

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in Dominica, in 2020 the government made no advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. Dominica's legal framework does not protect children from exploitative work outside of the school year, and the government has not determined the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. The country also lacks prohibitions against the use of children in pornography, or pornographic performances, and the use of children in illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs. During the reporting period, the government did not respond to requests for information related to its efforts to address child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists in Dominica. (1-3)




No current survey data on the child labor situation in Dominica are available. (1-3)

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were limited school closures, but generally, access to education continued. (3) Children from the Kalinago community face barriers to secondary education that could make them more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Because there is no secondary school in the Kalinago territory, students encounter transportation and social integration challenges as they travel outside of the territory to attend school. (1,3,4)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Dominica has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 1).

Table 1. 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 2). However, gaps exist in Dominica's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the minimum age for hazardous work.

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Table 2. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Articles 2 and 46 of the Education Act 1997 (5)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No		
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	No		Article 4 of the Constitution; Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act (6,7)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act (7)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act; Article 18 of the Sexual Offenses Act (7,8)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A†		
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A†		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 2 of the Education Act 1997 (5)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 15 of the Education Act 1997 (5)

† No standing military (9)

Article 46 of the Education Act prohibits the employment of children ages 5 to 16 during the school year, but allows students ages 14 and older to work during school vacations or in school-sponsored employment training programs without defining the conditions, specific activities, or number of hours permissible for light work. (5)

Pursuant to Section 7(1) of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act, children under age 18 are prohibited from working at night, unless they are working with family members. (11) The law does not otherwise prohibit the employment of children in work that is likely to jeopardize their health, safety, or morals. (10, 11) Specifically, Dominica does not have national laws or regulations that define the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. (7) The government also has not established a minimum age for hazardous work. Dominica's laws related to forced labor are not sufficient because they do not criminally prohibit forced labor except when it results from human trafficking. In addition, laws related to child trafficking are not sufficient because they are limited to international human trafficking. (7) The government has not enacted laws or regulations explicitly prohibiting the use of children in pornography, pornographic performances, or illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs. (10)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, the government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Labor Division, Ministry of Justice, Immigration and National Security	Conducts inspections and enforces laws related to child labor. Authorized to conduct unannounced inspections at any location with employees and to take legal action against employers violating child labor laws. (3,10) Reports to police and social services those cases in which children are found in exploitative labor situations. (10)
Ministry of Health and Social Services	Conducts inspections and enforces laws related to child labor. Reports to police those cases in which children are found in exploitative labor situations. (3,10) Provides social services, including education, housing, counseling, and financial aid, to children in child labor cases. (10)
Police Force	Enforces criminal laws, including those related to child labor. (1,3)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for mechanisms to coordinate efforts to address child labor.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2020, the government funded and participated in programs that may contribute to preventing child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including with implementation.

Table 4. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Basic Needs Trust Fund	Caribbean Development Bank-implemented program supervised by the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs, Family, and Gender Affairs that aims to reduce poverty through livelihood services, improved infrastructure, capacity-building projects, and technical services. (12)
Education Trust Fund† and School Textbook Provision Scheme†	The Education Trust Fund is a government-funded program implemented by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development that provides financial assistance for textbooks, transportation, registration, and exam fees to students in secondary school who would otherwise be unable to complete their education. (13)
School Feeding Program†	Government-funded program implemented by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development that provides lunch to primary school students in targeted areas. (14)
Climate Resilience Agency of Dominica (CREAD) and Climate Resilience Act	Launched in 2018 in partnership with the Clinton Foundation, CREAD funds, designs, procures, implements, and coordinates climate resilience projects, which include rebuilding and repairing major roads and infrastructure, including approximately 20 schools and 27 health facilities damaged by Hurricane Maria in 2017, and providing support for 8,500 farmers across the island. (15-17) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement CREAD during the reporting period.
Chances†	Government-funded program implemented by the Ministry of Youth Development and Empowerment, Youth at Risk, Gender Affairs, Seniors Security and Dominicans with Disabilities that supports an emergency residential shelter to provide short-term services to abused and neglected children. The shelter can accept victims of the worst forms of child labor. (1,10,18,19)

† Program is funded by the Government of Dominica.

The Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and UNICEF published a National Child Protection Action Plan effective through early 2021 to guide the implementation of recommendations for Dominica's child justice framework. Research was unable to determine whether Dominica has completed the recommendations or adopted the action plan. (1-3)

Although the government had social programs in 2020 that could address child labor, research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the programs during the reporting period. (2,3)

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VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the continued prevention of child labor in Dominica (Table 5).

Table 5. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Define the conditions, activities, and number of hours permissible for light work.	2014 – 2020
	Ensure that the minimum age for hazardous work is age 18 for all children.	2015 – 2020
	Determine and codify the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.	2018 – 2020
	Criminally prohibit forced labor.	2019 – 2020
	Criminally prohibit domestic child trafficking.	2019 – 2020
	Enact legislation to specifically prohibit using, procuring, or offering a child for the production of pornography or pornographic performances.	2011 – 2020
	Prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs.	2014 – 2020
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2020
Enforcement	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2020
Social Programs	Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including members of the Kalinago community who are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, by ensuring access to secondary education within the Kalinago territory.	2018 – 2020
	Adopt a national policy to improve Dominica's child justice framework as recommended by the National Child Protection Action Plan published in 2018 by the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States and UNICEF.	2020
	Publish activities undertaken to implement social programs to address child labor during the reporting period.	2020

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