

In 2019, Mozambique made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government approved an update to new Penal Code, which includes prohibitions on human trafficking, child prostitution, and the use of children in pornography. Numerous trafficking in persons trainings were conducted throughout the country for border police officers, social service providers, judges, and investigators. In addition, Provincial and District National Reference Groups were trained on available referral mechanisms and social protection services for children and victims of human trafficking, and the drafting of the National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons was finalized. Nearly 5,000 awareness-raising events were also organized throughout all of Mozambique's 11 provinces on human trafficking, the worst forms of child labor, and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. However, children in Mozambique engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced domestic work. Children also perform dangerous tasks in the production of tobacco. Although Mozambique made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, the established minimum age for work is not in compliance with international labor standards because it does not extend to informal employment. In addition, a coordination mechanism to address child labor is lacking and existing programs are insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem in Mozambique.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Mozambique engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced domestic work. (1-4) Children also perform dangerous tasks in the production of tobacco. (5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Mozambique.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	22.5 (1,526,560)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	69.5
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	22.4
Primary Completion Rate (%)		52.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2018, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020. (6)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 3, 2008. (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	Production of cashews, coconuts, cotton,† sesame, sugarcane,† tea, tobacco,† and tomatoes (1,2,5,8-11)
	Fishing,† including preparing nets† (1,5)
	Forestry,† activities unknown(5)
	Herding livestock,† including cattle (1,5)
	Hunting, including small and wild animals (1,5,11)
Industry	Mining,† including gold and gemstones† (5,12-14)
	Construction,† including crushing stone† and making bricks† (1,5)
Services	Domestic work,† including caring for babies and other children† (5,8,14,15)
	Street work, including car washing,† street vending, and garbage scavenging† (5,14-17)
	Selling alcoholic beverages in markets† (9)

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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 (4,5,18) Forced labor in agriculture, domestic work, mining, and vending, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1–4) Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, stealing, and assisting poachers in the illegal poaching industry (5)

† 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.

Mozambican children, lured from rural areas with promises of work and educational opportunities, are subjected to forced domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation in urban areas in Mozambique and South Africa. Research indicates that Mozambican children are also trafficked to South Africa for forced labor in agriculture, street vending, and commercial sexual exploitation. (2,4)







Although primary education is free through grade nine, families must provide school supplies and uniforms. (19) Barriers to education for children include lack of schools, classroom space, and trained teachers. Many students, particularly in rural areas, also face difficulties traveling long distances to get to school. (4,20,21) In addition, physical and sexual abuse is common in schools. Research found that some male teachers coerce female students into sex. (22)

During the reporting period, due to increased insurgent-related violence in the Cabo Delgado Province, and natural disasters impacting Central and Northern parts of the country, thousands of people were displaced and schools destroyed, thus further increasing education access barriers for some children. (19)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Mozambique 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 Mozambique’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including 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	Article 26 of the Labor Law; Article 4 of the Regulations on Domestic Work (23,24)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 23 of the Labor Law (24)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes	18	Hazardous Work List (25)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 5 and 10–11 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Articles 196 and 198 of the Penal Code (26,27)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (Cont.)

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 5 and 10–11 of the Trafficking in Persons Law (26)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 5 and 10–11 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Articles 226–227 of the Penal Code (26,27)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 33 and 40 of the Law on Drugs (28)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 23 of the Law on Military Service (29)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 2 of the Law on Military Service (29)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Articles 5 and 10 of the Trafficking in Persons Law (26)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Article 7 of the Law on the National System of Education; Article 41 of the Law of Basic Child Protection (30,31)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 41 of the Law of Basic Child Protection (30)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (30,31)

During the reporting period, the government approved an update to the Penal Code, which includes prohibitions on human trafficking, child prostitution, and the use of children in pornography. The new penal code is scheduled to enter into force in June 2020. (32) In addition, the Attorney General's Office, in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, Religious, and Constitutional Affairs, began updating the 2008 Trafficking in Persons Law with the aim of bringing it in line with international labor standards through the expansion of the definition of human trafficking, the provision of greater protection of victims, and the creation of a compensation fund for victims, including children. (33)

The Regulations on Domestic Work allow children ages 12 to 15 to conduct domestic work with the permission of their legal guardian. (23) The Labor Law also states that children ages 12 to 15 may work under certain conditions defined by the Council of Ministers. (24) The minimum age of 12 for light work is not in compliance with international standards. (34,35) However, in 2018, the government drafted a revision to the Labor Law, establishing age 15 as the minimum age for work, which would eliminate the current exception that allows children as young as age 12 to work. In 2019, Parliament did not vote on the draft law. (36,37)

The Labor Law's minimum age protections do not apply to children working outside of formal employment relationships. The Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security, in collaboration with civil society, has reportedly developed new regulations to protect children working in the informal sector; however, the government has not reported on the implementation of these regulations. (24,31,35,38)

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, Employment, and Social Security that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security	Enforces child labor laws and regulations. The labor inspectorate works with the National Police Force to enforce criminal law. (19) Monitors implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor. (19,39)
Ministry of Industry and Trade's General Inspectorate of Economic Activities	Enforces child labor laws and regulations related to business activities. (19)

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

Organization/Agency	Role
National Police Force	Enforces all criminal laws, including those related to the worst forms of child labor. Through its seven-person National Criminal Investigation Service, located within the Ministry of the Interior, investigates and refers cases of human trafficking to the Attorney General's Office. (19)
Attorney General's Office	Coordinates the government's efforts against human trafficking and receives cases for prosecution from the National Criminal Investigation Service. (19) In 2019, collaborated with relevant government agencies to assess and coordinate efforts in addressing victims' needs. (4)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2019, labor law enforcement agencies in Mozambique took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including training for labor inspectors.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown	Unknown
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (36)	Yes (19)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (36)	Yes (19)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown	Yes (19)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Yes (19)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Unknown
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	Unknown
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	Unknown	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (36)	Yes (19)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (36)	Yes (19)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (36)	Yes (19)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (36)	Yes (19)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (36)	Yes (19)

Although the government did not provide information on its law enforcement efforts, research found that 900 cases of child exploitation, including child labor, were registered during the first 9 months of the reporting period. (40) The government does not publicly release information on its labor law enforcement efforts. (19)

Reports indicate that the number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Mozambique's workforce, which includes approximately 13 million workers. (19,41) According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 40,000 workers in less developed countries, Mozambique would employ about 325 labor inspectors. (41-43) Insufficient training and limited financial resources may also hamper the labor inspectorate's ability to enforce child labor laws. (19)

Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security officials can refer victims of child labor to either the police or social workers from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Action (MGCAS) for family assessments and potential placement of these children in foster homes. (44)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2019, criminal law enforcement agencies in Mozambique 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 the lack of published criminal data related to child labor.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (36)	Yes (19)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Yes (19)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Yes (19)
Number of Investigations	10 (34)	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	7 (34)	Unknown
Number of Convictions	Unknown	Unknown
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (36)	Yes (19)

In 2019, numerous trainings were conducted throughout the country, including the training of border police officers, and other stakeholders involved in assisting human trafficking victims, on the South African border. Judges and investigators in southern Mozambique also received training on trafficking in persons matters, including on human trafficking legal elements, and related crimes. (33)

Reports indicate that in 2019, the government investigated 13 potential trafficking in persons cases, and determined that 8 of these cases involved 22 human trafficking victims. Of the 22 victims, 10 were 18 years or younger. (38) The government prosecuted 2 suspects, and achieved 2 convictions with sentences ranging from 3 to 13 years imprisonment. (38) Research also indicates that, in 2019, police apprehended a suspect for trafficking 22 children between the ages of 8 and 14 in Niassa Province, in the northern region of the country. (45) In addition, police intercepted the trafficking of 20 children into South Africa for labor purposes. (46) Both cases are under investigation. (45,46)

Criminal law enforcement officials work with MGCAS and the National Reference Group for the Protection of Children and Combating Trafficking in Persons to coordinate referrals of children to social service providers. (19) Furthermore, MGCAS has a standard operating procedure for handling victims of domestic abuse, including human trafficking victims. This procedure incorporates an intake form used nationwide by law enforcement officials, including border officials, to collect the necessary data from victims and ensure that they receive professional care and referrals to appropriate services. (34)

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 & Description
National Reference Group for the Protection of Children and Combating Trafficking in Persons	Coordinates efforts to combat all forms of human trafficking. Led by the Attorney General's Office. (47) Provincial-level groups coordinate regional efforts to combat human trafficking. (4) In 2019, provincial and district Reference groups received training aimed at improving referral mechanisms and protection services for child victims of human trafficking. Provincial and district Reference groups also conducted nationwide trainings and seminars, including training of national police officers on investigative techniques, and proper identification and referral of trafficking victims. (4,33)
National Commission on Children's Rights	Oversees and reports on children's rights in Mozambique to the African Charter and other international bodies, and performs consultations and deliberations on national action plans and legislation. Led by the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Action. (44) Active in 2019. (37)
Ministry of the Interior's Women and Children's Victim Assistance Units	Provides services to children who have been victims of crimes, including human trafficking. Implements a government-funded program that includes 22 victim assistance units, which provide temporary shelter, food, limited counseling, and monitoring of crime following reintegration, and operate countrywide through facilities in more than 215 police stations. (4) Active in 2019. (4)
Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Action	Operates three shelters that provide support and reintegration services for human trafficking victims, including to victims of child trafficking. Active in 2019. (38)

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Research did not find a coordination mechanism dedicated to addressing child labor beyond the scope of human trafficking.

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 the lack of implementation of existing policies.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2017–2022)	Aims to map 70 percent of occurrences of the worst forms of child labor by province and activity by 2019, and to withdraw 20,000 children from the worst forms of child labor and enroll them in the Basic Social Subsidy program. (39) Mandates the coordination of several key government agencies, including the Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Action. A multi-sector group comprising representatives from government, civil society, employers, and unions, including the informal sector, was also created through the plan to address child labor issues. (36) In 2019, the government provided training on child labor issues and protection of children's rights to public prosecutors, police, and criminal investigators. (19)
National Action Plan for Children II (2013–2019)	Established four priority areas for government action against child labor: child survival, child development, child participation, and child protection. (48) In 2019, the government continued their focus on the four established priority areas, especially pertaining to recovery efforts related to post-disaster situations. The government also facilitated anti-trafficking training with IOM in IDP camps, and raised awareness among students regarding the dangers of online recruitment. (38)

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (49)

Reports indicate that the drafting of National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons was finalized during the reporting period, although the plan has not been officially approved. (33,38) The associated referral mechanism contains a victim intake form, which, despite the plan's lengthy drafting process, has already been in use nationwide for more than 3 years by law enforcement officials to collect data on victims and ensure that they receive appropriate care and referrals to social service providers. (33,34)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2019, 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 to address the problem in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Basic Social Subsidy Program†	Government- and donor-funded program that provides financial subsidies to orphaned children living in poor and vulnerable households, as well as child heads of households. Aims to improve secondary school attendance and reach more than 3.3 million direct program participants by 2024. (50,51) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this program during the reporting period.
Programs for Street Children‡	Government and civil society organizations operate 176 shelters that provide education, occupational training activities, and health and psycho-social care for street children. (52) Active in 2019. (19)
Speak Child-116	NGO-funded program that works with the government to run a hotline to receive complaints of child abuse, including those related to child labor and sexual exploitation. (53) In 2019, 2.7 percent of cases received by the hotline were related to child labor. (38)
Memorandum of Understanding to Combat Child Labor in Tobacco Growing (2018–2021)	\$1.2 million, 3 year project funded by the Eliminating Child Labor in Tobacco Growing Foundation focusing on education, awareness raising, institutional capacity building, and revision of the government's legal framework. Incorporates training for law enforcement officials. (54–56)
Internet Watch Foundation Website	Internet portal, established by the government, in collaboration with Internet Watch Foundation, that receives anonymous reports on suspected cases of online commercial sexual exploitation of children, including in the production of pornography. (57–59)

† Program is funded by the Government of Mozambique.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (60)

In 2019, the government organized nearly 5,000 awareness-raising events, throughout all 18 provinces, on human trafficking, the worst forms of child labor, and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. (33)

Although a draft report on the analysis of national child labor data from the Integrated Household Survey was completed in 2017, the government has yet to publish the study's findings. (61) In addition, research found no evidence that the government has carried out programs to assist children engaged in domestic work, and the scope of existing programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the child labor problem.

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 Mozambique (Table I I).

Table I I. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that all children are protected under the law, including children working outside of formal employment relationships.	2015 – 2019
	Ensure that the minimum age for light work is in compliance with international labor standards.	2018 – 2019
Enforcement	Publish data on labor law enforcement information, including the labor inspectorate's funding, number of labor inspectors, number and type of labor inspections conducted, child labor violations found, and number of child labor penalties imposed and collected.	2009 – 2019
	Allocate sufficient resources for law enforcement agencies, including by increasing the number of labor inspectors to provide adequate coverage of the workforce.	2009 – 2019
	Provide labor inspectors with adequate training and financial resources to ensure their capacity to enforce child labor laws.	2009 – 2019
	Publish data on criminal law enforcement efforts, such as the number of investigations, violations found, prosecutions initiated, and convictions secured, and whether penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor were imposed.	2009 – 2019
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat all worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2019
Social Programs	Take measures to ensure that all children have access to education by providing supplies, and establishing an adequate number of schools, classroom space, and trained teachers. Take preventative steps to protect children from physical and sexual abuse in schools.	2010 – 2019
	Publish the results of the child labor study and use the findings to inform policies and programs.	2015 – 2019
	Ensure that the Basic Social Subsidy Program is active and fulfills its mandate.	2018 – 2019
	Institute programs to address child labor in domestic work, and expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem.	2010 – 2019

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