

In 2020, Jamaica made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government launched a national referral mechanism for child trafficking victims, and significantly increased the budget for the Program for Advancement through Health and Education from \$70.7 million in 2019 to \$100 million, an expansion that was supplemented with another \$6.7 million after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. It also

implemented the Child Labor Risk Identification Model, a preventative tool that identifies geographical areas and sectors with the highest probability of child labor. However, children in Jamaica are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and use in illicit activities. Children also engage in dangerous tasks in agriculture and street work. Although the government has laws prohibiting the use of children in some illicit activities, it does not provide higher penalties for using, procuring, or offering children for the production and distribution of drugs than penalties imposed for these same crimes when the victims are adults.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Jamaica are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and use in illicit activities. (1,2) Children also engage in dangerous tasks in agriculture and street work. (3) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Jamaica. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

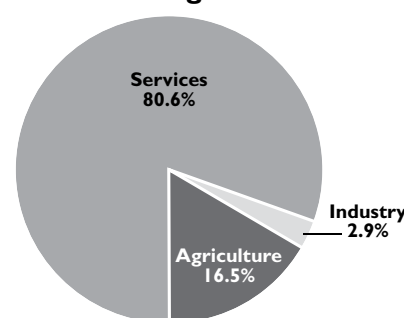
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	6.2 (30,111)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	98.9
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	7.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		Unavailable

Primary completion rate was unavailable from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021. (4)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Jamaica Youth Activity Survey (SIMPOC), 2016. (3)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



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,† activities unknown (3,5) Fishing, activities unknown (3,6,7)
Industry	Construction† (8)
Services	Garbage scavenging and collecting scrap metal (6,9) Working in gardens, shops, and markets (5,10) Domestic work (5,10-13) Street work, including peddling goods and services, begging,† and vending (5,6,13-15) Wholesale and retail (3)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,5,8,13,14,16) Forced labor in domestic work (1,5,14,17) Use in illicit activities, including executing financial scams and serving as drug and gun couriers (1,6,8-10,13,14,16,18-20)

† 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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Jamaica is a destination and source country for commercial sexual exploitation of children, particularly in or near the tourist attractions of Negril, Montego Bay, and certain urban areas of Kingston. (5) Jamaican children are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor to countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. (17) Sources indicate that children, sometimes at the behest of parents or criminal leaders referred to as “dons,” are forced into commercial sexual exploitation. (6) Young girls, immigrant children, LGBTQI+ youth, children from poor families, and children from rural areas are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking and child sexual exploitation. (1,14)

Children also continue to be recruited by criminal organizations to engage in illicit activities, such as gang violence, drug and gun smuggling, and financial fraud, including lottery scamming. (1,6,14,16,20) Some child domestic workers are subjected to domestic servitude, and some children are subjected to forced begging. Many children are reported missing in Jamaica, some of whom may be subjected to forced labor. (1,14,21)




The Statistical Institute of Jamaica and the ILO released the results of the Jamaica National Youth Activity Survey, which estimated that 37,965 children between ages 5 to 17 are engaged in child labor in Jamaica, with 48.9 percent engaged in hazardous work. Children are engaged in hazardous work primarily in the domestic work sector, in agriculture and fishing, in the wholesale and retail sectors, and in construction. (22) Children in rural areas are more likely to work than their urban counterparts; they are also more likely to work more hours and to engage in hazardous work. (3,22)

Although education in Jamaica is free, compulsory, and universal through secondary school, the cost for transportation, food, books, and uniforms creates barriers to education for some children. (6,23,24) School violence is common and, as a result, may prevent access to education. (5)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Jamaica 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 Jamaica’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the prohibition of using children for the production and distribution of drugs.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 34(1) of the Child Care and Protection Act (25)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 34(3) of the Child Care and Protection Act (25)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 34(3)(b) and 41 of the Child Care and Protection Act of 2004; Section 55 of the Factories Act: Docks (Safety, Health and Welfare) Regulations; Section 49(2) of the Factories Act: Building Operations and Works of Engineering Construction Regulations; Section 18 of the Mining Act (25-28)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Section 4 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act (29)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Section 10 of the Child Care and Protection Act; Section 4 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act (25,29)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Section 4 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prevention, Suppression and Punishment) Act; Sections 20 and 40 of the Sexual Offences Act; Sections 3–5 of the Child Pornography (Prevention) Act (29-31)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Section 4 of the Criminal Justice (Suppression of Criminal Organizations) Act (32)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Section 18(2) of the Defence Act (33)
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	Section 28 of the Child Care and Protection Act (25)
Free Public Education	Yes		Section 13(k) of the Jamaican Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms (34)

* No conscription (29)

Jamaican laws do not specifically include higher penalties for perpetrators who use, procure, or offer a child for the production and distribution of drugs. (25,35) The minimum age for work is also lower than the compulsory education age, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of schooling. In addition, Jamaican law does not criminally prohibit military recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

The Occupational Safety and Health Bill was expected to be passed by parliament during the reporting year, but it still has not been passed. Regulations associated with the bill, if passed, specify light work activities are permitted for children ages 13 and 14. (6,14,36)

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 authority 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
Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MLSS)	Enforces and administers child labor laws through the labor inspectorate, in both the formal and informal sectors of the economy. The Child Labor Unit within MLSS coordinates and shares information with other agencies to address child labor issues. (8)
Child Protection and Family Services Agency (CPFSA)	Monitors and investigates suspected child labor violations and oversees efforts to address child labor. Housed within the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information. (6,36) Receives complaints of child abuse, child labor, child trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation of children through a hotline. Refers suspected cases of child abuse to law enforcement. (6,8) Approximately 2,000 calls were received through the hotline, of which 314 were child labor matters that were referred from the National Children's Registry to the Investigation Services Unit. (38)

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

Organization/Agency	Role
Office of the Children's Advocate	Independently investigates reports of child abuse; partners with other agencies, including CPFSA and the police, to promote protection of children and address child labor. (8)
Jamaica Constabulary Force	Enforces criminal laws, including those related to the worst forms of child labor. Investigates, through the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit, cases of child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. (8) Through the Center for the Investigation of Sexual Offenses and Child Abuse, investigates cases of child and sexual offenses, and educates the public about sexual offenses against children. (6)
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	Prosecutes cases involving the worst forms of child labor. Protects and promotes human rights for all citizens. (39)
Office of the National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons	Monitors government efforts to protect human trafficking victims, prosecute cases, and implement preventative measures. (14)
Ministry of Justice Victim Services Division	Provides emotional support, crisis management, and special intervention projects for children and adults. (14) Assists child crime victims through the Children in Court Program, which offers victims access to social workers and counselors. (40)
Counter Terrorism & Organized Crime Investigation Branch, Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit	Responsible for special investigations of human trafficking, including child trafficking and crimes such as forced child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities in which trafficking is involved. (8)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2020, labor law enforcement agencies in Jamaica took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MLSS) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including penalty assessment authorization.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$3,000,000 (41)	\$3,144,000 (5)
Number of Labor Inspectors	183 (41)	181 (5)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (8)	No (5)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (41)	Yes (5)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (41)	Yes (5)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (41)	Yes (5)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown (8)	2,669 (5)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (8)	1,821 (5)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (41)	6 (38)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (8)	Unknown (5)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (8)	Unknown (5)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown (8)	Yes (5)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown (8)	Yes (5)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (8)	Yes (42)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown (8)	Yes (5)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (8)	Yes (5)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (8)	Yes (5)

In 2020, 168 labor inspectors received refresher training on how to identify child labor. (38) There were six cases of child labor violations found as a result of labor inspections. Two involved two 17-year-olds who were not aware they were not allowed to work at a construction site. The child victims in the remaining four cases were provided medical and psychological care and sent to shelters or returned home to their parents. (38)

Inspectors are not allowed to enter and inspect private residences, do not have authority to assess penalties, and are not required to take refresher training unless an administrative order or policy directive is issued. (5) Social workers are allowed to enter private residences and are trained to watch for indicators of child labor. (38)

The Government of Jamaica took steps in 2020 to address the country's child labor issues. In partnership with USDOS, Jamaica developed and released a national referral mechanism for child trafficking victims as an objective under the Child Protection Compact. (2) Furthermore, research shows that the MLSS significantly increased the budget for its Program for Advancement through Health and Education from \$70.7 million in 2019 to \$100 million, an expansion that was supplemented with another \$6.7 million after the advent of the pandemic. (5,8,23) However, the budget for anti-trafficking programming, which includes child labor programs in many respects, was reduced during the reporting period. All ministries saw budget cuts, with the anti-trafficking budget reduced by \$26,000 during the second quarter. (38)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2020, criminal law enforcement agencies in Jamaica 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 lack of regular training for prosecutors and officials.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (41)	Yes (5)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (8)	N/A (5)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (41)	Yes (5)
Number of Investigations	18 (41)	28 (5)
Number of Violations Found	4 (41)	8 (5)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	4 (41)	2 (5)
Number of Convictions	5 (41)	1 (5)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (41)	Yes (5)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (8)	Yes (5)

During the reporting period, line prosecutors and judiciary received training sessions pursuant to the U.S.-Jamaica Child Protection Compact. While the amount of training provided continues to increase year after year, the training program remains ad hoc. (2)

In 2020, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit and Center for Investigation of Sexual Offenses and Child Abuse found eight violations of laws related to the worst forms of child labor. All of the victims had been subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. Fifteen cases are still under investigation. (38)

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 clarity of institutional mandates.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
MLSS Program for the Elimination of Child Labor	Coordinates the government's child labor policies and programs and identifies gaps in legislation across ministries. Collaborates with other ministries and agencies, such as the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Information, CPFSA, the Ministry of Justice's National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (NATFATIP), and the Ministry of National Security, to address gaps in legislation. (2) During the reporting period, MLSS partnered with NATFATIP to host various online public awareness campaigns on child labor and human trafficking. (2)

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
NATFATIP	Facilitates information exchanges between government agencies and external stakeholders and creates momentum for counter-trafficking efforts. Led by the Ministry of National Security, includes ministries and agencies across the government. (8,41) Oversees implementation of the country's National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking. (9) Meets regularly with the Jamaica Constabulary Force, the Director of Public Prosecutions, and relevant ministries. (8,9) In 2020, appointed a new permanent secretary and formed a new library collection of books on trafficking in persons. (5,43) With the support of the U.S.-Jamaica Child Protection Compact, also developed a child trafficking screening toolkit, a set of screening tools to outline behavioral, situational, and health factors that indicate a child is being exploited. (2) Throughout 2020, sponsored and hosted various public awareness campaigns, including virtual public discussions on the worst forms of child labor with the Jamaica Constabulary Force and MLSS; radio discussion on child protection during the pandemic; social media discussion on how to safeguard children against human trafficking with CPFSA; annual essay competition for World Day Against Child Labor; and a video competition, focused on human trafficking for Children's Month. (2)
National Steering Committee on Child Labor	Provides leadership, shares information, and guides the development of policies and programs geared towards eliminating the worst forms of child labor. (38) Coordinates the government's design and implementation of activities and regulations to reduce child labor under the National Action Plan (NAP) to Eliminate Child Labor. In January 2020, reviewed and revised the NAP to Eliminate Child Labor in Jamaica (2019–2024). (44,45)

Although the Child Protection and Family Services Agency has assumed a coordinating function between various agencies charged with protecting children, the organization is not mandated or resourced to play this role. Accordingly, Jamaica lacks an effective agency to coordinate efforts to address the challenges posed by child labor, human trafficking, and other child-related issues. (14)

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 fact that child labor prevention and elimination strategies are still not integrated into the Compulsory Education Policy.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (2018–2021)	Identifies objectives, actions, and responsible agencies to combat trafficking in persons, including commercial sexual exploitation of children and forced child labor, through prevention, protection, and prosecution. (20) Approved an updated National Plan of Action to Combat Human Trafficking (2018–2021) in cabinet on March 28, 2019, which is intended to address all forms of trafficking in persons and all potential victims, including victims of sex trafficking and forced labor; foreign-born and domestic victims, and children and adults. (8) In 2020, to raise public awareness, hosted 3 webinars on human trafficking and child labor; with over 40 persons attending each; made public service announcements on Radio Jamaica and other stations; and hosted a social media video competition for children under age 13. Collaborated with VP Records to raise awareness on human trafficking by launching the “No Shadows After Dark” song and campaign. (38) Further hosted 3 webinars on modern slavery and child trafficking for over 50 immigration officers, and partnered with the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute for Social and Economic Studies (SALISES) to host 4 child trafficking prevention workshops for over 90 Deans of Discipline and 30 Education Officers with schools. In addition, engaged with SALISES to facilitate 7 virtual child trafficking prevention workshops to over 230 Health and Family Life Education Officers and teachers who were tasked with delivering the content of the Ministry's Child Trafficking Prevention curriculum in schools. (38)

In 2020, Jamaica became the first country in the Caribbean to implement the Child Labor Risk Identification (CLRISK) Model, a preventative tool developed by the ILO and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. The CLRISK Model will enable Jamaica to identify geographical areas and sectors with the highest probability of child labor and to implement measures to address child labor. (2,46)

In November 2019, the government established a National Plan of Action for an Integrated Response to Children and Violence (NPACV), which outlines a range of strategies and programs that will be implemented over 5 years across multiple stages in a child's life. The NPACV is implemented, monitored, and evaluated by an Inter-Sectoral Committee on Children and Violence. (5) However, child labor prevention and elimination strategies are still not integrated into the Compulsory Education Policy. (9,47)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

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

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Program for Advancement through Health and Education (PATH)†	Government of Jamaica- and World Bank-funded conditional cash transfer program that helps reduce child labor by requiring participants to attend school at least 85 percent of the academic days in a month. (8,47,48) Approximately 65 percent of PATH participants are within the lowest socioeconomic quintile. (38) 214,999 children participated in PATH during the reporting period. (38)
Citizen Security and Justice Program‡	Cooperative crime and violence prevention initiative undertaken by the Government of Jamaica, the Inter-American Development Bank, the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development of Canada, and the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Aimed to prevent gangs, criminals, and other actors from recruiting children. Provided services to 50 vulnerable communities in 8 different parishes. (14) Ended in March 2020. (5)
Trafficking in Persons Club in School Program‡	Launched by NATFATIP in October 2019 and implemented by the Ministry of National Security, the program is designed to provide information, exposure, and knowledge to students and teachers regarding child trafficking to help protect them from becoming victims. (8) In 2020, hosted 3 virtual events on human trafficking and child labor, with over 40 members of the public attending each event. (38)
Regional Initiative Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labor (2022-2025)	Developed as an inter-governmental cooperation platform made up of 30 countries, with active participation of employers' and workers' organizations. Seeks to declare Latin America and the Caribbean as the first developing region free of child labor by 2025. Drawing on the knowledge, experience, and accumulated capacity of key public and private actors, aims to address the persistence of child work. In October 2020, organized a virtual conference to discuss plans for 2022–2025, update its governance mechanisms, and work to improve participant ownership and social dialogue. (49)
U.S.-Jamaica Child Protection Compact Partnership (2018–2022)	Jointly developed 4-year plan partially funded by the U.S. Government to enhance the efforts of the Government of Jamaica to combat child trafficking. Finalized in 2018. Commits Jamaica to providing staff and resources to fulfill the project's objectives. (1) Formally launched in 2019 with implementing partners Wvarnath, Winrock, IOM, and Encompass, and began activities and training across the island. (8) In 2020, as part of this plan, launched a Trafficking in Persons Resource Library. (50) Moreover, U.S. and Jamaica representatives met to define next steps to strengthen capacity to identify more child trafficking victims and to better coordinate comprehensive protective services. (51)

† Program is funded by the Government of Jamaica.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (52-55)

Although Jamaica funds education-related social programs, current resources are insufficient, and social programs do not fully address the scope and magnitude of the problem, including the worst forms of child labor. (14) Research found no evidence of programs targeting children working in agriculture, street work, commercial sexual exploitation, and other worst forms of child labor.

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 Jamaica (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that legislation includes higher penalties for the use of children for the production and distribution of drugs.	2009 – 2020
	Raise the minimum age for work to align with the compulsory education age of 16.	2018 – 2020
	Pass legislation that will determine the specific light work activities and hours permissible for children ages 13 and 14 to facilitate enforcement.	2014 – 2020
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2020

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties.	2014 – 2020
	Ensure that yearly refresher training is mandatory for all labor inspectors.	2018 – 2020
	Publish information on the number of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed and collected.	2018 – 2020
	Provide training for prosecutors on a yearly or regular basis, as training is currently provided on an ad hoc basis.	2020
Coordination	Ensure that the Child Protection and Family Services Agency and any other relevant agency or coordinating body has the authority and resources necessary to effectively coordinate between child labor, human trafficking, and other child-related issues.	2018 – 2020
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Compulsory Education Policy.	2014 – 2020
Social Programs	Ensure that school costs, such as uniforms, books, food, and transportation, do not diminish access to free public education.	2017 – 2020
	Ensure that social programs adequately address child labor, including the worst forms of child labor, and expand programs designed to assist child laborers involved in street work, commercial sexual exploitation, agricultural work, and other worst forms of child labor.	2013 – 2020
	Implement a program to report, identify, and find missing children who may have been forced into child labor.	2020

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