

In 2015, Moldova made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government adopted Law No. 166, which expands the Ombudsman for Children's Rights to include the right to appeal to the Constitutional Court, attend parliamentary hearings, and contest any legislative proposals that would infringe upon the rights of children. The Government also adopted the Action Plan for 2015–2016, which includes actions to address child labor issues. However, children in Moldova are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture, and in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Funding for the State Labor Inspectorate was not sufficient, and the inspectorate's efforts to enforce child labor laws were hindered by barriers to conducting unannounced inspections. While the Government provides some financial support to programs addressing child labor, including human trafficking, most major child labor programs have been donor funded. These programs do not appear to be sustainable without outside financial assistance.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Moldova are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture. Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1-4) Each year, the Government's National Bureau of Statistics provides data on children and youth in Moldova. In previous years, the report featured information on child labor; however, the 2014 report, released in 2015, did not. (2, 5) According to the 2013 report, which includes the latest data on child labor available, 6,100 children between ages 15 and 17 (4.6 percent of the total number of children) worked. (2, 6) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Moldova.

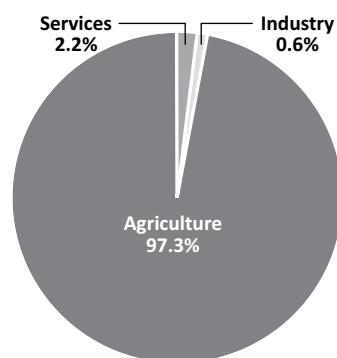
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	24.3 (102,105)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	92.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	29.0
Primary Completion Rate (%)		93.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2013, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015. (7)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Labour Force Survey-Child Labour Survey, 2009. (8)

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



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	Farming, including growing crops* and raising farm animals* (2, 3, 9-11)
Industry	Construction,* activities unknown (2, 9)

Table 2. Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity (cont)

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Street work,* including begging (3, 11)
	Domestic work* (11)
	Wholesale and retail trade,* activities unknown (9, 10)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation* and forced begging,* each sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (1-4, 12)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

Poor official statistics, along with the lack of research on child labor and related issues, lead to limited available information on the types of work children perform and the sectors in which they work.(2, 4, 12)

Child trafficking, particularly of children suffering from familial neglect, continues to be a concern in Moldova.(4, 13, 14) Both boys and girls are recruited for commercial sexual exploitation almost exclusively by men within the country through brothels, saunas, and massage parlors. Girls are also trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation transnationally.(3, 4, 15) A source indicates that changes in the recruit minors have led to younger children being recruited for use in commercial sexual exploitation. In previous years, traffickers usually did not recruit children for prostitution, and, if recruited, these minors ranged between ages 15 and 16.(4) However, in 2014 and 2015, the ages of these children, especially girls, who endure commercial sexual exploitation through prostitution, sex video chats, and massage parlors, ranged from age 13 to age 15.(4) Moldova is also a destination for sex tourism of children for tourists from various countries, including Australia, Denmark, Germany, Israel, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Thailand, and the United States.(3, 4, 12) Vulnerable children from the secessionist region of Transnistria were at an increased risk of being trafficked through Ukraine’s Odesa Region.(4)

The latest national study on children in need and children whose parents work abroad, conducted in 2012, reveals that 105,270 (approximately 15 percent) of children have one or both parents working abroad.(16) Children left behind by migrant parents may be particularly vulnerable to child labor and human trafficking, especially those who are institutionalized in orphanages or boarding schools. Children with disabilities account for more than 50 percent of children living in these residential institutions.(3, 4, 10, 11, 17, 18) Government authorities and NGOs report that sex tourists continue to target orphanages by posing as school benefactors and bribing orphanage administration officials to obtain unsupervised access to children, sometimes even taking the children to rented apartments overnight.(3)




Although the Education Code provides for free and compulsory education until age 18, parents are sometimes asked to pay informal fees for supplies and textbooks. Education-related costs, lack of transportation to school and birth registration documentation, and the negative attitudes and physical violence of school officials and fellow students toward some Roma children make it challenging for some children to access education.(4, 10, 11, 18-21)

Government policies entitle children with disabilities to government provided home schooling, but those living in rural areas have limited access to this service. Due to their concerns about facing discrimination, many parents of children with disabilities declined home schooling for their children.(3, 10, 18) According to a recent UNICEF study, 5,800 children with disabilities did not attend school in 2013. Schools often lack adequate resources to address the needs of these children.(3) Children with disabilities living in Transnistria rarely attend school and are often unable to access specialized resources.(3, 22) Due to their limited access to educational opportunities, children with disabilities may be vulnerable to child labor.

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Moldova 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 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	16	Article 46 of the Labor Code of the Republic of Moldova (23)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 255 of the Labor Code of the Republic of Moldova (23)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Government Decision No. 541 List of Jobs with Difficult, Harmful and/or Dangerous Working Conditions Prohibited for Children Under Age 18; the Collective Convention on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor; Articles 103, 105, and 255–256 of the Labor Code; Article 58 of the Contravention Code of the Republic of Moldova (23-26)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 44 of the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova; Article 6 of the Law on Children's Rights; Article 168 of the Criminal Code; Article 7 of the Labor Code; the Collective Convention on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor (23, 24, 27-29)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 206 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova; Articles 2, and 25–29 of the Law on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings; the Collective Convention on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor (24, 28, 30)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 206 and 208 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova; Article 6 of the Law on Children's Rights; the Collective Convention on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor (24, 28, 29)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 208 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova; the Collective Convention on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor (24, 28, 31)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 28 of Law No. 1245-XV on the Preparation of Citizens for Homeland Defense (32, 33)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Article 12 of Law No. 162-XVI on the Status of Military Personnel (32, 34)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	18	Article 13 of the Education Code (35)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 9 of the Education Code (35)

In 2015, the Parliament of Moldova adopted Law No. 166, which amended the law on the People's Advocate (Ombudsman). The power of the Ombudsman for Children's Rights has been expanded to include the right to appeal to the Constitutional Court, attend parliamentary hearings, and contest any legislative proposals that would infringe upon the rights of children.(2, 4)

Also during the reporting period, the Government adopted minimum standards for assistance provided to human trafficking victims through Government Decree 898.(4)

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During the reporting period, the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection, and Family (MLSPF) drafted a law to improve the implementation and enforcement of Law No. 140 on the Special Protection of Children at Risk and Children Separated from their Parents. Law No. 140 outlines procedures for interagency cooperation on the identification, evaluation, assistance, monitoring, and registering of vulnerable children, including victims of exploitation and human trafficking.(2) The draft proposes an updated version of Article 65 of the Contravention Code, with two new components. One component sets penalties for breaching the provisions of the law.(2) The second component sets penalties for the employees of the central and local authorities, or their subsidiary structures, institutions, and services providers that are operating in social services, education, health care, and law enforcement, for failure to ensure compliance with the deadlines, and the procedures laid out in the interagency cooperation mechanism. The draft is pending approval by authorities.(2)

In accordance with Article 46 of the Labor Code, the minimum age for employment in Moldova is 16. One exception to this requirement allows 15-year-olds to sign a work contract if the work will not endanger the minor's health or interfere with the child's growth, education, and professional development.(2) A parent or legal guardian must also provide written consent.(2) In addition, the law's minimum age protections do not apply to children who are self-employed or working outside formal employment relationships.(23)

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
State Labor Inspectorate (SLI) Within the Ministry of Labor, Social Protection, and Family (MLSPF)	Enforce all labor laws, including child labor laws. Investigate cases of possible labor law violations, including those pertaining to children.(16, 36) Manage the National Referral System (NRS), which has been implemented in all of Moldova's regions; each regional coordinator coordinates directly with law enforcement, NGOs, and schools, and lead victim rehabilitation efforts.(4)
Multidisciplinary Teams	Act on a local level to identify children involved in the worst forms of child labor, provide better alternatives to child laborers, continue to monitor the living conditions of identified children, and use the collected information for policy development(16, 36, 37)
Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA)	Enforce criminal laws against child trafficking and sexual exploitation. Assign officers dedicated to child protection and child labor.(16)
The Center for Combating Trafficking in Persons (CCTIP), subdivision of MOIA	Lead criminal investigations and arrest the perpetrators involved in trafficking of persons, including trafficking of children for both labor and sexual exploitation. In 2015, CCTIP and the SLI jointly organized a training on increasing awareness on human trafficking for the purposes of labor exploitation and forced labor for 27 inspectors.(2, 4, 38) In 2015, the Prosecutor General's Office (PGO) assigned seven litigating prosecutors and one administrative prosecutor to CCTIP, marking an increase of this unit's size by two, so that they can focus only on investigating and prosecuting cases of trafficking in persons. Changes to CCTIP's leadership during the reporting period led to a 6-month delay between when the former director, Ana Revenco, left and the new director, Sergiu Nani, came on board. (4) Upon assuming the role, Nani began implementing a new case intake policy that focused more on the number of investigations of less serious crimes that had previously been outsourced to local precincts, instead of continuing to use the effective policy that Revenco institutionalized during her tenure that dedicated resources to investigate child trafficking allegations and complex cases involving illegal migration and pimping rings instead. This delay and change in approach negatively affected the center's ability to cooperate with some members of civil society and its international partners, in part because this shift to the new case-intake policy was seen by some external stakeholders as an effort to increase CCTIP's enforcement statistics, at the expense of more in-depth and complex cases.(4)
Service for Information and Security	Enforce criminal laws against child trafficking and sexual exploitation through cooperation and exchanging information with CCTIP.(16)
The Prosecutor General's Office	Conduct and oversee criminal investigations of cases, including the worst forms of child labor exploitation; prosecute cases of worst forms of child labor in court and at the Supreme Court of Justice; and represent the rights of child victims in cases when their civil rights are violated.(39) Employ seven prosecutors to deal with trafficking in persons cases, as well as trafficking of children cases.(36) Composed of 36 prosecutorial offices throughout the country, which have prosecutors specialized in the handling of child trafficking cases.(16, 39)
The National Council for the Protection of Child Rights	Government institution typically chaired by a Deputy Prime Minister. The Council met only once in 2015.(2)

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (cont)

Organization/Agency	Role
People's Advocate (Ombudsman)	Promote the UN CRC and defend the constitutional rights of children. Request cooperation from public authorities, and public institutions, on child protection issues.(16)
Ministry of Justice (MOJ)	Enforce criminal laws against child trafficking and sexual exploitation.(16) Draft, consult, and propose all processes related to legislation for the Government's approval before they enter in force.(39)
Center for Combating Cyber Crime	This center has a specialized unit that focuses on combating child pornography. USDOS has donated specialized equipment, valued at \$100,000, to this center and conducts training on a continual basis for 12 police officers on criminal investigations of cybercrimes involving children, including online recruitment and child pornography.(4)
Ministry of Information Technology	Assist with the identification of victims of trafficking in persons and provide foreign victims with residence permits and identity cards.(4)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2015, labor law enforcement agencies in Moldova took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$776,000 (36)	\$560,000 (2)
Number of Labor Inspectors	109 (40)	109 (2)
Number of Child Labor Dedicated Inspectors	2 (37)	2 (37, 40)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (36)	No (2)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
■ Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
Number of Labor Inspections	6,190‡ (36, 37)	6,933† (2, 40)
■ Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	Unknown
■ Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	17‡ (36, 40)	10† (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	5 (36)	7 (2)
■ Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown (36)	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
■ Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	No (36)	Yes (2)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (2, 40)	Yes (2)

† Data are from January 2015 to November 2015.

‡ Data are from January 2014 to November 2014.

Twenty-two State Labor Inspectorate (SLI) inspectors work in the central office, while the remaining 87 are posted in 10 regional branches. In 2015, SLI allocated \$110,000 of its total budget for necessities to carry out inspections, out of which \$36,000 was approved for fuel.(2) The MLSPF noted that the number of inspectors and amount of SLI funding were not sufficient.(2, 37)

Since 2007, the SLI has trained all national and regional labor inspectors on the curriculum for combating child labor, developed with the support of the ILO-IPEC.(2, 37) During the reporting period, the SLI inspectors attended numerous trainings and seminars. For example, in March, SLI collaborated with the Center for Combating Trafficking in Persons to train 27 inspectors on human trafficking for purposes of labor exploitation, and, in October, inspectors attended continuing education seminars on best practices to comply with labor laws and assessing risk in construction, transport, and agriculture.(2)

SLI inspects enterprises, institutions, and organizations that hire employees, no matter their type or legal form. From January to October 2015, SLI conducted 14 inspections specific to child labor, which involved 32 working minors.(2) These children worked in the following industries: 18 in agriculture, 7 in food processing, 4 in construction, 2 in trade, and 1 in car washing.(2)

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The MLSPF acknowledges its inspections are less effective because, except in a limited number of circumstances, the SLI must give five days of notice prior to the inspection, which enables managers to conceal violations beforehand.(2) In addition, the Government's existing mechanism for filing and responding to child labor complaints is generally regarded as ineffective.(2)

Inspectors do not have the authority to assess penalties for labor law violations. They refer cases of labor violations to courts to make decisions regarding penalties in accordance with the law, on a case by case basis.(2)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2015, criminal law enforcement agencies in Moldova took actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Training for Investigators		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Yes (4)
■ Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (36)	Yes (2)
Number of Investigations	16 (2)	38 (2, 40)
Number of Violations Found	26 (41)	44 (2)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	7 (41)	24 (2, 40)
Number of Convictions	9 (41)	19 (2, 40)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (16, 36, 41)	Yes (2)

In 2015, the Center for Combating Trafficking in Persons employed 11 criminal investigators and 21 operative investigators, and the Center for Combating Cyber Crime, which specializes in the exploitation of children online, employed 4 investigators to investigate cases involving child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, the Prosecutor General's Office assigned seven prosecutors to handle trafficking in persons cases.(2)

In 2015, a total of 2,650 specialists participated in 118 trainings on trafficking in persons. This included a training in which the MLSPF partnered with the Permanent Secretariat of the National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Persons (NCCTIP) to conduct a series of training sessions and roundtable discussions on a multidisciplinary team approach to trafficking in persons and providing assistance to these victims for 776 social workers and local public authorities' personnel.(4) In addition, the National Institute of Justice collaborated with the IOM and the OSCE, with financial support from USDOS, to provide a mandatory 40-hour course on combating trafficking in persons, as well as identifying and interviewing victims, for 907 judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys. Despite this training, a source indicates that the Government's law enforcement personnel, particularly police officers who conduct foot patrols, lack training in proper investigative techniques for child trafficking cases, based on their limited ability to identify children subjected to forced begging or commercial sexual exploitation.(4)

The percentage of underage victims the Government identified during 2015 increased to 20 percent of all victims identified as minors, which represents a 6 percent increase since 2014. During the reporting period, the MLSPF provided assistance to 23 child victims of trafficking.(4)

A source indicated that during 2015 there was a trend of law enforcement officials not investigating allegations of children being subjected to commercial sexual exploitation when there was no physical evidence that the child had been coerced, such as visible bruises or other indicators of violence.(4) This source also highlighted another trend of police officers applying administrative penalties to victims of child trafficking for practicing prostitution.(4) Although a reciprocal mechanism between criminal authorities and social services exists, law enforcement personnel lack the ability to provide urgent care, either medical or legal, to child trafficking victims, which the NCCTIP attributed to insufficient cooperation between National Referral System stakeholders. The NCCTIP also emphasized the limited capacity of social workers in regions outside the capital city, which resulted in victims of trafficking receiving inefficient, poor-quality services.(4)

Although the Government has established child interview rooms in each of Moldova's regions, there is no specialized placement center for child victims of trafficking; instead children are placed in the same shelters as adult female trafficking in persons victims or left without necessary protection due to the lack of institutional space.(4)

Although the Government has made efforts to improve the prosecution of perpetrators of human trafficking, local NGO experts agree that corruption within the judicial system continues to hinder the Government's ability to enforce laws related to the worst forms of child labor.(4, 41, 42)

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 8).

Table 8. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
The National Steering Committee on the Elimination of Child Labor (NSC)	Coordinate work on child labor issues at the national level between representatives from workers' organizations, NGOs, academia, and the following government agencies: the MLSPF; the Ministry of Education (MOE); the Ministry of Agriculture and the Food Processing Industry; the Ministry of Finance; the Ministry of Health (MOH); the Ministry of Internal Affairs; the Ministry of Youth and Sports; the State Chancellery; SLI; the PGO; and the National Bureau of Statistics.(16)
Child Labor Monitoring Unit	Supervise national-level activities related to combating child labor and serve as a coordinating mechanism between NSC at the national level, and multidisciplinary teams at the local level.(16, 37)
The National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Persons (NCCTIP)	Coordinate the Government's overall efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in persons. Chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Integration; includes representatives from MOIA, the MLSPF, the MOH, the MOE, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the Border Guard Service, the Security and Information Service, the PGO, the Secretary of the Supreme Security Council, the Governor of the Gagauz Autonomous Region, the General Police Inspectorate, SLI, and the Bureau for Relations with Diaspora within the State Chancellery.(4)
The Permanent Secretariat under NCCTIP	Monitor implementation of legal provisions on combating TIP set out by the NCCTIP. Establish working groups for drafting new provisions on TIP, participate in anti-TIP campaigns, develop the national action plans, and seek support for projects.(4)
National Coordination Unit within the MLSPF	Coordinate activities related to the protection of victims and potential victims of human trafficking. Build the capacity of multidisciplinary teams at the local level to improve victim identification and referral for crisis intervention and rehabilitation.(43) Comprises community social assistants, police officers, and NGO workers.(43)

Despite the important coordinating role of the National Steering Committee on the Elimination of Child Labor, it did not meet in 2015 to discuss child labor issues. This may impact the overall efforts to combat child labor, including its worst forms, on a national level.(40)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Moldova has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan on the Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (NAP) (2011–2015)	Outlines 44 objectives to be implemented by 30 stakeholders to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by specific deadlines. Includes plans to institutionalize a child labor monitoring system in Moldova, increase access to education, provide rehabilitation and reintegration support for children withdrawn from child labor, and raise awareness on child labor issues in nine districts.(16, 37, 44)
EU-Moldova Association Agreement	Chapter 27 on the Cooperation in the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of the Child is dedicated to children's rights.(2)
The Action Plan for 2015–2016†	Adopted by Government Decision No. 680, this plan includes actions to address child labor issues.(2)
National Plan for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2014–2016)	Aims to improve national anti-human trafficking efforts and reduce the vulnerability of children to labor, and sexual exploitation, as a result of human trafficking. Includes specific objectives to build the capacity of government officials through training on TIP issues; improve systematic data collection; raise public awareness; and improve repatriation, and referral mechanisms for child trafficking victims.(45)

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
Strategy of the National Referral System to Protect and Assist Victims and Potential Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings (NRS) (2009–2016)	Outlines a comprehensive framework for cooperation between government institutions and civil society organizations, for the protection of victims and potential victims of human trafficking. Focuses on awareness-raising activities, improving victim identification and referral mechanisms, and building the capacity of counter-human trafficking actors through ongoing training and technical assistance. Regulates the work of the Multidisciplinary Teams operating throughout the country as well as the National Coordination Unit. Launched by the MLSPF.(43)
Action Plan for the Support of the Roma People from the Republic of Moldova (2011–2015)*	Aimed to improve social inclusion of the Roma people, including equal access to quality education for Romani boys and girls. Established a system of 48 Romani community mediators supported by the state budget to advocate for Roma issues at the national level.(11, 46)
Child Protection Strategy (2014–2020)*	Sets three general objectives for improving the situation of children: creation of conditions necessary for raising children in families; preventing and combating violence, neglect, and exploitation of children; and providing assistance to working parents regarding children's upbringing and development.(36, 47)

* Child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into this policy.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2015, the Government of Moldova funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Prevention of Sexual Abuse and Commercial Exploitation of Children in Central and Eastern Europe—Comprehensive Approach† (2014–2019)	Regional project, funded by Council of Europe; OAK Foundation; and Nobody's Children Foundation that aims to contribute to the prevention of sexual abuse, and commercial exploitation of children in Moldova. The National Center for the Prevention of Child Abuse (CNPAC), in partnership with several ministries, is responsible for its implementation, with the joint efforts from NGOs contributing to prevent abuse against children in six countries: Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, and Ukraine.(2)
Combating Child Trafficking Project	OSCE-funded project implemented by the MOE, the MLSPF, and local NGOs to prevent child trafficking by providing professional and life skills training to at-risk children without parental care in 12 residential schools across 10 regions and Transnistria.(48)
MOE's Educational Programs	Educational programs and activities implemented in 2015 to educate students in schools and universities about the phenomenon of trafficking in persons, domestic violence, abuse, and preventing neglect. All secondary school students are exposed to trafficking in persons issues in their civics course.(4) A total of 9,920 students studying at 12 universities participated in trainings to raise their awareness of trafficking in persons issues.(4)
National Anti-Traffic Week Campaign	Implemented on October 15–21, 2015, focused on online recruitment methods to educate the public about protecting themselves from being trafficked. Used press conferences, art exhibits, public debates, and flash mobs to discuss the services available to victims of human trafficking, which include rehabilitation and social integration support.(4) Additionally, provided 30,000 informational brochures, financed by the IOM and an NGO called La Strada, to regional councils. Also conducted seminars on anti-trafficking in persons in 24 communities. (4) Media coverage of this campaign's activities and events was high.(4)
World Day Against Trafficking in Persons	Commemorated by NCCTIP members on July 30, 2015, by participating in a radio talk show to discuss anti-trafficking in persons activities, assistance available to victims, etc., and encouraging stakeholders to promote this information as well(4)
UNICEF-Government of Moldova Country Program (2013–2017)†	Government and the UN program to improve social inclusion of vulnerable children and their families and to promote social change for child rights. Focuses on children affected by migration, Roma children, and child victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.(21, 36)
Structured Interviewing Child Victims and Witnesses in Moldova† (2014–2016)	UNICEF, OAK Foundation, and USAID, through the Rule of Law Institutional Strengthening Program, provide the funding for this project, which aims to help develop child-friendly justice systems, promote good practices, and ensure child victims and witnesses of sex crimes, domestic violence, and trafficking, encounter a sensitive justice system. Implemented by CNPAC, in partnership with the PGO, the MOJ, and several other ministries.(2)
Ministry of Economy's Programming on Social and Educational Inclusion	The Ministry of Economy partnered with local public authorities and NGOs to design educational programs to help child trafficking victims with their social and educational inclusion upon reintegrating into society.(4)

Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)

Program	Description
Ajutor Social Program†	Government and the World Bank cash benefit program that targets the poor.(49, 50)
Strengthening the Effectiveness of the Social Safety Net Project (2011–2017)†	\$37 million, World Bank-funded project implemented by the MLSPF to improve the country's social safety net through expanding and strengthening the Ajutor Social Program, among other things. Provides social assistance based on household income to reach the poorest population.(39, 50)
Education Assistance Programs†	Government program that seeks to improve access to education by providing a monthly payment of \$27 for a period of up to 6 months to cover the cost of school supplies for children from vulnerable families.(37)
Financial Assistance Program†	Government and donor-funded program that provides financial assistance to poor families with children in installments of approximately \$32 per month for a maximum of 6 months, or as a lump sum of approximately \$192.(16, 36, 38)
Children in Moldova Are Cared for in Safe and Secure Families Program (2014–2017)†	\$4.4 million, USAID-funded project implemented by Partnerships for Every Child that aims to build the capacity of the MLSPF and the MOE to strengthen national child protection systems. Includes the objective of supporting children living in institutions, family-based care, and group homes to attend school.(36, 51)
Child Helpline† (2014–2016)	Donor-funded telephone support service for children, implemented by the international NGO La Strada and managed by MLSPF. Provides psychological counseling and information to parents; caregivers; and children who may be experiencing violence, neglect, or exploitation.(37, 52) From January to November 2015, operators of the Child Helpline provided counseling to 4,879 children, by answering 5,247 phone calls, which included 527 requests for information; 820 instances of psychological counseling; 86 calls on domestic, sexual, and gender violence (including in schools); 24 cases of child neglect; 14 cases involving children in begging, and 3 cases of child labor exploitation.(2)
Shelters for Victims of Human Trafficking†	Government-funded shelters for TIP victims in seven locations throughout the country, some of which provide specialized services for children. Offer accommodation as well as rehabilitation and reintegration services.(41)

† Program is funded by the Government of Moldova.

In 2015, the Ministry of Finance repeatedly refused to release funds earmarked to pay La Strada specialists the MLSPF had subcontracted to administer the Child Helpline. This led La Strada to pay these staffers' salaries for up to four months at a time while awaiting reimbursement from the Ministry of Finance.(4)

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 Moldova (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including Its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that labor law protections extend to children who are self-employed or working outside of contractual relationships.	2015
Enforcement	Institutionalize and publish information about training for investigators, ensuring that investigators, including police officers who conduct foot patrols, receive training on new laws related to the worst forms of child labor.	2015
	Make enforcement data, including the number of labor inspections conducted at worksites and by desk review, the number of cases where the penalties imposed were collected, and whether inspections are targeted, publicly available.	2015
	Increase funding for the State Labor Inspectorate to ensure that it can employ the number of inspectors needed and provide inspectors with the financial resources necessary to carry out adequate child labor inspections.	2012 – 2015
	Authorize the State Labor Inspectorate to assess penalties.	2015
	Ensure that the government mechanism for filing and responding to child labor complaints functions properly.	2015
	Strengthen measures to reduce corruption in the judicial system to ensure that perpetrators of crimes related to the worst forms of child labor are convicted and sentenced according to law.	2014 – 2015
Coordination	Ensure that the National Steering Committee on the Elimination of Child Labor meets to discuss and coordinate effectively issues related to the worst forms of child labor.	2013 – 2015

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including Its Worst Forms (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into existing policies.	2013 – 2015
Social Programs	Conduct research to determine the activities carried out by children working in the agriculture, industry, and service sectors to inform policies and programs.	2013 – 2015
	Institute targeted support programs for institutionalized children in orphanages or boarding schools, particularly children with disabilities, to reduce their exposure to commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking.	2015
	Increase funding for education and monitor schools to ensure that extra educational fees are not imposed on children for the mandated term of free education through age 18.	2010 – 2015
	Institute targeted support programs that eliminate discrimination and violence against Romani children and promote equal access to education.	2014 – 2015
	Ensure sufficient support for child trafficking victims.	2015
	Ensure current child labor programs are sustainable by providing increased financial support.	2009 – 2014

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