

Burkina Faso

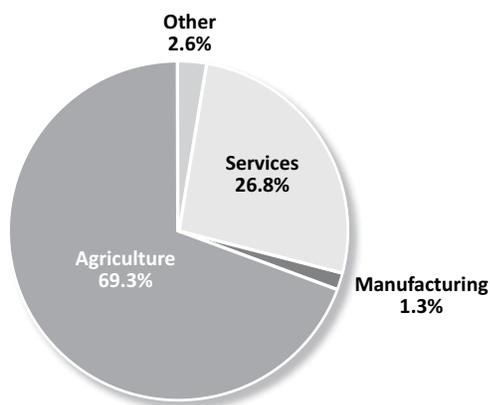
In 2011, Burkina Faso made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government launched a hotline, staffed by four social workers, to prevent the sexual exploitation of children and provide support to victims. In February 2012, Burkina Faso adopted a National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor to significantly reduce exploitative child labor by 2015. However, limited enforcement of the laws perpetuates the risks of children's involvement in the worst forms of child labor, particularly in hazardous activities in agriculture and mining.



Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	37.8 (1,258,003)
Attending School	7-14 yrs.	43.4
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	13.6
Primary Completion Rate		45.1

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2007, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from ENTE Survey, 2006.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Burkina Faso are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, particularly in hazardous activities such as agriculture and livestock-raising.(3, 4) Children herd goats, cattle and sheep, risking exposure to snakebites and severe weather.(5, 6) They also sow, weed and harvest crops.(7) Some

of these children are engaged in forced labor.(4, 8, 9) Children involved in agriculture work long hours and may be exposed to dangerous activities and chemicals such as pesticides used on cotton farms.(4, 8, 10, 11) According to a UCW-SIMPOC study, the vast majority of working children in Burkina Faso are found doing work that includes a hazardous component.(4)

Children work in construction, quarries and mines, including gold mines.(3, 4, 12) In artisanal mines, children break rocks, risking injury from the shards and work underground, where they are vulnerable to falling rocks. They also carry heavy loads and wash minerals, sometimes using harmful chemicals, such as mercury and cyanide.(3, 13-15) Children working in artisanal mining are not provided with protective gear. They often work 6 to 7 days a week for up to 14 hours per day, and many of these children receive only food and a place to sleep as payment.(14, 16) They may suffer from occupational illnesses including respiratory conditions, muscular ailments and vision problems. In addition, these children are sometimes physically or sexually abused.(16-18)

Thousands of children, particularly girls, work long hours as domestic servants, risking physical abuse and sexual exploitation.(4, 12, 19-21) Children are also engaged in commercial sexual exploitation.(3, 9)

Some boys sent to Koranic teachers are forced by their teachers to beg under hazardous conditions and surrender the money they have earned.(22, 23) The boys beg in the streets, at risk of injury from physical abuse and from vehicles. They may also be required to labor 12 to 18 hours, performing hazardous work in cotton fields, where they may also be exposed to pesticides.(10, 22, 23)

In urban areas, children work as mobile hawkers and in small restaurants.(3) A growing number of street children, many working as beggars, are found in the two largest cities of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso.(9, 24) Such children may

face multiple dangers, including maltreatment and sexual abuse.(25)

Burkina Faso is a destination, transit point and source for children trafficked for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation.(23) Children trafficked for forced labor work in domestic service, mines and quarries, and agriculture, including in the cultivation of cotton.(8, 23, 26) Some boys from Burkina Faso are trafficked to Mali for forced labor in agriculture.(26, 27) Other boys are trafficked to Côte d'Ivoire to work in the cocoa sector.(26, 28, 29) Some Nigerian girls are trafficked into forced prostitution in Burkina Faso.(9, 30)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code sets the minimum age of work at 16 but does not establish any age for entry into apprenticeships.(31, 32) The minimum age for hazardous work is 18, and the Government has issued a decree with a list of prohibited hazardous activities. The decree lists 12 sectors including quarrying, mining and agriculture; it also establishes prohibited activities for each sector.(3, 33) Additionally, this decree limits the workday for children to 8 hours and bans any activity that is detrimental to the health of the child.(34) However, the 2008 Labor Code reestablished an exception (from 1954) to the minimum age for employment in light work. This exception authorizes children age 12 and above to engage in domestic or seasonal work such as farming.(32) This exception increases the likelihood of children ages 12 to 15 working under hazardous conditions in agriculture and domestic service.

The legal protections in the Labor Code cover both the informal and the formal sector.(31, 32) Labor inspectors are specifically authorized to enter any location where they have reason to believe that employees are working to conduct inspections, including surprise inspections.(31)

Education is compulsory until age 16, but several obstacles make it difficult for children to attend school.(6, 35) Although the law mandates free education through primary school, families may be required to contribute to parent association funds.(36-38) These expenses can be prohibitive to families, especially those in rural areas where access to education is also hindered by a lack of schools.(6) Reportedly, the practice by teachers of commonly whipping and beating children also discourages some children from attending school.(35) In addition, only one in three Burkinabe children has a registered birth certificate. Children who are unable to prove their citizenship may face barriers to state-sponsored education.(9, 39)

The Trafficking in Persons Law sets penalties for both the trafficking of children and for other worst forms of child labor, including forcing a child to beg.(26, 40) The Penal Code also explicitly prohibits the debauchery or corruption of a minor.(41) The recruitment, solicitation and offering of children for prostitution or pornography are outlawed by the Labor Code.(31) The minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the military is 20, and there is no compulsory recruitment.(42)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The Ministry of Labor and Social Security's Directorate to Combat Child Labor and its Worst Forms coordinates and leads an inter-agency effort to combat forced and hazardous child labor. The Directorate develops and monitors implementation of the national action plan on child labor, coordinates with international partners and acts as the Secretariat for the national steering committee against child labor.(3, 43) The Ministries of Justice, Social Action, Security, Basic Education, Mines, Human Rights and Health all are involved in this effort.(3) However, competing priorities have limited the effectiveness of coordination across these agencies.(3)

The Ministries of Labor and Social Security, Health, Justice, Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Decentralization and Basic Education coordinate anti-trafficking enforcement efforts under the lead of the Ministry of Social Action.(3, 44, 45)

For the enforcement of hazardous or forced child labor laws, the Ministries of Labor and Social Security, Justice and Social

	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	16
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	16
	Free Public Education	Yes

Action share responsibilities.(44) Social welfare services also plays a role in monitoring informal labor, such as begging and street children.(37, 46) In 2011, the Government employed approximately 170 labor inspectors and 123 labor controllers to conduct inspections.(30, 47) Each regional office had a director designated to act as a point of contact for child labor issues and a special form for child labor reports, although the inspectors were responsible for inspecting all types of labor violations.(3, 48) The number of trainings received by labor inspectors on child labor issues in 2011 is unknown.(3) Inspectors lack the facilities, transportation and fuel needed to effectively carry-out inspections.(3) Additionally, the ILO Committee of Experts finds that the labor inspectorate is not well adapted to conduct inspections in the agricultural sector, a sector with many children working in hazardous and sometimes forced conditions.(49) In 2011, despite these constraints, Burkina Faso carried out 1,384 labor inspections.(47) The number of child labor violations found, fines issued and fines collected is unavailable.(3)

The Ministries of Social Action and Security and its Morals Brigade of the National Police share responsibility for enforcing laws pertaining to criminal investigations of the worst forms of child labor. This includes investigations into the commercial sexual exploitation of children, trafficking, child labor and drug-related crimes.(3, 44) No statistics are available on the numbers of violations, convictions or sentences.(3) At the provincial level, new mobile squads have been trained in order to rescue children in danger of exploitation.(47) Burkina Faso also launched a hotline in 2011 to prevent sexual exploitation and provide support to victims. As part of this effort, four social workers were trained to operate the hotline.(47) Observations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child indicates that the police have not made a systematic effort to identify trafficking victims.(35)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In February 2012, Burkina Faso adopted the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor in order to significantly reduce exploitative child labor by 2015. This plan includes prevention, enforcement and rehabilitation components and calls for the involvement of 11 ministries, particularly the Ministry of Social Action and the Ministry of Employment.(50)

Burkina Faso has a number of other national action plans that include policies to reduce the worst forms of child labor. In addition, a 4-year national action plan against trafficking in persons (2008-2012) and among other measures calls

for awareness-raising and the improvement of inter-agency coordination, to reduce trafficking.(16, 23) Burkina Faso also has a 4-year national action plan (2008-2012) for the survival, protection and development of children that includes protecting children from the worst forms of child labor. However, this strategy has yet to be implemented.(16, 35)

The Government of Burkina Faso adopted a national employment policy and action plan in 2008, with provisions linking this plan to the fight against exploitative child labor. It calls for providing training and apprenticeships for children working in mines, quarries, domestic service, agriculture and the informal sector in order to remove them from the worst forms of child labor.(51) Child labor concerns have also been incorporated into various other national level policies, including the National Poverty Reduction Strategy (2007-2011) and the Decent Work Country Program (2007-2015).(44, 48, 52) 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 present challenges.(3, 53)

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

In 2011, the Government of Burkina Faso implemented several initiatives to combat trafficking. The Government continued its counter-trafficking outreach campaign by distributing copies of anti-trafficking legislation to pertinent officials.(44) The Ministry of Social Action disseminated anti-trafficking policies and procedures to law enforcement and border officials throughout the country in 2011.(30) It also provided funding to orphanages that house children who are at risk of trafficking.(44) Burkina Faso participated in an IOM program to standardize the trafficking national referral system and to identify, return and reintegrate minors identified as trafficking victims throughout the region.(54) However, the system is not yet operational.

Burkina Faso coordinated with partners to reduce the worst forms of child labor in the mining sector. The Ministry of Social Action worked with UNICEF and Plan-Burkina Faso on a program that removed children from the mines and provided approximately 1,000 teenagers with vocational training and constructed new primary schools for children ages 6 to 12.(3)

In 2011, the Government of Burkina Faso also participated in several regional projects to combat the worst forms of child labor, including the regional USDOL-funded 4-year ECOWAS project. The ECOWAS project, initially funded at \$7.95 million in 2009, was increased by \$5 million in 2010.(55, 56) This project is assisting ECOWAS in developing systems to

help its member countries reduce the worst forms of child labor and in 2011 achieved a draft Regional Action Plan.(57)

As part of its goal to improve access to education, the Government continued a campaign to increase birth registrations.(58) Burkina Faso also continued to participate in a 3-year, \$28 million Millennium Challenge Corporation-funded project that targeted girls primary education with girl-friendly schools. The project built classrooms and other education-related structures and ran awareness-raising programs on the importance of education.(59, 60) The Government also participated in a 5-year, \$50 million project funded by the Canadian International Development Agency to

support the implementation of the education plan, including increasing access to primary education, improving school infrastructure, and supporting teacher training.(61) Finally, Burkina Faso continued to take part in a 4-year, World Food Program that promotes primary education and, in 2011, started recycling old food sacks to produce school bags for students.(62, 63)

Despite the many efforts that the Government of Burkina Faso is making to provide social programs, these remain limited when compared to the extent of worst forms of child labor found in agriculture, livestock raising, domestic service, begging, mining and street work.

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

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Establish a minimum age for entry into apprenticeships.	2011
	Update the 1954 decree concerning light work to ensure children ages 12 to 15 are protected from hazardous conditions in domestic service and agriculture.	2010, 2011
Coordination and Enforcement	Improve coordination across the relevant agencies working to reduce the worst forms of child labor.	2011
	Increase labor inspectors' resources involved in enforcing child labor laws.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Publicize detailed information on the numbers of prosecutions, convictions and sentences for the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Continue to establish and implement a systematic method for identifying victims of trafficking and other worst forms of child labor.	2010, 2011
Policies	Streamline coordination of policies related to the worst forms of child labor and implement national action plans.	2009, 2010, 2011
Social Programs	Expand and improve programs to withdraw and prevent children, including street children, from the worst forms of child labor in agriculture, livestock raising, begging and mining.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Provide the resources necessary to make the trafficking national referral system operational.	2010, 2011
	Take measures to increase access to free education that is safe for children by expanding birth registration campaigns, building schools and reducing or eliminating school-related fees, such as registration fees.	2010, 2011

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