

In 2020, Saint Lucia made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government launched a comprehensive study to assess economically vulnerable populations in the country. The study will ultimately provide recommendations on effective ways to help the identified populations. The Trafficking in Persons Task Force also raised awareness through social media platforms and issued several press releases related to human trafficking. Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Saint Lucia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in the sale and distribution of drugs. Saint Lucia's legal framework does not sufficiently protect children from hazardous work and illicit activities. In addition, policies addressing all forms of child labor, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children, do not exist.



### I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Saint Lucia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in the sale and distribution of drugs. (1-4) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Saint Lucia.

**Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	7.5 (2,017)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	99.7
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	8.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		99.8

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2019, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021. (5)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4 (MICS 4), 2012. (6)

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
Services	Street vending, including selling food and handicrafts in markets (3)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-4)
	Use in illicit activities, including in the sale and distribution of drugs (1,4)

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

During the reporting period, the government began a comprehensive study to assess economically vulnerable populations in the country. The study will serve to provide recommendations on effective ways to meet the needs of these populations. (7)

In 2020, reports indicated a significant increase in cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children. (3)

Saint Lucia lacks detailed data on the extent of child labor in the country. A rapid assessment conducted by the ILO in 2016 revealed limited evidence that children are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes in exchange for rides, clothing, or cell phones, by family members or caregivers in situations of financial need. (1,3) Additional sources also indicate that local and foreign children

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are subjected to human trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation, including by parents and caregivers. (2,3,8,9)

All children in Saint Lucia are entitled to free public education. However, violence in schools, some gang related, may hinder some children from attending. (10) Children who do not attend school are vulnerable to engage in child labor.

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Saint Lucia has ratified most 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 Saint Lucia's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children and the use of children in illicit activities.

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 122 of the Labor Code (11,12)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 122(2) of the Labor Code (11)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		Articles 126(b) and 214 of the Labor Code (11)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	No		Article 4 of the Constitution; Article 6 of the Labor Code (11,13)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 3, 5, and 10(c) of Counter-Trafficking Act No. 7 (14)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Article 141 of the Criminal Code; Articles 2 and 5 of Counter-Trafficking Act No. 7 (14,15)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Articles 141 and 560 of the Criminal Code (15)
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	15	Article 27 of the Education Act (16)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 16 of the Education Act (16)

\* No conscription (17)

† No standing military (17)

In 2020, the government began a comprehensive revision of the Labor Act, specifically addressing certain issues related to the Labor Department's mandate. It is currently under the review of the Attorney General. (3)

Saint Lucia has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. (11) Although the Criminal Code prohibits the use of children in some illicit activities, such as street work, the use, procurement, or offering of children for the production and trafficking of drugs is not criminally prohibited. (15) Moreover, forced labor is only criminally prohibited if it results from human trafficking, and the use or offering of children for commercial sexual exploitation is not criminally prohibited. (11,13,15)

### 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 Infrastructure, Ports, Energy, and Labor	Enforces laws on child labor through labor inspections conducted by its Department of Labor. (8)
Royal Saint Lucia Police Force	Enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. (8) Through its Vulnerable Persons Unit, in collaboration with the Division of Human Services, investigates cases of child labor, abuse, and neglect. The Vulnerable Persons Unit consists of 2 units of 12 officers each and leads in the enforcement of child labor laws. (8,18) Uses a specific manual to investigate crimes related to children. (8)
Ministry of Home Affairs, Justice, and National Security	Coordinates and leads anti-human trafficking efforts among various ministries. (19,20)
Department of Human Services and Family Affairs	Leads efforts related to childcare, protection, and adoption as mandated in the 2018 Child Care, Protection, and Adoption Bill. (10,21) Monitors and implements relevant legal framework related to cases of commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking in persons, including child victims. (22) Located within the Ministry of Equity. (10)

#### Labor Law Enforcement

In 2020, labor law enforcement agencies in Saint Lucia took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Infrastructure, Ports, Energy, and Labor 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	\$398,890 (3)	\$392,313 (3)
Number of Labor Inspectors	6 (8)	4 (3)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (8)	No (11)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	No (8)	No (3)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	No (8)	No (3)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	300 (8)	150 (3)
Number Conducted at Worksite	300 (8)	150 (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (8)	0 (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A	N/A
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A	N/A
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (8)	Yes (3)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown (8)	No (3)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (8)	Yes (11)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (8)	No (3)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (8)	Yes (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (8)	Yes (3)

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In 2020, reports indicate that the decrease in the number of labor inspections was primarily due to COVID-19 pandemic-related restrictions and limited resources. (3) Although inspectors look for child labor and forced labor violations during all inspections, reports indicate that insufficient funding may hamper the labor inspectorate's capacity to enforce child labor laws in all relevant sectors, especially in communities in which children are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation. (8) Inspectors can make recommendations to the Labor Commissioner, but cannot assess penalties, and furthermore existing penalties are insufficient to deter employers from committing child labor violations. (3,23)

### **Criminal Law Enforcement**

In 2020, criminal law enforcement agencies in Saint Lucia 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 insufficient 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 (24)	No (3)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	No (3)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (24)	No (3)
Number of Investigations	0 (8)	30 (25)
Number of Violations Found	0 (8)	0 (3)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (8)	0 (3)
Number of Convictions	0 (8)	0 (3)
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 (8)	Yes (3)

In 2020, reports indicate there were approximately 60 suspected cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children in contrast to 1 suspected case in 2019. (3) Of these 60 cases, 19 were referred by NGOs to the Division of Human Services and the police as possible cases of child sex trafficking. In addition, the police reported that they investigated 30 cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children under the Child Justice Act. (25) During the reporting period, the government also continued to investigate a suspected human trafficking case of a minor. Authorities are working with another government to locate and repatriate this victim. (7,26)

Reports indicate that insufficient resources, including funding, transportation, and equipment, hamper police capacity to enforce child labor laws. (18,27) Although the judicial system within the Ministry of Home Affairs, Justice, and National Security has a backlog of cases, and lacks the personnel and resources needed to address these issues, during the reporting period the government hired an additional judge and two prosecutors to address the backlog. (28,29)

## **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 efficacy in accomplishing mandates.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations, and Sustainable Development	Coordinates investigations of potential child labor cases and ensures the use of established protocols in collaboration with the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force. Active in 2020. (3,30)
Trafficking in Persons Task Force	Coordinates the identification and referral of human trafficking cases among law enforcement, social services, and immigration officials, under the Counter-Trafficking Act. Includes public servants, representatives from the Department of Labor, police, and victim-service NGOs. (14,31) Conducted human trafficking awareness raising through social media platforms, and issued several trafficking in persons press releases during the reporting period. (7)
Office of Gender Relations	Provides referrals to human trafficking victims for health, advocacy, crisis, and legal services. (3) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken by the Office of Gender Relations during the reporting period.

## 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 no evidence of a policy addressing child labor and its worst forms.

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
National Social Protection Policy (2014–2024)	Established a social protection policy in Phase I (2014–2019) by consolidating the Social Safety Net programs. In Phase II (2019–2024), will implement wider reforms for creating a coherent social protection policy. (18) Child protection policies are incorporated into poverty reduction concepts and promote access to education. (32,33) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Social Protection Policy during the reporting period.

Research found no evidence of any policies addressing child labor and its worst forms.

## VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

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

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Educational Programs†	Programs focused on increasing school attendance and promoting access to education. Includes the Saint Lucia Social Development Fund and Public Assistance Program, which fosters school attendance; the Community Empowerment’s After School Program, which aims to improve academic performance and maintains school attendance of children ages 8 to 16; the Upton Garden Girls Center, which provides education, training, and self-development opportunities to teenage girls; the Center for Adolescent Renewal and Education, which provides second-chance education, training, and self-development services to adolescents; the Boys Training Center, which supports boys ages 10 to 18 who have come in contact with the law or require care and protection; and the <i>Koudmen Sent Lisi</i> program, which funds textbook rentals, a book bursary that reimburses students for textbooks, a school feeding program, and a transportation subsidy program at most secondary schools. (19) During the reporting period, the government focused on providing school children with tablets, computers, and other resources to support at home learning since schools were closed in response to the pandemic. (25)
Building the Capacity of the Government of Saint Lucia and Promoting Awareness of Counter-Trafficking‡	\$105,000 government-funded, 2 year public awareness project to counter human trafficking; led by the Trafficking in Persons Task Force. Focuses on running radio and television announcements, printing posters and brochures, and maintaining a Facebook page to ensure a growing media and social media presence on human trafficking. (24) In 2019, the government assumed full financial support for this program from IOM. (24) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this program during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Saint Lucia.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (35)

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In 2020, reports indicate that the Government of Saint Lucia implemented programs aimed at improving economic conditions throughout the country, particularly in rural, impoverished areas. The government also continued to fund the Saint Lucia Crisis Center, a local NGO that provides human trafficking victim assistance, including victims of child trafficking. (7)

Research found no evidence of any programs with the specific goal of eliminating or preventing the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities such as the sale and transportation of drugs. In addition, overall funding for social programs remains a concern because it does not meet the needs of all children in the country, especially children subjected to human trafficking and those engaged in illicit activities, and funding remains highly dependent on foreign assistance. (19,36)

## 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 Saint Lucia (Table 11).

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.	2017 – 2020
	Ensure that laws criminally prohibit the forced labor of children in all instances.	2016 – 2020
	Ensure that laws criminally prohibit using or offering a child for commercial sexual exploitation.	2016 – 2020
	Ensure that laws prohibit procuring or offering a child for illicit activities, including drug trafficking and production.	2011 – 2020
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2020
Enforcement	Ensure that the labor inspectorate receives sufficient funding for conducting labor inspections.	2015 – 2020
	Authorize labor inspectors to assess penalties for labor law violations.	2016 – 2020
	Ensure that labor inspectors and criminal investigators receive initial training on child labor law enforcement, and that refresher courses are also provided for both labor inspectors and criminal investigators.	2015 – 2020
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by initiating targeted inspections based on analysis of data on risk-prone sectors and patterns of serious incidents, and by conducting unannounced inspections.	2015 – 2020
	Increase the resources allocated to criminal investigators, including transportation and equipment.	2017 – 2020
	Ensure that existing penalties are sufficient to deter employers from committing child labor violations.	2018 – 2020
	Ensure that the judiciary has sufficient resources and personnel to allow cases to be tried in a timely manner.	2017 – 2020
Coordination	Ensure that the Office of Gender Relations is able to carry out its intended mandate.	2020
Government Policies	Ensure that the National Social Protection Policy is implemented and fulfills its mandate.	2015 – 2020
	Adopt policies to address the worst forms of child labor, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2010 – 2020
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2017 – 2020
	Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers to education, and make it accessible for all children by ensuring that violence does not occur at schools.	2018 – 2020
	Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement all government funded programs.	2020
	Design and implement social programs that specifically target and assist children engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities such as the sale and transportation of drugs.	2013 – 2020
	Ensure that funding for social programs is sufficient so that it can meet the needs of all children, including vulnerable children, and that it does not highly rely on foreign assistance.	2017 – 2020

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