

In 2021, Georgia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government doubled the budget for the Labor Inspectorate, significantly increased its number of labor inspectors, and approved a new National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons (2021–2022). The Public Defender's Office also published a report on the status of child labor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a new mobile group was created to identify and assist children living and working on the streets in Adjara.

However, children in Georgia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including forced begging. Children also engage in agricultural labor. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, Georgia's minimum age for work does not meet international standards because it does not apply to the informal sector. In addition, the Criminal Code does not explicitly prohibit the use of children in illicit activities. Furthermore, the compulsory education age leaves children who are 15 years of age vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, because they are not required to be in school but are not legally permitted to work full time.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Georgia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including forced begging. Children also engage in agricultural labor. (I-5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Georgia.

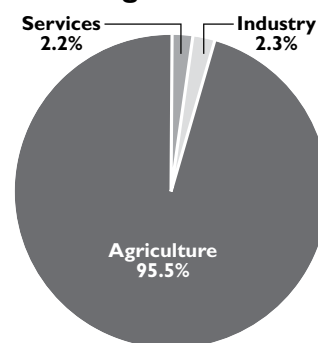
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	2.9 (13,547)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	96.9
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	3.7
Primary Completion Rate (%)		93.5

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2020, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022. (3)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from National Child Labor Survey (NCLS), 2015. (4)

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 of potatoes, citrus, blueberries, tea, hazelnuts, and hay (1,2,5-7)
	Raising cattle, activities unknown (7)
Industry	Construction (7,8)
	Work in factories (7)
Services	Street work, including begging, vending, carrying cargo, and collecting scrap metal (1,2,5,7,9-12)
	Domestic work (1,7)
	Work in restaurants, hotels, supermarkets, small advertising services, and at beaches and resorts (1,7)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (11,13,14)
	Forced begging and street vending (1,2,5,11-13,15)
	Coerced criminality, such as theft (1,14)

‡ 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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Roma and Azerbaijani Kurd ethnic minorities and refugee and internally displaced children from Georgia, Armenia, and Moldova are subjected to forced begging and coerced into criminality in Georgia. (9-15) Estimates suggest that 1,000 to 2,000 children earn a living by begging, primarily caused by poverty, homelessness, or domestic violence. (1,5,7,9,10,12) Many of the child beggars are from Roma communities. (9,11) Children also engage in seasonal labor migration, both within Georgia and to Turkey, where children as young as age 13 work during the summers to harvest tea and hazelnuts, as well as in construction. (7) There are instances in which Georgia is a source and transit country for child trafficking, especially of girls to Cyprus, Egypt, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. (9,14) Limited evidence indicates children may perform hazardous activities in construction. (8)

A lack of awareness among parents and employers is also cited as a barrier to the elimination of child labor in Georgia. Parents, especially in rural areas, do not perceive children's work as harmful to their development, even under conditions that are considered child labor by international standards. (7)




In the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, which are occupied by Russian forces and not under control of the central government, lack of information limits an assessment of the types of work children perform and the sectors in which they work. (2,5,14,16)

Children who do not attend school in Georgia are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Some children systematically miss or drop out of school due to their involvement in seasonal work, household labor, or seasonal labor migration. (1,7) Migrant children who do not speak Georgian or Russian may also not attend school due to language barriers; however, there are some mixed language schools with Georgian and Azeri or Armenian. (1) School employees, such as teachers and administrative personnel, do not always record absenteeism by students or the reasons for it. As a result, many cases of child labor are not recorded or investigated. (1,7) Socially vulnerable children, children from impoverished families, children with disabilities, and those who live in rural areas may have difficulty accessing education, in part due to a lack of identity documents. (2,17,18) In addition, some children from Roma communities lack identity documents, and therefore have challenges accessing education. (17) UNICEF notes that some migrant and Roma families continue to destroy identification and other documents in an effort to avoid interaction with state officials. (10) Although the law provides a path for homeless and transient children to obtain identity documents, government outreach remains insufficient to address the issue. (17) During the reporting period, the Ministry of Justice's Public Service Development Agency issued 10 temporary identification documents for homeless children, 7 identity cards, and 2 biometric passports. (1) The identity cards ensure that children are provided with additional state-funded services, including social, medical, and educational programs. (2)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

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

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	16	Article 4 of the Labor Code of Georgia (19)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 4 of the Labor Code of Georgia; Articles 2 and 5 of the Law on Occupational Safety; Resolution 381 Approving the List of Dangerous, Heavy, Harmful, and Hazardous Works (19-21)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 4(4) of the Labor Code of Georgia; Articles 2 and 5 of the Law on Occupational Safety; Resolution 381 Approving the List of Dangerous, Heavy, Harmful, and Hazardous Works (19-21)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 30 of the Constitution of Georgia; Articles 143/1, 143/2, and 143/3 of the Criminal Code of Georgia; Law of Georgia on Combating Human Trafficking; Article 55 of the Code on the Rights of the Child (22-25)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 143, 143/1, 143/2, 143/3, and 172 of the Criminal Code of Georgia; Law of Georgia on Combating Human Trafficking (23,24)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 143/1, 143/2, 143/3, 253–255, 255/1, and 255/2 of the Criminal Code of Georgia; Article 56 of the Code on the Rights of the Child (24,25)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Article 171 of the Criminal Code of Georgia (24)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 10 of the Law of Georgia on Military Duty and Military Service (26)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Articles 9 and 21 of the Law of Georgia on Military Duty and Military Service (26)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		Article 410 of the Criminal Code of Georgia; Article 59 of the Code on the Rights of the Child (24,25)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Articles 2 and 9 of the Law of Georgia on General Education (27)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 22 of the Law of Georgia on General Education (27)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (27)

In December 2021, the Criminal Procedure Code of Georgia was amended to permit investigators to involve witness and victim coordinators in criminal proceedings, where previously this power rested solely with prosecutors. The new provisions in the law make witness and victim coordinators more accessible, preventing further traumatization and revictimization of survivors of human trafficking. (12,28) The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) also adopted an order approving the establishment of a national registry for persons convicted of sexual crimes, including child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. The registry is intended to reduce recidivism and enhance law enforcement efforts to monitor offenders. (12)

Labor Code provisions related to the minimum age for work are not in compliance with international standards because they do not apply to the informal sector. (19) In Georgia, some employers hire children informally specifically because they are not covered by the Labor Code. (7) Georgia's law on education allows children to leave school at age 15. (27) During the 2020–2021 school year, 3,017 females (1,029 in grade 10; 407 in grade 11; and 256 in grade 12) and 4,033 males (1,783 in grade 10; 477 in grade 11; and 275 in grade 12) dropped out of school. (29) These children are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor because they are no longer required to be in school but are not old enough to be legally permitted to work full time. Article 4 of the Labor Code specifies conditions under which children ages 14 and 15 may perform light work, and Article 14 prescribes the hours, but the law does not specify the activities in which light work is permissible. (19) Article 4 of the Labor Code stipulates that children under age 14 are allowed to work only in sport, art, and culture, as well as some advertising activities. (19) Lastly, Georgia's laws do not criminally prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including the procuring and offering of children for the production or trafficking of drugs. (24)

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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, Health, and Social Affairs (MoLHSA)	Oversees child welfare issues and pursues enforcement of labor laws, including forced labor, labor exploitation, and occupational safety and health norms as determined by the Organic Law of Georgia on Occupational Safety. (1,2,17,30) Through the Department of Labor and Employment Policy, revises laws and policies to be in accordance with international standards. (31) Through the Social Services Agency, administers social benefits such as targeted social assistance, health care, and vouchers for day care, and employs social workers who oversee child protection. (5) Receives complaints through the Child Protection and Social Programs sub-department, and refers complaints of child labor violations to law enforcement agencies for investigation. (31) In 2021, enforced occupational safety and health laws, including those related to hazardous child labor, and enforced prohibitions on forced labor and human trafficking through the Department of Labor Inspection. (1) In January 2021, MoLHSA's Department of Labor Inspection became a separate Labor Inspection Service within MoLHSA. (11) Operates a hotline in eight languages (Georgian, English, Russian, Turkish, Azeri, Armenian, Arabic, and Persian languages). (1)
Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA)	Enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking. (1,2,5) Through District Police Units, collects information on minors in each jurisdiction and visits minors' families to inform them of their rights. (31) Through the Human Rights Department, ensures prompt responses to human trafficking crimes and suggests recommendations for investigations. Operates a hotline that is available in Georgian, Russian, and English. (9)
Central Criminal Police Department within MoIA	Leads criminal investigations of human trafficking, including the trafficking of children, through the Division for Combating Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration. (1,2,9) Identifies human traffickers and collates data on traffickers across various agencies through the Information-Analytical Department. (32) Investigates possible human trafficking schemes by deploying teams of law enforcement officials in Mobile Units to investigate companies offering suspicious work opportunities abroad. (14,33)
Prosecutor's Office of Georgia	An independent entity, separate from the Ministry of Justice (MOJ), which prosecutes criminal cases involving child exploitation, forced labor, and human trafficking. (13,34) Includes the Prosecution Service of Georgia Working Group, which addresses child labor trafficking issues under the framework of the Prosecution Service Strategy for 2017–2021. (1,11,17)

The Government of Georgia regularly organizes meetings and trainings with relevant state agencies responsible for the enforcement of laws related to child exploitation. In November 2021, in close cooperation with the IOM and with the financial support of the State Department's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, a joint training was held for investigators, prosecutors, victim and witness coordinators, and social workers and psychologists from the Agency for State Care. (1,12) The training sought to improve the efficacy of state institutions by sharing best practices in communication techniques to better understand the needs and challenges of child survivors of exploitation. (1,12) Additionally, in December 2021, the Prosecutor's Office convened a working group to discuss the pandemic's effects on child labor, including the difficulty of detecting child labor cases and new labor exploitation trends, challenges, and future steps. This working group has met regularly since its establishment in 2017 as part of a 5-year strategy to address the challenges of detecting and prosecuting child labor and forced labor. (1,2)

The Russia-occupied regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are not under the control of Georgian central authorities, who are prevented from carrying out inspections and law enforcement there. (2,12,16)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2021, labor law enforcement agencies appeared to function adequately in addressing child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor, Health, and Social Affairs (MoLHSA) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including the lack of information about inspections in all sectors.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$967,000 (2)	\$1,927,900 (1)
Number of Labor Inspectors	67 (2,35)	109 (1)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (36)	Yes (36)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (2)	Yes (1)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (2)	Yes (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (2)	Yes (1)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	21,081 (2)	58,607 (1)
Number Conducted at Worksite	21,081 (2)	58,607 (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (2)	1 (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	0 (2)	0 (1)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	0 (2)	0 (1)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (2)	Yes (1)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (2)	Yes (1)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (36)	Yes (36)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (2)	Yes (1)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (2)	Yes (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (2)	Yes (1)

The government reported a twofold budget increase for the Labor Inspectorate in 2021. (1) The Labor Inspectorate also increased its staffing to 109 labor inspectors and 10 additional supervisory positions for a workforce of more than 1.5 million, which now surpasses the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 20,000 workers in transition economies. (1,37,38) There are two inspectors specifically assigned to monitor forced labor and child labor issues, but all inspectors are trained on six technical and general topics and provided with continuing education to have the skills required to cover child labor cases. Inspections took place throughout the country and covered a range of economic sectors, including agriculture. (1)

Although the number of inspections increased significantly from 2020, the majority of inspections were conducted based on pandemic-related regulations. Out of the 58,607 inspections conducted, only 914 inspections were conducted on occupational safety and health issues, and 293 inspections were conducted on labor code violations, including child labor. (1) In 2021, labor inspectors received and responded to three complaints of possible child labor, and referred one case to the Agency for State Care. (1) The Labor Inspectorate also worked with the IOM during the reporting period to develop a guidance document on identifying and addressing labor trafficking and labor exploitation. (12)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2021, the government's criminal law enforcement agencies appeared to function adequately in addressing child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (2)	Yes (1)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (2)	Yes (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (2)	Yes (1)
Number of Investigations	4 (2)	6 (1)
Number of Violations Found	1 (2)	2 (1)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	1 (2)	2 (1)
Number of Convictions	26 (2,39)	2 (1)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (2)	Yes (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (2)	Yes (1)

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In 2021, the MoIA's national police academy conducted trainings for specialized police officers and investigators on the juvenile justice process and the needs of homeless children, each of which attracted more than 200 attendees. Additionally, investigators and representatives of the MoIA participated in a number of training courses related to child trafficking and exploitation, including virtual courses on child trafficking, online commercial sexual exploitation of children, and working with Interpol's International Database on Child Sexual Exploitation. (1,12)

During the reporting period, two people were convicted in three cases of using physical and psychological duress and threats of physical violence to force children to beg and sell small items on the streets of Tbilisi. (1,12) Georgian law enforcement agencies also reported conducting investigations into incidents of child pornography. (1)

Criminal investigators were unable to investigate and prosecute any potential human trafficking cases, including of children, in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, because they remain occupied by Russian forces and outside of central government control. (2,12,15)

The MoIA continued to support the operation of mobile task force units dedicated to anti-trafficking activities. The task force units continued to proactively interview individuals in vulnerable occupations and demographics, including hospitality workers and children living and working on the streets, to identify possible cases of labor exploitation and to advise them of their legal rights and available government services. (1,39) In May 2021, the mobile task forces received expert training on identifying and assisting homeless children who were subjected to human trafficking, and a new mobile group was created in November 2021 to identify and assist children living and working on the streets in Adjara. (1,12) Between April and November 2021, the mobile groups identified 158 homeless children. (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 the lack of coordination among agencies.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Inter-Agency Commission for the Implementation of the UN CRC	Supervises implementation of the Child Rights chapter of the National Human Rights Action Plan, which is based on provisions of the UN CRC. (2,5) In 2021, continued work toward the establishment of two psychosocial service centers for child survivors of sexual violence in Tbilisi and Kutaisi under the Agency for State Care. (1)
Inter-Agency Human Rights Council	Oversees law and policy on gender equality, children's rights, anti-discrimination, and the rights of people with disabilities. Chaired by the Prime Minister and includes government ministers and members of civil society. (2) Working groups convened during 2021 to address issues such as children's rights and sexual harassment. (1)
Inter-Agency Anti-Trafficking Coordination Council for the Implementation of Measures Against Human Trafficking	Coordinates government efforts against human trafficking, including efforts to protect and rehabilitate survivors. (13) Drafts national action plans and other strategic government programs to address human trafficking, and publishes biannual statistics on human trafficking, including sexual and labor exploitation of minors. Refers child survivors to shelters to receive social services. (1,2) Chaired by the Minister of Justice and comprises representatives from state agencies and non-state entities. (9,13) In 2021, approved a National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons (2021–2022). (1) In April, also implemented new legislation that grants survivors of human trafficking a 1-time compensatory payment without the need to go through the judicial process. (12)
Public Defender of Georgia	Monitors the observance of human rights and freedoms in Georgia. Advises the government on the nation's laws, policies, and practices on human rights issues. (40) Publishes an annual parliamentary report on human rights in Georgia with a chapter dedicated to children's rights. (1,2) In 2021, with the support of UNICEF, published a report on the administration of justice in crimes of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children, covering the period from July 2020 to March 2021. (1,12,41) Also published a report on the status of child labor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which reviewed legislative regulations in the field of child labor and made specific, practical recommendations for other government agencies. (1,7,12)

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Human Rights and Civil Integration Committee	Standing committee in Parliament that prepares new legislation and proposes amendments to existing laws relating to children's rights, human trafficking, and other human rights issues. Monitors and evaluates the government's compliance with and respect for national laws and international agreements. (42) In 2021, continued to operate the "Child Hotline" through the Agency for State Care to provide free assistance to children by connecting them to the relevant governmental and non-governmental agencies. The hotline provides both over-the-phone and in-person psychological support and counseling services for children and parents, and received 1,014 calls during the reporting period. (1)
Joint Child Referral Mechanism	Ensures interagency coordination of the enforcement of child labor laws and enumerates the procedures for referring children subject to any form of violence, including labor exploitation, to child protective services. (1,2,9,17) Through MoIA, registers cases of child exploitation identified by any government ministry. Through MoLHSA, assesses the child's condition, provides shelter and rehabilitation services to the child as needed, and monitors the child's case. (2) The referral mechanism continued to operate in 2021. (1)

In 2021, the Inter-Agency Anti-Trafficking Coordination Council for the Implementation of Measures Against Human Trafficking (A-TIP Council) drafted progress reports to evaluate the previous National Action Plans for 2017–2018 and 2019–2020. The A-TIP Council presented its findings publicly in May 2021, and incorporated lessons learned when finalizing the Governmental Strategy for 2021–2025 on Protection of Homeless Children from Violence, including Trafficking in Persons. (1) In addition, the Central Criminal Police Department and MoLHSA's Labor Inspectorate continued work on updating their Memorandum of Mutual Cooperation, with the goal of establishing joint investigatory mobile groups. However, a lack of transparency and clarity among the various coordinating bodies hinders cooperation between them, the Labor Inspectorate, and law enforcement. (1,2,14)

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 insufficient scope of existing policies.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Governmental Strategy on Protection of Homeless Children from Violence, including Trafficking in Persons (2021–2025)†	Aims to protect homeless children from violence and human trafficking. Formulated by the Actions against Trafficking in Human Beings (A-TIP Council), a working group which has representatives from the MOJ, MoIA, MoLHSA, and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport, among other government ministries, met virtually throughout the reporting period to finalize the Strategy and solicit comments from NGOs, international organizations, and other stakeholders. (1,12) Draft policy awaiting approval from the government. (1)
National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons (2021–2022)†	Aims for the social integration of children living or working on the streets, including through measures such as issuing identity documents and facilitating school enrollment. Supports the development of policy and the implementation of activities to address human trafficking. (1) In 2021, the National Action Plan committed the government to more effectively protect and promote social integration of children living or working on the streets, including those involved in begging. (1)
Code on the Rights of the Child	Seeks to establish and implement a range of measures to protect children from violence and hazardous child labor. (2,5,25) In 2021, the Public Defender's Office published a report recommending the development of a child labor policy document and relevant tools for its implementation. (1,7)

† Policy adopted during the reporting period

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (17)

The 2018–2020 National Human Rights Action Plan expired at the end of 2020, and the government began drafting a new 3-year national human rights action plan during the reporting period. (1) Although the government has established policies to address child begging, child trafficking, child labor in street work, and hazardous child labor, it does not have a policy to address child labor associated with family farms.

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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 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
Agency for State Care and for the (Statutory) Victims of Human Trafficking†	MoLHSA legal public entity under law that provides care and administers social benefits, including targeted social assistance, for survivors of child labor, human trafficking, domestic abuse, and sexual violence, as well as for elderly, disabled, and orphan populations. (1,2) Also operates six shelters and seven crisis centers for children living and working on the street. (12) Implements the government's Rehabilitation and Reintegration Strategy, which includes operating shelters for survivors of human trafficking. (17) In addition, operates a hotline for potential victims of human trafficking with assistance available in eight languages. (11) In 2021, received a budget of \$17.5 million, opened a new crisis center in Batumi, and continued to operate crisis centers and shelters to help remove child beggars from the streets. (1,12) Assisted 261 street children during the reporting period, 171 of whom were directed to crisis centers and 90 of whom were directed to 24-hour shelters under MoLHSA management in 4 cities: Tbilisi, Kutaisi, Rustavi, and Batumi. (1)
Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sport (MoES)†	Oversees national primary education curriculum and vocational training programs. (2) Funds programs that promote the inclusion of vulnerable children in education. (2,17) Initiatives include a program designed to increase the participation in school by street children, children forced into begging, and children who are seasonal agricultural workers; and a program to distribute free textbooks to public school students. (17) Conducts anti-trafficking activities in elementary schools, high schools, and institutions of higher education. (11) In 2021, the government continued to address the educational needs of vulnerable children by funding education for children living in MoHLSA shelters, vocational programs, and a program to increase the number of Georgian language teachers in communities with a high number of ethnic minorities. (1)
Targeted Social Assistance Program and Child Benefit Program†	Social Services Agency-administered social assistance programs designed to eliminate poverty, especially child poverty. In 2021, provided a variety of services, including shelters for homeless children, support for impoverished families, and daycare for vulnerable children. (1)
Social Rehabilitation and Childcare Program†	Places abandoned children in appropriate care and provides assistance to children at high risk of abandonment and children with disabilities. In 2021, received a budget of \$12.8 million. (1)
Strengthening Labor Law Enforcement	\$8.75 million USDOL-funded grant to enhance the Government of Georgia's capacity to create, implement, and monitor the application of labor laws by working with ministries of labor, labor judges, and other judicial labor authorities. Uses data collected from labor inspections to identify gaps that facilitate violations and to support legal reforms to address them. Additional information is available on the USDOL website. (43,44)

† Program is funded by the Government of Georgia.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (2,9,17)

Although Georgia has programs that target child labor, including ones to address the problem of street children, their scope does not fully address the extent of the problem. (2,7,45)

In 2021, the National Statistics Office of Georgia implemented a real-time monitoring survey on the impact of the pandemic on the well-being of families and children. Data were collected through electronic tablets and telephone interviews on topics including children's school attendance. (1) According to the surveys, 98.7 percent of children between ages 6 and 17 attended school in person, virtually, or a hybrid of both. The MoES continued to operate platforms for distance learning such as the "TV School" educational project to broadcast the national curriculum's standard lessons in Georgian, minority languages, and sign language. (1) Despite these efforts, the Public Defender of Georgia noted that educational access remains inadequate for vulnerable children, including students with disabilities, street children, and children in state care. (2,46)

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 Georgia (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 applies to all children, including those in informal work.	2017 – 2021
	Increase the age up to which education is compulsory to age 16, the minimum age for work.	2009 – 2021
	Ensure that the law's light work provisions are sufficiently specific to prevent children from involvement in child labor.	2016 – 2021
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use, procuring, and offering of children for the production and trafficking of drugs.	2019 – 2021
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2021
Coordination	Continue to increase coordination between the Department of Labor Inspection within the Ministry of Labor, Health, and Social Affairs and the Criminal Police Department.	2018 – 2021
Government Policies	Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant forms of child labor, including child labor in agriculture.	2017 – 2021
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor, including in agriculture, to inform policies and programs.	2018 – 2021
	Make additional efforts to register all children in school, including those from Roma communities, provide them with identity documents, and ensure that these groups can access education.	2018 – 2021
	Improve access to education for children who speak languages other than Georgian or Russian, as well as for socially vulnerable children, children from impoverished families, children with disabilities, and children who live in rural areas.	2019 – 2021
	Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, especially for street children.	2018 – 2021

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