

In 2021, Belize made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government developed Belize's second National Child Labor Policy with plans to begin implementation in 2022. It also launched a program with the ILO and the Belize Sugarcane Farmers Association to pilot strategies to promote employment for vulnerable youth and women in the sugarcane supply chain in northern Belize. In addition, Belize achieved its first two convictions under the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Act. However, children in Belize are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in dangerous tasks in agriculture and construction. Belize does not meet the international standard for prohibitions of hazardous work because children over age 14 are permitted to work in dangerous activities such as mining, manufacturing, and construction. In addition, the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.



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

Children in Belize are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in dangerous tasks in agriculture and construction. (1-3) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Belize.

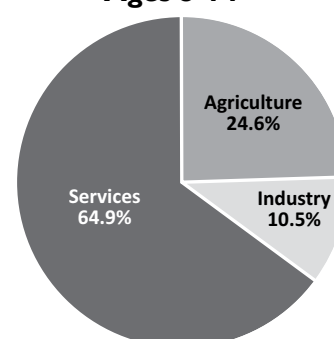
**Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	1.6 (1,405)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	94.5
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	1.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		104.5

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2020, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022. (4)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from National Child Activity Survey (SIMPOC), 2013. (5)

**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	Production of beans, bananas, citrus fruits, cereals, corn, rice, sugarcane, papayas, and vegetables (1-3,6-9)
	Fishing, including for fish, lobster, and conch (1-3,6,10)
	Butchering or raising livestock, including poultry and cattle (6,10,11)
Industry	Construction, carpentry, masonry, wood carving, carrying heavy loads, and using power tools (1-3,6,10)
	Quarrying, including operating stone crushers (2,10,12)
Services	Street and retail vending (2,3,10)
	Yard work, including using lawnmowers, weed-eaters, and machetes (6,10-12)
	Sewing (10)
	Working and cooking in food service, including using large mixers and grills (3,6,10,11)
	Working in the tourist sector, including in food and alcohol service and hospitality, and as tour guides, maintenance personnel, and security guards (1-3)

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**Table 2. Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity (Cont.)**

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Auto repair (6,10,11)
	Welding (10,11)
	Pumping gas (6,11)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2,13,14)
	Forced labor in working and cooking in food service (3)
	Use in illicit activities, including trafficking of drugs and weapons (1-3,10,15)

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

Belize lacks a recent comprehensive child labor study, which makes it difficult to clearly determine the sectors and activities in which working children are engaged. Although there is a plan to conduct a more thorough study under the Child Labor Secretariat and Inspectorate, the last known data available are from a 2010 study on child activity funded by the ILO. (1,2)

Particularly in rural areas of Belize, many children are removed from school on their 14th birthday to work as street vendors or in the sectors of agriculture and construction. (16) Reports also showed that children in rural areas work in the agriculture and fishing industries, while children in urban areas work in the construction and tourist industries. Children work on family-owned farms and accompany adults to employment sites to assist in planting and harvesting. (1,3)

Among Belize’s ethnic groups, Mennonites have the highest percentage of child labor, with approximately 9.5 percent of Mennonite children engaged in child labor. (2,6,10,12) Non-Mennonite children are also engaged in child labor on Mennonite-owned land. (7) Children working on Mennonite land often use dangerous tools like machetes, tractors, and plows, and work long hours in the sun without proper hydration. (3,7,12) Limited reporting also indicates that boys working mainly in Mennonite communities may be involved in operating heavy machinery and flying small airplanes to spray crops. (1,2)

Children in Belize are also engaged in child labor in diving and fishing for fish, lobster, and conch. Many of these children cannot swim or may be involved in swimming at extreme depths and have been injured working with dangerous tools such as anchors, fish traps, chipping hammers, and spears. (1-3,10)

Government officials stated that there are anecdotal reports of Belize being a destination for child sexual exploitation, with reports of children being trafficked in areas frequented by tourists or seasonal workers, such as San Pedro, Punta Gorda, and Belize City. (2,13,14) There have also been instances of the "sugar daddy" phenomenon, in which a wealthy male offers to pay school fees, provide cash payments, or purchase groceries or gifts for a family in exchange for sexual favors from a young, usually female, family member. (17) Girls from impoverished communities and LGBTQI+ children are particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation and labor trafficking in Belize. (14,15,18) Migrant children are trafficked in commercial sexual exploitation, with most typically originating from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras. (16) A limited number of sources also indicate that boys from Belize City and San Pedro were trafficked to transport and sell drugs and firearms and commit murders as part of gang warfare. (1,2,12,15,16) These activities were more prevalent in rural communities near the Mexican and Guatemalan borders, where smuggling contraband from these countries is known to be a high-profit enterprise. (16)




In Belize, primary and secondary education is tuition free up to age 14. In areas lacking a school, the state provides free transportation for children to attend the nearest primary school. (16) Many children's access to education is hindered by the cost of school fees, textbooks, uniforms, and meals. (15,16) In 2021, approximately 60 percent of children benefited from a secondary school subsidy of \$150 per year toward education expenses. (16) Migrant children do not qualify for state benefits including tuition coverage and access to the \$150 subsidies for high school students. Parents must cover these costs and pay administrative fees or opt to remove their child from school. (16) Some Spanish-speaking children face language barriers at schools that provide

instruction only in English. (7) In addition, Belize lacks qualified teachers, basic supplies, and adequate facilities to educate children. (2)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Belize 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 Belize's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the minimum age for hazardous work.

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Articles 54, 164, and 169 of the Labor Act; Articles 2 and 3 of the Shops Act (19,20)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No	14	Articles 2 and 7 of the Families and Children Act; Articles 54 and 169 of the Labor Act (19,21)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 8 of the Constitution; Articles 157 and 158 of the Labor Act; Articles 2 and 11 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act (19, 22, 25)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 11–14 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act; Article 9 of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act; Articles 49–51 of the Criminal Code (23-25)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Articles 2, 11, 13, and 14 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act; Articles 2–9 of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act; Articles 49–51 of the Criminal Code (23-25)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 16 of the Defense Act (26)
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	14	Articles 2 and 59 of the Education and Training Act; Articles 2 and 34 of the Education Act (27,28)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 70 of the Education and Training Act; Article 45 of the Education Act (27,28)

\* Country has no conscription (26)

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While Belizean law does set the minimum legal age for work in wholesale and retail trade or business at age 14, the law is inconsistent with international standards on light work, because it allows children between the ages of 12 and 14 to engage in some activities deemed “light work”, but the types of light work permissible for children have not yet been identified. (19,20,29) Belizean law is also inconsistent with international standards on hazardous work. Children under age 14 are prohibited from working in industrial undertakings—including activities such as mining, manufacturing, and construction—but children over age 14 are permitted to work in those types of activities. (19) Although Belizean law indicates that children under age 18 are prohibited from being employed or engaged in any activity that may be detrimental to their health, education, or mental, physical, or moral development, the law does not specify which employment activities are detrimental to children. (19,21) While a hazardous work and light work list was originally drafted in 2018, legislative delays have impeded the government’s efforts to enact and amend this or other legislation addressing child labor concerns. (1,3) A list of hazardous work prohibited for all children has not been adopted as law. (29,30)

The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act and the Criminal Code prohibit all forms of child sexual exploitation, with the former explicitly prohibiting child pornography. (23,24) However, consensual sex with children ages 16 or 17 is permitted, including in cases in which a person gives or promises remuneration, goods, food, or other benefits in exchange for the sexual act. This provision leaves children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. (23,30)

The Government of Belize is currently conducting consultations on potential revisions to the Anti-Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act of 2013 and the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act of 2013, with the aim of achieving compliance with international standards. On March 24, 2022, the government enacted into law an amendment to the Indictable Procedures Act that adds the crimes of child abduction, child abuse, and human trafficking to the list of crimes that can be tried without a jury in order to improve the speed of court cases, address the back log of cases, and provide survivors a more comfortable environment in which to testify. (31)

Research could not determine whether laws prohibit the use of children in specific illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs. (32)

### 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
Ministry of Human Development, Families, and Indigenous People's Affairs	Receives referrals for child labor cases. (16) Provides survivors with welfare services, including medical and social services and counseling assistance. (18) Previously known as Ministry of Human Development and Social Transformation, Department of Human Services. Department of Human Services and Child Protection remains under this ministry and is tasked with enforcement of criminal laws regarding forced child labor, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and use of children in illicit activities. (16)
Belize Police Department (BPD)	Investigates cases of child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and human trafficking through Sexual Offense and Family Violence Units. (2,3,16) Through its Anti-Trafficking in Persons (A-TIP) Unit, utilizes specialized screening to identify potential survivors of trafficking and forced labor. The A-TIP Unit works closely with its counterparts in the A-TIP Council, which is the interagency governmental council overseeing cases involving trafficking and forced labor. (16)
Office of the Director of Public Prosecution	Prosecutes criminal offenses in court, including cases of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. (3,11)

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

Organization/Agency	Role
Child Labor Secretariat and Inspectorate	Identifies, coordinates, and reports on all child labor activities; collaborates with stakeholders to assist with the monitoring and enforcement of laws and policies that relate to child labor; and consults, educates, and raises awareness of child labor. Deals with all issues related to child labor and enables criminal authorities and social services to reciprocally refer children found in child labor. (2) After the situation has been assessed, relevant agencies get involved, such as the Department of Human Services and BPD. (16)
Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labor, and Local Government	Identifies cases, conducts inspections, and enforces laws related to child labor and hazardous child labor through its Labor Department. (3,16) In June 2021, held a day-long workshop on child labor issues to observe World Day Against Child Labor. (33)
Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, and Technology	Investigates truancy offenses in schools and issues fines for these violations. (2,3)

### Labor Law Enforcement

In 2021, labor law enforcement agencies in Belize took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including insufficient funding for the labor inspectorate.

**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (3)	Unknown (16)
Number of Labor Inspectors	23 (3)	24 (16)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (19)	Yes (19)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (3)	Yes (16)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (3)	N/A (16)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (3)	Yes (16)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	301 (3)	584 (16)
Number Conducted at Worksite	301 (3)	584 (16)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (3)	0 (16)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	0 (3)	0 (16)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	0 (3)	0 (16)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (3)	Yes (16)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (3)	Yes (16)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (19)	Yes (19)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (3)	Yes (16)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (3)	Yes (16)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (3)	Yes (16)

The government incorporates child labor curriculum into inspector training programs and uses a child labor inspection and monitoring form that it developed through the CLEAR II Project to record child labor information. Of the 584 labor inspections performed during the reporting year, 197 were child labor inspections. (16) Although the Labor Department is required to visit every business at least once a year, it usually falls short of this goal due to a lack of resources. (1,10) Labor inspectors are able to assess penalties, but the fine for child labor infractions is only \$12.50. Liquor licensing boards, which also have a responsibility to detect and report cases of child labor, also routinely fails to conduct required inspections of restaurants and bars. (1,34,35) Thus, inspections and penalties may be insufficient to deter child labor violations in Belize.

The government does not publish information regarding labor inspectorate funding. Government officials indicated that inspectors have sufficient office facilities, transportation, fuel, and other necessities to carry out inspections. (16) However, according to the Child Development Foundation, a local NGO that works in the field of child exploitation, abuse, neglect, and labor, the annual budget designated to address child labor is insufficient. The Child Development Foundation also noted that, in most instances, labor inspectors do not have

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transportation and fuel to travel to all locations. (16) Another NGO contact confirmed that inspectors do not travel to all areas of the country due to vehicle and fuel shortages, which prevents the proper monitoring of child labor across industries. During the reporting year, while labor inspections continued, the COVID-19 pandemic prevented inspectors from traveling on occasion. (16)

Child labor complaints can be submitted to the Labor Department, the Belize Police Department, or the Department of Human Services. Limited reporting from local NGOs and the private sector indicates that it is difficult to follow up on the status of complaints made. (1,3)

### **Criminal Law Enforcement**

In 2021, criminal law enforcement agencies in Belize took actions to address child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including insufficient training for criminal investigators.

**Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	N/A (3)	No (16)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (3)	N/A (16)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (3)	Unknown (16)
Number of Investigations	0 (3)	Unknown (16)
Number of Violations Found	0 (3)	0 (16)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (3)	0 (16)
Number of Convictions	0 (3)	2 (36)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	No (3)	No (16)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (3)	Yes (16)

The government did not provide information on trainings for inclusion in this report, however, several trainings were attended by officers from the Anti-Trafficking in Persons (A-TIP) Police Unit and other ministries throughout the reporting period. These included a training by the International Center for Missing & Exploited Children on concepts, definitions and legal foundations on child sexual abuse and exploitation for one officer from the Department of Human Services (DHS), as well as trainings held by UNODC on cyber-enabled crimes against children and women for a total of 23 officers from A-TIP, the Ministry of Human Development, Belize Police Department, and the National Committee for Families and Children. (31) In addition, Interpol trained an A-TIP police officer on trafficking in persons and online child pornography investigation. (31)

The government did not provide information on how many investigations of child labor were conducted during the reporting period. (16)

There have been four human trafficking convictions since 2005. This includes the conviction of one trafficker in 2019 for sex and labor trafficking, and two traffickers, including the mother of the victim, for commercial sexual exploitation of children as a result of human trafficking in 2021. (35-37) The 2021 cases are the first convictions made under Belize's Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Act. Although the country's laws allow for the imprisonment of violators, human trafficking cases are often dismissed by lower courts and there are generally low rates of victim identification and prosecution of traffickers. (36,38) Additionally, there are anecdotal but consistent reports of low-level officials tolerating and participating in human trafficking-related offences; however, research has not found frequent occurrences of high-level complicity in human trafficking cases. (14,31,34,38,39)

Belize lacks official statistics on commercial sexual exploitation of children, and criminal investigators, police officers, and labor inspectors lack sufficient resources—such as vehicles, fuel, office supplies, and adequate training—to investigate violations of criminal law, including the worst forms of child labor. (2,12)

#### 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
National Child Labor Committee	Coordinates efforts among ministries to prevent and eliminate child labor and implement the National Child Labor Policy. Led by the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labor, and Local Government and 14 government and civil society members. (40,41) The Child Labor Secretariat and Inspectorate serves as the Secretary for the Committee. (2) The Committee distinguishes between children engaged in work that is beneficial to their development and those engaged in the worst forms of child labor. (37,42) During the reporting period, resumed meetings with newly appointed representatives from various government agencies and stakeholders. (43) Five meetings were held throughout 2021. (16)
Anti-Trafficking in Persons Council	Identifies and rescues human trafficking survivors, trains law enforcement officials, and educates the public about the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Led by the Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Human Development; includes 12 other government agencies and civil society organizations. (44) During the reporting period, held an anti-trafficking in persons symposium in partnership with the Human Trafficking Institute during which stakeholders renewed their commitment to strengthening their network and discussed how they can improve efforts to address human trafficking. (45)
National Committee for Families and Children	Promotes, monitors, and evaluates Belize's compliance with its national and international commitments to children, including the UN CRC. (46) Implements the National Results Framework for Children and Adolescents 2017–2030, which is also referred to as the Children's Agenda. Collaborates with the Child Labor Secretariat and Inspectorate on special assignments and projects. (3,8,47,48) Research could not determine whether activities were held 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 a lack of implementation.

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

Policy	Description
National Child Labor Policy†	Focuses on strengthening child labor laws, creating legislation to address existing gaps, and providing educational assistance to children who have been or who are currently engaged in child labor. (49) Aims to strengthen government institutions and services and to train labor officers. (41) In collaboration with the ILO and UNICEF, developed the country's second national child labor policy during the reporting year with plans to finalize and begin implementation in 2022. (16,50,51) In 2021, hosted a dedicated online workshop which brought together tripartite ILO constituents and broad representation from governmental and non-governmental entities. (50,52)
CARE Model	Coordinates the protection, care, and monitoring of sexually exploited and trafficked children. Outlines the role of the Department of Human Services and BPD in receiving allegations of commercial sexual exploitation of children and referring children to services. (2) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the CARE Model during the reporting period.
National Results Framework for Children and Adolescents (Children's Agenda) 2017–2030	Sets out the government's agenda and priorities to protect the rights of children and adolescents, including in education, health, economic security and opportunity, and protection from discrimination, abuse, and exploitation, including child labor. (8,47,48) Raises awareness of the role of families in promoting early childhood education. (48) Research was unable to determine what activities took place to implement the National Results Framework for Children and Adolescents during the reporting period.
Road Map to End Child Marriage and Early Unions in Belize	Increases awareness of commercial sexual exploitation legislation, particularly to protect children between the ages of 15 and 17 from exploitation. Coordinated by the National Committee for Families and Children, in partnership with UNICEF. (49,50,53,54) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Road Map to End Child Marriage and Early Unions in Belize during the reporting period. (16)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (18)

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### VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2021, 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 the inadequacy to address the problem in all sectors.

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

Program	Description
Building Opportunities for Our Social Transformation	Conditional cash transfer program established in 2010 with approximately 3,116 households benefitting annually. (55) Continues to be implemented in Belize City in areas with the highest reported incidents of child sexual exploitation. (2) Provides small cash assistance to poor households subject to specific conditions, such as minimum school attendance of 85 percent. The program seeks to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children by wealthy men who pay families for access to vulnerable children. (2) Received additional funding for 6 months under the BCCAT pandemic relief program. (56) Research could not determine whether activities were held within the reporting period.
Social Innovative LABOR Project*	Belize Labor Department, ILO, and the Belize Sugarcane Farmers Association program that pilots strategies to promote employment for vulnerable youth and women in the sugarcane supply chain in northern Belize. (16,57) The project had a budget of \$25,000 and took place between May 12, 2021 to February 12, 2022. (16) During the reporting period, a desk study was conducted to determine implementation activities for the next phase of the project, which is expected to begin in 2022. (58)
Belize COVID-19 Cash Transfer Program (BCCAT)*	\$12.4 million cash transfer program funded by the World Bank and implemented by the Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation, the National Bank of Belize Limited, Digi, and the Belize Social Investment Fund to assist 10,500 poor and vulnerable families during the pandemic. (59)

\* Program was launched during the reporting period.

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

During the reporting period, the A-TIP Council, with funding from IOM, held informational sessions on human trafficking with 30 high school teachers and 15 Red Cross volunteers of San Ignacio Town. The National Organization for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, UNICEF, and the NGO Pathlight also trained 555 primary school and high school teachers on Mandatory Reporting Training. (31) In addition, Youth Enhancement Services trained 44 officers from the Community Rehabilitation Department, Residential Care Facilities, DHS, and the Women's Department on commercial sexual exploitation of children, trafficking in persons (prohibition), and domestic violence legislation. (31)

Research found no evidence of government programs to prevent or eliminate commercial sexual exploitation of children or to assist children working in agriculture, fisheries, or construction. (3) However, the government sponsored billboards at the international airport and at border crossing points specifically to address child sex tourism. The government further participated in a multicountry program to identify and deny tourist entry to registered sex offenders. (61)

### 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 Belize (Table 11).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the minimum age for work is age 14 in all sectors.	2013 – 2021
	Ensure that the law's light work provisions specify the activities and conditions in which light work may be undertaken.	2021
	Adopt a list of hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children and ensure that all children under age 18 are prohibited from engaging in hazardous work.	2009 – 2021
	Ensure that the law prohibits all forms of commercial sexual exploitation of children ages 16 and 17.	2013 – 2021
	Ensure that laws prohibit the use of children in specific illicit activities, such as the production and trafficking of drugs.	2013 – 2021
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 into non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2021



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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Publish complete information on enforcement efforts to address child labor, including labor inspectorate funding and the number of investigations.	2020 – 2021
	Ensure that law enforcement agencies have sufficient resources, including vehicles, fuel, and inspectors, to conduct labor inspections and criminal investigations.	2009 – 2021
	Ensure that the level of inspections, including liquor license inspections, and penalties are sufficient to deter child labor law violations.	2018 – 2021
	Provide sufficient funding and resources to allow agencies responsible for the enforcement of labor laws to fulfill their mission, including fuel and transportation.	2021
	Prosecute and impose criminal penalties for the worst forms of child labor, including for government officials, and ensure that courts hear and try human trafficking cases in a timely manner.	2017 – 2021
	Improve transparency regarding the status of complaints that are being investigated.	2021
Coordination	Ensure that all coordinating bodies are active and able to carry out their intended mandates.	2021
Government Policies	Publish activities undertaken to implement key policies related to child labor, including the Road Map to End Child Marriage and Early Unions in Belize, during the reporting period.	2020 – 2021
Social Programs	Conduct a comprehensive study of children's activities to determine whether they are engaged in or at risk for involvement in the worst forms of child labor, to inform policies and programs.	2018 – 2021
	Increase access to education by eliminating fees; improving educational facilities; hiring additional qualified teachers; providing textbooks, uniforms, and meals; and addressing language barriers for Spanish-speaking students.	2011 – 2021
	Implement programs to address commercial sexual exploitation of children and programs to assist children working in agriculture, fisheries, and construction.	2019 – 2021
	Publish activities undertaken to implement key programs related to child labor, including BOOST.	2021

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