)
	Herding animals, including cattle* and goats* (8, 10)
Industry	Working in gold mines† (1, 2, 6, 7, 11-24)
	Working in granite quarries*† (1, 2, 7, 14-17, 25-28)
Services	Domestic work (2, 5, 17, 18, 29-31)
	Street work, including vending and begging (5, 7, 8, 18, 32-34)
	Use of children in illicit activities, including drug trafficking (1, 7, 18, 32, 35)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced labor in herding* (8, 10)
	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (32, 37)
	Farming including cotton, domestic work, herding,* begging, gold mining, and work in quarries,* as a result of human trafficking (5, 7, 8, 17, 32, 33, 36-38)

* 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.

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In Burkina Faso, some boys placed in the care of Koranic teachers to be educated are forced by their teachers to beg in the streets and to surrender the money they have earned.(5, 7, 17, 33, 36-39) Koranic students may also be required to work in cotton fields.(39) Street children sometimes beg, including in the two largest cities of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso.(5, 7, 32-34, 36) Burkina Faso is a destination, transit point, and source for child trafficking.(5, 7, 37) Boys are trafficked from Burkina Faso to Côte d’Ivoire to work in the cocoa sector, and to Mali to work in rice fields.(40, 41) Nigerian children are also trafficked into forced commercial sexual exploitation in Burkina Faso.(32, 37)




In Burkina Faso, the lack of educational infrastructure hinders children’s access to education , particularly in rural areas.(10, 42) The crisis is especially acute among the 49,975 refugees—many resulting from the conflict in Mali—hosted in Burkina Faso as of May 2013.(18, 43-45) A lack of government resources has limited many Malian refugee children’s access to education.(46, 47) Students are also abused physically and sexually by their teachers, which may discourage some children from attending school.(7) In addition, one in three Burkinabé children is not registered at birth. Some schools’ requirement for birth certificates decreases the likelihood of children attending school, which might increase their vulnerability to exploitation.(7, 48)

In addition, Burkina Faso continued to experience a boom in gold mining.(8, 18) The result is an increased number of children working in gold mines and thousands of students leaving school.(2, 13, 18, 49-51)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Burkina Faso 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	16	Labor Code (52)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Labor Code (1, 52, 53)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	Yes		Hazardous List Decree (1, 2, 53, 54)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Labor Code (2, 52)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Trafficking of Persons Law (55, 56)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Labor Code (2, 52)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Labor Code (2, 52)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	21	Legislation title unknown (57)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Education Law (42, 58, 59)
Free Public Education	Yes		Education Law (42, 58, 59)

* No conscription or no standing military.

The Labor Code provides an exception for light work, allowing children age 12 and older to engage in domestic or seasonal work such as farming. This exception increases the likelihood that children ages 12 to 15 may work under hazardous conditions in agriculture and domestic service.(32, 52, 60) Research identified inadequacies in current legislation related to child pornography. Moreover, the Burkinabé Association for the Fight Against the Exploitation of Children for Commercial Ends and EPCAT have recommended that the Penal Code define child pornography and include adequate penalties for the possession of child pornography.(18) Although the law mandates free education through primary school, in practice, schools often ask for contributions and students are frequently charged other fees, which may increase the students vulnerability to exploitation.(32, 42, 58, 61) In addition, research did not uncover a public version of the Government's decree for minimum age for voluntary military service.(57)

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 Civil Service, Labor, and Social Security (MOL)	Enforce labor laws, including child labor laws.(2, 18, 40)
Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity (MSA)	Provide child protection services.(18)
Ministry of Security's Morals Brigade of the National Police	Enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor, including investigations into the commercial sexual exploitation of children, trafficking, child labor, and drug-related crimes.(1, 2, 40)
Ministry of Justice	Enforce and prosecute criminal laws, including child labor laws.(2, 40)

Law enforcement agencies in Burkina Faso took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms, during the reporting period.

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2013, the Government, with the support of ILO-IPEC, trained 291 labor inspectors from the Ministry of Civil Service, Labor, and Social Security (MOL) on child labor issues.(18) However, research indicates that inspectors lack the funds, staffing, training, facilities, transportation, and fuel needed to carry out inspections effectively.(1, 5, 7, 18, 62) Moreover, the ILO Committee of Experts has noted that the labor inspectorate is ill-equipped to conduct inspections in the agricultural sector, in which many children work in hazardous and sometimes forced conditions.(63) No funds were specifically dedicated to the enforcement of child labor laws.(2, 18) Finally, the number of child labor violations found, fines issued, and fines collected in 2013 is unavailable.(18) The Embassy of Burkina Faso to the United States has noted that when inspections occur and violations are found, inspection officers issue formal warnings, specifying the required changes and deadlines.(64, 65) If the requirements are not met within the specified timeframe, inspectors are authorized to impose penalties on the employer.(65) To date, no penalties have been issued to employers. This is largely because many children work on their own accord, for example in artisanal gold mines, and not under an employer.(62, 64, 65)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2013, the Government conducted 240 anti-trafficking police patrols in targeted vulnerable villages.(45) Police officers from Burkinabé and Côte d'Ivoire intercepted 55 girls and 142 boys being trafficked across the border. In addition, police officers in Burkina Faso rescued 387 girls and 562 boys from internal trafficking.(18) All the rescued children were referred to Ministry of Social Action and National Solidarity (MSA) social services.(45) During the reporting period, the Government trained 700 local officials and community leaders on trafficking, including on victim identification and assistance, as well as in procedures for investigating and prosecuting cases.(45) Research found that the police force has not made a systematic effort to identify trafficking victims. Moreover, the UN CRC has noted that the police force also does not have adequate funding and staffing to carry out its mandate.(7) No statistics are available on the numbers of violations, convictions, or sentences related to these crimes.(18)

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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
MOL's Directorate to Combat Child Labor and its Worst Forms	Coordinate and lead interagency efforts to combat forced and hazardous child labor. Serve as the Secretariat for the National Steering Committee to Combat Child Labor (SSC).(1, 2, 64) The Ministries of Justice, Social Action, Security, Basic Education, Mines, Human Rights, and Health all are involved in the SSC.(1)
National Coordination Committee against Trafficking (NCC)	Oversee implementation of the National Action Plan on child labor, including trafficking. Chaired by the MOL.(57) In 2013, the Government established a new decree to define the roles and responsibilities of the NCC more clearly, to improve coordination efforts.(18)
National Committee for Vigilance and Surveillance Against the Trafficking in Persons and Assimilated Practices	Coordinate actions against trafficking in persons at the national level. Chaired by the MSA.(57)

Sources indicate that competing priorities and a lack of human and financial resources have limited the effectiveness of the coordination efforts of the National Coordination Committee Against Trafficking (NCC).(1, 18) During the reporting period, the Government held meetings, both nationally and in each of the country's 13 regions, to discuss anti-trafficking coordination with various government agencies and members of civil society.(45)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor 2012–2015 (NAPWFCL)	Aims to prevent and protect children from the worst forms of child labor through awareness raising, data collection, rehabilitation services, increased access to education, and better law enforcement. Calls for the involvement of 11 ministries, particularly the MSA and the MOL, to reduce exploitative child labor significantly by 2015.(18, 66)
ECOWAS Regional Action Plan on Child Labor	Aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in West Africa by 2015 and to continue to progress toward the total elimination of child labor.(67)
Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development 2011–2015	Mentions the Government's challenge to eliminate child labor and includes strategies to reduce poverty and ensure primary education for all.(2, 18, 68)
Joint Cooperation Agreement Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire	Calls for increased cooperation between Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire against cross-border trafficking.(45, 69)
Decent Work Country Program 2007–2015	Incorporates child labor concerns into the strategy for work.(40, 70)
Ministry of Youth, Vocational Training, and Employment's Action Plan 2012–2014*	Calls for the construction of 45 vocational training centers and a central vocational training center for each region.(60)

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

Across the various plans and policies, the existence of multiple coordination mechanisms results in a cumbersome process, while a lack of sufficient funding for implementation presents challenges for national action plans. The Directorate to Combat Child Labor and its Worst Forms acknowledges that inadequate funding of the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor hinders its implementation.(1, 18, 71)

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

In 2013, the Government of Burkina Faso 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
National School Feeding Program*	Government program that provides one meal a day to students during the 3-month “hungry season.” The U.S. Department of Agriculture, USAID, and WFP contribute to the program.(2)
Reducing Child Labor Through Education and Services	\$5 million, USDOL-funded 4-year project implemented by Counterpart International that targets 10,000 children engaged in or at risk of entering child labor in the production of cotton and in gold mining.(72, 73) Aims to increase access to education, social protection, and training programs. Also targets 1,000 households of child beneficiaries with livelihood services.(72, 73)
Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues	USDOL-funded project implemented by the ILO in approximately 40 countries to support the priorities of the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor by 2016 established by the Hague Global Child Labor Conference in 2010. Aims to build the capacity of the national government and develop strategic policies to address the elimination of child labor.(74)
Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labor in West Africa and Strengthening Sub-Regional Cooperation Through ECOWAS I & II	USDOL-funded regional projects that supported ECOWAS to strengthen its role in combating the worst forms of child labor in the West Africa sub-region by providing policy and capacity building support for all ECOWAS states.(75, 76)
Control Stores†‡	\$130 million, Government-funded, program that provides food price controls to vulnerable populations. In 2013, the Government operated 140 stores.(18)
Civil Registry Offices†‡	Government program that opened civil registry offices in maternity wards to register newborn babies.(45, 57)
Anti-Trafficking Campaign	MSA program that conducted anti-trafficking awareness programs through theater forums, training workshops, community meetings, and radio programming in all 13 regions of Burkina Faso.(45, 57)
Child Abuse Hotline	MSA program that operates a free hotline to report child abuse, including child labor.(32, 57)
Transit Centers†	Government program that runs 23 transit centers welcoming children rescued from trafficking.(45)
Child Anti-Trafficking Project (Fonds Enfants)	8-year project funded by the Government of Germany to combat child trafficking that conducts awareness-raising campaigns and improves access to education, social services, and protection.(77) Aims to build institutional and judicial capacity to combat child trafficking.(77)
Quarrying and Mining Child Labor Project	Multi-donor-funded, project that seeks to set up nursery schools and provide access to primary and vocational school for children involved in quarrying and mining.(78) Aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in quarries and mines.(78)
Country Program*	WFP-funded program that promotes primary education and food security. Aims to reach 560,000 beneficiaries annually.(79)
Refugee Assistance Program*	UNICEF-funded project that provides schooling to 5,000 child refugees to prevent the exploitation of refugee children.(80)
Emergency Assistance†	\$4.5 million, USAID-funded project that provides emergency humanitarian aid to refugees and other vulnerable populations.(81)

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

† Program was launched during the reporting period.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Burkina Faso.

Although Burkina Faso has social programs to address the worst forms of child labor in the production of cotton and in mining and quarrying, the scope of these programs is insufficient to address the extent of the problem fully. In addition, research found no evidence that the Government has carried out programs to address the worst forms of child labor in such activities as livestock raising, domestic service, forced begging, or street vending. It is unknown how many complaints related to child labor were made to MSA’s hotline.

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 Burkina Faso (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Ensure that children ages 12 to 15 are prohibited by law from working in hazardous conditions in domestic service and agriculture.	2010 – 2013
	Ensure that the law, possibly the Penal Code, defines child pornography and provides adequate penalties for the possession of child pornography.	2013
	Make publicly available the Government's decree for minimum age for voluntary military service.	2013
Enforcement	Increase the capacity of labor inspectors and enforcement officers, and provide them with adequate resources to enforce the laws relating to the worst forms of child labor.	2009 – 2013
	Publicize detailed information on the data regarding inspections, fines levied and collected, prosecutions, convictions, and sentences against those who practice the worst forms of child labor.	2009 – 2013
	Establish and implement a systematic method for identifying victims of trafficking and other worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2013
Coordination	Improve the coordination efforts of the NCC.	2011 – 2013
Government Policies	Streamline the coordination of policies related to the worst forms of child labor and adequately fund the implementation of national action plans, including the NAPWFCL.	2009 – 2013
	Assess the potential impact of existing social policies on child labor.	2013
Social Programs	Take measures to increase access to free and safe education for children by— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Implementing programs to address abuse in schools; ■ Expanding birth registration campaigns; ■ Building new schools and maintaining existing schools; and ■ Reducing or eliminating school-related fees. 	2010 – 2013
	Expand existing programs to address the worst forms of child labor and establish specific programs to address the worst forms of child labor in livestock raising, domestic service, forced begging, and street vending.	2009 – 2013
	Assess the potential impact of existing social programs on addressing child labor.	2013
	Disaggregate the number of complaints related to child labor that are made to MSA's hotline.	2013

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