

In 2017, Guatemala made a significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government released the Roadmap for the Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, distributed a new inspection protocol providing guidance to labor inspectors, including on conducting child labor inspections, and approved legislation tripling the budget of the school feeding program. However, children in Guatemala are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. The lack of a sufficient number of labor inspectors and resources limited the Ministry of Labor’s ability to combat the worst forms of child labor, particularly in rural areas outside the capital. In addition, existing social programs are insufficient to reach all children engaged in exploitative labor and, in particular, do not target children working in domestic service or agriculture.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Guatemala are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. (1; 2; 3; 4; 5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Guatemala.

Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	7 to 14	6.3 (193,917)
Attending School (%)	7 to 14	89.9
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	3.5
Primary Completion Rate (%)		82.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2015, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (6)

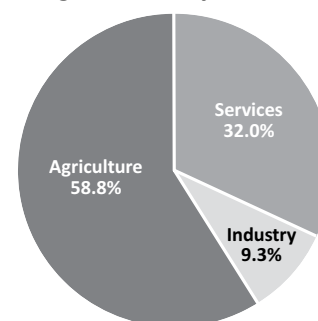
Source for all other data: Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis of statistics from Encuesta Nacional de Empleo e Ingreso (ENEI) Survey, 2016. (7)

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	Planting and harvesting coffee, sugarcane, broccoli, bananas, plantains and flowers (8; 9; 10; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15; 16)
	Picking macadamia nuts and tea leaves (17)
	Production of rubber and timber (17)
	Harvesting palm kernels† and producing palm oil† (18; 12; 19)
Industry	Mining, † including silver mining† (2; 20; 21; 22)
	Construction, † including as bricklayers and mason helpers (11; 23; 24)
	Production of garments, activities unknown (2; 22; 25)
	Manufacturing gravel (crushed stones)† and fireworks† (2; 4; 20; 21; 22; 26; 27; 13; 28; 14)
Services	Domestic work and house-sitting† (4; 11; 25; 12; 14)
	Street work, † including vending, † performing, † cleaning windshields and windows, begging, and shoe shining† (2; 11; 21; 22; 24; 29; 13; 30)
	Making corn tortillas (31; 32; 14; 33; 16)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 7-14



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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Working as store clerks in small family-owned corner stores (<i>abarroterías</i>) (12; 14; 33; 16)
	Garbage scavenging† and working in garbage dumps† (4; 24)
	Working as servers in restaurants (<i>comedores</i>) (12)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced labor in agriculture, production of garments, domestic work, garbage scavenging, street begging, making corn tortillas and vending (2; 3; 21; 22; 31; 27; 34; 12; 30; 33)
	Use in the production of pornography (2; 5; 22; 35; 36; 37; 38)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2; 3; 5; 21; 31; 11; 12; 30)
	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, and stealing and transporting contraband as a result of criminal and gang recruitment (4; 22; 31; 11; 33; 30)

† Determined hazardous by national law or regulation as understood under 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 as young as 5 years old work in coffee fields picking coffee beans and mixing and applying pesticides. (39; 40) In agriculture, working conditions for children involve using machetes and other dangerous tools. (22) Children, both Guatemalan-born and from other countries, are also engaged in commercial sexual exploitation, including in sex tourism. (41; 34) Traffickers are increasingly using social media to recruit children. (34)

In 2017, the Ministry of Education held 14 dialogues with 1,400 participants in 13 departments—including teachers, parents, and students—on the importance of maintaining attendance rates and integrating sex education and social development for girls into the national education system. (31) However, significant barriers to accessing education remain, particularly for girls, indigenous children, and children in rural areas. (22) Reports conclude that there is a high degree of illiteracy among girls—especially indigenous girls and girls from rural areas. (42; 43; 5) Indigenous children also have lower enrollment rates compared to other children. (5)




Although education is free through grade 6 in Guatemala, there is an insufficient number of primary and secondary schools, especially in rural areas. (44) Additionally, secondary school fees, distance from schools, lack of safe and affordable transportation to school, and other prohibitive costs associated with attending school create barriers for children to access education. (31; 44; 12) Due to the heightened security risks for girls traveling alone, girls in rural areas have lower enrollment rates in secondary school than boys. (31)

The lack of bathrooms in some schools discourages some students from attending school. (12) The education system is also unable to address the needs of students with disabilities. (31) In addition, there are not enough qualified teachers to provide instruction in the predominant native languages and insufficient classroom materials available in these languages. (22; 45; 43)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Guatemala 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 Guatemala’s legal framework to adequately protect children from exploitative child labor, including prohibition of non-state compulsory military recruitment.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Articles 31 and 148 of the Labor Code; Government Accord 112-2006 (46; 47)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 148 of the Labor Code; Article 1 of Government Accord 250-2006 (46; 48)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 4 of Ministerial Accord 154-2008 (49)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 202 of the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law of Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents; Article 108 of the Migration Law; Decree 10-2015 (50; 51; 52; 53)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 202 <i>bis</i> and <i>quater</i> of the Penal Code, as amended by Articles 47 and 48 of the Law Against Sexual Violence Exploitation, and Trafficking in Persons, No. 9-2009 (50; 54)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 36–42 of the Law against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Trafficking in Persons, No. 9-2009 (54)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 27 of the Penal Code (50)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	Yes	18	Article 68 and 69 of the Constitutive Law of the Guatemalan Army (55)
State Voluntary	Yes	18	Article 57 of the Law of Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents (51)
Non-state	No		Article 245 of the Constitution; Article 57 of the Law of Integral Protection of Children and Adolescents (56; 51)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Article 74 of the Constitution; Article 33 of the National Education Law; Ministerial Agreement 1055-2009 (57; 58; 56)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 74 of the Constitution; Article 1 of Government Agreement 226-2008 (56; 59)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (2; 56; 60; 61)

Although Articles 32 and 150 of the Labor Code allow the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTPS) to authorize children under age 14 to work under exceptional circumstances—including if the MTPS determines that children must work to support their family due to poverty—the law does not define the total number of hours, kinds of tasks, or age range applicable for this exception, which is inconsistent with international standards on light work. (46; 47) No such exceptions were granted in 2017. (62)

While the Constitution prohibits the establishment of non-state armed groups, there are no criminal penalties for the recruitment of children into non-state armed groups. (56)

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, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security that may hinder adequate enforcement of child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor and Social Security's (MTPS) Inspection Division (IGT)	Enforce child labor laws, including prohibitions on the worst forms of child labor, by inspecting businesses and responding to child labor complaints. (2) Refer children found in child labor to government social services and complaints to the MTPS Adolescent Workers Protection Unit. (63; 58; 64; 65) Refer cases of worst forms of child labor to the Secretariat Against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Trafficking in Persons (SVET) and unresolved cases to labor courts for review and sanctions, as appropriate. (2)
National Civil Police (<i>Policía Nacional Civil</i>)	Investigate cases of child trafficking through the Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labor Unit located within the Special Investigation Police, and operate a hotline to receive reports of suspected child trafficking cases. (21; 66; 67)

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

Organization/Agency	Role
Public Ministry, Special Prosecutor's Office	Receive case referrals involving the worst forms of child labor from labor inspectors. Investigate cases of human trafficking and forced labor through the Special Prosecutor's Office Against Human Trafficking. (2)
Solicitor General's Office	Receive complaints regarding the exploitation of children. Initiate legal proceedings and ensure the legal representation of children whose rights have been violated. (35; 67; 68) Maintain a Child Rescue Unit that determines safe placement for minors who have been abused. (35)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2017, labor law enforcement agencies in Guatemala took actions to combat child labor (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$1,300,000 (69)	\$803,588 (31)
Number of Labor Inspectors	256 (70)	219 (71)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (22)	Yes (31)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	N/A	Yes (31)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (22)	Yes (31)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Yes (72)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	16,083 (73)	16,656 (71)
Number Conducted at Worksites	16,083 (74)	16,656 (74)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	97 (22)	108 (75)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	19 (22)	103 (31)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that were Collected	Unknown	0 (31)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (22)	Yes (31)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (22)	Yes (31)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (22)	Yes (31)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (22)	Yes (31)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (22)	Yes (31)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (22)	Yes (31)

The 2017 Labor Inspectorate budget was lower than the previous year because, unlike in 2016, the Labor Inspectorate did not receive a budget supplement. (31) The number of labor inspectors may be insufficient for the size of Guatemala's workforce, which includes more than 4.6 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, Guatemala should employ roughly 308 labor inspectors. (76; 77; 78)

The Ministry of Labor reports that the Labor Inspectorate "attended to" 32,785 cases in 2017—16,656 through worksite inspections and 16,29 through conciliations at the Ministry. The information raises questions as to whether the Ministry is treating conciliations as an enforcement mechanism, equivalent to inspections by desk review. (71) Concerns have been raised about inspectors increasingly conducting conciliations in lieu of inspections and some inspectors being assigned to perform only conciliations, which could compromise the Inspectorate's role as an enforcement entity. (79)

Although labor inspectors may conduct unannounced inspections, reports indicate that the timing of some inspections has become predictable, taking place when employers are required to pay quarterly bonuses. (21; 22) Announced inspections, or inspections that occur at a predictable time are more likely to allow time for employers to temporarily hide or remove children who may be engaged in child labor. Additionally, although laws governing the minimum age for work and hazardous work apply in both the formal and informal sectors, labor inspectors rarely inspect informal workplaces where child labor violations are most likely to occur. (2; 31) Some reports question the quality of inspections for child labor violations, particularly the scope and coverage across industries. (21; 22) Civil society organizations state that, during worksite inspections, labor inspectors many times meet only with business owners or supervisors and bypass conducting worker interviews. (15; 17)

In 2017, 37 children—2 of them under 13 years old—were removed from child labor as a result of inspections. Research did not reveal how many of these children received social services. (31) While the government has created a mechanism for filing complaints regarding child labor, reports state the mechanism is not efficient in responding to those complaints. (31)

In 2017, the MTPS distributed a new labor inspection protocol, including guidance on child labor inspections. (80) However, civil society reports that labor inspectors are not adequately trained to perform inspections for child labor. (12; 16) While the Labor Inspectorate regained its authority to impose administrative sanctions in June 2017, civil society reports that the process of imposing and collecting fines has been extremely slow. (31; 15) In addition, inspectors—especially those outside Guatemala City—lack sufficient resources such as fuel, vehicles, computers, printers, ink and paper, and are not paid per diem to cover lodging and food to conduct inspections in areas far from regional MTPS offices. (22; 81; 82; 19) As a result, inspections were not carried out in several large rural areas. (19)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in Guatemala took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the National Civil Police that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including training for criminal investigators.

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	Unknown	Yes (31; 72)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (22)	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (25)	Yes (31; 72)
Number of Investigations	43 (22)	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	97 (22)	140 (31)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	19 (22)	4 (31)
Number of Convictions	19 (22)	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (2)	Yes (31)

In 2017, the government opened a regional office in Quetzaltenango to prosecute trafficking cases in departments in the western region of Guatemala. (72) Additionally, the MTPS conducted an inspection sweep of 1,734 businesses in Quiché, resulting in 8 child laborers being rescued. (34) In May 2017, the Special Prosecutor’s Office Against Trafficking conducted 36 strategic raids targeting tortilla factories and cornerstores suspected of labor exploitation of children. (83) These raids resulted in the rescue of 22 children from child labor. (83) The government secured 1 forced child labor conviction, detained 4 people suspected of trafficking of children and rescued 22 children—most of them indigenous and from rural areas—from forced labor in tortilla shops. (2; 84; 32; 34) However, the total number of convictions related to the worst forms of child labor is unknown.

In 2017, SVET provided trafficking in persons training to judges and court staff, military personnel and civil servants, including 500 crime scene experts and 3,000 prosecutors. (34) SVET also conducted training and awareness campaigns on trafficking in persons throughout Guatemala, interacting with 146,221 citizens. In addition, SVET trained guards from 176 private security companies, school-age children vulnerable to trafficking in persons, 48 National Police Academy trainers, and 3,627 public sector employees. (34) However, while criminal law enforcement personnel receive training, reports indicate that training is inadequate outside of the capital. (31) The Public Ministry specifically noted a need for training on the recruitment of children by criminal groups. (72) Law enforcement agencies also lack sufficient vehicles, fuel, and criminal investigators, particularly outside Guatemala City. (22; 85)

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 coordination between agencies.

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

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
National Commission for the Eradication of Child Labor (CONAPETI)	Coordinate government policies and efforts to combat child labor. (2) Led by the Vice President’s office and composed of several government ministries, as well as representatives from industry associations and trade unions. (20; 86) Met twice in 2017. (30)
Departmental Commissions for the Eradication of Child Labor (CODEPETI)	Coordinate government efforts to combat child labor at the departmental or regional level. Composed of department-level representatives of CONAPETI member agencies as well as NGO and business representatives. (2; 21) Replaced the Labor Ministry Executive Secretariats. (2)
Intra-Institutional Coordination Protocol to Assist Child Laborers	Sets guidelines for MTPS inspectors to identify child laborers, remove children from the worst forms of child labor, and coordinate services for such children with other government agencies. (49)
Secretariat Against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Trafficking in Persons (SVET)	Coordinate all government efforts against human trafficking, including for commercial sexual exploitation of children and forced child labor, by responding to cases and providing support for victims. Operate shelters to serve minor victims of trafficking and a hotline to file child sex tourism complaints. Led by the Vice President’s Office. (67; 68) In 2017, released a protocol for processing trafficking cases, assisting victims, and strengthening relationships with other ministries and NGOs working to address trafficking. (34)
Inter-Institutional Committee Against Trafficking (CIT)	Develop and manage initiatives to combat human trafficking. Relaunched by SVET in 2016, co-chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and includes 28 government and civil society institutions. (35; 67; 68) In 2017, met 3 times. (34)
National Working Group for the Prevention and Protection of Children and Adolescents Against Sexual Exploitation in Activities Related to Travel and Tourism (MENACESNNA)	Aims to prevent sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in the travel and tourism sector. (25) Oversees the Code of Conduct Against Sex Tourism, a mandatory code for trade group membership that forbids providing services to customers believed to be engaging in commercial sexual exploitation of children. Presided by SVET and includes 10 government, private sector, and civil society institutions. (25) In 2017, conducted workshops that trained 496 people in Petén, Izabal, Escuintla, Santa Rosa and Sacatepéquez Departments to promote awareness of the Code of Conduct. (87)

In 2017, Guatemala joined the Regional Action Group of the Americas to share technical expertise, improve implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of national policies, and promote the elimination of the commercial sexual exploitation of children in tourism. (87) In 2017, Guatemala also became the Technical Secretariat of the Regional Coalition Against Trafficking in Persons and Illicit Traffic of Migrants and participated in 2 meetings with other Central American countries. (30) Additionally, UNODC led a discussion with representatives of the Guatemalan Judiciary to strengthen coordination between the Public Ministry, National Civil Police, and Judicial Branch to protect children from commercial sexual exploitation. (88)

Despite improvements in interagency coordination to address trafficking, there continues to be a lack of effective coordination among other government institutions and civil society actors who provide services and protection to victims of child labor. (4; 21; 35) Additionally, although the government established specialized courts—including a 24-hour court in Guatemala City—to hear cases of human trafficking of adults and children and gender-based violence, judges are often unable to schedule hearings and trials in a timely manner. (82)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including the implementation of several policies.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor‡

Policy	Description
Roadmap for the Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2016–2020)	Aims to prevent and eradicate child labor by addressing poverty; guaranteeing rights to health for children and adolescents; guaranteeing access to education, especially for children in or at risk of child labor; coordinating and enforcing child labor laws; raising awareness regarding risks and consequences of child labor; and implementing a system to monitor and evaluate child labor. Led by CONAPETI and CODEPETI. (22; 89; 90; 91). Launched in January 2017. (31)
Protocol for Providing Comprehensive Health Care to Children and Adolescents in the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Requires public health workers to enter information into a database about any child whose injuries may have been labor related. Implemented by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance. (20; 93) Research did not reveal whether any actions were taken under this policy in 2017.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor‡ (cont)

Policy	Description
Protocol for Identifying and Assisting Child and Adolescent Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation	Establishes procedural guidelines for government agencies and NGOs responsible for the protection and care of child and adolescent victims of commercial sexual exploitation. Overseen by the Secretariat of Social Welfare and Departmental Social Welfare Offices and implemented by SVET. (2; 94) Research did not reveal whether any actions were undertaken under this policy in 2017.
Inter-institutional Protocol for the Protection and Attention of Victims of Human Trafficking	Provides instruction on how to process sex crimes, including commercial sexual exploitation of children, and assist prospective victims of trafficking in persons. (25; 73) In 2017, the government ran the campaign, “I don’t permit the exploitation of children and adolescents.” (87)
Public Policy on Human Trafficking and the Comprehensive Protection of Victims (2014–2024)	Aims to guarantee protection for and comprehensive attention to trafficking victims, and promote prevention, detection, prosecution, and sanction of this crime. (92) Includes a National Plan of Strategic Action that directs the government’s actions on preventing and combating human trafficking. (21; 35; 95) In 2017, the government provided SVET with a budget for the operation of its three temporary and specialized shelters for children and teenagers victims of human trafficking. (87)
Urban Social Protection Strategy	Seeks to prevent children from engaging in street work and to increase training and employment opportunities for youth. (20) Research did not reveal whether any actions were undertaken under this policy in 2017.

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (24)

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 efforts to address the problem in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor‡

Program	Description
Child Labor Reducing Initiatives*	In 2017, the government launched several initiatives including: (1) SVET campaign conducted in Palacal, Sololá to stop child laborers from being sent to Guatemala City to sell merchandise on the street, (2) SVET online campaign to raise awareness of commercial sexual exploitation of children, and (3) an initiative to make it easier for children of migrant agricultural workers to attend school near the farms where their parents work. (34)
Business Network for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor in Guatemala (<i>Red Empresarial</i>)	Program that aims to promote prevention and eradication of child labor. Created in 2015 and members include the ministries of Education and Agriculture, MTPS, CONAPETI, ILO, UNICEF, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, and representatives from the private sector. (24; 96; 97; 98; 99) In 2017, the Ministry of Education and the private education group “Business members for education” joined the Network, contributing by conducting social monitoring of elementary rural schools in the departments with highest incidence of child labor. (87)
I Don’t Allow Sexual Exploitation of Children in Tourism†	SVET-administered national campaign against the commercial sexual exploitation of children in tourism. (3) In 2017, the Code of Conduct against Sex Tourism was signed by 11 new private security businesses and 496 individuals. (34) The specialized tourist police force trained 15,206 minors on techniques to prevent becoming victims of sex tourism. (34) SVET launched the campaigns “Be Careful with Grooming” to prevent online grooming of children and adolescents between 10 and 15 years old for sexual abuse and “Protecting Our Greatest Treasure” to create awareness of sexual exploitation of children in tourism and travel activities. (87; 34)
Human Trafficking Referral and Grant Funding†	Program that provides funding to NGOs to assist child victims of human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. (95) In 2017, the government allocated public funds to state institutions that provide attention to victims of human trafficking. (87)
Committed to First (<i>Comprometidos con Primero</i>) Program (2017-2019)*	Program that seeks to decrease dropout rates and increase enrollment and advancement to the next grade at a national level. (31) Goals include generating conditions to achieve competency in reading and writing, providing teacher training, conducting diagnostic evaluations, and supplying educational materials and pedagogical support. (100; 101) Aims to serve 35,000 first grade students. (101) Budget is 4.7 million dollars. (101)

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

Program	Description
Ministerio de Desarrollo Social (MIDES) Poverty Reducing Programs†	Conditional Cash Transfer for Education and Health Program (<i>Mi Bono Seguro</i>) provides cash assistance to families with school-age children, conditioned on children’s school attendance. (20; 65; 102; 31) In 2017, the budget for this program was reduced by almost 50 percent. (31) Food Assistance Program (<i>Mi Bolsa Segura</i>) provides food assistance to poor families, with the requirement that their children attend school. (65; 103; 104; 31) In 2017, the budget for this program was cut by 10.6%. (31) Young Protagonists (<i>Jóvenes Protagonistas</i>) provides at-risk adolescents with training and formative activities outside school hours. (102; 105; 106; 31) My Secure Dining Hall (<i>Mi Comedor Seguro</i>) provides access to food to people in situations of poverty, crisis and emergency, including children. (107) My First Employment (<i>Mi Primer Empleo</i>) places working-age youth in apprenticeship programs and grants them on-the-job training and a monthly stipend. (93; 102; 108; 31) In 2017, the government increased the budget for <i>Jóvenes Protagonistas</i> and <i>Mi Primer Empleo</i> by 10.4% and 11.1% respectively. (31) My Middle School Scholarship (<i>Mi Beca Educación Media</i>) and My College Scholarship (<i>Mi Beca Educación Superior</i>) promotes access to school and college through cash assistance to children between 11 and 24 years old and 16 and 28 years old respectively, who are in situations of poverty and extreme poverty in rural and urban areas. (107) In 2017, the government awarded 640 college scholarships and 5,678 middle school scholarships. (107)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Guatemala.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (25; 85; 109; 110)

At the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labor, the government pledged to create a monitoring, evaluation, and follow-up system to track government, private sector, and civil society’s best practices to combat child labor. (111) The government also pledged to implement a predictive model to assess child labor risks. (111)

Although the government has implemented programs to assist children and families, research found no evidence of government programs specifically designed to assist children engaged in hazardous work, including those in agriculture and domestic service. (4)

Conditions in government-run children’s shelters are not adequate, and the government has not ensured the protection and safety of children under its care. (42) In 2017, a fire broke out in a children’s shelter resulting in the deaths of 41 children. (42; 112; 113) The shelter, which housed over 700 children but had capacity for 400, was already facing accusations of abuse and neglect. (112; 84) Civil society reports that conditions in shelters did not improve in 2017. (14)

In addition, the environment for the implementation of social programs that address child labor remains insecure as the government has done little to investigate or prevent further instances of threats, intimidation and violence—including murder against individuals working on social programs including NGO officials, human rights workers, judges, and labor activists. (114)

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 Guatemala (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Eliminate the exception allowing some children under 14 years old to work or establish a light work framework for children ages 12 to 14 outlining restrictions on working conditions, type of work, and number of hours of work.	2010 – 2017
	Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under 18 into non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2017
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO’s technical advice.	2015 – 2017
	Provide adequate training to labor inspectors so they can adequately conduct child labor inspections in all sectors and geographical areas.	2017
	Adequately implement the Labor Inspectorate’s new sanction authority legislation by penalizing violators of child labor laws in a timely manner and by compelling payments and corresponding remediation.	2016 – 2017

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Ensure that labor inspectors and criminal investigators have sufficient resources and staff to conduct inspections and investigations in all geographical areas of the country.	2009 – 2017
	Make publicly available the total number of inspections that were conducted, disaggregated by worksite visits and desk reviews intended to assess compliance with labor laws.	2011-2017
	Ensure that conciliations are not used as a substitute for worksite inspections and do not inhibit the effectiveness of the Labor Inspectorate.	2017
	Interview workers during worksite inspections and conduct inspections in informal workplaces.	2017
	Ensure that the timing of labor inspections is not predictable so that they can be truly unannounced as recommended by international standards.	2016 – 2017
	Strengthen the inspection system by adopting a strategic planning methodology based on more accurate data regarding types of complaints, where and when they occur (such as harvesting season), and targeting industries not reached previously by the Inspectorate (including agriculture and informal sectors).	2015 – 2017
	Dedicate more staff and train criminal law enforcement officials, particularly those outside the capital, on laws related to the worst forms of child labor.	2013 – 2017
	Make publicly available the total number of convictions for the worst forms of child labor.	2017
	Ensure that hearings and trials addressing human trafficking and gender-based violence in specialized courts are scheduled in a timely manner.	2016 – 2017
Coordination	Strengthen coordination efforts to institutionalize relationships between civil society representatives and government agencies that provide services to victims of child labor.	2013 – 2017
Government Policies	Undertake activities to implement the Protocol for Providing Comprehensive Health Care to Children and Adolescents in the Worst Forms of Child Labor, the Protocol for Identifying and Assisting Child and Adolescent Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation, and the Urban Social Protection Strategy.	2017
Social Programs	Make education accessible for all children, including indigenous children and girls, and children living with disabilities and in rural areas, by recruiting and training more qualified teachers, providing instruction in indigenous languages, building additional schools, and removing school fees and transportation costs.	2015 – 2017
	Expand scholarship and subsidy programs so that children can attend secondary schools.	2016-2017
	Ensure that schools in rural areas have bathrooms for students.	2017
	Initiate social programs to address child labor in agriculture and domestic work, and for children who perform other types of hazardous work.	2009 – 2017
	Ensure high standards of safety and care for children in government-run shelters and expand shelter capacity to prevent overcrowding.	2016 – 2017
	Ensure the safety of NGO officials, human rights workers, judges, and labor activists in order to facilitate a secure environment for the implementation of social programs that address and prevent child labor.	2017

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