

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in Dominica, in 2022, the government made minimal advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. The government funded and participated in programs that may contribute to preventing child labor, including fundraising for the Education Trust Fund and providing meals to students. However, the government's ability to prevent children from being subjected to the worst forms of child labor is limited because existing laws do not determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children and the government has not enacted laws explicitly prohibiting the use of children in pornography. In addition, information on Dominica's criminal law enforcement efforts was not publicly released.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Table 1 provides one key indicator on children's education in Dominica.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Primary Completion Rate (%)		101.8




Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2021 published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2023. (1)

Children from the Kalinago community face barriers to accessing secondary education, including a lack of schools and long travel outside of the territory to attend school, which could make them more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. (2-4)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Dominica has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 2).

Table 2. 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 3). However, gaps exist in Dominica's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the minimum age for hazardous work.

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Table 3. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Articles 2 and 46 of the Education Act (5)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No	14	Articles 2, 4, and 5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act (6)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		Articles 2, 4, 5, and 7(1) of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act (6)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	No		Article 4 of the Constitution; Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act (7,8)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act (8)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Sections 2, 8, 10, and 13 of the Transnational Organized Crime (Prevention and Control) Act; Article 18 of the Sexual Offenses Act (8,9)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Article 16(5) of the Drugs (Prevention of Misuse) Act (10)
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	Articles 2 and 27 of the Education Act (5)
Free Public Education	No		Articles 15 and 16 of the Education Act (5)

† Country has no standing military (11)

Pursuant to Section 7(1) of the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, children under age 18 are prohibited from working at night, unless they are working with family members. However, the law does not otherwise prohibit the employment of children in work that is likely to jeopardize their health, safety, or morals. (6) Specifically, Dominica does not have national laws or regulations that comprehensively define the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. The government also has not established a sufficient minimum age of 18 for hazardous work. (8) Moreover, Article 46 of the Education Act prohibits the employment of children ages 5 to 16 during the school year, but allows students ages 14 and older to work during school vacations or in school-sponsored employment training programs without defining the conditions, specific activities, or number of hours permissible for light work. (5) Dominica's laws related to forced labor are not sufficient because they do not criminally prohibit forced labor except when it results from human trafficking. In addition, laws related to child trafficking are not sufficient because they are limited to international human trafficking. (8) The law does not sufficiently prohibit commercial sexual exploitation because the use of children in prostitution, pornography, and pornographic performances is not criminally prohibited. (3) Further, the law criminalizing the use of children as carriers for drug trafficking is insufficient because it does not cover the use, procuring, and offering of children for the production and trafficking of drugs. (10) Laws providing for free basic education do not meet international standards because they permit schools to charge tuition fees for some students who reside in Dominica but are not citizens. (5)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, the government has established relevant institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 4).

Table 4. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role & Activities
Labor Division, Ministry of National Security and Legal Affairs*	Documents and investigates cases involving child labor and refers violations to the Dominica Police Force and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. Refers cases to the Ministry of Health and Social Services and the Ministry of Culture, Youth, Sports and Community Development, which have limited social welfare and outreach programs. (12) In December 2022, Dominica created the Ministry of Labor, Public Service Reform, Social Partnership, Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development. At this time, it has not been reported what responsibilities the Ministry will take over from the Labor Division in the Ministry of Justice, Immigration and National Security. (12)
Police Force	Enforces criminal laws, including those related to child labor. (12)

* Agency responsible for child labor enforcement was created during the reporting period.

Labor Law Enforcement

Research did not find information on whether labor law enforcement agencies in Dominica took actions to address child labor. (12)

Table 5. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$185,000 (12)	\$185,000 (12)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown (13)	Unknown (12)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (14)	Yes (14)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	Unknown (13)	Unknown (12)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (13)	Unknown (12)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (13)	0 (12)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (13)	N/A (12)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (13)	N/A (12)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown (13)	Unknown (12)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown (13)	Unknown (12)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (14)	Yes (12, 14)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown (13)	Unknown (12)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (13)	Yes (12)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (13)	Yes (12)

Labor inspectors can conduct unannounced inspections at worksites in any sector at any time. (12, 14) Labor Inspectorate funding was approximately \$185,000, which was the same funding level as the previous year and is used for salaries, allowances, travel, supplies, and operations and maintenance services. (12)

Criminal Law Enforcement

Research did not find information on whether criminal law enforcement agencies in Dominica took actions to address child labor. (12)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor.

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VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for programs to address child labor. However, in 2022, the government funded and participated in programs that may contribute to preventing child labor (Table 6), although gaps exist in these programs, including a lack of implementation.

Table 6. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description & Activities
Basic Needs Trust Fund	Caribbean Development Bank-implemented program supervised by the Ministry for Ecclesiastical Affairs, Family, and Gender Affairs that aims to reduce poverty through livelihood services, improved infrastructure, capacity-building projects, and technical services. (15) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Basic Needs Trust Fund during the reporting period.
Education Trust Fund†	Government-funded program implemented by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development to provide financial assistance for textbooks, transportation, registration, and exam fees to students in secondary school who would otherwise be unable to complete their education. (12) The Dollar Day fundraiser was held during the reporting period. (16)
School Feeding Program‡	Government-funded program implemented by the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development to provide lunch to primary school students in targeted areas. Active during the reporting period. (12)

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/ilab-project-page-search>

† Program is funded by the Government of Dominica.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (4,17-23)

There is no evidence of current research on the worst forms of child labor in Dominica.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the continued prevention of child labor in Dominica (Table 7).

Table 7. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Define the conditions, activities, and number of hours permissible for light work.	2014 – 2022
	Ensure that the minimum age for hazardous work is age 18 for all children.	2015 – 2022
	Determine and codify the types of hazardous work prohibited for children, in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.	2018 – 2022
	Criminally prohibit the use of children in forced labor.	2019 – 2022
	Criminally prohibit domestic child trafficking.	2019 – 2022
	Enact legislation to specifically prohibit using, procuring, or offering of a child for prostitution, the production of pornography, and pornographic performances.	2011 – 2022
	Prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.	2014 – 2022
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2022
Enforcement	Ensure that laws providing free basic education include all children in Dominica, including non-citizens.	2022
	Collect and publish labor law enforcement data, including information on the number of labor inspectors, number and type of inspections conducted, and inspector training.	2022
	Collect and publish data on criminal law enforcement efforts on an annual basis.	2022
Social Programs	Make education accessible for all children, including members of the Kalinago community who may be vulnerable to child labor, by ensuring access to secondary education within the Kalinago territory.	2018 – 2022
	Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the Basic Needs Trust Fund to address child labor and make information about implementation measures publicly available on an annual basis.	2020 – 2022

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