

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2021, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

The National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons coordinated numerous trainings for the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit of the Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force, frontline healthcare workers, and frontline volunteers from the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Red Cross Society. The training modules addressed human trafficking indicators, such as victim identification, care and protection, awareness raising, and survivor and professional resources. In addition, the government distributed food parcels to 349 student participants through its program Zero Hunger Trust Fund. The government also funded and provided resources for several human trafficking awareness campaigns, including a live radio program, distributing hundreds of brochures to evacuees of the La Soufrière volcano eruption, and training to healthcare and frontline workers. However, children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines engage in child labor in street vending, including selling fruits and vegetables at local farmers' markets. Gaps remain in the legal framework, as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines law does not fully meet international standards because the use of children for prostitution, pornography, or pornographic performances is not prohibited. In addition, the minimum age for hazardous work falls below international standards and there is no legislation prohibiting the using, procuring, and offering of children in illicit activities, including in the production of drugs.

I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines engage in child labor in street vending, including selling fruits and vegetables at local farmers' markets. (1,2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

| Children | Age | Percent |
|-------------------------------|---------|-------------|
| Working (% and population) | 5 to 14 | Unavailable |
| Attending School (%) | 5 to 14 | Unavailable |
| Combining Work and School (%) | 7 to 14 | Unavailable |
| Primary Completion Rate (%) | | 104.9 |

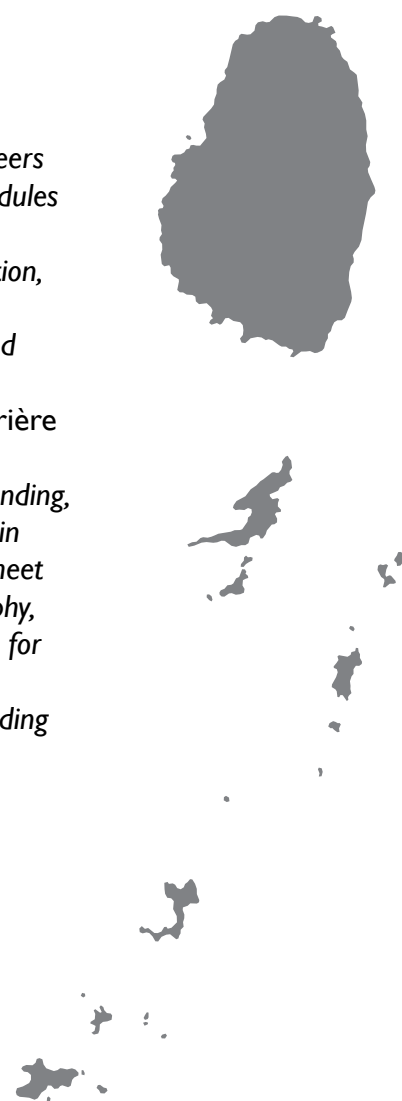
Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2019, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022. (3)
Data were unavailable from International Labor Organization's analysis, 2022. (4)

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 | Activities unknown (1,2) |
| Services | Street vending, including selling fruits and vegetables at local farmers' markets (5) |

‡ 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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All children in the country are able to access education; however, inadequate public transportation for children in rural villages causes them to walk long distances to get to school, which may make attending school difficult. (1,6,7) Children out of school are vulnerable to engaging in child labor.

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 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 Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

| Standard | Meets International Standards | Age | Legislation |
|---|-------------------------------|-----|---|
| Minimum Age for Work | Yes | 14 | Article 8 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act (8) |
| Minimum Age for Hazardous Work | No | | Schedule, Part I, Articles 1, 2, and 5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act (8) |
| Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children | No | | Part I, Sections 3 and 4, and Articles 1, 2, and 5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act; Section VI(37) of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Occupational Safety and Health Act of 2017 (8,9) |
| Prohibition of Forced Labor | Yes | | Chapter XII, Part 207 of the Criminal Code (10) |
| Prohibition of Child Trafficking | Yes | | Part II, Articles 5–8 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (11) |
| Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children | No | | Part II, Article 7 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (10) |
| Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities | No | | |
| Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment | N/A* | | |
| Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military | N/A*† | | |
| Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups | No | | |
| Compulsory Education Age | Yes | 16 | Part I, Article 2 of the Education Act (6) |
| Free Public Education | Yes | | Part III, Articles 14–16 of the Education Act (6) |

* Country has no conscription (12)

† Country has no standing military (13)

The government has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. (8,9) In addition, the law does not fully meet international standards as it does not prohibit the use of children for prostitution, pornography, or pornographic performances. (11)

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.

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 | Enforces child labor laws through its Department of Labor, and refers victims to appropriate social services. (14) If the Department finds a criminal violation, it forwards the case to the Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force. (15) |
| Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force | Makes criminal arrests, including those involving the worst forms of child labor. Addresses human trafficking through the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit (ATIPU); refers survivors to appropriate social services and funds financial requests made by ATIPU. (15) |
| Office of the Director of Public Prosecution | Prosecutes criminal violations, including those related to the worst forms of child labor. (15) |
| Ministry of Social Development | Maintains the Child Protection Unit, which includes child protection officers who report cases of child abuse. (1) |

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2021, labor law enforcement agencies in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including a lack of a mechanism to assess civil penalties.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

| Overview of Labor Law Enforcement | 2020 | 2021 |
|--|---------------|----------------|
| Labor Inspectorate Funding | \$618,758 (1) | \$591,907 (16) |
| Number of Labor Inspectors | 6 (1) | 6 (15) |
| Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties | No (17) | No (17) |
| Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors | No (1) | N/A (16) |
| Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor | N/A | N/A |
| Refresher Courses Provided | No (1) | Yes (15) |
| Number of Labor Inspections Conducted | 37 (1) | 35 (16) |
| Number Conducted at Worksite | 37 (1) | 35 (16) |
| Number of Child Labor Violations Found | 0 (1) | 0 (15) |
| Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed | 0 (1) | N/A |
| Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected | 0 (1) | N/A |
| Routine Inspections Conducted | Yes (1) | Yes (15) |
| Routine Inspections Targeted | Yes (1) | Unknown |
| Unannounced Inspections Permitted | Yes (17) | Yes (17) |
| Unannounced Inspections Conducted | Yes (1) | Yes (15) |
| Complaint Mechanism Exists | Yes (1) | Yes (15) |
| Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services | Yes (1) | Yes (15) |

During the reporting period, the Department of Labor reported that the number of inspectors and amount of funding was sufficient. (15,16)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2021, criminal law enforcement agencies in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 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 and human resources.

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Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

| Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement | 2020 | 2021 |
|---|----------|-------------|
| Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators | Yes (18) | Yes (19,20) |
| Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor | N/A | N/A |
| Refresher Courses Provided | Yes (18) | No (15) |
| Number of Investigations | 0 (1) | 0 (15) |
| Number of Violations Found | 0 (1) | 0 (15) |
| Number of Prosecutions Initiated | 0 (1) | 0 (15) |
| Number of Convictions | 0 (1) | 0 (15) |
| Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor | Unknown | 0 (15) |
| Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services | Yes (1) | Yes (15) |

In 2021, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit (ATIPU) participated in more than 30 online learning programs on human trafficking conducted through the Criminal Justice Reform project, which aims to develop training aids for frontline responders who may encounter human trafficking survivors during their daily duties. The training modules addressed human trafficking indicators, such as victim identification, care, and protection; awareness raising; and survivor and professional resources. (19,20)

Reports indicate that insufficient resources, including limited personnel and vehicles, hampered the capacity of ATIPU to address human trafficking throughout the country. (18)

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 a lack of efforts to address all forms of child labor.

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

| Coordinating Body | Role & Description |
|--|---|
| National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons | Develops a national plan to address human trafficking, coordinates the collection of data among government agencies, establishes policies to enable government agencies to work with NGOs to prevent human trafficking and assist survivors, and provides training to all relevant government officials and authority figures. Chaired by the Prime Minister. (11) Comprises representatives from police, immigration, public prosecutors, social services, gender affairs, the Department of Labor, and a local NGO. (21) In 2021, coordinated various trainings given to ATIPU, frontline healthcare workers, and frontline volunteers from Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Red Cross Society. (19,20) |

Research shows that, outside the scope of human trafficking, there is no specific coordinating mechanism dedicated solely to addressing issues related to the worst forms of child labor.

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 coverage of all worst forms of child labor.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

| Policy | Description |
|---|---|
| National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons (2021–2025) | Establishes procedures to eradicate human trafficking, including training for frontline staff and other relevant stakeholders; conducts awareness-raising campaigns; and provides victim protection and assistance, although the government has not identified a victim since 2019. Administered by the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons. (22,23) |
| Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Countering Human Trafficking in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines | Outlines the responsibilities of each signatory agency in addressing human trafficking and the worst forms of child labor. Assigns tasks and responsibilities among nine government stakeholders regarding human trafficking. (24) Includes the Department of Labor; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Trade and Commerce; ATIPU and others. (25) |

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Research found no evidence of any policy addressing child labor, including street vending. In addition, research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement key policies during the reporting period.

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 child labor in relevant sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

| Program | Description |
|---|--|
| Government-Funded Educational Programs† | Provide free meals to students and low-income families through the Supplementary Feeding Program. Active in 2021. (24) |
| Zero Hunger Trust Fund† | Provides textbooks, cash for the purchase of school supplies, and daily meals to over 300 grade 4 and 5 students in 12 primary schools. Seeks to alleviate poverty and improve the standard of living of primary school-age children through its "Adopt a Classroom" program. (25) During the reporting period, distributed food parcels to 349 recipients. (26) |

† Program is funded by the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

During the reporting period, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines funded and provided resources toward human trafficking awareness campaigns, including through a live radio program on Radio 705, a national broadcasting corporation; the distribution of hundreds of brochures to evacuees who were placed in shelters during the explosive eruption of La Soufrière volcano; and the training of healthcare workers and Red Cross frontline workers. (15,20)

Although the government has implemented programs to address educational and food needs, research found no evidence that it has carried out programs specifically focused on addressing child labor in all relevant sectors.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

| Area | Suggested Action | Year(s) Suggested |
|---------------------|--|-------------------|
| Legal Framework | Establish 18 as the minimum age for hazardous work and identify hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children. | 2009 – 2021 |
| | Ensure that laws criminally prohibit the use of children for prostitution, pornography, and pornographic performances. | 2017 – 2021 |
| | Ensure that laws criminally prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of children for illicit activities, including in the production of drugs. | 2011 – 2021 |
| | Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups. | 2016 – 2021 |
| | Raise the minimum age for work to the age up to which education is compulsory. | 2018 – 2021 |
| Enforcement | Establish a mechanism to assess civil penalties for child labor violations. | 2016 – 2021 |
| | Increase resources, including personnel and vehicles, for the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit to expand their capacity to address human trafficking throughout the country. | 2017 – 2021 |
| | Ensure training is provided, including offering periodic refresher courses to criminal investigators during the reporting period. | 2021 |
| Coordination | Establish coordinating mechanisms to address all worst forms of child labor. | 2019 – 2021 |
| Government Policies | Adopt policies to address child labor, including street vending. | 2021 |
| | Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement key policies and publish results from activities implemented during the reporting period. | 2019 – 2021 |

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

| Area | Suggested Action | Year(s) Suggested |
|-----------------|--|-------------------|
| Social Programs | Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs. | 2017 – 2021 |
| | Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including children in rural communities, by providing public transportation. | 2018 – 2021 |
| | Institute programs to address child labor in relevant sectors. | 2021 |

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