

In 2012, Ethiopia made a significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government of Ethiopia approved a National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor; ratified the Palermo Protocol; and passed the Young Worker's Directive, which includes an updated list of hazardous occupations for children. The Government also released data on child labor in the Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey from 2011. In addition, the Government expanded a cash transfer program to assist vulnerable populations, including child laborers, into three new regions, and operates Africa's largest social protection program, the Productive Safety Net Program Phase II. The Government also established a National Steering Committee on child labor, increased the number of labor inspectors from 130 to 380, and participates in and implements several programs to combat the worst forms of child labor. However, gaps in legislation continue to put children at risk and government efforts to address child labor have not sufficiently targeted sectors with a high incidence of child labor. Children continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, particularly in agriculture and domestic service.



Children working in agriculture may use dangerous tools, carry heavy loads, and apply harmful pesticides.(5, 19, 20) Children also herd cattle.(3, 14-16, 18, 19, 21) Children herding livestock may suffer injuries such as being bitten, butted, gored, or trampled by animals.(22, 23) Limited reports suggest that children engage in fishing.(4, 14, 16, 17, 24, 25) These children may work long hours, perform physically demanding tasks, and face dangers such as drowning.(24, 26)

Children, mostly girls, work in domestic service, potentially exposing them to sexual and other forms of abuse. Child domestics in Ethiopia may also suffer from a variety of mental health problems.(4, 27-29) Children collect firewood and water, which may require them to walk long distances with heavy loads.(11, 17, 19, 30, 31)

Children work in the production of gold. In small-scale gold mining, they may dig their own mining pits and carry heavy loads of water.(11, 12, 32, 33) Anecdotal evidence indicates that children may work in quarries.(4, 15) Children also work in the construction and manufacturing industries, potentially carrying heavy loads, working with sharp tools, and risking exposure to toxic substances.(4, 6, 14-19, 34, 35) In addition, limited reports indicate that children crush clay into powder to make pottery products. This type of work may cause respiratory illnesses from prolonged exposure to clay dust.(14, 36)

In urban areas, many children engage in hazardous work on the streets as shoe shiners, assistants to taxi drivers, vendors, porters, and beggars.(4, 6, 14, 16-18, 37-42)

Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	22.0 (5,545,319)
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	54.0
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	17.0
Primary Completion Rate		64.0

Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2011, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from DHS Survey, 2011.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Ethiopia are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in dangerous activities in agriculture and domestic service.(3-6) Although evidence is limited, there is reason to believe that the worst forms of child labor are used in the production of apples, coffee, cotton, onions, bananas, flowers, sugarcane, and tea.(7-18)

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Although the extent of the problem is unknown, reports indicate that children work in the traditional weaving industry, including in Addis Ababa and in the Gamo Gofa and Wolayita Zones.(14, 16, 27, 43-46) Child weavers may work long hours, face physical, sexual, or emotional abuse from their employers; and develop injuries as a result of crouching while working on traditional weaving looms.(14, 19, 47, 48) Anecdotal evidence suggests that some child weavers are held in debt bondage.(48, 49)

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	No
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	No
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	No
	Free Public Education	Yes

Children in Ethiopia are also engaged in commercial sexual exploitation, which is most prevalent in urban areas, including in Addis Ababa.(6, 40, 50, 51) Girls are recruited to work in commercial sexual exploitation at brothels, hotels, bars, rural truck stops, and in resort towns.(6, 27, 50) Girls may also be involved in sex tourism and, although information is limited, there are reports that children are involved in the production of pornography.(50, 52, 53)

Trafficking of children is a problem in Ethiopia. Children are trafficked from rural areas to Addis Ababa and other regions of the country for forced labor in domestic service and the weaving industry.(14, 43, 53, 54) Children are also trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation, begging, street vending, cattle herding, and manual

labor.(53-55) Children are reportedly trafficked from Ethiopia to Djibouti, South Sudan, Kenya, Europe, and the Middle East for labor and commercial sexual exploitation.(53, 54, 56, 57)

There are no reports from 2012 that suggest that children are recruited by local militias in the Somali Regional State.

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Labor Proclamation No. 377/2003 sets the minimum age for employment at 14 and the minimum age for hazardous work at 18.(58) The law forbids employers from using “young workers,” defined as children ages 14 to 18, when the nature of the job or the conditions under which it is carried out might endanger the life or health of a child.(58, 59) The Labor Proclamation also prohibits all children from working at night, and working overtime or in hazardous work, including digging tunnels, working underground, in sewers, with electric transformers, and transmission lines.(58, 60) However, the Labor Proclamation allows children above the age of 14 to engage in hazardous work if this work is performed following a government-approved vocational training course.(58, 61) In addition, the Labor Proclamation only applies to contractual labor, excluding children who work without a contract.(61-63)

In 2012, the Government adopted the Young Workers’ Directive, which includes an updated list of hazardous occupations for children, including work in mines, glass factories, domestic labor, and on the streets.(18) In addition, during the reporting period, the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) submitted a proposal to the Parliament to raise the minimum age for employment from 14 to 15 years.(18)

The Constitution provides protections for children from trafficking, slavery, and forced labor.(59) Some communities in Ethiopia have also enacted local bylaws against trafficking. The Criminal Code prohibits trafficking, child pornography, commercial sexual exploitation of children, and the use of children in illicit activities.(60, 64) In March 2012, the Government of Ethiopia ratified the UN Palermo Protocol on Trafficking

in Persons.(65, 66) The Criminal Code also sets the minimum age for conscription and voluntary recruitment into the military at 18.(64)

There is no law establishing compulsory education in Ethiopia. The lack of compulsory education may increase the risk of children's involvement in the worst forms of child labor.(67) In addition, many children in Ethiopia are not registered at birth. Unable to prove citizenship, nonregistered children may have difficulty accessing services such as education.(27, 68, 69) To address this issue, the Government passed the Vital Events Registration Proclamation No.760/2012 in July 2012 to mandate the registration of births, adoptions, marriages, divorces, and death. This law also includes penalties for those who fail to declare such events.(70, 71) Rollout of the Vital Events Proclamation has been delayed by the absence of uniform national identification cards.(72)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

In 2012, the Government of Ethiopia established a National Steering Committee to coordinate activities on the worst forms of child labor. The Committee includes members from MOLSA; the Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth Affairs (MOWCYA); and the Ministry of Education.(18) The Government also has a National Steering Committee against Sexual Exploitation of Children and an Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Trafficking to coordinate efforts on specific worst forms of child labor.(53, 62, 73) The Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Trafficking meets on a quarterly basis and received ILO training in 2012 to improve its capacity and productivity.(74)

MOLSA is the lead agency for programming on the worst forms of child labor. The Occupational Safety and Health Case Team (OSHCT) is responsible for data collection, analysis, and policymaking for labor purposes.(18, 75, 76) OSHCT enforces occupational safety, health, and wage and hour protections, which include child labor laws, at industrial enterprises in Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. MOLSA is also responsible for labor inspections, which are organized through federal and regional offices.(60, 76)

In 2012, MOLSA created a child labor desk, which includes four employees, to strengthen its capacity to

address child labor issues.(18, 70, 77) MOLSA's State Minister also chairs a forum at the national level, which meets monthly, to combat the worst forms of child labor; the forum includes participants from the Ethiopian Employers' Federation and Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions.(18) Officials from federal ministries and agencies also participate weekly in a technical working group on trafficking, which aims to identify trends and areas in need of public awareness campaigns on trafficking.(53, 74) In some communities, there are also child protection committees, which include children, police, health workers, and teachers.(16, 18)

In 2012, the University of Gondar trained labor inspectors on child labor issues and OSHCT increased the number of labor inspectors from 130 to 380.(18) Despite this improvement, ILO reports that this department is understaffed and lacks sector-specific occupational safety and health guidelines, which weakens enforcement efforts.(76) Regional Bureaus of Social and Labor Affairs (BOLSAs) and City Administration are responsible for labor inspections at the zonal offices, and regional and city levels.(76) In 2012, the BOLSA office in Addis Ababa established an occupational safety and health laboratory to identify work place hazards.(70) OSHCT and BOLSAs both lack equipment, and their inspectors do not have access to suitable transportation, sometimes relying on employers and trade union representatives for rides.(76) ILO reports that labor inspectors' salaries are not competitive and turnover is high.(75, 76)

Labor inspectors visit enterprises to conduct investigations, and they use checklists specific to small, medium, and large enterprises.(62, 76) If a labor violation is found, the labor inspector may require the employer to correct the situation within a given timeframe or the inspector may report the incident to the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs.(58, 76) Labor inspectors do not have the authority to impose immediate sanctions, and fines can be issued only by a court.(58, 76) Although labor inspectors bring cases to court, they lack training on presenting evidence in court.(78) In addition, the labor relations board, an institution that settles labor disputes, can receive labor complaints and issue decisions on alleged violations.(48) MOLSA does not disaggregate child labor data, and research found no information on the number of labor inspections, how many citations were issued, or whether appropriate sanctions were applied.(18, 75, 76)

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The police and the Ministry of Justice investigate and prosecute criminal violations of laws that protect against the worst forms of child labor.(12) Police departments and district officials refer victims of the worst forms of child labor to NGO-run shelters and government orphanages.(53) The Government of Ethiopia has a special court to hear trafficking cases.(79) During the reporting period, 407 police officers received training on child labor identification and investigation.(70) As a result of this training, 500 children were identified as victims of the worst forms of child labor. However, it is unknown whether the 500 identified children received services.(80) In 2012, the police established an Emergency Response Center in the Afar Region to address human trafficking. The center helped approximately 400 people, including 69 children, during its first month of operation.(18)

At the local level, Child Protection Committees, Child Rights Clubs, and Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Task Forces promote children's rights and train members on child labor, case management, international child labor standards, and Ethiopian child labor laws. In some cases, such groups may provide children with direct food transfers and school supplies.(81, 82)

The Human Trafficking and Narcotics Section in the Organized Crime Investigation Unit of the federal police collaborates with the prosecutor's office to conduct investigations, prosecute offenders, and report and collect trafficking data.(12, 54) In 2011, the last year for which information is available, this Unit employed 31 investigators who identified 136 cases of human trafficking, which resulted in 77 convictions. There is no information available on whether these cases involved children.(53) The UN Committee Against Torture is concerned with the low prosecution and conviction rates for the internal trafficking of women and children for forced labor and sexual exploitation.(83)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In 2012, the Government approved a National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor(2013-15), which established a National Steering Committee and includes guidelines on child labor identification, withdrawal, reintegration, and educational

policies. The Plan is available in Amharic, and MOLSA plans to also translate it into English, Oromifa, and Tigrinya.(18, 70, 84) The National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor subsumed the National Plan of Action on Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children (2006-10) and the National Plan of Action for Children (2003-10).(67, 85) In 2012, the Government, in cooperation with the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions and industry federations, also continued to implement its action plan to combat human trafficking.(86, 87)

Child labor issues have been integrated into the following Ethiopian development agendas and policies: Development Social Welfare Policy, National Youth Policy, Decent Work Country Program, and the UN Development Assistance Framework. In addition, MOWCYA and the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office's Standard Service Delivery Guidelines for Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Care include a component on exploitative child labor.(60, 88-91) However, with the exception of the Standard Service Delivery Guidelines for Orphans and Vulnerable Children's Care, these policies do not have budgets, detailed action plans, or targets related to the worst forms of child labor.(60, 88-91) In addition, the National Child Policy, Social Protection Policy, and National Action Plan Against Trafficking, which were drafted to protect the rights of children in 2012 and 2011 respectively, have not yet been adopted.(54, 70, 74, 92, 93)

The Ethiopian Government also supports policies that directly target children and youth. The National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education supports early education programs for young children and community-based nonformal school readiness programs.(12, 94, 95) The Growth and Transformation Plan 2010-15 supports the expansion of education services and outlines interventions for the 5-year period to provide greater opportunities for vulnerable households to engage in decent work.(12, 96) The National Technical Vocational Education and Training Strategy aims to increase employment opportunities for school dropouts and people without formal education through technology and skill accumulation.(97) The question of whether these policies have an impact on child labor, however, does not appear to have been addressed.

The Government of Ethiopia has improved access to education by building schools, increasing the number of teachers, implementing its General Education Quality Assurance Package, and expanding its Technical Vocational Education and Training Program.(98-101) The lack of adequate educational facilities in rural areas, however, increases children's risk of entering the workforce at a young age.(6, 73, 102) Droughts and floods also hinder access to education in Afar; Amhara; Benishangul-Gumuz; Dire Dawa; Gambella; Harar; Oromia; Somali Region; Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region (SNN-PR); and Tigray.(42, 103) In addition, although primary education is free, the cost of school supplies keeps some children from attending school.(6, 12)

In 2012, results were reported from the Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2011 on the population and health situation across the country. The survey included questions on the participation of children ages 5-14 in different types of work.(104) The results showed that 27 percent of children are involved in child labor, with most engaged in household chores or working for a family business. In addition, the survey demonstrated that the percentages of child labor are higher among males and in rural areas.(104) However, the Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey does not provide a complete profile of the child labor situation in Ethiopia.(104) There has not been a comprehensive, stand-alone child labor survey since 2001.

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

In 2012, the Government of Ethiopia continued piloting child-labor-free zones in Addis Ababa and Adama, in collaboration with the Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment. It brought together child protection officers, labor inspectors, police officers, and other stakeholders to reintegrate child laborers.(12, 18, 82) The Government of Ethiopia, in partnership with UNICEF, continued to provide more than 6,000 street children with formal and nonformal education and access to free health care in 14 major towns, including Addis Ababa, during the reporting period.(105)

The Government sustained its participation in a 4-year, \$10 million project funded by USDOL, which targets 20,000 children engaged in or at risk of entering exploitative child labor, particularly in the traditional weaving industry and in rural areas.(16) This project will also assist 7,000 households of targeted children to promote sustainable livelihoods, and will collaborate with MOLSA to coordinate the provision of services and provide occupational safety and health training to labor inspectors. This project operates primarily in Addis Ababa and in the Gamo Gofa and Wolayita Zones.(16) In 2012, Ethiopia participated in the USDOL-funded, 4-year Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues Project, which is active in approximately 40 countries. In Ethiopia, the project aims to build the capacity of MOLSA to address child labor issues.(106, 107)

During the reporting period, the Government raised awareness of child labor in communities where children primarily work in the agricultural sector. The Government also invested in modern agricultural practices and constructed schools in communities heavily engaged in agricultural work to combat child labor.(6)

Ethiopia also continued its involvement in the Regional Program for Eastern Africa (2009-12), which aims to combat the trafficking of children. With support from UNODC, this Program aims to collect data on trafficking in persons, develop a border control system, and promote the ratification and implementation of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocols.(108)

During the reporting period, the Government of Ethiopia, in partnership with UNICEF, sustained its support for the 3-year pilot cash transfer program in two districts of the Tigray Region to assist vulnerable populations, including child laborers.(12, 109, 110) This program aims to increase school enrollment and attendance and support the health of the children in the targeted districts by operating through Community Care Coalitions. In 2012, MOLSA expanded this program to the Afar, Oromia, and SNNPR regions.(85)

In 2012, the Government of Ethiopia continued to implement Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program (PSNP) Phase II. This is Africa's largest social

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protection program, operating in 319 food insecure districts. The project assists more than 7.6 million beneficiaries. (80, 111-115) The PSNP Phase II has several components, one of which provides cash and in-kind transfers to orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) and households without able-bodied adults who can work. This component has been shown to reduce the amount of time children spend doing household work and increase the amount of time children spend in school. (111-115) However, in rare cases, another component, promotion of employment through public works, has been shown to increase the amount of time children work, as families substitute adult family members' labor with children's labor to receive benefits under this program. (114, 115)

The Government of Ethiopia also participates in the General Education Quality Improvement Project (2008-13) to improve the quality of general education across Ethiopia. Funded by the World Bank and other donors at \$417 million, this project consists of curriculum development, textbook assessment, teacher training, and school construction. (116) The question of whether this program has an impact on child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

While the Government participates in and implements several programs to combat the worst forms of child labor, its efforts have not sufficiently targeted sectors with a high incidence of the worst forms of child labor, such as agriculture and domestic service.

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

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Ensure protection for children who are working on a non-contractual basis and engaging in unpaid work.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Amend the Labor Proclamation to raise the minimum age when children may enter hazardous work following vocational training from 14 to 16, in line with ILO Convention 138.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Establish a compulsory education age that is consistent with the minimum age of employment.	2012
	Ensure the registration of all children at birth by implementing the Vital Events Registration Proclamation, which was passed by Parliament in 2012.	2010, 2011, 2012
Coordination and Enforcement	Develop sector-specific occupational safety and health guidelines.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Strengthen the capacity of labor law enforcement officials by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing labor inspectors with competitive salaries to reduce turnover. • Providing enforcement personnel with training on procedures to bring a case to court. • Ensuring that labor inspectors in MOLSA have adequate resources to conduct systematic inspections in all sectors of the economy. 	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Gather and publish information about the number of child labor investigations, citations, and criminal prosecutions initiated and issued, and the penalties applied.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Separate trafficking statistics for children and adults.	2011, 2012

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Coordination and Enforcement	Increase efforts to improve the likelihood of successful prosecution and conviction of offenders who internally traffic women and children for forced labor and sexual exploitation.	2011, 2012
Policies	Include budgets, action plans, and targets related to the worst forms of child labor in development agendas and policies.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Adopt the National Child Policy, Social Protection Policy, and National Action Plan Against Trafficking.	2012
	Ensure that children can complete primary school by subsidizing or defraying the cost of school supplies.	2010, 2011, 2012
	Conduct a national child labor survey.	2012
Social Programs	Develop social protection programs for the withdrawal from or prevention of children working in agriculture and domestic service.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Improve access to education in rural areas by building additional schools, hiring additional teachers, and implementing programs that protect communities from droughts and floods.	2010, 2011, 2012
	Conduct an assessment of the impact that the General Education Quality Improvement Project has on reducing child labor.	2012
	Conduct research on children engaged in street work as shoe shiners, assistants to taxi drivers, vendors, porters, and beggars, including specific activities and associated hazards, in order to inform policy and program design.	2012

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