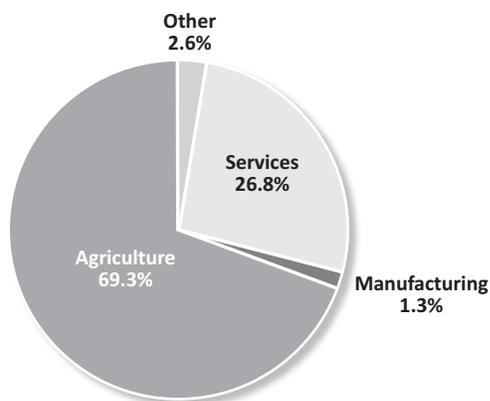


In 2012, Burkina Faso made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government adopted a National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor, collaborated with INTERPOL to rescue 387 victims of child trafficking, and increased its number of labor inspectors. However, limited resources for the systematic enforcement of child labor laws hamper Government efforts to protect children from the worst forms of child labor. Children continue to engage 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 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.(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 in agriculture and mining.(3-5) Children herd goats, cattle, and sheep, risking exposure to snakebites and severe weather.(6, 7) They



also sow, weed, and harvest crops, including cotton.(8-11) Some of these children are engaged in forced labor.(3, 6, 12) Children involved in agriculture work long hours and are exposed to chemicals, such as pesticides used on cotton farms.(3, 6, 9, 11, 13, 14) According to a UCW-SIMPOC study, the vast majority of working children in Burkina Faso are found doing work that includes a dangerous component.(2)

Children work in granite quarries and gold mines.(3-5, 10, 11, 15-24) Reportedly, in quarries children break rocks and carry heavy loads, working 12-hour days, sometimes in extreme heat.(24) In artisanal gold mines, children descend into mine shafts 40 meters underground, risking injury from falling and from shards and falling rocks. They also break rocks, carry heavy loads, and wash minerals, sometimes using explosives and harmful chemicals such as mercury and cyanide.(4, 19, 22, 23, 25-32) 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, using amphetamines to maintain energy.(23, 25, 29, 33) Many of these children receive only food and a place to sleep as payment.(28, 29) They may suffer from occupational illnesses including respiratory conditions, muscular ailments, vision problems, or death. In addition, these children are sometimes physically or sexually abused.(10, 22, 26, 29, 32, 34-38) Over the reporting period, Burkina Faso experienced a boom in gold mining. The result was an increase in children working in gold mines.(5, 18)

Thousands of children, particularly girls, work long hours as domestic servants, risking physical abuse and sexual exploitation.(3, 5, 23, 39-41) Children are also engaged in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit drug trafficking.(4, 11, 12, 27)

# Burkina Faso

Some boys, placed in the care of Koranic teachers for the purposes of education, are forced by their teachers to beg in the streets and surrender the money they have earned. They are at risk of physical abuse and injury from vehicles.(9, 11, 23, 42-46) Koranic students may also be required to labor up to 17 hours per day, performing hazardous work in cotton fields, in which they may be exposed to pesticides.(14, 42, 43, 45)

A growing number of street children, many working as beggars, are found in the two largest cities of Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso.(9, 11, 12, 42, 46, 47) Children working on the streets may face multiple dangers, including maltreatment and sexual abuse.(11, 48)

Burkina Faso is a destination, transit point, and source for children trafficked for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation.(9, 11, 44) Children trafficked for forced labor work in domestic service, mines, quarries, and agriculture, including in the cultivation of cotton.(11, 44, 49) Boys are trafficked to Côte d'Ivoire to work in the cocoa sector and to Mali to work in rice fields.(50-52) Nigerian girls are trafficked into forced commercial sexual exploitation in Burkina Faso.(12, 44)

Quality education is a critical component in preventing the economic exploitation of children.(53, 54) In Burkina Faso, access to education is hindered by a lack of educational infrastructure, particularly in rural areas.(7, 55) In addition, students are subject to physical and sexual abuse from their teachers, discouraging some children from attending school.(6, 11) In the 2011-2012 school year, children left school in large numbers to participate in the artisanal gold mining rush. More than 3,000 students in the central north left school, and 900 students missed their exams for work in gold mining.(56-58) These conditions contributed to the closure of schools across rural Burkina Faso.(56, 57) Due to the crisis in Mali, Burkina Faso experienced an influx of refugees during the reporting period, hosting 49,975 refugees as of May 2013.(59-61) Due to a lack of resources, many Malian refugee children do not have access to education.(62, 63)

## Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code sets the minimum age of work at 16. However, it provides an exception for light work, allowing children ages 12 and above to engage in domestic or seasonal work such as farming.(9, 64) This exception increases the likelihood of children ages 12 to 15 working under hazardous

conditions in agriculture and domestic service. Labor inspectors are specifically authorized to inspect any location where they have reason to believe that employees are working.(7, 65)

The Apprenticeship Act sets the minimum age for apprenticeships at 16.(66) 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.(4, 67) Additionally, this decree limits the workday for children to 8 hours and bans any activity that is detrimental to the health of the child.(67)

## International Conventions and Selected Laws on Child Labor and Education

	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

Education is compulsory until age 16. Although the law mandates free education through primary school, in practice, schools often ask for contributions, and students are frequently charged other fees.(6, 55, 68-70) In addition, only one in three Burkinabé children has a registered birth certificate. The requirement by some schools for birth certificates and school-related fees decreases the likelihood of children attending school and may increase their vulnerability to exploitation.(7, 11, 55, 70, 71)

The Trafficking in Persons Law sets penalties for the trafficking of children and for other worst forms of child labor, including forcing a child to beg.(49, 72) The Labor Code prohibits the

use of children for illicit activities as well as the recruitment, solicitation, and offering of children for prostitution or pornography.(5) The minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the military is 18, and there is no compulsory recruitment.(5, 73)

### **Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement**

The Ministry of Labor and Social Security's Directorate to Combat Child Labor and its Worst Forms (DLTE) coordinates and leads interagency efforts to combat forced and hazardous child labor. The DLTE 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 to Combat Child Labor (SSC).(4, 5, 74) The Ministries of Justice, Social Action, Security, Basic Education, Mines, Human Rights, and Health all are involved in the SSC.(4) However, competing priorities and a lack of human and financial resources have limited the effectiveness of coordination across these agencies.(4, 5) Under the lead of the Ministry of Social Action, the Ministries of Labor and Social Security, Health, Justice, Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Decentralization, and Basic Education coordinate anti-trafficking enforcement efforts.(4, 51, 52)

The Ministries of Labor and Social Security, Justice, and Social Action share responsibilities for the enforcement of hazardous or forced child labor laws.(5, 51) In 2012, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security increased the number of labor inspectors from 170 to 281.(5) However, research indicates that inspectors lack the funds, staffing, training, facilities, transportation, and fuel needed to effectively carry out inspections.(4, 9, 11, 75) Additionally, the ILO Committee of Experts finds that the labor inspectorate is not well adapted to conduct inspections in the agricultural sector, in which many children work in hazardous and sometimes forced conditions.(76, 77) No funds were specifically dedicated to the enforcement of child labor laws.(5) The number of child labor violations found, fines issued, and fines collected in 2012 is unavailable.(5) Despite these constraints, according to the Embassy of Burkina Faso to the United States, joint inspections by labor inspectors and enforcement and security forces are conducted in gold mining sites in Burkina Faso's 13 regions. Some inspections are also conducted in cotton fields.(74) When violations are found, inspection officers issue formal warnings, specifying required changes and deadlines.(74, 78) If the requirements are not met within the specified time frame, inspectors are authorized to impose penalties on the

employer.(78) To date, no penalties have been issued to employers. This is largely due to the fact that many children work on their own accord, for example, in artisanal gold mines, and not under an employer.(74, 75, 78)

The Ministry of Social Action and the Ministry of Security's Morals Brigade of the National Police share responsibility for enforcing criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. This includes investigations into the commercial sexual exploitation of children, trafficking, child labor, and drug-related crimes.(4, 5, 51) No statistics are available on the numbers of violations, convictions, or sentences related to these crimes.(4, 5) In 2012, the Ministry of Social Action, together with the Ministry of Territorial Administration, trained 111 law enforcement officers on issues related to child protection and the worst forms of child labor.(5) The Ministry of Social Action also trained 200 volunteers in four different regions to identify and respond to child abuse, including exploitive child labor.(5) Police squads in each provincial capital were trained on how to directly intervene in cases of child exploitation.(5) The Ministry of Social Action also maintains a hotline to prevent sexual exploitation and provide support to victims.(5, 79) Observations of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child indicate that the police do not have adequate funding and staffing to carry out their mandate. In addition, the police have not made a systematic effort to identify trafficking victims.(5, 11)

In November 2012, more than 100 officials from the *gendarmerie*, which is a military force charged with civilian policing; the national police; and customs, welfare, water, and forestry services took part in a 3-day training provided by INTERPOL and police, education, and health specialists from Burkina Faso. This training resulted in Burkina Faso's fifth INTERPOL-led operation targeting forced child labor. The operation rescued 387 children working under extreme conditions in gold mines and cotton fields.(10) Rescued children were returned to their families or taken into care by social services, and 73 individuals were arrested for trafficking and labor offenses.(10) Fifty-seven of those arrested were released after investigations determined they were not directly involved in trafficking networks.(5)

### **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.(80) This plan includes initiatives to prevent and protect children

# Burkina Faso

from the worst forms of child labor through awareness raising, data collection, rehabilitation services, increased access to education, and better enforcement of laws.(80) The plan calls for the involvement of 11 ministries, particularly the Ministry of Social Action and the Ministry of Employment.(80)

In 2012, the First Lady of Burkina Faso signed a joint declaration with the First Lady of Côte d'Ivoire to finalize an agreement against cross-border trafficking. The Government also adopted its new Strategy for Accelerated Growth and Sustainable Development (SCADD), which officially replaced Burkina Faso's PRSP.(5, 81, 82) The SCADD (2011-2015) specifically mentions the Government's challenge to eliminate child labor and includes strategies to reduce poverty and ensure primary education for all.(5, 82)

In 2012, the labor ministers of the ECOWAS countries, including Burkina Faso, adopted a regional action plan on child labor, especially in its worst forms. The objective of the plan is 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.(83)

Burkina Faso has a number of other National Action Plans that include policies to reduce the worst forms of child labor. The 4-year National Action Plan against trafficking in persons (2008-2012) calls for awareness-raising and the improvement of interagency coordination to reduce trafficking, among other initiatives.(29, 44) The 4-year National Action Plan (2008-2012) for the survival, protection, and development of children includes the initiatives to protect children from the worst forms of child labor. However, the plan was not implemented during the 4-year plan period.(11, 29)

The Government of Burkina Faso also has a national employment policy and action plan (2008-2012), with provisions linking the 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.(84) Child labor concerns have also been incorporated into the Decent Work Country Program (2007-2015).(51, 85, 86) 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.(4, 85)

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

In 2012, the Government of Burkina Faso implemented and participated in several initiatives to combat the worst forms

of child labor. The Government continued its national school feeding program, providing \$50 million for the program in 2012.(5) The program, launched in 2010, provides students one meal a day during the 3-month "hungry season." The U.S. Department of Agriculture, USAID, and WFP also contributed to the Government's school feeding program.(5) In early 2012, in response to the food crisis, the Government distributed food to affected households and set price limits on staple food items.(5)

In 2012, the Government of Burkina Faso began to participate in a 4-year, \$5 million project funded by the USDOL. The project targets 10,000 children engaged in or at risk of entering exploitive child labor in the production of cotton and in gold mining.(87, 88) The project will increase access to education, social protection, and training programs. It will also provide 1,000 households of child beneficiaries with livelihood services.(87, 88) The Government of Burkina Faso participated in the USDOL-funded, 4-year Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues Project, which is active in approximately 40 countries. In Burkina Faso, the project aims to build the capacity of the national Government and develop strategic policies to address the elimination of child labor or forced labor.(89) Burkina Faso also participated in regional projects to combat the worst forms of child labor, including two USDOL-funded, 4-year regional projects to assist ECOWAS to develop systems to help its member countries reduce the worst forms of child labor. The ECOWAS I project was funded at \$7.95 million in 2009, and the ECOWAS II project was funded at \$5 million in 2010.(90-92)

The Government participated in the third phase of an 8-year German development bank, *Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau*, a funded project to combat child trafficking. The project conducts awareness-raising campaigns and improves access to education, social services, and protection.(93) It also builds institutional and judicial capacity to combat child trafficking.(93) Burkina Faso continued to participate in a multi-donor-funded project to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in quarries and mines. The project, which began in 2009, is funded by the Government of Taiwan, UNICEF, and private foundations.(94) The project has set up nursery schools and provided access to primary and vocational school for children involved in quarrying and mining.(23, 94)

Burkina Faso continued to participate in a 3-year, \$28 million Millennium Challenge Corporation-funded project that targeted primary education for girls. The project

built classrooms and other education-related structures and ran awareness-raising programs on the importance of education.(95-97) Burkina Faso continued to take part in the WFP Country Program (2011-2015) that promotes primary education and food security.(98) It also participated in a UNICEF-funded program to provide schooling to 5,000 child refugees in efforts to prevent the exploitation of refugee children.(99)

The Government of Burkina Faso has implemented or participated in social programs to address the worst forms of child labor in the production of cotton and in mining and quarrying, improving access to education and social services. However, research found no evidence that it has carried out programs to address the worst forms of child labor found in livestock raising, domestic service, forced begging, or 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	Ensure children ages 12 to 15 are protected from hazardous conditions in domestic service and agriculture.	2010, 2011, 2012
Coordination and Enforcement	Improve coordination across the relevant agencies working to reduce the worst forms of child labor.	2011, 2012
	Increase labor inspector and enforcement officer resources to enable the enforcement of laws relating to the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Publicize detailed information on the numbers of prosecutions, convictions, and sentences for the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Establish and implement a systematic method for identifying victims of trafficking and other worst forms of child labor.	2010, 2011, 2012
Policies	Streamline coordination of policies related to the worst forms of child labor and implement National Action Plans.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
Social Programs	Take measures to increase access to free, quality education that is safe for children by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementing programs to address violence in schools;</li> <li>• Expanding birth registration campaigns;</li> <li>• Building new schools and maintaining existing schools; and</li> <li>• Reducing or eliminating school-related fees.</li> </ul>	2010, 2011, 2012
	Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor in livestock raising, domestic service, forced begging, and street work.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012

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