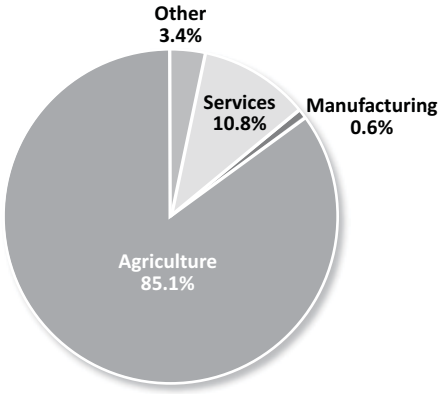
Rwanda

In 2011, Rwanda made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Rwanda increased the number of years of free education from 9 to 12, and more than tripled the number of specialized officers working on gender-based violence and child labor issues. It also launched an Integrated Child Rights Policy and Strategic Plan (ICRP) to address all children's issues, which includes a budget dedicated to child labor. Despite these efforts, Rwanda has not devoted sufficient resources to enforce its child labor laws. In addition, social programs are not sufficient to assist the numerous orphans and vulnerable children and children working on the streets. Children also continue to be engaged in the worst forms of child labor and exposed to dangerous conditions in agriculture and domestic service.

Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	6.1 (142,523)
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	82.9
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	6.1
Primary Completion Rate		69.6

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 SIMPOC Survey, 2008.(2)*

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Rwanda are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and domestic service.(3-7) Children produce tea and are reportedly working in the production of coffee, potatoes, corn, beans, sorghum, bananas, rice and sugar.(3, 4, 8-12) Children's work in agriculture commonly involves using dangerous tools, carrying heavy loads and applying harmful pesticides.(6) Children also reportedly herd and care for cattle. In 2011, ICF International reported that approximately 20 percent of children tending to livestock in Rwanda were injured.(3, 11, 13)

In Rwanda, children work in domestic service.(3-5) Many child domestics do not attend school, work long hours and are vulnerable to sexual and other forms of abuse by their employers.(14) Children also work on construction sites and engage in heavy manual labor such as brickmaking. Limited evidence suggests that children mine coltan.(3, 15-18) Children working in quarries risk eye and lung damage from stone dust.(15) Some children reportedly produce charcoal.(18-20) Children working on the streets beg, carry goods, and may be exposed to dangers including severe weather, traffic accidents and crime.(21-24)

Prostitution and trafficking also occur in Rwanda. Older women sometimes coerce girls to provide sexual services in exchange for cash, protection and living quarters.(25) Loosely structured prostitution networks recruit children from secondary schools. Girls are known to be trafficked internally into domestic service and prostitution.(25) Children are also trafficked to Kenya, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Tanzania, Burundi, Zambia, South Africa, Europe and China for forced agricultural labor, commercial sexual exploitation and domestic service. In a few isolated cases, children have been trafficked into Rwanda.(25-30)

There were no reports during 2011 that children were abducted and conscripted within Rwanda for armed conflict in the

Democratic Republic of the Congo.(18, 31) However, the Rwanda Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (RDRC) continues to provide assistance to former child combatants returning from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.(18, 31)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Rwanda's Labor Law sets the minimum age for work at 16 and the minimum age for hazardous work at 18. The law prohibits children under age 18 from night work and work that is difficult, unsanitary or dangerous.(32) It also prohibits children from working in the worst forms of child labor, which are defined in ILO Convention 182 to include: slavery or similar practices, forced or bonded labor, the use or recruitment of children into armed conflict, illicit activities or prostitution and any work whose nature is detrimental to the health, security or morals of a child.(32) The ministerial order determining the list of the worst forms of child labor prohibits children from working at industrial institutions and in domestic service, mining, quarrying, construction, brick making, and applying fertilizers and pesticides.(33) In addition to the national laws, some districts have enacted laws against hazardous child labor that sanction employers and parents for violations.(34)

	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

Penalties for violations of the Labor Law provisions on the worst forms of child labor and hazardous work are stringent, with up to 20 years incarceration and fines.(32) However, the Labor Law only covers contractual employment, leaving most of Rwanda's working children unprotected.(32, 35)

The Labor Law also prohibits child trafficking and the Law on Prevention and Punishment of Gender-Based Violence prohibits and provides penalties for gender-based human trafficking.(32, 36) The Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child Against Violence prohibits slavery, child rape, recruiting, using or profiting from child prostitution and using children in pornographic publications or for illicit activities.(37) The Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child Against Violence, and Presidential Orders 155/01 and 72/01 also prohibit children under age 18 from military service.(31, 37)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The National Advisory Committee on Child Labor coordinates government efforts relating to the worst forms of child labor and is responsible for reviewing child labor laws. It also advocates for the inclusion of child labor policies in national development plans, oversees the implementation of child labor interventions and conducts field visits to assess the prevalence of child labor and raise awareness of child labor.(12, 25) This group meets quarterly and includes representatives from the: Ministry of Public Service and Labor (MIFOTRA), the Rwandan National Police (RNP), the National Human Rights Commission, the Ministry of Youth, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Sports and Culture, the RDRC, Rwandan trade unions, the ILO, UNICEF, the Private Sector Federation and Winrock International.(12, 25)

In 2011, the Kigali City Council formed a task force to combat child labor in the districts of Kicukiro, Gasabo and Nyarugenge. Reports indicate that this task force drafted guidelines on child labor including domestic work which are awaiting cabinet approval.(16, 38) There are 149 Local Child Labor Committees (LCLCs) nationwide at the local level that monitor incidents of child labor.(12, 34) Child Protection and Gender-based Violence Committees also exist at the district level to identify and report cases of child rights violations.(39)

To enforce child labor laws, MIFOTRA employs 30 labor inspectors, one per district, who are supervised by the district authorities and work with the RNP.(12, 40, 41) There is also one labor inspector at the national level supervised by the Directorate General in charge of labor. Reports indicate that labor inspectors lack resources such as transportation.(12, 40) MIFOTRA assesses the performance of their labor inspectors every 6 months and provides them with training twice a year to identify and investigate child labor violations.(12, 19) In 2011,

labor inspectors held quarterly trainings for employers and local authorities in their district on child labor issues.(12, 25) Labor inspectors also participated in training provided by the U.S. Embassy in Kigali on child labor and trafficking in persons.(42, 43) From July 2010 to June 2011, MIFOTRA's training budget for labor inspectors was $180,000.(12)

In Rwanda, inspections may be conducted without prior notice, and labor inspectors may issue warnings, which must be corrected by the offender within 7 days. Otherwise, the labor inspector may ask the authorities to temporarily close the institution under investigation.(40) Labor inspection reports do not contain information on inspections related to the worst forms of child labor.(44) Data regarding child labor inspections, prosecutions and penalties are not publicly available.(12)

Within villages, citizens can report instances of child labor to the local volunteer officer in charge of social affairs. If the officer cannot resolve the problem, it may be referred to the village leader, who may contact the police.(12) The district authorities' personal performance contracts include targets for reducing child labor and increasing school enrollment.(12) In the tea sector, leaders of cooperatives are also trained on child labor laws to reduce the incidence of working children in their communities.(45) In 2011, district officials in Muhanga barred a mining cooperative from operating after 11 children were found mining coltan.(17)

The RNP enforces criminal laws relating to the worst forms of child labor. Within the Commission for Criminal Investigations of the RNP, there is a Child Protection Unit with a network of investigators throughout the country who are responsible for cases of child abuse, including the use of children in commercial sexual exploitation.(12, 46, 47) In collaboration with MIGEPROF, the RNP established a Directorate for Anti-Gender Based Violence at its headquarters to respond to complaints of gender-based violence. In 2011, the RNP increased the number of officers in this unit from 62 to 225.(12, 48) The RNP also operates a free hotline to report incidences of gender-based violence, which is also used for reporting child abuse, including child labor.(12, 49) MIFEPROF and RNP do not always follow government approved procedures for screening children and referring them to services.(25) During the reporting period, the RNP referred some child domestics and children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation to the Isange Center for police assistance, legal aid, shelter, medical exams and counseling.(12)

Trafficking cases are referred to the RNP and the Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration.(12) The Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration retains an anti-trafficking specialist, and the RNP operates an anti-trafficking unit employed with four full-time officers.(12, 25) The RNP is trained on issues including sex crimes, crimes against children and preventing transnational child trafficking, however some officials lack awareness and training on laws pertaining to internal trafficking.(27, 49) In addition, there have been indications that some members of the RNP are not sensitized to the needs of child trafficking victims and there are reports that some children found engaged in commercial sexual exploitation and market vending were detained in transit centers for months before being released.(12, 18, 50)

Immigration and customs officers assist with the enforcement of child trafficking laws and receive training on document verification and passenger profiling. Standard procedure requires these officers to verify that all children transported across the border are traveling with the permission of their parents or guardians.(12, 25) Research found no information about the number of children prevented from crossing the border in 2011.(12)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The 2003 National Policy for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children, which is still in effect, includes strategies to address the worst forms of child labor by improving working conditions for children, providing support to needy families and strengthening the education system.(51) The Government's National Strategic Plan of Action for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (NSP) (2007-2011) provides a more detailed framework to achieve the objectives of the National Policy for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children.(23, 52) The services offered to orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) included healthcare, shelter, education, livelihood enhancement and psychological support. However, due to the sheer magnitude of the problem, three-fourths of identified OVCs have not received government assistance.(23) Rwanda also has a National Strategic Plan on Street Children (2005), which prioritizes prevention and reintegration services for street children and sets the foundation for legal action against parents who send their children into the streets to live and work.(12, 31)

In 2011, the Government of Rwanda launched an Integrated Child Rights Policy and Strategic Plan (ICRP) to address all children's issues, including child labor. As part of this Plan, the Government established an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Children's Rights, which will meet at least once a year to coordinate the ICRP and assess progress.(25, 31) The

Government also established a National Commission on Children to monitor compliance with child rights commitments and ensure that all government policies and programs are aligned with the ICRP.(12, 31) Through this Plan, $9,000 is budgeted to develop timebound programs to eliminate child labor and $3,230 is budgeted to establish a National Task Force on Child Labor.(31) Rwanda also made policy commitments to combat child labor in its National Employment Policy and Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (2008-2012) (EDPRS).(53-55)

The Government's National Youth Policy and Vision 2020 also include child protection issues.(12, 48, 56, 57) In 2011, Rwanda launched a National Social Protection Strategy, which defines social protection and outlines social development activities to assist poor households, such as providing vulnerable children with grants and free education.(58) However, the question of whether these programs have an impact on child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

During the reporting period, Rwanda announced that it would commence its Twelve Years Basic Education (12YBE) policy in 2012, which will provide free education for 12 years. Education is compulsory beginning at the age of 7 and was until the age of 16. However, in practice the costs of uniforms and school supplies prohibit many families from sending their children to school.(12, 57, 59, 60)

Despite the aforementioned protections, the Government of Rwanda has not finalized its 2008 National Policy for the Elimination of Child Labor or 2007 5-year Action Plan to Combat Child Labor. It is unclear how this Policy and Plan will complement the Integrated Child Rights Policy and Strategic Plan.(12, 43, 61)

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

In 2011, the RDRC assisted former child combatants returning from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to Rwanda by operating a rehabilitation center in Muhazi for 52 children and reuniting 21 children with their families.(12, 25, 31, 62, 63) The Government of Rwanda also raised public awareness of child soldiers' issues with the hope that communities will be more welcoming to children returning from armed conflict.(12)

During the reporting period, Rwanda operated eight rehabilitation and vocational skills centers for street children, which offered psychosocial counseling, education and reintegration services. In 2011, 1,345 former street children graduated from the Iwawa Rehabilitation and Vocational Development Center in Rutsiro District with new skills in commercial farming, tailoring, construction and carpentry. (12, 64-66) The Government also continued to operate a 2-week camp and partnered with private organizations to support 34 child care institutions across the country that provided shelter, basic needs and rehabilitation for 3,830 street children.(12, 67) In August, MIGEPROF announced that it would begin phasing out Rwanda's 34 orphanages and integrating the children with families across the country.(48, 68, 69)

The Government continued to participate in the Rwanda Education Alternatives for Children (REACH) Project, which is funded by USDOL at $4.5 million from September 2009 to March 2013. The Project aims to withdraw 4,800 children and prevent 3,500 children from exploitive child labor, particularly in the agricultural sector, by providing educational services, strengthening child labor and education policies and ensuring the sustainability of these efforts.(13)

Rwanda began participating in the USDOL-funded, 4-year Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues Project. This $15 million regional Project aims to build the capacity of national governments, develop strategic policies to address the elimination of child labor and forced labor, increase the availability of evidence on child labor through data collection and research, and promote legal protections and social service delivery for child domestic workers.(70)

In 2011, the Government participated in discussions on child labor in the tea sector with tea companies and NGOs.(45) MIFOTRA and district authorities also raised public awareness on the importance of education and the worst forms of child labor through radio shows, television announcements and skits.(12, 38)

Rwanda continued to collaborate with the East African Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization in order to strengthen its ability to combat human trafficking. This organization consists of 11 East African countries and works to strengthen regional cooperation and capacities among East African law enforcement authorities.(71, 72) The Government also continued its public campaign to discourage intergenerational sex and sexual procurement, and initiated a campaign against gender-based violence, child abuse, sexual exploitation and human trafficking.(12)

In 2011, the Rwandan Government continued to implement its Vision 2020 Umurenge Program, which provides direct support through cash and in-kind transfers to child headed households and street children. In fiscal year 2010-2011, the Rwandan Government contributed $24 million to this program.(12, 58, 73) Likewise, in 2011 Rwanda provided

1,500 OVCs with vocational training and startup kits, and 41,452 OVCs with health insurance and financial support for secondary education.(74) During the reporting period, the Government also developed a plan to register the births of all children 16 years and below by 2015.(31)

The WFP and USDA concluded a $27 million school feeding program, which supported 300,000 primary and secondary school students. This program is being transitioned to the Government of Rwanda in 2012.(12) In 2011, the Government also built more than 2,600 classrooms to accommodate additional students in preparation for its 12YBE policy.(12) However, it is too early to determine the impact the additional classrooms will have on the worst forms of child labor. In addition, despite the many programs detailed in this section, Rwanda's social programs are not sufficient to assist the numerous orphans and vulnerable children, and children working on the streets and in domestic service.

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

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Ensure protection for children working in exploitative non-contractual labor activities.	2009, 2010, 2011
Coordination and Enforcement	Improve measures to investigate, prosecute and convict individuals involved in the worst forms of child labor, by:	
	• Increasing resources for labor inspectors.	2009, 2010, 2011
	• Making information publicly available on child labor investigations and prosecutions.	2009, 2010, 2011
	• Increasing training among enforcement officials on internal child trafficking and the rights of trafficking victims and children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation and market vending.	2009, 2010, 2011
Policies	Finalize, adopt and implement the National Policy for the Elimination of Child Labor and 5-year Action Plan on child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Expand resources available to the National Strategic Plan of Action for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children to reach more vulnerable children.	2011
	Assess the impact that policies such as the National Youth Policy, Vision 2020 and National Social Protection Strategy may have on addressing child labor.	2011
	Ensure that school costs, such as fees and the cost of uniforms, do not diminish the impact of the Twelve Years Basic Education policy.	2010, 2011
Social Programs	Assess the impact that the school feeding and the birth registration programs may have on addressing child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Develop additional social protection programs to assist child domestics, orphaned, vulnerable children and children working on the streets.	2009, 2010, 2011

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