

In 2022, the Philippines made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government enacted the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act to hold private sector entities responsible for addressing human trafficking. It also enacted the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials Act, which, among other things, punishes perpetrators of online sexual abuse of children and provides penalties for the production, distribution, possession, and provision of access to child sexual abuse or exploitation materials. In addition, the government launched a plan to improve the quality and delivery of education, address access gaps, and build resilience of learners. However, children in the Philippines are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture and gold mining. The minimum age for work of 15 is lower than the compulsory education age of 18, making children ages 15 through 17 vulnerable to child labor. Social programs also do not sufficiently support child victims of online sexual exploitation, and enforcement of child labor laws remains a challenge throughout the country due to limited personnel and financial resources.



### I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in the Philippines.

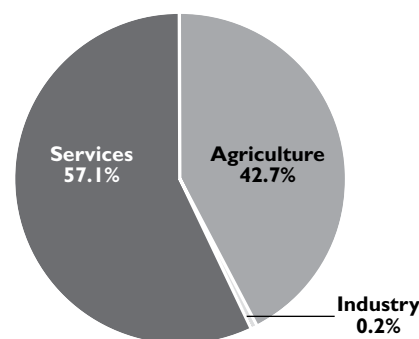
**Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	1.9 (458,631)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	92.0
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	2.0
Primary Completion Rate (%)		94.8

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

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization’s analysis of statistics from Labour Force Survey (LFS), 2021. (2)

**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 sugarcane,† including growing, weeding,† harvesting,† cutting,† and carrying sugarcane bundles† (3,4)
	Growing bananas, coconuts, corn, rice, rubber, and tobacco (4-6)
	Hog farming (7,8)
	Deep-sea fishing† (4,9)
Industry	Mining† and quarrying,† including for gold (3,4,10)
	Manufacturing pyrotechnics† (4,9)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Industry	Construction,† activities unknown (4,9)
	Production of fashion accessories (3,4)
Services	Domestic work (3,4,11,12)
	Street work, including scavenging, selling flowers, and begging (3,9,13,14)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, including use in the production of pornography, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4,13-17)
	Forced labor, including domestic work (3,4,17,18)
	Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict (3,19,20)
	Forced begging (3,9,13)
	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking (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.

Philippine children are victims of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC), in which children perform sex acts at the direction of paying foreigners and local Filipinos for live internet broadcasts that take place in small internet cafes, private homes, or windowless buildings sometimes referred to as “cybersex dens.” (3,12,17,18,21-26) The sector is highly profitable and growing due to increasing internet connectivity, widespread English language literacy, gaps in existing legislation and financial systems, and high international demand. (26) According to the latest available information published in 2021, 20 percent of internet-using children between the ages of 12 and 17 in the Philippines have been subjected to OSAEC. (14,18,25-27) Children from rural communities, primarily girls, are also subjected to trafficking domestically in urban centers and tourist destinations for the purposes of domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation. (4,18,21) Children in disaster-affected areas are targeted for sex trafficking, domestic servitude, and other forms of forced labor. As the Philippines is vulnerable to natural disasters including typhoons, tsunamis, volcanic activity, droughts, and erosion—and models indicate that the frequency and scale of these disasters will escalate in the coming years—an increasing number of children may be exposed to child labor. (26,28,29) In addition, perpetrators of child trafficking use student and intern exchange programs, use fake childcare positions, and take advantage of porous maritime borders to facilitate the exploitation of children. (21)




The recruitment and use of children by non-state armed groups, primarily the New People's Army and Dawla Islamiyah, remains a concern in the country. These children are used in both combat and non-combat roles, including as supply officers, medics, and cooks, and for running errands. (14,30,31) In addition, the Islamic State's affiliated groups reportedly have subjected women and girls to sexual slavery. (21) Despite the new administration's commitment to rehabilitate drug users and address the root causes of drug abuse in the country, lethal clashes between civilians and law enforcement officials continue, which resulted in the death of 14 children during the last 6 months of the reporting period. (14,32) Children are used in drug trafficking as pushers, possessors, employees at “drug dens,” and cultivators. (14)

Although the Constitution establishes free, compulsory education through age 18, unofficial school-related fees, such as for school uniforms, are prohibitive for some families. Other barriers to education include substandard infrastructure, which makes traveling and access to schools challenging, especially for children in rural areas, and architectural barriers that pose challenges for children with disabilities. (24)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Philippines 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 the Philippines' legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including a minimum age for work that is below the compulsory education age.

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 137 of the Labor Code; Section 12 of the Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act; Section 16 of the Act Instituting Policies for the Protection and Welfare of Domestic Workers (33-36)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 137 of the Labor Code; Section 12-D of the Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act (34-36)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Department Orders 149 and 149A on Guidelines in Assessing and Determining Hazardous Work in the Employment of Persons Below 18 Years of Age; Sections 12-D and 14 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act (9,35-38)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Sections 4 and 5 of the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 12-D and 16 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act (35,36,39)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Sections 3a, 4(k), 5, and 10 of the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 12-D and 16 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act (35,36,39,40)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Section 11 of the Free Internet Access in Public Places Act; Sections 12-D and 16 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act; Section 4 of the Cybercrime Prevention Act; Sections 4 and 10 of the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials Act. (35,36,41-43)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Sections 12-D and 16 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act; Sections 5 and 8 of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act (35,36,44)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Section 12 of the Providing for the Development, Administration, Organization, Training, Maintenance and Utilization of the Citizen Armed Forces of the Philippines, and for Other Purposes Act (45)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes*		Section 14 of the Providing for the Development, Administration, Organization, Training, Maintenance and Utilization of the Citizen Armed Forces of the Philippines, and for Other Purposes Act (45)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Sections 12-D and 16 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act (36)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	18‡	Section 4 of the Enhanced Basic Education Act (46)
Free Public Education	Yes		Section 2 of the Philippine Constitution (47)

\* Country has no conscription (45)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (46,48)

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In 2022, the government enacted the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2022, which imposes requirements and responsibilities on a multitude of private sector entities—including internet intermediaries, tourism enterprises, and financial intermediaries—to address and prevent trafficking in persons, including children. The act also identifies penalties for private sector entities if they are found in violation of the requirements. (14,40) Additionally, the Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials Act became law during the reporting period. This act provides additional protection for children against digital sexual abuse and exploitation. (14,43,49,50) As the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age in the Philippines, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. (24,33-35,46)

### 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 authority 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 & Activities
Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)	Bureau of Working Conditions (BWC) manages the labor inspection program that oversees inspections conducted by DOLE regional offices nationwide. BWC also oversees training of labor inspectors, manages the DOLE Labor Inspection Management Information System, and responds to queries and complaints regarding labor standards and working conditions, including tips on potential child labor cases, received through the DOLE 1349 hotline. (4,51) Inspects establishments and monitors compliance with labor laws in the formal sector. (52) Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns (BWSC) oversees the Profiling Child Laborers Initiative, a program to identify child laborers and remove them from child labor situations. (3,53) Mandated to develop policies, programs, and systems that champion the development and protection of disadvantaged workers by contributing to their decent and productive employment. Provides advisory and technical assistance to the Labor Secretary and regional offices. (54) Also oversees the Rescue the Child Laborers Quick Action Teams ( <i>Sagip Batang Manggagawa</i> ) that detect, monitor, and rescue child laborers in hazardous conditions. (4,9,13,51,52) During the reporting year, DOLE held events to raise awareness of child labor, including for the annual World Day Against Child Labor. (50)
Criminal Law Enforcement Agencies: Philippine National Police (PNP), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA)	PNP investigates and prosecutes cases related to the worst forms of child labor. (4,13) Its Women and Children's Protection Center (WCPC) enforces laws on child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children and has 269 personnel nationwide. (18) NBI investigates and prosecutes child labor cases and operates a national Task Force on the Protection of Children from Exploitation and Abuse. (9,18) Oversees the Anti-Human Trafficking Division, which investigates trafficking and illegal recruitment of children nationwide. (17) PDEA enforces the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act, maintains a national hotline for reporting cases of children used in illicit activities, and coordinates with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to assist during rescue operations. (9,13)
Cybersecurity Law Enforcement Agencies: National Telecommunications Commission, Dept. of Justice–Office of Cybercrime, Philippines Internet Crimes Against Children Center (PICACC), Dept. of Information and Communication Technology–Cybersecurity Bureau	National Telecommunications Commission enforces the Anti-Child Pornography Law. Coordinates with internet service providers to block websites containing pornographic material involving children. (25,49) Department of Justice–Office of Cybercrime receives CyberTips reports from the U.S.-based National Center for Missing and Exploited Children regarding potential OSAEC cases, conducts initial investigation into CyberTips, prioritizes cases, and then sends cases to PNP's Internet Crime Against Children Center for follow up. (55) Comprises legal and investigative divisions. (55) PICACC aims to combat the online sexual exploitation of children. Comprises the PNP-WCPC Anti-Human Trafficking Division and NBI Anti-Human Trafficking Division and aims to coordinate WCPC and NBI investigation of internet crimes against children. (18,56,57) Coordinates international investigations with the United Kingdom's National Crimes Agency (UK NCA) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP). (16,17,57,58) Receives funding from the UK NCA, AFP, and the U.S. Government. (59,60) Department of Information and Communication Technology–Cybersecurity Bureau provides preventative technological assistance to law enforcement and protects cybersecurity of Filipino citizens. (61) Oversees an anti-OSEC program comprising awareness-raising programs, computer software, website monitoring, cybersecurity, and a visible internet application, a form of artificial intelligence that allows for remote screen access. Shows an educational anti-OSAEC video in local communities, in collaboration with the Philippines Online Corporation. (61) Consults with telecommunications companies and civil society organizations to produce the National Cybersecurity Strategy. (42,61,62) Oversees CyberSafePH, an awareness campaign and capacity-building program with a 3-year roadmap aimed at addressing OSAEC and cyberbullying. (17,21,63) Reporting indicates that all of the aforementioned bodies were active in combatting child labor during the reporting period. (64) In 2022, PICACC successfully conducted 26 anti-trafficking in persons (OSAEC) operations that resulted in the rescue of 60 victims, arrest of 9 suspected traffickers, initiation of 19 prosecutions, and conviction of 5 suspects. (50)

### Labor Law Enforcement

In 2022, labor law enforcement agencies in the Philippines took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including insufficient financial and human resource allocation to the labor law inspectorate.

**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$3,657,520 (4)	\$3,700,000 (14)
Number of Labor Inspectors	1,210 (4)	1,210 (14)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	No (34)	No (34)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	Yes (4)	Yes (14)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite	58,363 (4)	81,314 (14)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	5 (4,65)	5 (14)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (4)	0 (14)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (4)	N/A (14)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (4)	Yes (14)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (4)	Yes (14)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (34)	Yes (34)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (4)	Yes (14)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (4)	Yes (14)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (4)	Yes (14)

Research indicates that the Philippines does not have an adequate number of labor inspectors to carry out their mandated duties. (14,66,67) A lack of funding, equipment, and data further prevents the labor inspectorate from conducting inspections in all provinces and in the informal sector. (14) The Bureau of Working Conditions acknowledged that more specialized training on child labor is needed to enhance labor inspectors' ability to readily identify and act on child labor situations. (3,13)

Enforcement of child labor protections for children employed in the informal sector and in small and medium-sized enterprises, particularly in agriculture and fishing, falls to DOLE, which has in the past lacked financial and human resources. (3,9,13,18,24) The Rescue the Child Laborers Quick Action Teams are permitted to conduct unannounced compliance visits to video karaoke bars, massage parlors, saunas and bathhouses, and farms, but they are not authorized to conduct visits to private homes to search for underage child domestic workers. However, there are mechanisms available to *barangay* (neighborhood level) officials to permit them to investigate domestic work-related complaints. (3,9,13,14,64)

### Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2022, criminal law enforcement agencies in the Philippines took actions to address child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the Philippine judicial system that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including inefficiencies in court proceedings, which prevent victims from obtaining justice and restitution.

**Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Training for Criminal Investigators Provided	Yes (4)	Yes (14)
Number of Investigations	93 (4)	122 (14)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	70 (4)	105 (14)
Number of Convictions	53 (4)	69 (14)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (4)	Yes (14)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (4)	Yes (14)

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The Philippine National Police continued to refer children involved in drug trafficking to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), after which they were placed in either juvenile detention centers or Houses of Hope, which, in practice, closely resemble detention centers. (9,24,68) In 2022, police killed a 17-year old suspect after he allegedly drew a weapon during a buy-bust police operation. (69,70) The Department of Justice claimed that it would review over 6,000 killings committed during drug war-related police operations, but the process has been slow and ineffective, with only 52 cases filed in the courts and only 5 convictions of offending police officers. (64)

During the reporting period, officials from law enforcement, courts, and other parts of the government participated in trainings related to OSAEC and trafficking in persons. (14) Philippine law allows judges to award civil compensation to human trafficking survivors based on damages arising from being trafficked, but survivors rarely receive this restitution since perpetrators often lack sufficient assets to pay. However, in cases for which perpetrators are financially able to pay this penalty, many are able to evade doing so due to ineffective, slow court procedures. (18,28,64) Due to the high volume of cybercrime tips related to child sexual exploitation received by the Office of Cybercrime each month, there is the need for additional law enforcement personnel, funds for operations, and equipment for forensic analysis of digital evidence. (24,28) Slow-moving courts, the need for additional training on handling digital evidence, a lack of understanding regarding application of the legal framework to cases, and too few prosecutors also hindered the effective and timely prosecution of human trafficking crimes. (12,18,22,28) Law enforcement agencies raised concerns about a lack of resources, including staff and a centralized database for tracking illegal recruitment and human trafficking. This lack of resources impedes their ability to act quickly on complaints of child labor, including those involving OSAEC, through conducting investigations and initiating prosecutions. (17,28,64)

## IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

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

**Table 8. Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Coordinating Body	Role & Activities
National Council Against Child Labor (NCACL)	Chaired by DOLE and co-chaired by DSWD. (14,71-74) Membership includes 19 government agencies and organizations. (4,72) Coordinates national efforts to combat child labor and implements the Philippine Program Against Child Labor. (14,74,75) Promotes information sharing at the national, regional, and provincial levels, and is tasked with establishing and disseminating a child labor reporting mechanism for use by local and national authorities. (3,17) During the reporting period, NCACL held 4 regular meetings and its technical working groups held 20 meetings. The council discussed the proposed assessment of the Philippine Program Against Child Labor Strategic Framework, the redevelopment of Child Labor Knowledge Sharing System website, approved the resolution Urging Council Members to Accelerate the Provision of Necessary Services to Profiled Child Laborers, and approved a resolution supporting the Durban Call to Action on the Elimination of Child Labor. (14)

During the reporting period, the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking established the National Coordination Center Against OSAEC under the DSWD. The center will develop and implement programs to prevent children from being victimized by online and commercial sexual exploitation, and to provide protective services to and reintegrate into society survivors of the crime. (14,50)

## V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

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

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description & Activities
Philippine Program Against Child Labor Strategic Framework (2020–2022)	Aimed to gradually reduce child labor through consultations with government institutions, local and international NGOs, civil society organizations, faith-based groups, professional associations, academia, the private sector, parents, and children. (9,13,83) Implementation of the framework was led by the NCACL with DOLE serving as Chairperson and DOLE's BWSC and BWC as Joint Secretariat. (14) During the reporting period, stakeholders conducted an assessment of the plan and developed recommendations for implementation of the policy. Additionally, stakeholders proposed a Program Against Child Labor Strategic Framework for 2023–2028. (14,84)
Basic Education Development Plan (BEDP) (2022–2030)†	Functions as a strategic roadmap to improve the government's delivery and quality of basic education. Aims to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on learning, participation in learning, access gaps, education quality, and resilience and rights of learners. (14,48) Implemented and assessed by the Department of Education. Each level of governance (school, division, region, and national) will formulate their own basic education policies that will work to meet the goals of the BEDP. Department of Education's planning offices review the policies and plans of each governance level to ensure congruency with the national plan. (14,48)
Anti-Trafficking Policies: National Strategic Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons (2023–2027)†	Approved to replace the Third National Strategic Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons during the reporting period. Provides an overall direction for the Philippines to address labor trafficking and sex trafficking, including online sexual abuse and exploitation of children. Chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Justice and co-chaired by the Secretary of DSWD. Employs a multi-stakeholder approach to fight human trafficking. (14) Mandated to prevent and suppress human trafficking, and ensure victim recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration into society through four key result areas: (1) Prevention, (2) Protection and Reintegration, (3) Prosecution and Law Enforcement, and (4) Partnership and Networking. (14,85)

† 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. (38,92,93)

During the reporting period, the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking completed an assessment of the Third National Strategic Action Plan Against Trafficking, which the council utilized to finalize the fourth strategic action plan. (14)

## VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2022, 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 a lack of adequate services for survivors of OSAEC.

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description & Activities
Anti-Child Labor Programs: Child Labor Prevention and Elimination Program,† Livelihood for Parents of Child Laborers ( <i>Kabuhayan para sa Magulang ng Batang Manggagawa</i> ),† and <i>Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino</i> Program (Conditional Cash Transfer Program)	<p>The Child Labor Prevention and Elimination Program is a DOLE anti-child labor program that implements local awareness-raising campaigns, institutes child labor-monitoring mechanisms, and requires neighborhoods to develop child labor elimination plans. (9) Includes a provision of livelihood assistance to parents of child laborers, <i>Sagip Batang Manggagawa</i>, and Project Angel Tree. (9,76) The government increased the program's budget by 30 percent during the reporting period. (14)</p> <p>Project Angel Tree is a social service with local government agency benefactors, known as "angels," who provide educational supplies to communities. (53,94) The program conducted 96 gift-giving activities during the reporting period. (14)</p> <p>Livelihood for Parents of Child Laborers is a DOLE program that provides livelihood assistance to parents, guardians, or other family members of child laborers. Seeks to prevent and eliminate child labor by providing necessary materials to start a livelihood undertaking. (4) During the reporting period, the program provided 5,512 parents of child laborers with livelihood assistance. (14)</p> <p>Conditional Cash Transfer Program is a DSWD national poverty reduction program that provides conditional grants, local awareness-raising campaigns, and child labor-monitoring mechanisms to assist poor families with children's access to health care, adequate nutrition, and education. (3,9,18,95) Includes a child labor module on family development for program participants. (9,96) Covers 1,627 cities and municipalities in 79 provinces in all 17 regions. (3,9) During the reporting period, the program published a third quarter report on its progress. (64)</p>

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**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor (Cont.)**

Program	Description & Activities
Strategic Helpdesks for Information, Education, Livelihood and Other Developmental Interventions for Child Laborers (SHIELD Against Child Labor)†	DSWD-led project implemented in 14 barangays in Catanauan, Labo, Jose Panganiban, Paracale, Kananga, and Ormoc City, with support from the ILO CARING Gold Mining Project. (51,53) Comprises three components: Child Labor Local Registry; Helpdesk and Convergence of Services; and Advocacy, Organizing, and Capacity Building. (9,97) Focuses on areas with a high child labor incidence rate, with interventions based on data from the Child Labor Local Registry. (97) Aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in the small-scale gold mining, deep sea fishing, and sugarcane industries. (3,9,75,98) During reporting year, recorded and addressed 1,400 cases of child laborers.
Recovery and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons (RRPTP)†	RRPTP is a DSWD and Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking program that provides recovery and reintegration services to survivors of human trafficking and raises awareness in vulnerable communities. Includes the National Referral System, which strengthens coordination among agencies providing services to human trafficking victims using standard referral and reporting forms. (18,99) During the reporting period, RRPTP conducted trainings on trauma-informed care and gender-responsive case management. The program also developed the Implementing Rules and Regulations for the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act. (14)

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 the Philippines.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (106,107)

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) continued to coordinate with DSWD when dealing with children allegedly involved in drug trafficking. From July 2016 to October 2022, Philippine law enforcement arrested 4,679 minors. (4,14) PDEA policy is to turn children over within 8 hours of their arrest to "Houses of Hope" (*Bahay ng Pag-asa*), which are rehabilitation and skills training centers for children in trouble with the law. (4,14,108) Previous reports indicate that although there is an accreditation process for these facilities administered by the federal Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council, only a small number of Houses of Hope have met the qualifications, which allows for corruption, maltreatment of residents, and failure to provide quality rehabilitative services. Research from previous years showed that many Houses of Hope essentially operated as youth detention centers, in which some children were subjected to physical and emotional abuse, deprived of liberty, and forced into overcrowded and unhygienic cells. (24,51,108,109) According to the Juvenile Justice Welfare Council, council employees regularly visited the centers during the reporting period to ensure compliance with set standards. Their reports note inadequate food and clothing, inadequate staffing, limited programs and services, prolonged stays in the center, typhoon damage, and absence of psychologists in the centers. (14)

DSWD works in consultation with parents and community leaders to determine how best to assist children suspected of being involved in the drug trade; however, DSWD does not have programs specifically designed to increase protections for or assistance to children engaged in drug trafficking. DSWD also lacks programming to address the heightened vulnerability of children impacted by the death of familial breadwinners in the drug war. (9,110) In addition, although some specialized resources exist to assist victims of human trafficking, the Philippines lacked sufficient programs to care for and rehabilitate children who have been victims of OSAEC. (25)

## 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 the Philippines (Table 11).



**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Raise the minimum age for work from 15 to 18 to align with the compulsory education age.	2018 – 2022
Enforcement	Increase funding to allow for the hiring of more law enforcement personnel, including police and prosecutors, training for forensic analysis of digital online sexual exploitation of children evidence, and creation of a centralized database to allow for quicker action on cases involving the worst forms of child labor.	2019 – 2022
	Establish a mechanism to assess civil penalties for child labor violations.	2015 – 2022
	Increase the number of labor inspectors from 1,210 to 2,834 to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 42.5 million people, and increase resources available to provide sufficient coverage of the workforce, particularly in the informal sector and in rural areas where child labor is prevalent.	2014 – 2022
	Develop and provide specialized training for labor inspectors on identification of child labor.	2019 – 2022
	Allow Rescue the Child Laborers Quick Action Teams to conduct unannounced compliance visits to private homes to ensure that there are no child domestic workers being illegally employed.	2018 – 2022
	Publish information on labor law enforcement efforts, including the number of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed and collected.	2015 – 2022
	Enhance efforts to prevent the inappropriate incarceration of, and violence against, children suspected to be engaged in the production and trafficking of drugs and those caught in the crossfire during anti-drug operations.	2017 – 2022
	Prosecute law enforcement officials and civilians responsible for the killing of children engaged in the drug trade and officials who are complicit in trafficking.	2017 – 2022
	Ensure that youth rehabilitation centers, including Houses of Hope ( <i>Bahay ng Pag-asa</i> ), are accredited and in compliance with standards set by the Department of Social Welfare and Development and Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council.	2020 – 2022
	Provide criminal law enforcement officials training on laws related to the worst forms of child labor, including the proper handling of digital evidence in criminal trials.	2020 – 2022
	Prosecute trafficking crimes in a timely manner and hire more criminal prosecutors to lessen the workload.	2020 – 2022
	Develop procedures to allow for the efficient collection of restitution from convicted human traffickers and its transfer to their victims.	2020 – 2022
	Social Programs	Increase access to free, compulsory education by eliminating unofficial school-related fees and addressing issues related to inadequate school infrastructure, including architectural barriers.
Develop programs to increase protections for and provide assistance to children engaged in drug trafficking and children impacted by the death of a familial breadwinner to address their heightened vulnerability to child labor.		2017 – 2022
Ensure that Houses of Hope ( <i>Bahay ng Pag-asa</i> ) child detention centers in the Philippines do not subject children to physical or emotional abuse, that those who commit such crimes are held accountable, and that centers are provided with adequate resources to remedy overcrowding and unhygienic conditions.		2017 – 2022

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