

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

In 2012, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. In implementing the Prevention and Trafficking in Persons Act this year, the Government established a ministerial National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons. An anti-trafficking unit has also been established within the Royal Police Force. However, gaps remain in the legal framework, as the minimum age for hazardous work falls below international standards and there is no law to prohibit the use of children in the production of drugs. While the country does not appear to have a widespread child labor problem, some children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor.

Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate		94.2

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, 2013.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, some children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor. There is limited evidence suggesting that children are involved in dangerous activities within the agricultural sector, including the cultivation of marijuana.(3-5) Although information is limited, there are reports that children are also found working on banana plantations and in family-owned cottage industries.(5, 6) Such work may put them at risk by requiring them to use dangerous tools, carry heavy loads, and apply harmful pesticides.(7, 8)

There also have been reports of trafficking in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, including children who are trafficked for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and work in agriculture.(9) Limited reports from NGO and government sources state that girls are encouraged by their mothers to engage in sexual activities with older men for money as a way to supplement the family income.(6) However, the Government has acknowledged that due to the lack of data on the prevalence of child labor, especially the sexual exploitation of children, the full extent of the problem is unknown.(10) In



addition, there is limited evidence that children are involved in the trade of marijuana.(3-5)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children (EWYPC) Act establishes the minimum age for employment, including hazardous work, at age 14.(10, 11) This law does not meet the international minimum age standard of 18 for hazardous work.(10, 11) Children under the age of 18 are prohibited from working at night and in any industrial undertaking.(10, 11)

The EWYPC Act also authorizes the Governor-General to establish regulations regarding the health, welfare, and safety of children and young persons. However, there are no regulations defining or prohibiting hazardous occupations or conditions for children.(10, 11).

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

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	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	14
	Compulsory Education Age	16
	Free Public Education	Yes

The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (PTIP) Act of 2011 prohibits the sale and trafficking of all children under the age of 18. The Act prohibits the involvement of any trafficked person, including children, in forced labor, prostitution, and pornography.(12, 13) It also prohibits the use of a child in the trafficking of illicit goods.(12, 13) However, there are no legal frameworks prohibiting the use of children in the production and trafficking of illicit drugs.(10)

The Constitution (1979) prohibits all forms of forced and compulsory labor.(14)

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines does not have a national army.(15) The Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force is responsible for the security and protection of the people. The minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the Police Force is 19.(15, 16)

The Education Act of 1992 was revised in 2006 to offer universal access to primary and secondary schooling. The Act mandates free and compulsory education for all children between the ages of 5 to 16.(17-19)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

Research found no evidence that the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has established a coordinating

mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor. However, a ministerial-level task force coordinates the prosecution of trafficking cases.(5)

The Ministry of Labor is responsible for enforcing all child labor laws. There are five labor officers who are responsible for monitoring all labor issues for the country and the island of the Grenadines.(4-6) Inspectors investigate child labor only in response to complaints; there were no reports of inspections or violations involving child labor this reporting period.(5) The Government recognizes that there are not enough inspectors to carry out the full extent of their assigned duties and this has led to difficulties in inspecting workplaces.(20) In 2012, the Government allocated \$377,777 to the Ministry for all enforcement activities. Labor inspectors did not receive training on child labor and its worst forms this reporting period.(5)

The Royal Police Force is responsible for making all criminal arrests, including those involving the worst forms of child labor and human trafficking. An anti-trafficking unit has also been created within the Royal Police Force in an effort to address the problem.(5, 21) In 2012, the budget for the police force was \$650,250. This reporting period, the entire force received training on trafficking victim identification, care, and sensitization.(21) Children who are identified by the police force as victims of human trafficking or engaged in child labor are referred to the Ministry of Social Development for social services by the Ministry of Labor.(5, 21)

In 2012, the Government established a ministerial National Task Force against Trafficking in Persons.(22) The functions of the Task Force are to develop a national plan to address trafficking, to coordinate the collection of data amongst government agencies, to establish policies to enable government agencies to work with nongovernmental organizations to prevent trafficking and assist victims, as well as to coordinate and provide training for all relevant government officials and authority figures.(13, 22)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Although the worst forms of child labor do not appear to occur extensively in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, research found no evidence of policies to address existing child labor, including children working in agriculture and child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.(5) According to the Government, official statistics are not available on the prevalence and scope of the worst forms of child labor.(10)

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

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

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines does not have any programs that are specifically designed to address child labor. However, several programs exist to reduce poverty, increase educational attainment, and improve the overall lives of its people.(4, 5, 18) Some of the services include free medical and health care services for children 16 years and younger, subsidization of textbooks, and school feeding programs.(18)

The Ministry of Education developed the Education Sector Development Plan to serve as a guide in the comprehensive development of the education system.(4, 18, 19) Programs, such as Children Against Poverty, were developed to address gaps in the schooling system and break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.(4, 18) This program specifically targets low achievers between the ages of 5 to 16, using innovative and integrated approaches to learning, in order to keep children engaged.(18)

The impact of these programs on the worst forms of child labor is unclear.

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines:

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Amend the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act to make 18 the minimum age for engaging in hazardous work.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Develop a list of hazardous occupations and working conditions prohibited to children under the age of 18.	2009, 2011, 2012
	Draft and adopt legislation to prohibit procuring or offering a child for the production and trafficking of illicit drugs.	2011, 2012
Coordination and Enforcement	Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat all worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Provide training to inspectors on child labor and its worst forms.	2011, 2012
Policies	Conduct a national child labor study to assess whether the worst forms of child labor are indicative of a small or hidden problem that requires further follow-up.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Develop a national plan of action to address the worst forms of child labor, particularly for children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation and in illicit activities within the agricultural sector.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
Social Programs	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on addressing the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012

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Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

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