

In 2020, Cabo Verde made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The National Assembly approved a draft law on Crimes of Aggression and Sexual Abuse Against Children and Adolescents, which increases penalties for sexual assault, including in cases of commercial sexual exploitation, sexting, and child sex tourism. The Observatory for Monitoring and Rapid Identification of Situations of Trafficking in Persons also developed internal procedures and a list of priorities related to human trafficking, including child trafficking. Furthermore, the government extended compulsory, tuition-free education through the 12th grade. However, children in Cabo Verde are subjected to 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. Law enforcement officials often lack the necessary resources to conduct thorough investigations, and communication among enforcement agencies is limited. In addition, social programs to assist children involved in agriculture and domestic work are not sufficient to address the scope of the problem.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Cabo Verde are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1-6) Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. (6-8) Table I provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Cabo Verde.

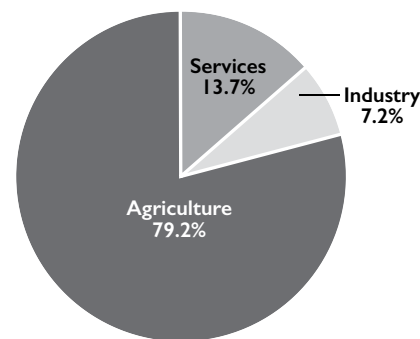
Table I. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10 to 14	3.2 (2,392)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	90.1
Combining Work and School (%)	10 to 14	1.7
Primary Completion Rate (%)		87.3

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2018, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021. (9)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization’s analysis of statistics from *Inquérito as Despesas e Receitas Familiares (HHS)*, 2001–2002. (10)

Figure I. Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14



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

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming, including carrying heavy loads† (1,7,8,11)
	Raising livestock (11)
	Artisanal fishing in small boats† (8,11)
Industry	Construction (12)
Services	Domestic work (1,6-8)
	Street work, including vending, garbage scavenging,† car washing, and begging (6,7,13,14)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-5)
	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking (6,11)

† 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.

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The commercial sexual exploitation of boys and girls, including in the tourism industry, occurs in Cabo Verde. (3,4,6,11) Research indicates that the islands of Sal and Boa Vista register the highest incidences of commercial sexual exploitation of children. (2) Research further indicates that children are also victims of commercial sexual exploitation on the islands of Brava, Santiago, Fogo, and São Vicente. (6)

During the reporting year, the government extended compulsory, tuition-free education through the 12th grade. (8) According to the Cabo Verdean Institute for Children and Adolescents (ICCA), not all special needs students or children in remote areas had equal access to education. In some areas, mountainous topography obliged children to commute great distances to reach secondary schools. (8)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Cabo Verde 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's laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 261 of the Labor Code (15)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 264 of the Labor Code; Article 133 of the Civil Code (15,16)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		National List of Dangerous Work for Children (17)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 14 of Chapter 3 of the Labor Code; Articles 149, 271, and 271-A of the Penal Code (15,18)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 149 and 271-A of the Penal Code (18)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 144–145, 148–150, and 271-A of the Penal Code (18)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 8 of the Drug Trafficking Law (19)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	17	Article 31 of the Military Service Law (20)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 2 of the Military Service Law (20)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Article 268-C of the Penal Code (18)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Articles 13 and 20 of the Education Law (21)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 14 of the Education Law (21)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (22)

During the reporting period, the National Assembly approved a draft law on Crimes of Aggression and Sexual Abuse Against Children and Adolescents aimed at increasing penalties for sexual assault, including in cases of commercial sexual exploitation, sexting, and child sex tourism. The law would also revise the age of "children" upward from 14 to 16 in such cases. (8,23)

The Civil Code includes a list of light work activities that children age 14 are allowed to perform; however, the law does not prescribe the number of hours per week permissible for light work, nor does it specify the conditions under which light work may be performed. (16,24,25)

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 enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Inspector General for Labor	Monitors and enforces child labor laws, working closely with the Cabo Verdean Institute for Children and Adolescents (ICCA). (8)
Attorney General's Office	Determines whether cases have merit and can refer relevant cases to the Judicial Police for investigation. Prepares cases for trial. (8)
Judicial Police and National Police	Judicial Police conduct criminal investigations; National Police make arrests related to the worst forms of child labor, including human trafficking. (3)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2020, labor law enforcement agencies in Cabo Verde took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Inspector General for Labor (IGT) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including financial resource allocation.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$26,000 (26)	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	21 (3)	21 (8)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (3)	Yes (27)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (3)	N/A
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (3)	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	1,752 (28)	723‡ (8)
Number Conducted at Worksite	1,752 (28)	723‡(8)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	0 (3)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	0 (3)	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (3)	Yes (8)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (3)	Yes (8)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (3)	Yes (27)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (3)	Yes (8)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (3)	Yes (8)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (3)	Yes (8)

‡ Data are from January 2020 to June 2020. (8)

Although the government did not report any child labor violations, ICCA recorded 24 reports of child labor violations during the reporting period. When IGT inspectors find a case of child labor, they inform ICCA for referral to social services providers. (3)

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The government did not provide information on whether refresher courses were provided, the number of child labor violations found, or the number of penalties imposed or collected in relation to child labor violations during the reporting period.

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2020, criminal law enforcement agencies in Cabo Verde 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 allocating human resources.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (29)	Unknown
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (29)	Unknown
Number of Investigations	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Convictions	Unknown	0 (30)
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 (3)	Yes (8)

ICCA registered and assisted 172 reports of sexual abuse and exploitation of children in 2020, which may have included potential child trafficking victims. (28)

Reports indicate that the Judicial Police and the National Police often lack the necessary financial and human resources to conduct thorough investigations, including cases of child labor. (8,11)

The government did not maintain comprehensive anti-trafficking in persons law enforcement and victim protection data among its criminal enforcement agencies. (6) Although law enforcement agencies work well together, limited coordination between agencies, which sometimes struggle to share case information and updates, may hinder enforcement efforts. (11) In addition, reports indicate that the judicial system is overburdened with a backlog of cases, which can contribute to a lack of protection for child victims of the worst forms of child labor. (2,3)

The government did not provide information on its criminal enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report.

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 for Child Labor Prevention and Eradication in Cabo Verde	Coordinates the execution of the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and provides a functional mechanism for reciprocal referrals between law enforcement and social services. Led by ICCA, with the support of the Ministry of Youth, Labor and Development of Human Resources. (31) In 2020, coordinated activities with various partners, including civil society partners. (8)
Cabo Verdean Institute for Children and Adolescents (ICCA)	Coordinates and monitors the implementation of all national programs and activities to prevent and combat child labor. (32) In 2020, conducted an assessment of the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor. ICCA also consulted with UNICEF, among others, to assess the impact of the National Plan to Combat Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents, and began developing a new action plan for 2021–2023. (8)

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Children and Adolescent Committee to Prevent and Combat Sexual Abuse and Exploitation	Contributes to the prevention and elimination of child sexual exploitation by coordinating the activities of member organizations and public and private services. Supervises, monitors, and evaluates the National Plan to Combat Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents. (11) Led by ICCA. (33) In 2020, coordinated with NGOs, public and private institutions, and religious organizations. (8)
Observatory for Monitoring and Rapid Identification of Situations of Trafficking in Persons	Coordinates and monitors all efforts to combat human trafficking. Comprises law enforcement, NGOs, civil society, and various government agencies. (11,34) Led by the Ministry of Justice and Labor. (11) In 2020, the Observatory met once and developed internal procedures and a list of priorities related to trafficking in persons and the exploitation of children. (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 Action Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor	Prioritizes the eradication of child labor. Outlines specific objectives, including data collection, institutional capacity building, and enhancement of measures to prevent, protect, and remove children from involvement in child labor. (31) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor.
Code of Ethics Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children	Guides and governs agencies involved in the tourism sector to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. (35) Remained in force in 2020. (30)
National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons (2018–2021)	Prioritizes five strategic areas: prevention, awareness, protection, investigation, and coordination. (36) Establishes the Observatory for Monitoring and Rapid Identification of Situations of Trafficking in Persons. (11,34) Active in 2020. (30)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2020, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating and preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including the adequacy of efforts to address the problem in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Child Labor Awareness Campaigns†	Government program implemented by ICCA and the National Committee for Child Labor Prevention and Eradication that conducts national awareness-raising campaigns on the worst forms of child labor. (37) ICCA conducted awareness-raising activities within communities during the reporting period. (30)
Help for At-Risk Children and Social Protection and Reintegration Centers†	ICCA-implemented program that provides education, health services, and professional training to vulnerable children and their families. Operates six day centers for street children vulnerable to sexual and labor exploitation, including sex trafficking. Moreover, ICCA operates three additional centers for street children through their <i>Nôz Kaza</i> project. (28) The government also operates five long-term social protection and reintegration centers that provide support and educational integration services to children who have experienced long-term trauma, including child trafficking. (38) All centers were active in 2020, and continued to provide support to numerous at-risk children. (38)
Child Emergency Centers†	ICCA-implemented program that operates two emergency centers for child victims of abuse and sexual exploitation on Santiago and São Vicente islands, operating 24/7. (31,37) Active in 2020. (8)
Cabo Verdean Foundation for Social Action in Education†	Government programs aimed at providing access to education for disadvantaged children by paying for school fees, materials, and meals. In 2020, launched a campaign to guarantee funds for school materials to 30,000 students from poor families, which will be distributed through the School Kits Program. (39)

† Program is funded by the Government of Cabo Verde.

Research indicates that awareness-raising efforts on human trafficking, including child sex tourism, remained insufficient on some of the nine inhabited islands. (6) Research also found that programs to assist children involved in agriculture and domestic work are not sufficient to address the scope of the problem.

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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 Cabo Verde (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Prescribe by law the number of hours per week and conditions under which light work may be undertaken.	2015 – 2020
Enforcement	Ensure that criminal investigators receive sufficient financial and human resources to conduct thorough investigations, including investigations of child labor.	2014 – 2020
	Publish labor law enforcement data, including information on labor inspectorate funding, whether refresher courses are provided, the number of child labor violations found, and the number of penalties imposed and collected related to child labor.	2011 – 2020
	Develop a system to compile and share comprehensive anti-trafficking in persons and victim identification data among criminal enforcement agencies to improve coordination efforts.	2018 – 2020
	Make criminal law enforcement data publicly available, including information on training for new criminal investigators, whether refresher courses are provided, and the number of investigations conducted, violations found, prosecutions initiated, and penalties imposed for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.	2011 – 2020
	Ensure that the judiciary has sufficient resources and personnel to allow cases to be prosecuted in a timely manner.	2019 – 2020
Government Policies	Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor.	2020
Social Programs	Ensure that special needs students and children in remote areas have equal access to education, including by providing adequate transportation.	2020
	Conduct awareness-raising activities on human trafficking, including child sex tourism, on all nine inhabited islands.	2018 – 2020
	Institute programs to address child labor in agriculture and domestic work.	2010 – 2020

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