

In 2018, Thailand made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased its Labor Inspectorate budget by 47 percent and allocated more resources to inspect high-risk workplaces. The rate of access to education and enrollment for migrant children has improved. The government also supported a training for 7,255 labor volunteers on the worst forms of child labor. The government hired 394 additional labor inspectors, including Department of Labor Protection and Welfare civil servants and other government employees, and 22 additional interpreters at Department of Labor Protection and Welfare offices and fishing port inspection centers. The government continued the information-sharing agreement with the U.S. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children to combat online child commercial sexual exploitation. Finally, the government continued to work directly with NGOs to open two additional Child Advocacy Centers, bringing the total to five in Thailand. However, children in Thailand engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in Muay Thai fighting competitions without protective equipment. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, it does not meet the international standard for the minimum age of work. Enforcement of child labor laws remains a challenge due to an insufficient number of inspectors.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Thailand engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in *Muay Thai* fighting competitions without protective equipment. (1-6) As of the end of the reporting period, the government worked with the ILO to design survey questionnaires and collect data on working children. However, the government has yet to release the results of a national survey on the prevalence of children’s work, which are needed to implement the National Policy and Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor Phase II (2015–2020). (7-8) Table I provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Thailand.

Table I. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	13.0 (1,302,267)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	96.3
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	14.4
Primary Completion Rate (%)		93.4

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2017, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019. (9)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization’s analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 3, 2005–06. (10)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children’s work by sector and activity.

Thailand

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Processing shrimp and seafood† (7,11-13)
	Fishing, including work performed on sea vessels† (7,11,14)
	Planting and harvesting sugarcane (15)
	Production of rubber and pineapples (7)
Industry	Manufacturing, including garment production (7,16)
	Work in poultry factories and pig farms (17,18)
	Construction, including transporting cement and bricks (7,3,19-21)
Services	Domestic work (7,22,23)
	Work in restaurants, motorcycle repair shops, and gas stations (7)
	Street work, including begging and vending (7,23,24-27)
	<i>Muay Thai</i> fighting (3-6,8,28-33)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, including use in the production of pornography, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2-3,34-37)
	Forced labor in vending, begging, and domestic work, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (7,16,22)
	Forced labor in the production of garments, in agriculture, and in shrimp and seafood processing† (35,38)
	Fishing as a result of human trafficking (1,14,16,39,40)
	Use in the production and trafficking of drugs, including amphetamines, kratom, and marijuana (7,35)

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

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

Thai children, as well as children from Burma, Laos, and Cambodia, are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation in Thai massage parlors, bars, karaoke lounges, hotels, and private residences. In addition, children are lured, including through the internet and social media, and coerced to produce pornography and perform sexual acts for live internet broadcasts. (3,23,34,37,41-43)




Children, particularly migrants from the Greater Mekong Subregion, engage in hazardous work in shrimp and seafood processing. Although incidents of child labor in the shrimp and seafood processing industry have decreased in recent years, small numbers of children are still reported to work in the industry. (3,11,44,45) Children who work in shrimp and seafood processing work late hours cleaning and lifting heavy loads of seafood. Many of these children also experience health problems, including injuries and chronic diseases. (13,46) Children working in agriculture face health risks from exposure to pesticides, sun, and heat, often working long hours from very early in the morning until nighttime. In addition to lifting heavy loads, they face risks of injury from operating dangerous machinery and using sharp equipment, and other workplace hazards. (7) Thai and migrant children who accompany their parents working in the construction sector are exposed to child labor at and around construction sites, including performing construction and domestic work, or working at nearby restaurants. (3,8,20,21) Children also participate in dangerous *Muay Thai* competitions without using forms of protective equipment that are generally required by international *Muay Thai* leagues and associations, including mandatory usage of gum shields, groin protectors, head, shin, and elbow guards, and body protectors. Children who participate in *Muay Thai* competitions sustain serious head injuries, including brain hemorrhages and deteriorated nerve fibers around the brainstem. (30)

Although Order No. 28/2559 of the National Council for Peace and Order ensures 15 years of free education for all children in Thailand, some children, particularly migrants and ethnic minorities, struggle to access basic education due to a lack of awareness of migrant children’s right to public education, language barriers, and insufficient transportation to schools. (11,35,47-49) Although children without identity documents or registered addresses cannot be denied enrollment, public school applications are available in the Thai language only, which can create a barrier to children’s access to education, particularly for migrants and ethnic minorities. (3)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Thailand 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 Thailand's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including not meeting the international standard for the minimum age for work.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	15	Chapter 4, Section 44 of the Labor Protection Act; Section 148/1 of the Labor Protection Act (No. 5) (50,51)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Chapter 4, Sections 49–50 of the Labor Protection Act; Section 148/2 of the Labor Protection Act (No. 5); Chapter 2, Article 26(6) of the Child Protection Act; Chapter 4, Section 20 of the Homebased Worker Protection Act (50,51,52,53)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Chapter 4, Sections 49–50 of the Labor Protection Act; Clause 4 of the Ministerial Regulation concerning Labor Protection in Sea Fishery Work; Clause 2 of the Ministerial Regulation Identifying Tasks that may be Hazardous to the Health and Safety of Pregnant Women or Children Under the Age of Fifteen Years (50,54,55)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Sections 312, and 312 <i>bis</i> of the Penal Code; Sections 4 and 6 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (No. 3) (56-58)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Sections 282–283 of the Penal Code; Section 6 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (No. 3) (56,58)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Section 8 of the Prevention and Suppression of Prostitution Act; Section 6 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (No. 3); Sections 282 and 285–287 of the Penal Code; Article 26 of the Child Protection Act; Amendment to the Penal Code Act No. 24 (53,56,57,59,60)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 26 of the Child Protection Act; Section 93 of the Narcotics Act; Section 84 of the Penal Code; Section 22 of the Beggar Control Act (53,61-63)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Section 25 of the Military Service Act (64)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Section 25 of the Military Service Act (64)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Section 17 of the National Education Act (65)
Free Public Education	Yes		Section 10 of the National Education Act (65)

The minimum age for work does not comply with international standards because the law does not grant protections to children working outside of employment relationships. In addition, because the minimum age for

Thailand

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

work is lower than the compulsory education age, some children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. (8,4,50,51,65)

During the reporting period, domestic and international news outlets widely reported on a 13-year-old boy who died from injuries sustained during a *Muay Thai* competition at a school charity event. (3,29-6) This highly publicized death prompted the government to begin drafting a Thai Boxing Act amendment, which would ban children under age 12 from participating in *Muay Thai* competitions and mandate the use of protective equipment for children between the ages of 12 and 15. (4,33,6) As of the end of 2018, the draft law had not been submitted to the cabinet for consideration. Research was unable to confirm whether the draft law will permit the Labor Protection Act to categorize child participants in *Muay Thai* as formal employees. (66) In addition, research was also unable to determine whether the government enforced the Child Protection Act, which forbids a person to force, threaten, use, induce, instigate, encourage, or allow a child to play sports for the purpose of commercial benefit in a manner that hinders the child's growth and development. (8,53)

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 (MOL) and criminal law enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Department of Labor Protection and Welfare (DLPW) of the Ministry of Labor (MOL)	Enforces child labor laws through workplace inspections. (7) Operates Hotline 1546 and staffs 86 labor protection and welfare offices in every province to answer questions about working conditions and receive complaints from the public about child labor. In 2018, 770 child labor-related calls were made to the DLPW hotline; the majority of the calls were employers failing to notify DLPW of legal employment of children ages 15 to 18 in non-hazardous work, non-compliance with children's required rest periods, or employment of children under age 15. (3,67)
Anti-Human Trafficking Units	The Anti-Trafficking in Person Division of the Royal Thai Police (RTP) enforces laws related to forced labor, human trafficking, child pornography, and commercial sexual exploitation of children, and operates Hotline 1191 to receive complaints on human trafficking and violence against children. (68) The Department of Trafficking in Persons Litigation under the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) investigates human trafficking offenses, including cases of labor, sex, and child trafficking, and monitors cases to improve the quality of prosecutions. (7,8,69,70) The Anti-Human Trafficking Division under the Criminal Court of Justice prosecutes human trafficking cases, focusing specifically on high-profile human and sex trafficking, forced labor, slavery, and the illegal trade of human organs. (8,69) The Thailand Anti-Trafficking in Persons Taskforce (TATIP)* investigates and enforces laws against human trafficking in the sex trade and mainstream industries. TATIP teams comprise police officers, social workers, and selected NGO representatives. (3) The Department of Special Investigation's (DSI) Bureau of Human Trafficking Crime is tasked with enforcing and investigating human trafficking cases. (8) All Anti-Human Trafficking units were operational during the reporting period and carried out duties related to their mandate. (3,37,71)
Thailand Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce (TICAC)	Investigates and enforces laws against child trafficking and the online sexual exploitation of children, including the distribution and production of child pornography. (7) Comprises police officers, DSI agents, social workers, and selected NGO representatives. (8,72) In 2018, TICAC investigated 19 cases of internet-facilitated child sex trafficking and 60 cases of child pornography possession. (71)
Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS)	Enforces child protection laws through close collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, RTP, DSI, and DLPW; and operates 76 temporary shelters located in every province and 9 long-term shelters for human trafficking victims, including shelters dedicated solely for girls and boys. Operates Hotline 1300, which received 118 calls in 2018 related to human trafficking, including forced prostitution and forced labor. (3,37,53,71) In 2018, MSDHS organized a campaign to eliminate prostitution and sex trafficking for 3,234 children, women, and families. MSDHS also worked with OAG, TICAC, TATIP, and NGOs to provide anti-sex trafficking education to 3,000 students and youth. (37)
DSI in the Ministry of Justice	Investigates human trafficking crimes, including those related to government officials' complicity, and transnational or organized crime. (67) In 2018, DSI participated in criminal law enforcement investigations, including in crimes involving sexual exploitation of children, and organized anti-trafficking in persons best practices seminars for foreign government agencies and NGOs. (3,37)

*Agency responsible for child labor enforcement was created during the reporting period.

Even though the incidence of child labor law violations has decreased in the shrimp and seafood processing sectors, Thailand continues to closely monitor the industry for child labor through 32 Port In-Port Out (PIPO) Centers along the coasts. These Centers enforce laws related to fishing, forced labor, child labor, and human trafficking. (3,8,12,14,45)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2018, labor law enforcement agencies in Thailand took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the MOL that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including an insufficient number of labor inspectors.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$614,251 (7)	\$921,068 (3)
Number of Labor Inspectors	1,506 (7)	1,900 (3)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	40,306 (7)	40,568 (3)
Number Conducted at Worksite	40,306 (7)	40,568 (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	103 (7)	83 (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	103 (48)	53 (3)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	53 (7)	53 (3)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (7)	Yes (3)

In 2018, 905 Department of Labor Protection and Welfare (DLPW) and MOL civil servants carried out labor inspection duties. In addition, 221 contract employees employed by DLPW and 774 officials from other agencies, including the Royal Thai Police (RTP) and Department of Fisheries, supported labor law enforcement efforts. (3) The government also hired an additional 22 interpreters to assist the labor inspectors, bringing the total number of interpreters to 124. (3) Despite the increase in the number of labor inspectors from the previous reporting period, the number is still likely insufficient for the size of Thailand's workforce, which includes approximately 38.45 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, Thailand would employ about 2,558 labor inspectors. (73,74) More than 94 percent of unannounced child labor inspections targeted high-risk worksites that employed children in the garment, shrimp and seafood processing, poultry and pig farming, services, auto repair, and construction sectors. (3) Inspectors who find a child labor violation must immediately assess a penalty on the employer and refer the case to the RTP. (48) Although the Command Center for Combating Illegal Fishing (CCCIF) and DLPW have made efforts to actively exchange information with NGOs, it is reported that the CCCIF and DLPW have not made efforts to reach out to migrant community NGOs or networks to exchange information on high-risk workplaces or provide training on child labor issues. (7,8)

In 2018, interpreters at DLPW provided translation assistance to Burmese and Cambodian migrant workers on Thai-owned fishing boats at PIPO Centers. (8) The DLPW also had mobile inspection teams that consisted of labor inspectors, a legal affairs officer, interpreters, and sometimes employees from the departments of Special Investigation, Employment, and Fisheries. These teams conducted targeted monthly child labor inspections using information shared by NGOs and child protection networks, and they are authorized to file criminal

Thailand

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

lawsuits when child labor violations are found. (7,48) During the reporting period, the mobile inspection teams conducted 49,394 labor inspections at worksites and on 78,789 fishing boats. Although no child labor cases were identified in the fishing sector, DLPW identified 99 cases involving 206 alleged child labor law violations in other industries. (3)

In addition, 695 labor inspectors, government employees, and law enforcement officials received training in inspection and law enforcement related to the worst forms of child labor. Lastly, the MOL conducted several trainings in 2018 for labor inspectors, including training 108 participants on rescuing and protecting children from the worst forms of child labor, and providing capacity building for labor inspectors to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in hard-to-reach workplaces. (3,37)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2018, criminal law enforcement agencies in Thailand 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 fully reporting criminal enforcement data.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Number of Investigations	2,891† (7)	2,582‡ (3,37)
Number of Violations Found	31 (7)	205‡ (3)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (7)	172‡ (3)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (7)	Unknown (3)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (7)	Yes (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (7)	Yes (3)

† Data are from October 1, 2016 to September 30, 2017.

‡ Data are from October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018.

In 2018, the government identified 1 child victim of forced labor and 40 child victims of commercial sexual exploitation, and worked on 34 child pornography cases. The Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection reported 2,541 cases of children involved in the production and trafficking of narcotics. (3) The Thailand Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce (TICAC) and the Thailand Anti-Trafficking in Persons Taskforce (TATIP) collaborated closely with international law enforcement agencies and NGOs, including the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, to identify and arrest suspects engaged in online child commercial sexual exploitation. (3,8) Throughout 2018, TICAC investigated 19 cases involving human trafficking, and TATIP investigated 29 human trafficking cases. Both TICAC and TATIP provided coaching, training, and case management support to investigators across the country to improve investigatory practices and the adequateness of victim specialists. (8,37) The RTP's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Division received training in child labor policies and laws as well as training in techniques to investigate and prosecute the worst forms of child labor and human trafficking crimes. (3,37) In addition, the government collected and reported administrative data on the worst forms of child labor to the Cabinet. (67)

Reports indicate that there is a lack of understanding of human trafficking issues in some provincial governments and courts if the victims are boys engaged in commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, there are reports of underreporting human trafficking incidences for fear that reporting them would demonstrate law enforcement deficiencies. (3,37)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8).

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Committee to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Coordinates the implementation of child labor policies, facilitates cooperation among relevant ministries, and reports annually to the Thai Cabinet on child labor issues. (65) Chaired by the MOL, with representation from other government agencies, employer and worker associations, and civil society groups. (75) Oversees a subcommittee responsible for monitoring the National Policy and Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor. (35,76) In 2018, the committee met three times to review Thailand's report on the worst forms of child labor and adjusted the working committee to oversee and monitor efforts to remove Thailand's products from USDOL's <i>List of Goods Produced with Child Labor or Forced Labor</i> . (8)
National and Provincial Committees on Child Protection	Coordinates with government agencies and private sector representatives to monitor and protect children's social welfare and safety, including monitoring public and private workplaces for child labor violations. (53) Led by MSDHS with participation from DLPW and the Ministries of Education and Public Health. (8) In 2018, the committee convened to discuss policies and develop a plan to prevent young children from engaging in <i>Muay Thai</i> and protect those children who do engage in <i>Muay Thai</i> . (8)
Fishing Regulatory Units	The National Policy Committee on Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing coordinates anti-trafficking in persons policies and activities and oversees five subcommittees, including the Subcommittee on Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Migrant Workers. Chaired by the MOL. (35,77) In 2018, MOL conducted iris scan and biometric registration for 172,895 migrant fishing and seafood processing workers. (71) The Provincial Coordination Center for Sea Fishery Workers (operated jointly by DLPW, Marine Police, Provincial Administration, and Fishers' Association) compiles registration records and information on work permits for migrants working on fishing vessels, and works with vessel owners to ensure that undocumented migrant workers are registered. Also monitors and coordinates inspections of working conditions on fishing vessels, provides trainings on labor protection, receives human trafficking complaints, and coordinates with other agencies to provide assistance, remedy, and rehabilitation services for victims. (68) In 2018, the Provincial Coordination Center for Sea Fishery Workers was operational and continued to support the Royal Thai Government's (RTG) work on fishery workers' registrations and provide trainings on new regulations for fishery workers and vessel owners. (8) The Command Center for Combating Illegal Fishing (CCCIF) coordinates government efforts to resolve cases of human trafficking and illegal fishing and operates 32 Port In-Port Out (PIPO) Centers and 19 Forward Inspection Centers in every coastal province. (68) Carries out inspections in the fishing and seafood industry. Members include the Royal Thai Navy; the ministries of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Transport, Interior, and Labor; and RTP. (78) In 2018, the Royal Thai Navy, under CCCIF, organized 3 training program for 147 high-level officers, policy makers, and practitioners. One of the trainings taught a curriculum on the prevention and suppression of human trafficking, child labor, and forced labor in the fishing sector. (8) PIPO Centers enforce laws related to fishing and labor, including child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking, through boat inspections. PIPO Centers are staffed by officers from the Royal Thai Navy, Department of Fisheries, Marine Department, DLPW, Department of Employment, and interpreters. (3) In 2018, all 32 PIPO Centers were operational and conducted 78,623 fishing boat inspections, which identified 511 violations. (3,71)
Division of Anti-Trafficking in Persons	Coordinates anti-trafficking activities, including those involving forced child labor, child trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation. Monitors 76 Provincial Operation Centers for the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking. (35,68,79) Operates under MSDHS. (35) In 2018, the Division developed manuals and videos in seven languages (Thai, English, Burmese, Laotian, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Mandarin) on the rights of trafficked victims to provide information to victims prior to entering shelters. The Division also developed a handbook and vocabulary book for interpreters to assist victims of trafficking. (8)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor (Table 9).

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Policy and Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor Phase II (2015–2020)	Seeks to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in Thailand in accordance with international labor standards. Focuses on (a) preventing the worst forms of child labor, (b) rescuing and protecting children from the worst forms of child labor, (c) developing and enforcing relevant laws, (d) enhancing interagency cooperation, and (e) developing management and monitoring systems. (76) In 2018, this policy supported a training for labor volunteers on the worst forms of child labor; 7,255 volunteers participated in 76 courses. (8)

Thailand

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor (Cont.)

Policy	Description
Cyber Tipline Remote Access Policy	Seeks to combat the online sexual exploitation of children in Thailand by partnering with the U.S. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Supports TICAC by permitting RTP to request warrants to search the residences and electronic equipment of individuals for child pornography and initiate criminal prosecution. (80-83) In 2018, TICAC actively used the Virtual Private Network associated with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which led to the investigations of 14 commercial child sexual exploitation cases, prosecution of 2 cases, and conviction of 1 case. (8)

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (7,67,84,85)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2018, 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 the adequacy of programs to address child labor in high-risk sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Government Shelters for Trafficking Victims†	MSDHS program that operates 76 temporary shelters that provide emergency assistance and protection to human trafficking victims, including children. (78) Operates nine long-term trafficking shelters that offer medical care, psychosocial services, education, and life skills education. (78,88) In 2018, Save the Children personnel trained shelter staff on specialized child services, including conducting risk assessments, victim referrals, and providing child witness support. (37)
Combatting Unacceptable Forms of Work in the Thai Fishing and Seafood Industry (2016–2019)	3.5 year, EU- and ILO-funded Ship to Shore Rights project implemented by ILO, the government of Thailand, and other stakeholders to prevent and reduce forced labor and child labor in the Thai fishing and seafood processing sectors, including by withdrawing children engaged in the worst forms of child labor and enhancing their access to support services. (89,90) In 2018, this program supported an ILO-MOL joint training for 60 participants to prevent and reduce forced labor, child labor, and indecent forms of work in the seafood industry. (8)
Migrant Learning Centers‡	NGO and government-operated centers that provide basic education, life skill training, and vocational training to children in migrant communities along Thailand's borders. In 2018, RTG continued to provide subsidies and accreditation to some qualified Migrant Learning Centers. (3,68)
Welfare Cards for the Poor†	Government program that provides low-income parents or caretakers with a monthly stipend of approximately \$51 (1,630 baht) for transportation, farming supplies, educational materials, and other essentials. In 2018, approximately 3 million Thai citizens received benefits. (7,3)
Equal Education Fund†	Provides scholarships to support disadvantaged children's access to education. Approximately 397,493 students received disbursements in 2018. (3)
Child Advocacy Centers (CAC)†	Provide social, legal, and repatriation services to children who are victims or vulnerable to human trafficking, including children trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation. (37,42) In 2018, two new CACs opened—for a total of five CACs around the country—and RTP committed to fully fund all of the CACs. During the reporting period, CACs also assisted 57 victims during criminal investigations, accompanied 36 victims to the courts, and helped repatriate 10 victims. (37,42)

† Program is funded by the Government of Thailand.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (42,76,91)

The lack of available research and data on the prevalence of child labor in high-risk sectors, such as agriculture, garment manufacturing, domestic work, and construction, make it difficult for the Thai Government to design appropriate programs to address these issues. (3,44) Although access to education for migrant children has increased, many Migrant Learning Centers rely on decreasing donor funding, and migrant students face difficulties acquiring a certification of education because many centers lack qualified teachers and accreditation. Lastly, migrant children are not eligible for Equal Education Fund distributions, which increases their vulnerability to labor exploitation. (8,67)

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 Thailand (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the minimum age for work applies to children working outside of employment relationships.	2017 – 2018
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2018
	Raise the minimum age for work to the age up to which education is compulsory.	2018
	Enact legal protections that prohibit children under age 18 from participating in <i>Muay Thai</i> without protective gear and forbid all types of contact with opponents' heads.	2018
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors responsible for enforcing laws related to child labor to meet the ILO's technical guidance.	2015 – 2018
	Collect and publish comprehensive data on the number of convictions for all crimes related to child labor.	2015 – 2018
	Provide trainings for provincial governments and courts to ensure that boy victims of commercial sexual exploitation are reported and afforded the same services as girls.	2018
	Increase collaboration with NGOs and migrant community networks to exchange information on high-risk workplaces, and provide training on child labor issues.	2018
Social Programs	Improve access to education, especially for ethnic minority and migrant children, including by raising awareness of migrant children's right to education, improving access to school transportation, and addressing language barriers for non-Thai speaking students, including on public school applications.	2012 – 2018
	Publish the results of the survey on working children in Thailand and use the results to refine the government's policy and actions.	2009 – 2018
	Conduct research and data prevalence surveys to ensure that there are sufficient social programs to address child labor in agriculture, garment manufacturing, domestic work, and construction.	2016 – 2018
	Ensure that there are sufficient social programs to assist children from vulnerable groups, such as migrant children, who are at high risk of the worst forms of child labor.	2016 – 2018
	Support migrant learning centers to improve the quality of education and provide accreditation for migrant children; develop systems to refer migrant students to schools in their countries of origin.	2018

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Thailand

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