

In 2017, Armenia made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Despite new initiatives to address child labor, Armenia is receiving this assessment because it continued to implement a law that delayed advancement in eliminating the worst forms of child labor. The government has lacked a functioning Labor Inspectorate since the 2014 repeal of Article 34 of the Labor Code, which previously established the government's authority to conduct routine labor inspections. Since that time, the government has lacked a functioning labor inspection mechanism to monitor, inspect, and enforce child labor laws, including a mechanism with the authority to conduct unannounced inspections. Otherwise, the government made efforts by pursuing continued inspection reform, including establishing the Health Inspection Body, which will have limited ability to monitor prohibitions on hazardous child labor when functioning.

However, children in Armenia perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. The government also lacks a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address all forms of child labor, including its worst forms. In addition, no programs exist to aid children engaged in work activities in agriculture.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Armenia perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. (1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Armenia.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	7.0 (24,602)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	95.4
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	8.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		99.4

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2016, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (9)

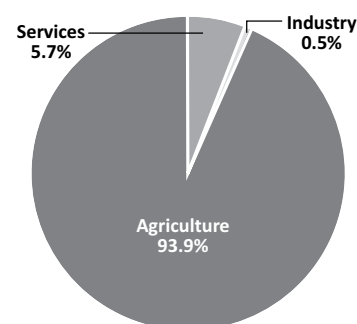
Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from National Child Labor Survey, 2015. (10)

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 planting and harvesting potatoes (1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8)
	Raising livestock, including cattle breeding, cattle herding, and shepherding (2; 3; 5; 7; 11)
Industry	Construction, activities unknown (1; 5; 6; 7; 12; 8)
Services	Vehicle maintenance (3; 7)
	Selling food (7)
	Street work, including gathering scrap metal, selling flowers, and begging (1; 2; 3; 5; 12; 13; 14)
	Working in shops (5; 7)
	Dancing in clubs (3; 5)

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



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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3; 6; 15; 16; 17; 18)
	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3; 6; 16)

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

Although Article 38 of the Constitution of Armenia and Article 6 of the Law of the Republic of Armenia on Education guarantee free universal education, children from ethnic minority and low-income families continue to have reduced access to education. (19; 20) Children of families that travel for seasonal labor and work on farms in remote rural areas are also less likely to be enrolled in school and are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, including forced child labor in agriculture. (8)




In addition, the Law on Public Education requires all schools to be inclusive for children with disabilities by 2025. (19; 21; 22) However, NGOs report that children with disabilities face difficulty accessing mainstream education due to the inaccessibility of school buildings, lack of community-based support services, and general social stigma against individuals with disabilities. (19; 23; 24) As a result of these barriers, more than 70 percent of children with disabilities in the care of the state and almost 20 percent of children with disabilities in the care of their families reportedly do not attend school. (24; 25)

Despite government efforts to decrease institutionalization of children, nearly 3,500 children remain in government boarding schools, orphanages, and special education institutions. (26) These children are more likely to experience physical and psychological violence and were at a higher risk of becoming victims of human trafficking. (6; 19; 26) Children living in these institutions were reportedly also vulnerable to exploitation in child labor, including in labor within the institutions. (27; 28)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Armenia 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 (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Armenia’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including definitions of forced labor and light work.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Articles 15 and 17 of the Labor Code; Article 57 of the Constitution (29; 20)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 257 of the Labor Code (29)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Law on Approval of the List of Occupations and Work That Are Likely to be Heavy and Hazardous for Persons Under the Age of 18 Years, Pregnant Women, and Women Taking Care of a Child under the Age of 1 Year; Articles 140, 148–149, 153, 155, 209, 249, and 257 of the Labor Code (29; 30)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 57 of the Constitution; Article 3 of the Labor Code; Articles 132 and 132.2 of the Criminal Code (29; 20; 31)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 132 and 132.2 of the Criminal Code (31)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 132.2, 166, and 261–263 of the Criminal Code (31)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 63, 165, 166.1, and 266 of the Criminal Code (31)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	Yes	18	Article 11 of the Law on Conscription (32)
State Voluntary	Yes	18	Articles 4 and 10 of the Law on Military Service (33)
Non-state	No	18	Article 29 of the Law on the Rights of the Child; Articles 63, 165, and 224 of the Criminal Code (31; 34)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	17	Article 18 of the Law on Education (35)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 38 of the Constitution; Article 6 of the Law on Education (20; 35)

The Labor Code allows for children ages 14 and 15 to work restricted hours with the permission of a parent or guardian, but does not list specific activities that constitute light work. (29; 36) In addition, the Constitution, Criminal Code, and Labor Code prohibit forced labor, but enforcement of this prohibition is hindered by the lack of a definition of “forced labor” in Armenian law. (37)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, the absence of worksite inspections conducted at the national level in Armenia impeded the enforcement of child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Health Inspection Body*	Enforce a limited range of labor laws and impose sanctions for violations, as one of a variety of inspection mandates related to public health. In particular, enforce occupational safety and health provisions through the Department of Employee Occupational and Health Safety. (8) This body was created in April 2017, staffing was approved in October, and recruitment began in November. (8)
Main Department on Especially Serious Crimes Within the Investigative Committee	Investigate cases of child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children referred to the Investigative Committee by the police. (23; 38)
Department on Defending the Rights of Minors and Combating Domestic Violence Within the Police	Identify and conduct preliminary investigation of crimes in which children are victims or perpetrators. (23; 38) Enforce laws against the worst forms of child labor under the General Department of Criminal Intelligence. (23; 39) Refer identified crimes to the Investigative Committee for further investigation. (23)
Anti-Trafficking Unit Within the Police	Identify and conduct preliminary investigation of crimes related to child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children through a staff of seven field officers. Operate within the Department of Combating High-Tech related (Cyber) Crimes, Human Trafficking, Illegal Migration, and Terrorism of the General Department on Combating Organized Crime. (40) Refer identified crimes to the Investigative Committee for further investigation. (23)
Police Hotline	Receive complaints related to human trafficking and migration issues. (6)

* Agency was created during the reporting period. (8)

As part of a broader inspection reform agenda, Armenia’s Labor Inspectorate was abolished in 2013, and responsibility for conducting labor inspections was transferred to the new State Health Inspectorate, created the same year. In 2015, subsequent changes to legislation regulating labor inspections left the State Health Inspectorate unable to conduct labor inspections, beginning in 2015. (37; 41) In 2017, continued inspection reform led to the dissolution of the State Health Inspectorate and the creation of

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the Health Inspection Body, which is tasked with monitoring occupational safety and health standards for employees, along with monitoring a variety of public health standards. (42) The Health Inspection Body also has the ability to monitor compliance with legislation protecting workers under the age of 18, but cannot proactively inspect for child labor issues. (42) Additional legislation and regulations need to be passed for the Health Inspection Body to begin conducting inspections. (8) As a result, in 2017 the Health Inspection Body was unable to monitor or enforce child labor laws in Armenia. (37; 41)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2017, the absence of worksite inspections conducted at the national level in Armenia impeded the enforcement of child labor laws (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	60 (37)	9 (8)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (43)	Yes (8)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Yes (8)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	No (44)	Yes (8)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Yes (22)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	0 (37)	0 (22)
Number Conducted at Worksites	0 (37)	0 (22)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that were Collected	0 (44)	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	No (37)	No (22)
Routine Inspections Targeted	No (37)	No (22)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	No (37)	No (8)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	No (37)	No (8)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (42)	Yes (8)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (42)	No (45)

The Health Inspection Body is authorized to hire 23 occupational health and safety oversight inspectors, including 15 civil servants and 8 contractors. (8) This is a significant decrease from the 60 labor inspectors employed by the former State Health Inspectorate, which already had reduced staffing levels from the 146 labor inspectors employed by the former State Labor Inspectorate. (46) The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Armenia's workforce, which includes over 1.5 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 20,000 workers in transition economies, Armenia would employ roughly 75 labor inspectors. (47; 48; 49)

A third of labor inspectors in Armenia are contractors rather than public servants. While civil servants in Armenia must receive training at least once every 3 years, there is no requirement that contractors receive regular training. Officials have expressed concern that the high proportion of contracted inspectors will negatively impact the overall training level and competency of the body of inspectors over time. (46)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in Armenia took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including investigation planning.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (44)	Yes (44)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (44)	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (41)	Yes (50)
Number of Investigations	2 (44)	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	1 (44)	1 (50)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	1 (44)	1 (22)
Number of Convictions	0 (41)	0 (22)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (43)	Yes (43)

The government reports that almost 300 police officers and investigators are engaged in investigations of crimes involving children. The Main Department on Especially Serious Crimes within the Investigative Committee has 40 investigators, 7 of whom specialize in investigating human trafficking cases. (38; 43; 51) The Investigative Committee requires that its personnel receive training at least once every 2 years. (43) In 2017, 327 investigators from the Investigative Committee participated in criminal justice trainings on trafficking in persons. An additional 21 Investigative Committee investigators received training specific to child trafficking, and 30 investigators participated in a seminar on trafficking and sexual assault of children. (50) An additional 119 police officers who work on juvenile investigations received training on combatting trafficking in persons. (50)

Child victims discovered during the course of criminal investigations are referred to the Fund for Armenian Relief Children's Center, where they are provided with specialized social services. (43) A source reported that because not all the children who are referred to social service providers by the police are officially registered as victims, official statistics for begging, forced begging, and commercial sexual exploitation may underreport the scope of the problem. (3)

Research found that although the police work with social service providers when conducting the pre-investigation, the Investigative Committee does not typically work with social service providers to ensure the well-being of the children during the investigation period. (3) In addition, a source reported that law enforcement officials do not receive adequate specialized training on interviewing child victims of crime, which in some cases can prevent local investigators from collecting sufficient evidence to build a prosecutable case. (3; 41) The government's implementation of the provisions on victim and witness protection in the Criminal Procedural Code continued to be inadequate, including with regard to victim-centered prosecution, due to the lack of an appropriate mechanism and insufficient funding for these efforts. (6; 52)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8). However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including efforts to address all forms of child labor.

Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
National Commission on the Protection of Child Rights	Coordinate activities of state bodies responsible for child protection, assist in developing state policy and programs aimed at the protection of children's rights, and assist in developing solutions to new child welfare problems as they arise. Facilitate cooperation between state and local government and NGOs. (39) Maintain a working group to prevent child begging. (39)
Ministerial Council to Combat Human Trafficking	Implement, coordinate, and monitor government efforts on human trafficking. (16; 39) Chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. (16)
Inter-Agency Working Group Against Trafficking in Persons	Advise, organize, and implement decisions made by the Ministerial Council to Combat Human Trafficking. (16) Composed of officials from all government entities; non-governmental stakeholders participate in regular meetings. (16; 39)

The National Commission on the Protection of Child Rights coordinates government efforts to prevent child begging, and the Ministerial Council to Combat Human Trafficking coordinates government efforts on child trafficking. (16; 39) However, Armenia lacks a mechanism to coordinate efforts to prevent child labor in other forms of street work, the service sector, and agriculture.

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V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including mainstreaming child labor issues into relevant policies.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Strategic Program for the Protection of Children's Rights	Includes an Action Plan for 2017-2021 that calls for the development and introduction of oversight and monitoring mechanisms to prevent the involvement of children in the worst forms of child labor. The action plan includes a component on developing and introducing oversight and monitoring mechanisms for the protection of children involved in the worst forms of child labor. (22)
Concept on Combating Violence Against Children	Defines government priorities for combating violence against children and outlines a list of related activities. Addresses labor exploitation of children, especially in rural communities, and commercial sexual exploitation of children, especially child trafficking. (38)
National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons and Exploitation (2016–2018)	Aims to improve the legal framework and enforcement of legislation related to trafficking in and exploitation of children. Planned activities include developing tools for identification of the worst forms of child labor, as well as a guide for the proper identification and referral of child trafficking victims. (37; 53)

The UNDAF Plan for Armenia, which focuses on poverty reduction, lacks specific provisions on child labor. (24) In addition, research found that the National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons and Exploitation lacks funding for identified activities and is not actively monitored for progress. (50) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Concept on Combating Violence Against Children during the reporting period.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2017, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including adequacy of programs to address the problem in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor†‡

Program	Description
Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labor (CLEAR)	USDOL-funded capacity-building project implemented by the ILO in 11 countries to build local and national capacity of governments to address child labor. Additional information is available on the USDOL website. (54)
Global Research on Child Labor Measurement and Policy Development (MAP)	USDOL-funded research project implemented by the ILO, which supported the publication of a National Child Labor Survey in 2016. Additional information is available on the USDOL website. (55)
Family Benefits Program†	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs-funded poverty-mitigation program for families with children recorded in the Family Poverty Assessment System. Families receive a monthly payment based on their financial situation, the number of children in the family, and the geographical location of their home. (43)
UNICEF Country Program for 2016–2020	Improve child protection systems, including through expanding programs for children in extreme poverty, improving social integration of children with disabilities, and developing a victim-witness protection system. (56)
Day Care Centers†	Government-supported day care centers that provide alternatives to working children and daytime centers that provide services for children with special needs. (40)
Shelter for Victims of Human Trafficking†	Government shelter co-funded and run by the United Methodist Committee on Relief-Armenia that provides medical, psychological, social, and legal services to victims of human trafficking; access to education for children; and vocational training for adult victims. (17) In 2017, the government allocated \$39,000 for the program. (50)

† Program is funded by the Government of Armenia.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (43; 57)

Although the Government of Armenia has implemented programs to address child labor, research found no evidence that it has carried out programs to assist children engaged in child labor in street work or in agriculture.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Armenia (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that Armenian law specifies the types of light work acceptable for children ages 14–15.	2014 – 2017
	Facilitate enforcement of labor law by codifying a definition of forced labor.	2016 – 2017
Enforcement	Establish a functioning Labor Inspectorate by ensuring that the legal framework on inspections clearly empowers the Health Inspection Body to monitor, inspect, and enforce child labor laws. Ensure that the Health Inspection Body’s mandate includes the ability to conduct quality inspections, including targeted, complaint-based, and unannounced inspections; and that data on the number and type of inspections, violations, and penalties are made publicly available.	2017
	Make information on the Health Inspection Body’s funding publicly available.	2017
	Strengthen labor inspection by increasing the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO technical advice and ensuring that labor inspectors are civil servants rather than contractors.	2017
	Protect children by providing law enforcement officials with specialized training on interviewing child victims of crime, and by ensuring that law enforcement officials coordinate with social service providers during investigations.	2014 – 2017
	Implement and adequately fund a victim-witness protection mechanism for criminal proceedings.	2011 – 2017
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat child labor, including all its worst forms.	2009 – 2017
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into national policies, including the UNDAF Plan for Armenia.	2011 – 2017
	Ensure that the National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons and Exploitation has sufficient oversight and funding to allow for effective implementation.	2017
	Take steps to implement the Concept on Combating Violence Against Children.	2016 – 2017
Social Programs	Ensure that all children, including children from low-income families and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have equal access to education.	2010 – 2017
	Increase efforts to prevent institutionalization of children and to ensure the safety and well-being of children currently residing in government institutions.	2015 – 2017
	Ensure that mainstream education is accessible to children with special education needs and children with disabilities by improving the accessibility of the physical infrastructure, expanding community-based support services, and ensuring that social stigmas against disabilities do not prevent children from accessing schools.	2014 – 2017
	Implement programs to address child labor in street work and in agriculture.	2009 – 2017

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