

In 2013, Cambodia made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government completed and published a National Child Labor Survey. The Government also participated in multiple projects to address human trafficking to, from, and within the country for forced labor and sexual exploitation, including child sex tourism. The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport participated in a new cash scholarship transfer pilot program through a mobile banking system which allows participants to use cash assistance for food or school supplies. However, children in Cambodia continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor as victims of human trafficking and in child labor in agriculture. The legal framework leaves children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor as there is no compulsory education requirement, and the law allows children as young as age 12 to work in domestic service. Labor inspectors lack sufficient resources to adequately monitor child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Cambodia are engaged in the worst forms of child labor as victims of human trafficking and in child labor in agriculture. In November 2013, the Government published its first combined Cambodia Labor Force and Child Labor Survey.(1, 2) Data from this survey was not analyzed in time for inclusion in the table below. However, the survey collected data in 2012 on children ages 5-17 and indicated that more than half of child laborers were engaged in agriculture, forestry and the fishing sector, and nearly 20 percent of them worked in manufacturing.(1, 2) Many of these children work in hazardous activities in agriculture, including handling and spraying pesticides and herbicides which the Government has deemed hazardous. Additionally, some fall victim to trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor.(2-6) Children in rural areas are more likely to work than children in urban areas due to the prevalence of rural poverty and lack of educational opportunities.(7) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Cambodia.

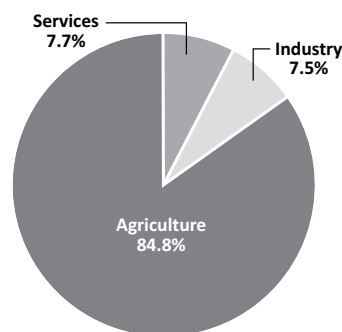
Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	28.7 (888,370)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	79.2
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	28.3
Primary Completion Rate (%)		98.1

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(8)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis of statistics from Socio-Economic Survey, 2009.(9)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



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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	Fishing, including deep-sea† and night fishing† (2, 10-12)
	Peeling shrimp and shucking crabs* (10, 13)
	Production of tobacco, cassava, and rubber (3, 5, 7, 14, 15)
	Logging for the production of timber† (2)
Industry	Making bricks† (2, 5, 6, 13)
	Production of salt (3, 5, 6, 16)
	Construction,† activities unknown (2)
	Production of textiles, including bleaching, dyeing and finishing with chemicals† (2)
	Production of alcoholic beverages† (2)
Services	Work in slaughterhouses for the production of meat† (2)
	Portering (5, 13)
	Domestic service (5, 13, 17-19)
	Work in entertainment,† including as bartenders, masseurs, dancers, and waiters (2)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Work on the streets, including begging, vending, shoe polishing and scavenging (11, 17, 19, 20)
	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (6, 21-23)
	Domestic service, begging, street vending, and factory work as a result of human trafficking (6, 22-24)

* 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.







Children are trafficked to, from, and within Cambodia for commercial sexual exploitation and labor exploitation. Trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation occurs primarily from Cambodia to Thailand, from Vietnam to Cambodia, and within Cambodia.(6, 23) Children are trafficked from smaller villages to larger cities and primarily to Malaysia and Thailand to work as domestic servants.(6, 17, 23, 24) Children are trafficked primarily to Thailand as street vendors, to sell candy or flowers, or work in factories. Children are also trafficked to Thailand and Vietnam and forced to beg.(6, 23)

Significant barriers to accessing the education system still exist. In remote areas, children have to travel long distances to reach school, and transportation is limited.(25) This sometimes deters parents from sending girls to school due to safety concerns.(25) Lack of bilingual education can be an obstacle to school access for children of ethnic minorities and needs to be further expanded.(19) Some children cannot gain access to education due to displacement as a result of land disputes and government land concessions for large agro-industry development and infrastructure projects.(26)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Cambodia 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	15	Article 177 of The Labor Law (27)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 173, 177 of the Labor Law; Regulation on the Prohibition of Hazardous Child Labor (27, 28)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	Yes		Regulation on the Prohibition of Hazardous Child Labor (28)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 15 of The Labor Law (27)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Law on Suppression of the Kidnapping, Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Persons (29)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Law on Suppression of the Kidnapping, Trafficking and Exploitation of Human Persons (29)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 343-346 of the Penal Code (11)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	18	The Law on General Statutes for the Military Personnel of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (3, 30)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	The Law on General Statutes for the Military Personnel of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (3, 30)
Compulsory Education Age	No		
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 31 of the Education Law of 2007 (32)

The Labor Law lacks full protections for children involved in domestic service.(5, 33) Children as young as age 12 are permitted to perform domestic labor by law, as long as the work is not hazardous to their health, safety, or morals, and does not involve any type of hazardous work specifically prohibited.(28) This minimum age of 12 for domestic work is below the minimum age for all other occupations in Cambodia. In September 2013, the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MOLVT) and World Vision held a workshop to raise awareness about child domestic labor and to promote passage of a regulation establishing rules for child domestic labor.(1)

Education is free, but not compulsory, through grade nine.(32) The lack of compulsory schooling makes children under age 15, the legal age to work, particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor because they are not required to attend school and are not legally permitted to work. The Education Law provides for free education, however, in practice, teacher salaries are low, and instructors often charge extra fees to students for exams, snacks, tutoring, and even class time.(31, 34, 35)

While the legal framework provides some protection against the worst forms of child labor, the Cambodian Labor Law exempts work performed for a family business from the hazardous work order.(20)

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
The Department of Child Labor within the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MOLVT)	Enforce child-related provisions of the Cambodian Labor Law and manage Cambodia's Child Labor Monitoring System.(1, 36)
The Cambodian National Police's Anti- Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Department (Anti-Trafficking Police)	Enforce laws against trafficking, child sexual exploitation, and criminal activities along with municipal and provincial anti-human trafficking and juvenile protection offices.(20) Commanded by the Ministry of the Interior.(37) Human trafficking complaints can be filed through nine anti-trafficking hotlines, one at the Ministry of Interior and eight at the municipal and provincial levels.(20)
Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation (MOSAVY)	Accompany the police on investigations during which child victims may be found, and subsequently refer child victims to NGO services.(3, 13)

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

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2013, the Department of Child Labor reported employing 35 staff members, some of whom acted as labor inspectors. The department, however, said that its staff did not receive any professional training on inspection and equated inspections with visiting factories to disseminate information about child labor.(1) The Department visited 153 garment factories.(1)

While the MOLVT has specific regulations regarding acceptable work for children in agriculture, fishing, and tobacco and cassava production, government officials report that they have not yet begun to enforce these regulations.(1, 13) The Government lacks standardized guidelines on how to conduct labor inspections, and it is unclear how inspectors verify the age of children in the workplace.(38) Inspectors have no budget for transportation, fuel, and other necessities to carry out inspections.(3, 20) The MOLVT conducts routine inspections of some industries, primarily in the formal sector; however, most inspections are complaint driven rather than initiated by the MOLVT and do not target or monitor where hazardous child labor is known to occur.(5, 39)

The Government does not officially release data on the number of child labor inspections or the number of children assisted.(40) Although labor inspectors have the authority to order immediate removal of children from the workplace and levy fines, procedures for applying such penalties are not administered uniformly.(38)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2013, 1,147 police officers participated in anti-trafficking training.(1) The Anti-Trafficking Police employed approximately 500 police officers who served as investigator and enforcement officers. Investigators had office facilities but did not have sufficient means of transportation.(1) They continued to rely heavily on local and international NGOs in all phases of investigations. Funding for the agencies responsible for combating the worst forms of child labor was not adequate to conduct investigations effectively absent NGO participation.(1)

From January through November 2013, police arrested 26 people accused of involvement in human trafficking and child prostitution, and nine defendants were convicted. Of the nine convicted, five defendants were sentenced to 18 months in prison for indecent acts against a minor under 15 years old, three were sentenced to eight years in prison for supplying child prostitutes, and one person was sentenced to seven years in prison for purchasing child prostitutes.(41) During the same time period, police rescued 33 underage victims of trafficking in Cambodia and referred them to MOSAVY.(1) MOSAVY in Phnom Penh received 53 underage victims who were locally trafficked for sexual or labor exploitation. These victims were referred to local or international organizations for assistance.(1) In 2013, MOSAVY also received 143 underage victims of trafficking or commercial sexual exploitation who had been repatriated from Thailand.(1)

Judges can determine whether perpetrators will be imprisoned or fined, and they can determine the amount of the fine. If fines are levied without a prison sentence, the punishment may not be a sufficient deterrent for wealthy perpetrators.(3, 13)

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
The National Sub-Committee on Child Labor of the Cambodian National Council for Children (CNCC)	Coordinate child labor issues at the national level.(42) Includes all concerned ministries, businesses, trade unions, and NGOs. Ensure that projects and programs follow national policy on child labor. Provincial committees on the Protection of Child Rights and Provincial Committees on Child labor coordinate efforts to address child labor at the provincial level.(42)

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor (cont)

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
The National Committee on Suppression of Human Trafficking, Smuggling, and Labor and Sexual Exploitation of Women and Children (NC/STSLs)	Coordinate policymaking efforts with regards to trafficking. Includes representatives from the Cambodian Government and civil society.(36, 43)
Migration Working Group within NC/STSLs	Coordinate multi-sectoral participation to address migration issues, gather and monitor data on migration, facilitate information exchange, and provide recommendations on the formulation of agreements with relevant countries. Chaired by the Ministry of Interior and includes representatives from the government, the UN, and NGOs.(44)

In 2013, the National Sub-Committee on Child Labor continued to meet quarterly under MOLVT chairmanship.(1)

Also during the reporting period, the Migration Working Group conducted research on challenges related to migration, held national workshops to determine measures to protect migrants' safety, and disseminated the government's policy on the protection of migrants' safety to 21 recruiting companies.(37)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Plan of Action to Tackle Child Labor in Inland and Coastal Fisheries	Incorporates child labor into the Ministry's policies and legal frameworks for fisheries and aquaculture. Assesses work hazards for children in fisheries and aquaculture and ensures that children who work in fisheries and their families have access to education and livelihood opportunities.(36) In March 2014, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MOAF) with technical assistance from the ILO and World Vision, finalized guidelines for child workers in the fisheries sector.(45) Guidelines define the kinds of hazardous activities in which children are not permitted to engage and set fines for employers who violate them. Awaiting official approval from MOAF and the MOL.(45)
The Education Strategic Plan (2009-2013)	Outlines a plan to improve access to quality education for vulnerable children, including child laborers, and supports the decentralization of education service delivery by building the capacity of local educational institutions to receive and administer funds effectively.(46, 47) Raises awareness on the importance of education; the provision of school meals; improved school infrastructure; bilingual education; and advocacy for community participation.(47) Uses vocational training as a development strategy for marginalized youth, including child laborers.(46) During the reporting period, a new Education Strategic Plan (2014-2018) was drafted, but has not yet been approved.(48)
The National Youth Policy	Aims to afford meaningful opportunities to young people ages 15 to 30 and to provide them with the skills they need to enhance their economic participation.(49)
Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency Phase III (2013-2017)†	Defines Cambodia's socio-economic policy agenda and outlines a strategy for sustainable development and poverty reduction. Includes social protection programs to ensure poor children have access to education; promotes sustainable development of the health sector including improved sanitation, health, and nutrition of children; and a focuses on strengthening law enforcement to be more effective against human trafficking and sexual exploitation of children.(50)
National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) (2011-2015)	Aims to protect the poorest and most disadvantaged populations, mitigate risk by providing coping strategies, and promote poverty reduction by building human capital and expanding opportunities such as access to health, nutrition, and education services, which the strategy states will benefit child laborers and their families.(51)
ILO Decent Work Country Program (2011-2015), endorsed by the MOSAVY	Highlights child labor issues and outlines a framework for enhancing policies, laws, and enforcement mechanisms to protect children.(52)
MOSAVY's First Occupational Safety and Health Master Plan (2009-2013)	Includes eliminating hazardous child labor as one of its six priorities.(53)
Policy and National Minimum Standards for the Protection of the Rights of Victims of Human Trafficking	Guidelines to improve the treatment of TIP victims. Mandates MOSAVY to train relevant government officials.(54) Lists children among those identified as victims of trafficking in Cambodia and includes the Ministry of the Interior's Safety Village Commune/Sangkat Policy Guide which mandates that local governments take action to end the trafficking of women and children to ensure safe communes.(36, 55)

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Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
National Plan of Action on the Suppression of Human Trafficking, Smuggling, Labor, and Sexual Exploitation (NPA-STSL) (2011-2013)	Includes activities aimed at harmonizing the NPA-WFCL and the NPA-STSL. These activities include developing monitoring procedures for domestic servants with an emphasis on child domestic workers and training trainers at the sub-national level to prevent child trafficking and child labor.(36, 56)

† Policy was launched during the reporting period.

The National Plan of Action on the Worst Forms of Child Labor (NPA-WFCL) ended in 2012. The Department of Child Labor, with technical assistance from the ILO, is incorporating information from the newly-released Child Labor Survey into the development of a new Plan.(48) The Government reports that changes in leadership within the Ministry as a result of national elections in July 2013 have contributed to the lapse in finalizing a new plan. The new plan is expected to be approved in 2014.(48)

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

In 2013, the Government of Cambodia 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
Commune Committees for Women and Children (CCWC)‡	MOLVT and provincial government program that establishes and trains these committees at the commune and village level to raise awareness of child labor regulations, ensuring that children continue to go to school, and report employers that use child labor.(1)
Street People Committee‡	Inter-ministerial committee chaired by MOSAVY that provides direct support for street children. It is responsible for determining the number of people living and working on the street, including children, and providing for their needs.(37, 57)
Cambodians EXCEL: Eliminating exploitative Child Labor through Education and Livelihoods	\$10 million USDOL funded, 4-year project to combat child labor in agriculture, fishing, and domestic service. Targets 28,000 child laborers and at-risk children to receive education services and 14,000 households to receive livelihood services.(58) Addresses a complex set of factors causing child labor including poverty, lack of education access, cultural acceptance of child labor, debt, migration, and lack of regulation in the informal sector.(58)
United Nations World Food Program (WFP) – Fighting Hunger Worldwide*	Australian-funded, 5-year program implemented by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MOEYS) to improve food security and nutrition, which includes providing breakfast and take-home rations to vulnerable primary school children, and off-season income-generation activities for the poor.(59) In 2013, WFP introduced a new cash scholarship transfer pilot program through a mobile banking system in partnership with Angkor Microfinance of Kampuchea. Beneficiaries of the program must attend 80 percent of their classes and receive cash assistance that can be used for food or school supplies.(60)
Project Childhood	\$3.7 million Australian-funded, 4-year regional project to combat child sex tourism in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam.(61, 62) Seeks to ensure that the relevant legislative framework of each participating country meets international standards; police, prosecutors, and judges understand the law; and mechanisms are established to promote cooperation within and across borders.(62)
Counter Trafficking in Persons II (CTIP II)	\$5.4 million USAID-funded, 4-year program implemented by Winrock International to improve the Government and civil society's coordination and capacity to effectively combat all forms of human trafficking. CTIP II focuses specifically on addressing the needs of victims of forced labor and sexual exploitation.(63)
Improved Basic Education in Cambodia Project*	\$10 million USAID-funded, 5-year project supported by the MOEYS to enhance access to education, targeting 202 primary schools and 101 lower secondary schools. Provides improvement grants to schools for scholarships, latrines, and equipment including computer and science labs.(64)
Bilingual Education Programs*‡	MOEYS bilingual education program for ethnic minority children in preschools and primary schools in three provinces. Targets 2,359 students from grades one through three in 27 schools.(57, 65)

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

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Cambodia.

The Government of Cambodia relies heavily on outside funding to combat child labor, including its worst forms. The Government has set up Committees for Women and Children (CCWC), and it is reported that these monitoring committees were largely successful in the communes where they were established.(1) The Government reports that

the Local Administration Department collects reports from the CCWC, however, it has not released any data on their achievements.(37)

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 Cambodia (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Raise the minimum age for work in domestic service to at least 15, in compliance with the minimum age for work and with international standards.	2009 – 2013
	Institute and enforce a compulsory education age that is at a minimum equal to the minimum age for work.	2009 – 2013
	Enact laws to protect children from hazardous work in family businesses.	2009 – 2013
Enforcement	Enforce regulations regarding child labor in agriculture, tobacco, cassava, and fishing.	2012 – 2013
	Develop and implement standardized guidelines for conducting child labor inspections.	2011 – 2013
	Provide sufficient resources for the enforcement of child labor laws to address the full scope of the problem.	2010 – 2013
	Conduct targeted inspections of industries in which hazardous child labor is known to occur.	2009 – 2013
	Collect and publish data on the number of child labor inspections conducted, the employers prosecuted, and the children assisted.	2010 – 2013
	Uniformly administer existing penalties for businesses violating child labor laws and ensure that punishments are a sufficient deterrent.	2009 – 2013
Government Policies	Approve new National Plan of Action on the Worst Forms of Child Labor (NPA-WFCL).	2013
Social Programs	Ensure all children have access to free quality education, including by ensuring school fees are not charged and addressing distance, transport, and language barriers.	2013
	Assess the impact that existing poverty alleviation and education programs may have on the worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2013

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