

In 2021, Honduras made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

The government established a new legal protocol to improve local community coordination on child labor issues and increased penalties for forced labor under the Penal Code from 5 to 8 years' imprisonment to 10 to 15 years. The government also established the Roadmap for the Elimination of Child Labor in Honduras (2021–2025), which seeks to identify risk factors for vulnerability to child labor, raise awareness of child labor laws, and establish

a protocol for responding to child labor violations. Furthermore, government agencies conducted multiple joint inspections targeting child labor throughout the country, and the Ministry of Education launched a new learning management system to address gaps in education caused by the pandemic. However, children in Honduras are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. They are also used to carry out illicit activities, including selling and trafficking drugs. Children also engage in child labor in the production of coffee, melons, and lobsters. Labor law enforcement agencies lack the financial and human resources necessary to fulfill their mandate. Additionally, social programs that address child labor in agriculture have not addressed the problem nationwide. The government also lacks similar programs to eliminate child labor in other sectors, including fishing, mining, domestic work, and forced begging.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Honduras are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. They are also used to carry out illicit activities, including selling and trafficking drugs. Children also engage in child labor in the production of coffee, melons, and lobsters. (1-4) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Honduras.

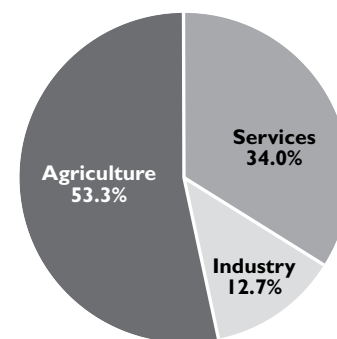
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	9.0 (168,348)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	87.9
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	6.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		80.2

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2020, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022. (5)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Encuesta Permanente de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples (EPHPM), 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.

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Production of melon, coffee, corn, and okra (7-13)
	Harvesting shrimp† (10)
	Fishing,† including working as divers' assistants,† and diving for lobster† (4,14)
Industry	Production and sale of fireworks† (15,16)
	Artisanal mining† (4)
	Construction,† activities unknown (1,4,8,12-14)

Honduras

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Washing car windows, begging, vending, and performing† on the streets for tips (1,17,18)
	Scavenging in garbage dumps† (17,19)
	Work in hotels, activities unknown (17)
	Domestic work† (8,12,13,17)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced labor in fishing, mining, construction, and in the hospitality industry (4)
	Forced begging, street vending, and domestic service (4,12,13,20)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4,12-14,21,22)
	Use in illicit activities, including by gangs in committing extortion, and selling and trafficking drugs, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,3,4,12-14)

† 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.

Children in Honduras are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes by family members and friends. (4,12,14) Children are also forced to work as street vendors and domestic servants. Gangs force children to commit extortion, engage in prostitution, transport weapons, traffic drugs, and serve as lookouts. (4,12,14) In addition, Honduras is a destination country for child sex tourists from the United States and Canada. (4)

According to Honduras' National Institute of Statistics, 364,765 children between the ages of 5 and 17 were working in 2019, with 67 percent working in rural areas and more than half engaged in labor in agriculture. (12-14) These numbers do not incorporate estimates for children used by gangs. The Ministry of Labor and Social Security (SETRASS) noted that due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent job losses, child labor has likely increased as adults have been unable to support their families, but has not updated official statistics. (13) Reports indicate that children from indigenous and Afro-descendant groups are particularly vulnerable to child labor, including its worst forms. (1,21,23) In particular, boys from the Miskito Afro-descendant community are vulnerable to forced labor in fishing, mining, construction, and hospitality industries. (4) Children who lack economic and educational opportunities are the most vulnerable to child labor and are among the most likely to migrate to other countries. Once en route, migrant children are vulnerable to human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. (21,22,24)

In 2021, barriers to education in the country continued due to pandemic-related school closures and children's lack of access to the Internet, cellphone coverage, or technical equipment required to attend virtual classes. (12,13) After a significant number of children left school in 2020, high rates of school dropouts persisted in 2021 as most schools continued to only provide distance education. (13) Poverty and lack of access to education increase the vulnerability of children to child labor and exploitation. (25) To help address gaps in access to education, USAID provided technical assistance and materials to launch the Ministry of Education's new learning management system, Learning Passport, benefitting over 1.6 million students in 2021. Additionally, USAID assisted in the distribution of education kits, which included printed textbooks, teacher guides, school supplies, and in some cases, connectivity packages, to support over 800,000 children and youth in 11 departments. (13)




Access to education is often limited, especially for children living in rural areas, where there is a lack of funding for schools, and in many cases, a limited number of secondary schools. (1,26) Reports indicate that in some regions of the country, especially in La Mosquitia, language barriers exist as the teachers do not speak local languages or dialects. (12,27) Violence originating from gang activity, including recruitment and territorial disputes, also presents barriers to access for both children and educators, causing some schools to drastically reduce their enrollment. (1,12-14) Additionally, children from indigenous and Afro-descendant groups face persistent difficulties in obtaining access to education. (27,28) Schools that serve their communities have deteriorating conditions, such as shortages of materials, personnel, and infrastructure. There is also a particularly high dropout rate among children of indigenous and African descent. (27,28) Finally, children with disabilities attend schools at a lower rate than the general population, and the National Center for Social Sector Information states that 43 percent of persons with disabilities received no formal education. (29) Other barriers to education access in

the country include deteriorating school infrastructure, a lack of sanitation and electricity in schools, a lack of transportation to school, and the cost of school fees, uniforms, and supplies. (12-14)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Honduras 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 Honduras' legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the minimum age for work being lower than the compulsory education age.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	18	Article 120 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence; Article 15 of the Executive Agreement STSS-211-01; Article 32 of the Labor Code (30-32)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 1 and 122 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence; Articles 2 and 10 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01; Article 1 of the Executive Agreement STSS-441-2016 (30,31,33)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 1 of the Executive Agreement STSS-441-2016; Article 8 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01 (30,33)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 2 and 10 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01; Articles 221 and 222 of the Penal Code (30,34)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 2 and 10 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01; Article 8 of the Legislative Decree 35-2013; Articles 219 and 220 of the Penal Code (30,34,35)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 134 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence; Articles 2 and 10 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01; Articles 219, 220, 257 and 259–262 of the Penal Code (30,31,34)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 134 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence; Article 10 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01; Articles 6 and 52 of the Law Against Trafficking in Persons (Decree 59-2012); Article 8 of the Legislative Decree 35-2013 (30,31,35,36)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Articles 2 and 12 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01 (30)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Articles 2 and 10 of the Executive Agreement STSS211-01 (30)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	17	Articles 8, 13, and 21–23 of the Fundamental Law of Education; Articles 36 and 39 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence (31,37)
Free Public Education	Yes		Articles 7, 13, and 21–23 of the Fundamental Law of Education; Article 36 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence; Article 171 of the Constitution (31,37,38)

* Country has no conscription (30)

Honduras

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

On October 7, 2021, the National Congress increased penalties for forced labor under the trafficking in persons article of the Penal Code from 5 to 8 years' imprisonment to 10 to 15 years, bringing the penalties in line with the penalties for other serious crimes, such as kidnapping. The reform, which reinstated the penalties that existed prior to 2020, entered into effect on November 1, 2021, after publication in the national register. (63) In addition, at the end of 2020, SETRASS issued Executive Order STSS 578-2020 Regulation of Protected Adolescent Work. (64) The Executive Order governs issuance of work permits to adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18, including determination of hours, conditions, and activities of work. (64)

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 and Social Security (SETRASS)	Conducts labor inspections and enforces child labor laws through the General Directorate of Social Welfare and the General Directorate of Labor Inspections. Created by the Labor Inspection Law enacted in 2017 through Decree Num. 178-2016. (12,39,40)
Public Ministry	Carries out criminal prosecutions and directs the investigation of crimes in the country, including those related to the worst forms of child labor. (14,41) Through its Office of the Special Prosecutor for Children, prosecutes crimes with child victims, including crimes related to child trafficking, forced labor, and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Also coordinates with the National Police to investigate crimes and protect survivors. (14,41) Through its Technical Agency for Criminal Investigations, investigates and provides technical support for criminal prosecutions, including by the Office of the Special Prosecutor for Children, such as those related to human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and child pornography. (14) Through its Unit Against Trafficking in Persons, Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Illicit Human Smuggling (UTESCTP), coordinates with domestic and international enforcement agencies to carry out anti-trafficking in persons operations and prosecutions. (20,42)
National Police	Investigates crimes related to the worst forms of child labor, through its Police Investigation Directorate. Also works with the Public Ministry and the Directorate of Childhood, Adolescence, and Family (DINAF), as well as other government entities on operations to remove children from child labor. (12)
Directorate of Childhood, Adolescence, and Family (DINAF)	Formulates, coordinates, and implements national plans concerning children, adolescents, and their families; monitors children's rights, including by investigating complaints of child labor and ensuring that survivors receive government services; and coordinates state efforts with civil society institutions to protect children. It is overseen by the Social Cabinet, a cabinet-level government entity that coordinates 17 governmental institutions. (12,13,43-45) DINAF also carries out inspections throughout the country through its six regional offices, in conjunction with other Government of Honduras (GOH) agencies. (13)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2021, labor law enforcement agencies in Honduras took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the SETRASS that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including a lack of labor inspectors.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$3,200,000 (12)	\$3,300,000 (13)
Number of Labor Inspectors	170 (13)	162 (13)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (32)	Yes (32)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (12)	Yes (13)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (12)	Yes (13)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (12)	Yes (13)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	8,267 (12)	14,299 (65)
Number Conducted at Worksites	7,318 (12)	Unknown (13)

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (Cont.)

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (12)	1 (13)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A (12)	0 (13)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A (12)	0 (13)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (12)	Yes (13)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (12)	Yes (13)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (32)	Yes (32)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (12)	Yes (13)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (12)	Yes (13)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (12)	Yes (13)

During the reporting period, SETRASS conducted 14,299 labor inspections, including 32 related directly to child labor. SETRASS conducted inspections in businesses in the commercial, service, and agricultural sectors. SETRASS reported it conducted inspections throughout the country in the language spoken by most workers in the workplace. (13,65) SETRASS uncovered one violation of child labor laws in 2021, however it could not provide additional details as the violation was still under review. SETRASS also uncovered one child working in a commercial business without the appropriate authorization. (13) While SETRASS confirmed there are children working in the agricultural sector, they did not find any when conducting their inspections during the reporting period. (13)

SETRASS and civil society partners have all indicated that the number of inspections conducted is insufficient to address the scope of labor violations in the country, including child labor violations. (1,12,13,26) Reports indicate that SETRASS conducts most inspections in the urban areas of Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula. Moreover, rural areas and indigenous communities, in which hazardous activities in agriculture, fishing, and diving are concentrated, have insufficient inspections to address the scope of the problem. (4,46) Inspectors do not conduct inspections in the informal sector unless there is a formal complaint, even though child labor is often encountered in this sector in Honduras. (12,13)

Labor union confederations, employer organizations, and human rights organizations have indicated that the level of funding and resources for the General Directorate for Labor Inspections is insufficient to enforce child labor laws nationwide. (1,12,26) In 2021 the government allocated \$3.3 million to the labor inspectorate, which was a 3.1 percent increase over the budget of 2020. However, inspectors did not have enough access to transportation and travel funding to carry out inspections. (13,65) Furthermore, reports indicate that the Directorate of Childhood, Adolescence, and Family (DINAF) lacks sufficient resources to adequately carry out its mandate. (26)

The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Honduras' workforce, which includes more than 4.1 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, Honduras would employ about 274 labor inspectors. (47,48) SETRASS also noted that the number of labor inspectors is insufficient. (12) New inspectors receive an initial training of six months, including training on child labor issues. During the reporting period, inspectors received virtual training on inspection protocols. (13) However, reports indicate that additional training on child labor issues is still needed for labor inspectors. (65)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2021, criminal law enforcement agencies in Honduras 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 allocation of financial resources.

Honduras

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (12)	Yes (13)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (12)	N/A (13)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (12)	Yes (13)
Number of Investigations	35 (12)	10 (13)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (12)	4 (13)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (12)	12 (13)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (12)	Unknown (13)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (12)	Unknown (13)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (12)	Yes (13)

In 2021, the Public Ministry reported the Special Prosecutor's Office for Children opened an investigation into forced child begging, carrying out 156 operations on a national level. (13) Related to these investigations, the office identified one perpetrator who has been linked to sexual assault against three children, aggravated rape against two children, and production of child pornography involving at least three child victims. The office continues to investigate to see if other victims can be identified. (13) The Unit Against Trafficking in Persons, Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Illicit Human Smuggling (UTESCTP) investigated six child trafficking cases linked to forced begging, three cases linked to child labor exploitation, and one case of forced labor involving three children as of December 2021. The government did not have final numbers on the number of violations related to forced child begging. (13) The Public Ministry reported three violations of child commercial sexual exploitation (child pornography) and one violation of child labor exploitation. (13) However, reports indicate that criminal law enforcement agencies in the country have a limited capacity to investigate trafficking in persons cases in most regions of Honduras due to staffing limitations. (49)

The Public Ministry reported the Special Prosecutor's Office for Children prosecuted two defendants for alleged child labor crimes. (13) In addition, UTESCTP prosecuted one defendant for child sexual exploitation, forced servitude, and slavery; two defendants for child labor exploitation; one defendant for forced begging; one defendant for forced labor, child abuse, and sexual assault; two defendants for child labor exploitation, aggravated sexual assault, aggravated rape, and aggravated child abuse; two defendants for aggravated rape and trafficking in persons resulting in forced servitude and slavery; and one defendant for trafficking in persons resulting in forced begging. (13) The Public Ministry reported the Special Prosecutor for Children rescued seven children who were victims of various crimes and removed 96 children from situations of begging. The Public Ministry transferred the children to DINAF to receive social support and services. (13)

During the reporting period, the Public Ministry's Special Prosecutor's Office for Children trained prosecutors and criminal investigators on child labor. (13) Additionally, UTESCTP conducted several trainings on prevention of trafficking in persons. These trainings benefitted police, prosecutors, judges, labor inspectors, teachers, students, health officials, victims services professionals, and migration officials. (49)

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 Commission for the Gradual and Progressive Eradication of Child Labor	Coordinates government policies and efforts on child labor issues. Chaired by SETRASS and includes officials from eight government ministries, DINAF the Supreme Court, and other government entities. (39,50) Oversees regional sub-commissions, led by SETRASS and DINAF officials, which implement national efforts at the local level. (39,50) The Commission met on June 17, 2021. The meeting focused on the creation of a strategic and operational plan for 2022–2026. On August 23, 2021, the Commission approved the 2021–2025 roadmap for the elimination of child labor. (13) During the reporting year, SETRASS coordinated joint actions for the prevention of child labor through the Technical Council for the Gradual and Progressive Eradication of Child Labor, which is made up of state institutions, workers' unions, private enterprise, and civil society. (13)
Inter-Institutional Commission Against Sexual, Commercial, and Trafficking Exploitation (CICESCT)	Works to prevent trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation, as well as providing services to protect and support survivors and their families. (13) Coordinates at the national level the actions carried out by public and private institutions to sensitize, prevent, and provide services to survivors, as well as implement actions to address sexual exploitation and human trafficking. (51) CICESCT is made up of 20 government institutions and 12 civil society organizations. It supports local committees in each of the country's 18 departments. (13) Implements the Strategic Plan to Combat Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking, as well as manages a dedicated trafficking in persons hotline. (13,49) In 2021, CICESCT identified 35 child victims of exploitation, 10 of them were children used to produce pornographic material and 25 were girls used for sexual exploitation. CICESCT coordinated with DINAF to provide protection, food, health care, and psychological support to survivors. (13) CICESCT also conducted a series of trainings both online and in-person for government officials and representatives of non-governmental organizations. These trainings focused on prevention of trafficking in persons. (49) It also carried out information and raising awareness campaigns on human trafficking. (49)
Migration Task Force	Convenes several government ministries to collaborate on addressing irregular migration, including addressing the risks associated with trafficking in persons. (2) In 2021, it held various meetings to support and coordinate dignified returns of migrants and to provide services to them. (65)
Ministry of Social Development and Inclusion	Coordinates social protection policies and the provision of services to vulnerable populations. (52) Reports indicate it was active during 2021. (13,45)

On July 9, 2021, SETRASS published agreement STSS 177-2021 Protocol of Organization, Training, and Legalization of Child Labor Prevention Committees. This protocol aims to improve local community coordination on child labor issues. SETRASS will lead the initiative with the support of its regional offices and municipal councils. (13,66)

During the reporting period, the government also developed and approved a victim's assistance manual, which includes new standard operating procedures for preventing, detecting, and providing assistance to survivors of trafficking. It provided information on identifying trafficking risk factors and vulnerable groups, as well as outlining interagency coordination to support survivors. (49) Additionally, the government created an assistance plan outlining the basic and urgent needs of survivors, including assistance to support recovery from trauma. (49)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9).

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Roadmap for the Elimination of Child Labor in Honduras (2021–2025)†	Aims to eliminate all forms of child labor by 2025. Established on August 23, 2021, by the National Commission for the Gradual and Progressive Eradication of Child Labor. (13) It replaces the previous roadmap for the elimination of child labor that expired in 2020. (65) The lines of action include increased efforts to identify risk factors for vulnerability to child labor; the establishment of a common, integrated protocol for responding to child labor situations, and increased awareness of child labor laws and labor rights. Works at the national, regional, and sub-regional levels and addresses poverty, health, education, and social development. (13,53)
Strategic Plan to Combat Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking in Honduras (2016–2022)	Establishes national priorities to address commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking in four principal areas: (1) prevention and awareness; (2) investigation, prosecution, and punishment of violations; (3) detection, assistance, and protection of victims; and (4) coordination and cooperation. (54,65) During the reporting period, CICESCT continued implementing the Strategic Plan to Combat Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Human Trafficking in Honduras by undertaking activities such as: identifying child victims of commercial and sexual exploitation, as well as coordinating with DINAF to provide them with support. (13)

Honduras

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor (Cont.)

Policy	Description
Interinstitutional Strategy for Homeless Families and Children	Defines coordinating actions to confront the problem of family and child homelessness, including child begging. Finalized in 2020, it was developed partly in response to the pandemic and other factors contributing to increasing rates of homelessness. (12) In 2021, it supported activities carried out by the Program to Combat Child Forced Begging. (65)
U.S.-Honduras Labor Rights Monitoring and Action Plan	Aims to improve the enforcement of labor laws, including laws related to child labor, by implementing legal and policy reforms, strengthening SETRASS, enhancing enforcement activities, and increasing outreach efforts. (55) During the reporting period, USDOL and SETRASS continued activities and coordination under the plan. (13)

† 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. (56-59)

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
Better Life Voucher (<i>Bono Vida Mejor</i>)†	Conditional cash transfer program that aims to reduce poverty by providing financial assistance to households after parents ensure that their children participate in health, education, nutrition, and other programs. (24,60) Reports indicate this program was active in 2021, and continued to provide cash transfers to reduce poverty. (65)
Program to Combat Child Forced Begging†	DINAF program that identifies and rescues children who are subjected to forced begging and raises awareness of child forced begging through the media. (46,61) In 2021, as part of this program the government conducted 106 operations as part of an investigation into forced child begging. These led to interactions with 112 family units through six DINAF regional offices, and resulted in the application of 13 protective measures, and the referral of seven cases for prosecution. (65)
Program for the Reintegration of Returned Unaccompanied Migrant Children†	Government program that assists unaccompanied migrant children who have been returned to Honduras. (12,13) Implemented by DINAF in collaboration with the National Institute for Migration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNICEF, the Network of Institutions for Children's Rights (COIPRODEN), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and NGO Aldeas SOS. UNICEF and USAID, through IOM, provide financial support for the program. (13,65) Reports indicate it was still active and operational in 2021, especially in the Belen Child and Family Reception. (65)
Program to Prevent Sex Tourism Involving Children and Adolescents†	Government program that aims to raise awareness and provide training on preventing sex tourism for the tourism industry. Implemented by the Honduran Tourist Board, the Ministry of Tourism, and the Honduras Tourism Institute. (1) In 2021, the Honduran Institute of Tourism virtually participated in a workshop on preventing exploitation and trafficking in persons. Additionally, as part of the implementation of the Integrated Central American System of Quality and Sustainability (SICCS) the theme of preventing child sex tourism was covered as part of the required modules for socially responsible business certifications. (67)
USDOL-Funded Projects	USDOL projects that aim to eliminate child labor through direct services to Honduran children and youth, capacity building with the Government of Honduras, and technical assistance to the private sector and civil society organizations. These projects include: \$8.4 million Increasing Collective Action to Address Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Other Unacceptable Conditions of Work in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras (2021–2026); \$2 million Addressing Child Labor and Forced Labor in the Coffee Supply Chain in Honduras (2017–2022); \$17.2 million Youth Pathways Central America (2015–2021); and \$11.6 million Bright Futures (2014–2023). In 2021, Bright Futures provided several trainings to Child Labor Committees around the country on topics related to child labor, human trafficking, and labor rights. It also assisted in the elaboration of the Roadmap for the Elimination of Child Labor in Honduras (2021–2025), by helping to identify the main strategic lines of action. (62) In June 2021, launched the awareness campaign "Work over School", focused on raising awareness on the causes of child labor, the effects of the pandemic on children's access to education, the number of children working by gender and by geographic area in the country, and on the worst forms of child labor. It managed to reach a total of 44,431 people through social media. (62) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.

† Program is funded by the Government of Honduras.

Although the Government of Honduras funds or participates in social programs to address child labor, research did not identify programs that specifically target children working in sectors such as fishing, mining, domestic

work, and forced begging or that address the illegal recruitment of children into gang-related activities. In addition, social programs that address child labor in agriculture do not appear to be sufficient to address the scope of the problem nationwide. (65)

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 Honduras (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the age up to which education is compulsory is the same as the minimum age for work.	2021
Enforcement	Carry out labor inspections in areas in which child labor is prevalent, such as rural areas, the informal sector, and indigenous communities in which children engage in hazardous activities.	2017 – 2021
	Ensure that labor and criminal law enforcement agencies have sufficient funding and resources to carry out their mandates nationwide.	2010 – 2021
	Increase the number of labor inspectors from 162 to 274 to meet the ILO's technical advice.	2010 – 2021
	Ensure that all labor inspectors receive sufficient training on child labor issues.	2014 – 2021
	Publish labor law and criminal law enforcement information on the number of labor inspections conducted at worksites, the number of convictions obtained, and penalties imposed related to the worst forms of child labor.	2015 – 2021
Social Programs	Increase access to education by increasing funding to schools; ensuring that teachers speak local languages or dialects; building more schools, particularly secondary schools, and schools in rural areas; enhancing efforts to protect students from gang recruitment and violence; and removing barriers such as school fees, costs for uniforms, and lack of transportation.	2014 – 2021
	Ensure that social programs reach the children who are most vulnerable to child labor, including children of African descent and indigenous children.	2017 – 2021
	Expand social programs that address child labor in agriculture and create programs to assist children engaged in child labor in fishing, mining, domestic service, and illicit gang activity.	2009 – 2021

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