

In 2021, Colombia made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government amended the Penal Code, increasing penalties for aggravating factors in crimes of human smuggling and trafficking involving children. The Ministry of Labor also adopted a "Guide for the Identification of Possible Cases of Trafficking in Persons for the Purpose of Forced Labor" to help labor inspectors identify forced labor crimes. The Intersectorial Commission for the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Children by Illegal Armed Groups published an extensive report analyzing the incidence and patterns of the recruitment, use, and sexual violence against children carried out by illegal armed and criminal groups for the 2016–2020 period. The Ministry of the Interior also developed and implemented the national trafficking in persons prevention plan "Zero Complicity," which focused on strengthening trafficking prevention efforts and includes a public awareness campaign. In addition, the government introduced the "Katunaa Modality" social program designed to protect the fundamental rights of children ages 6 to 13, including with regard to child labor, sexual violence, and intra-family violence. However, children in Colombia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. The government does not employ a sufficient number of labor inspectors. Research also indicates that existing social programs are insufficient to address the scope of the worst forms of child labor in Colombia.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Colombia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1) The government publishes annual statistics on children’s work from its National Household Survey, based on research conducted in the fourth quarter of every year. (2-4) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Colombia.

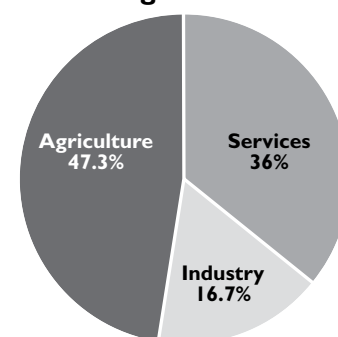
Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	2.5 (210,431)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	93.7
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	2.5
Primary Completion Rate (%)		106.8

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2019, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022. (5)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organizations’ analysis of statistics from Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares, Módulo de Trabajo Infantil (GEIH-MTI), 2019. (6)

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.

Colombia

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Production of coffee, including the application of pesticides;† production of sugarcane,† cocoa, pome and stone fruits, grapes, and unrefined brown sugar (panela) (3,7-11)
	Animal husbandry,† hunting,† and fishing,† including conch and crab harvesting (3,7-13)
Industry	Mining† coal, emeralds, gold, tungsten, and coltan (11,14)
	Producing bricks and wood charcoal (3,7,11,14)
	Construction,† particularly of large-scale projects (3,11)
	Cutting and transporting wood,† and creating artisanal woodwork such as handicrafts and decorative items (8,11,12,15)
	Processing shrimp and langoustines† (8)
Services	Street work,† including vending and helping shoppers carry bags in urban markets,† begging,† guarding or washing cars and motorcycles,† and selling massages and hair braiding to tourists in beach areas (3,11,16-23)
	Recycling† (11,16)
	Domestic work,† including caring for children,† cooking, gardening, and shopping for the home (11)
	Working in retail establishments, hotels, and restaurants (2,11)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,11,24)
	Use in the production of pornography (11,24)
	Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict (1,11,25)
	Forced begging and use in illicit activities by illegal armed groups and criminal organizations, including committing homicides, extortions, trafficking drugs, and the production of marijuana and coca (stimulant plant), each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,3,11,25,26)

† 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.

Reports indicate that the forced recruitment and use of minors in Colombia by illegal armed groups, including *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia–Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP)*, *Segunda Marquetalia*, the National Liberation Army, and the Gulf Clan continued in 2021. (11) Children are typically recruited by armed groups to commit crimes, including producing and trafficking drugs, committing extortion, and serving as combatants and informants. (1,11) Armed groups also continued to use children for commercial sexual exploitation. (11,24) Colombia's 2016 Peace Accord with the FARC integrated special provisions known as the "Ethnic Chapter" to address the disproportionate harm Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities suffered during the 50-year conflict. High levels of violence persist in these communities and ethnic community leaders report a recent increase in child recruitment by narcotraffickers. (27)







Commercial sexual exploitation of children occurs more often in private homes rented online than in commercial establishments. Children are particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation in areas with foreign tourism, in mining communities, and in areas with large construction projects. (11) Some child victims of commercial sexual exploitation are reportedly recruited in schools and, in some cases, prostitution ring members conduct surveillance around schools in search of vulnerable girls. (3,8,11,28) Venezuelan children are particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, including street work and commercial sexual exploitation. (11)

Although basic education is free and compulsory for all children up to age 18, in practice, children in rural parts of the country face barriers to accessing education due to living long distances from school and lack of transportation, inadequate school infrastructure, and violence. (11) A need for remote learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic continued to have a significant negative impact on school attendance in 2021. However, the Ministry of Education reported programmatic and financial measures to improve school attendance, including the strengthening of the Active Search (*Búsqueda Activa*) strategy to locate children who have left school and re-enroll them. (11,29) The government reported a 23 percent increase in the matriculation of Venezuelan children from October 2020 to January 2022. (11)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Colombia 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 Colombia's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the difference in the minimum age for work and the compulsory education age.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 35 of the Child and Adolescence Code (30)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 117 of the Child and Adolescence Code (30)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 3 of Resolution 1796 (31)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 17 of the Constitution; Articles 141 and 188A of the Penal Code (32,33)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 17 of the Constitution; Articles 188A–188C of the Penal Code; Law No. 2168 (32-34)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 213–219B of the Penal Code (33)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 162, 188D, and 384 of the Penal Code (33)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 81 of Law 1861 (35)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 4 of Law 1861 (35)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Article 162 of the Penal Code; Article 20 the Child and Adolescence Code; Article 14 of Law 418 (30,33,36)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	18	Decree 4807 of 2011 (37)
Free Public Education	Yes		Articles 2.3.1.6.4.1 and 2.3.1.6.4.2 of Decree 1075; Article 1 of Decree 4807; Article 28 of the Child and Adolescence Code (30,37,38)

In December 2021, the Colombian government amended the Penal Code, increasing penalties for aggravating factors in crimes of human smuggling and trafficking of minors. The amendment also stipulates that parents or legal guardians who subject their children to begging or other forms of exploitation and are convicted of the crime, shall lose parental or guardian rights of the minor. (11,34) The government also modified the Child and Adolescence Code, rescinding the authority of the family commissioner to provide authorization for adolescent work. This tightens oversight of work permits, which are now authorized only by labor inspectors, or in their absence, the municipal mayor. (11,39) As the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

Colombia

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

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 Labor's (MOL) Inspection, Monitoring, Control, and Territorial Management Department	Receives complaints of labor law violations and conducts labor inspections, including inspections to verify labor conditions for adolescent workers and compliance with other child labor provisions. Oversees the Internal Working Group on Child Labor Eradication. (8,40) Also operates the Comprehensive Child Labor Information System, a child labor monitoring system that identifies children engaged in or at risk of child labor. (8) Collects fines for labor violations assessed after January 1, 2020, and administers proceeds through a fund designated to strengthen the labor inspectorate. (3,4)
Active Search Team for Trafficking in Persons, Sexual Exploitation of Children, Girls, and Adolescents and Related Crimes (Bogotá)	Uses a proactive investigation model to identify crimes related to human trafficking and the sexual exploitation of children in Bogotá instead of waiting for victims to seek attention at the national level. Created in 2018 by the Bogotá Mayor's office. (41,42)
National Police	Investigate cases of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking and house the Child Protection Police Unit. (8,43) Judicial police and the Technical Investigation Corps support the Attorney General's Office (AGO) throughout the investigation process. (8)
Attorney General's Office (AGO)	Investigates and prosecutes cases of child recruitment for use in armed conflict and illicit activities, commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, and human trafficking, with support from the Office's Technical Investigation Unit, which also advises the Attorney General in the design of policies and strategies related to the role of judicial police investigators. (8,12,30) Also oversees the Articulation Group for Combating Trafficking in Persons, which includes prosecutors, analysts, and judicial police engaged in addressing organized crime and human trafficking. (44)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2021, labor law enforcement agencies in Colombia took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor (MOL) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including insufficient resource allocation.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$875,000 (3)	\$1,400,000 (11)
Number of Labor Inspectors	845 (3)	885 (11)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (45)	Yes (45)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (3)	Yes (11)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (3)	Yes (11)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown (3)	13,018 (11)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (3)	Unknown (11)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (3)	1 (11)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (3)	0 (11)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (3)	N/A
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown (3)	Yes (11)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown (3)	Yes (11)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (45)	Yes (45)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown (3)	Yes (11)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (3)	Yes (11)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (3)	Yes (11)

The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Colombia's workforce, which includes more than 23 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, Colombia would need to employ about 1,549 inspectors. (47,48) The MOL continued to train new and veteran inspectors in 2021, but noted that child labor-related trainings could be strengthened. (11) The government did not report how many inspections were conducted at worksites during the reporting period. (11)

Criminal Law Enforcement

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

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Unknown (3)	Unknown (11)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (3)	Yes (11)
Number of Investigations	2,568 (3)	2,457 (11)
Number of Violations Found	2,124 (3)	2,444 (11)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	71 (3)	316 (11)
Number of Convictions	229 (49)	Unknown (11)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (49)	Yes (50-52)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (3)	Yes (11)

The AGO reported 2,457 criminal investigations related to the worst forms of child labor for the period of January 1–November 31, 2021, of which 47.7 percent involved child pornography and 28.8 percent involved commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking-related crimes. (11) Of these cases, 316 suspects were charged with crimes related to the worst forms of child labor. (11) While the government did not report annual statistics on the number of convictions for crimes related to the worst forms of child labor, the AGO convicted and sentenced perpetrators of commercial sexual exploitation of children during the reporting period. (50,52) The AGO reported that 316 suspects were charged in these cases. (11) However, the AGO reported that its case management system tracks criminal proceedings through conviction only, and does not include information on sentencing. (3,8)

During the reporting period, the AGO trained a total of 1,943 officials on trafficking-related crimes, including 111 prosecutors and judicial police who participated in a course on improving investigative techniques for crimes related to the recruitment and use of children by illegal armed groups. (11) In July 2021, the MOL with support from the UNODC, adopted a "Guide for the Identification of Possible Cases of Trafficking in Persons for the Purpose of Forced Labor." This guide helps labor inspectors identify possible cases of forced labor through their inspections and provides a protocol for the referral of cases to the Attorney General's Office (AGO). (11,53)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8).

Colombia

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Interagency Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Protection of the Adolescent Worker (CIETI)	Coordinates efforts to address the worst forms of child labor. (3) Chaired by MOL, includes 13 government agencies and representatives from trade unions, business associations, and civil society organizations. Oversees department-level CIETIs throughout the country, each comprising municipal-level committees. (54,55) In 2021, the committee implemented a survey across 28 of Colombia's 32 departments to monitor municipal-level efforts to address child labor. (11)
National Interagency Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Commercial Sexual Exploitation	Coordinates and implements efforts to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Led by MOL and comprising various government agencies. (54,56) Met twice during the reporting period to strengthen interagency coordination and report on efforts in 2020 and 2021. The committee also convened a range of stakeholders, both government and non-government, in Cartagena in September to raise awareness of the commercial sexual exploitation of children. (11)
Colombian Institute for Family Well-Being (ICBF)	Operates Mobile Teams for Comprehensive Protection to coordinate government actions to protect children's rights, including protection from child labor. Supports demobilized child soldiers by strengthening family networks and increasing access to health services, food, education, and shelter. (8,57) Serves as Administrator of the Fund Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. (58) Processes child labor complaints, operates telephone hotlines to report child labor cases, and provides social services to children engaged in or at risk of child labor. (8,12) Lead agency among those comprising the National System of Family Well-Being, which promotes interagency coordination to protect children's rights, including those related to child labor, and designs, implements, monitors, and evaluates policies related to childhood and adolescence. (4,54,59) In 2021, provided capacity-building assistance to 11 regional CIETI committees and participated in designing a "Strategy for the Comprehensive Protection of Children and Adolescents" with the Department of Education on fundamental rights-related risks facing school-age children. (11) Also held a virtual forum on the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on child labor in the domestic sphere moderated by government officials and academics with more than 500 participants. In addition, continued to coordinate efforts to prevent child labor and protect adolescent workers in sugarcane under the "Pact for Growth and Employment Generation in Agro-Industrial Sugarcane" public-private partnership. (11)
Interinstitutional Committee for the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons	Leads and coordinates efforts among government agencies to address human trafficking. Created by Law 985 and chaired by the Ministry of the Interior (MOI). (60) Comprising 19 government entities, including Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MOL, and the Ministry of Health and Social Protection, among others. (61) In 2021, the committee held four sessions covering the modification of internal regulations, investigations and prosecutions, compliance, and the creation and approval of the Protocol for the Identification of Victims of Human Trafficking. (50)
Intersectorial Commission for the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Children by Illegal Armed Groups (CIPRUNNA)	Guides, coordinates, and monitors the actions carried out by state entities at both the national and territorial level to prevent the recruitment and use of, and sexual violence against, children by illegal armed groups and criminal gangs. (3,11,62) Led by the Presidency's Office for Human Rights and International Affairs, comprises 22 entities, including AGO and MOL as permanent members. (3,8,62-64) Met twice during the reporting period and published an extensive report analyzing the incidence and patterns of the recruitment, use, and sexual violence against children carried out by illegal armed groups and criminal gangs for the 2016–2020 period. (11,65) Also published a "Manual for the Establishment of Territorial Routes of Prevention," which provides step-by-step instruction to local-level agencies to build and use protocols to prevent and address the recruitment and use of children by armed groups. This publication is a key deliverable under the National Policy for the Prevention of Recruitment, Use, and Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents by Illegal Armed Groups or Organized Criminal Gangs. (11,66)

‡ The government has other coordinating mechanisms that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (67-70)

In previous years, research indicated that there was inconsistent coordination in the areas of human trafficking victim identification and assistance. However, in 2021, the Ministry of Interior created the Operating Committee for the Fight Against Human Trafficking, which initiates and coordinates victim assistance among local trafficking committees and state entities, including the Judicial Police, NGOs, and the Colombian Institute for Family Well-Being (ICBF). (50)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established relevant policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor (Table 9).

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Policy Guidelines to Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor and Protect the Adolescent Worker (2017–2027)	Aims to address child labor in the agriculture sector, develop child labor prevention strategies, improve the quality and coverage of child protection services, protect adolescent workers from hazardous work, create strategies to address child labor in domestic work, and establish evaluation and monitoring mechanisms to assess progress. (71) The policy also contains a Roadmap for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor in Mining and a cooperative agreement between the Ministry of Mining and Energy and ICBF to prevent child labor in mining. (72,73) Under these guidelines, in 2021, ICBF published an operational manual that further specifies the model and measures for assistance provision under its Administrative Program for the Re-establishment of Rights, including with regard to children and adolescents who have been engaged in child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and armed conflict. ICBF also held 27 capacity-building workshops on child labor prevention and elimination for the National System of Family Well-Being agencies and department-level CIETIs. (11)
National Policy on Childhood and Adolescence (2018–2030)	Articulates multiple sub-policies on the worst forms of child labor, protection of adolescents, prevention and eradication of commercial sexual exploitation of children, and prevention of the recruitment and use of children by armed groups. Promotes the comprehensive welfare and development of children and adolescents, recognizing them as rights-bearing subjects and integral to national development. (12,74) ICBF continued to implement the Strategy for the Prevention of Specific Risks under this policy during the reporting period. It also conducted programs that aimed to prevent human trafficking, including 21 outreach events that reached 1,454 participants, and 37 events on the prevention of the commercial sexual exploitation of children that reached 3,616 participants. (11)
National Strategy for the Prevention and Eradication of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (2018–2028)	Guides Colombian government actions at the national, departmental, and municipal levels for the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation, victim assistance, and the strengthening of sentencing for abusers. (75) As part of this strategy, the Colombian government maintains an "Eyes Everywhere" (" <i>Ojos en Todas Partes</i> ") public awareness campaign, which aims to prevent child sex tourism. Led by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism, and implemented in coordination with ICBF and the National Tourism Fund. (12,41) MOL continued to promote the National Strategy in 2021 at the Departmental Sub-Commissions of the Tripartite Permanent Commission for the Agreement of Wage and Labor Policies in five departments throughout Colombia. (11) ICBF and MOL also held a National Best Practices Competition to recognize department-led efforts to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children. On the International Day Against the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism held public awareness outreach on child commercial sexual exploitation with hotel associations and the tourism industry, reaching 896 participants. (11,76) In addition, the government continued implementation of the "Protecting Them Begins with Me" campaign, with leading agencies MOL and ICBF conducting virtual events during the reporting period. (11) The AGO also joined the "Strategic Alliance with the Tourism Sector to Prevent Human Trafficking" which is led by MOI and the Presidency of the Republic to discourage the purchase of commercial sex. (50)
National Strategy for the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons (2020–2024)	Aims to prevent human trafficking by focusing on providing immediate assistance to victims, promoting effective interagency coordination, international cooperation, and research and knowledge management. (75) Established by Decree 1818 in 2020 and led by the Interinstitutional Committee for the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons. The strategy also prioritizes migration and border-related risks and emphasizes prevention among migrant populations. (3) During the reporting period, MOI created the Operating Committee for the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons under this policy. The committee aims to centralize information on the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation with a focus on children and adolescents in order to prioritize law enforcement efforts in cities with high prevalence of these crimes. (11,76) MOI also developed and implemented the national trafficking in persons prevention plan "Zero Complicity" in 2020 and 2021, which focused on strengthening trafficking prevention efforts and includes the public awareness campaign "#CeroComplicidadConLaTrata" (Zero Complicity with Trafficking). (11)
National Policy for the Prevention of Recruitment, Use, and Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents by Illegal Armed Groups or Organized Criminal Groups (2018–2028)	Directs actions to prevent the recruitment and use of children by armed groups. Aims to address violence against children, including the worst forms of child labor, and improve interagency coordination. (77) The government also has a Roadmap for the Restoration of Rights, Assistance, and Reparation for Children and Adolescent Victims of the Armed Conflict that establishes protocols to assist child victims of armed conflict and is implemented through interinstitutional mechanisms in various departments. (7) CIPRUNNA continued to implement the "Join for Me" (<i>Súmate por Mi</i>) and the "Future Generations" strategies under this policy in 2021. (11)

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (12)

Colombia

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

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 of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Campaigns Against Child Labor†	ICBF campaigns to increase coordination among ICBF, Child Protection Police, MOL, and municipal authorities on child labor issues, and to promote education about the risks of hazardous work. (78) In 2021, ICBF continued to implement the 49 Mobile Teams for Comprehensive Protection (EMPI) units, with a total of 147 officers working across 33 Regional Directorates to protect children's rights. The EMPI units also conducted numerous child labor prevention efforts, including "active searches" for children engaged in child labor, assisting 1,815 children at risk of child labor through October 2021. (11)
Programs Addressing Trafficking in Persons†	Eye on Trafficking aims to increase awareness of human trafficking among high school students, and School Environments in Coexistence and Peace focuses on identifying potential human trafficking victims. (54) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' campaign, "Do Not Ignore Trafficking" (<i>#AnteLaTrataNoSeHaga</i>), is directed at border populations with limited access to digital platforms. (79) The AGO also continued to implement the "Don't be Fooled" (<i>"#EsoEsCuento"</i>) campaign to prevent human trafficking in 2021, with showcases on social media of the prevention campaign offices located within Colombian consulates in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic and Barcelona, Spain. (11)
Development for Social Prosperity Programs†	Families in Action (<i>Familias en Acción</i>) uses a conditional cash transfer program to address poverty and build human capital; United Network (<i>Red Unidos</i>) coordinates actions to reduce inequality and end extreme poverty; Healthy Generations (<i>Generaciones con Bienestar</i>) operates a children's rights program offering cultural and recreational activities for children ages 6 to 17 identified as vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor; and Youth in Action (<i>Jóvenes en Acción</i>) provides technical job training and conditional cash transfers to vulnerable urban youth ages 16 to 24. (82,83) ICBF continued to implement the Healthy Generations program and under this umbrella, the sub-program <i>Generación Sacúdate</i> benefitted 46,594 children ages 14 to 18 across the country. (11)
USDOL-Funded Projects	During the reporting period, the <i>Colombia Avanza</i> project completed a youth story competition entitled "Inheriting a Coffee Culture Free of Child Labor" and four winning stories were selected out of 100. These stories were published and widely shared by the project implementers and the National Federation of Coffee Growers of Colombia in a special edition booklet raising awareness on child labor. (84) Cooperation on Fair, Free and Equitable Employment (COFFEE) developed a set of 15 open-source tools based on USDOL's Comply Chain tools which collectively form the recently launched Socially Sustainable Sourcing Toolkit. This toolkit helps businesses and other stakeholders to identify, address, and prevent labor abuses, including child labor, in coffee supply chains. (85,86) Also in 2021, Building the Capacity of Civil Society to Combat Child Labor and Improve Working Conditions in Colombia (<i>Pilares</i>) equipped 44 civil society organizations to collect community-level data and produce reports on child labor to inform government strategies, which led to 11 new alliances and 27 joint activities carried out that year. (87) The Preventing and Reducing Child Labor and Forced Labor in Palm Oil Supply Chains (<i>Palma Futuro</i>) project assessed the social compliance systems of its private sector partners and conducted trainings for their suppliers on child labor and forced labor risks. (88) The Measurement, Awareness-Raising, and Policy Engagement (MAP16) Project on Child Labor and Forced Labor global project supported the establishment of an online training system for labor inspectors. (89) In addition, during the reporting period, the Equal Access to Quality Jobs for Women and Girls in Agriculture (EQUAL) project produced a research-based factsheet identifying the working conditions of women and girls engaged in the cut flower and panela value chains, using it as a tool for engagement to foster cooperation and secure commitments with public and private sector stakeholders in preparation for field implementation in 2022. (90) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.

† Program is funded by the Government of Colombia.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (7,12,91,92)

In addition to the social programs outlined above, the Colombian government introduced the "Katunaa Modality" program in 2021, designed to protect the fundamental rights of children ages 6 to 13, including their rights to a life free of child labor, sexual violence, and intra-family violence. (11) Despite these efforts, research indicates that existing social programs are insufficient to address the scope and magnitude of the worst forms of child labor problem in Colombia, particularly commercial sexual exploitation, forced begging, and recruitment for use in illicit activities. (11,93)

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 Colombia (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Raise the minimum age for work to the age up to which education is compulsory.	2018 – 2021
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.	2009 – 2021
	Improve the case management system to track the entire criminal proceeding process through sentencing.	2021
	Publish information on the number of inspections conducted at worksites.	2009 – 2021
	Publish information on whether criminal investigators received initial training and the number of convictions for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.	2021
Social Programs	Expand efforts to improve access to education for all children, including by ensuring adequate transportation to school, improving school infrastructures, and addressing violence at school.	2013 – 2021
	Expand social programs to sufficiently address the scope of the worst forms of child labor, particularly commercial sexual exploitation, forced begging, and recruitment for use in illicit activities.	2020 – 2021

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