

In 2022, Saint Lucia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government renewed its Trafficking in Persons National Action Plan through 2026 and launched a new Border Control Management System that will assist authorities in identifying trafficking in persons cases. Additionally, members of the Human Trafficking Task Force and the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force partnered with U.S. Homeland Security Investigations for training on trafficking in persons. Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Saint Lucia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Saint Lucia has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children and its laws do not sufficiently prohibit the commercial sexual exploitation of children.



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Saint Lucia.

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

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	7.5 (2,017)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	99.7
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	8.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		100.4

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2020, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2023. (1)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4 (MICS 4), 2012. (2)

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
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor <sup>‡</sup>	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,4)

<sup>‡</sup> Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

As the most recent survey concerning child labor in Saint Lucia was completed by the ILO in 2017, Saint Lucia lacks detailed data on the extent of child labor in the country. (3) Some government officials and civil society members reported that anecdotally some children are encouraged or forced to engage in commercial sexual exploitation in exchange for goods or services. (4,5) In some cases, women or teenagers are reported to recruit younger children to engage in commercial sex. (4)

Children in Saint Lucia under the age of 16 are entitled to free public education. (6) General gang-related violence might hinder some children from attending school in select localities. (5,7) Children who do not attend school are vulnerable to engaging in child labor.




## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Saint Lucia has ratified most key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

# Saint Lucia

## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

**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 Lucia's 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	15	Article 122 of the Labor Code (8,9)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 122(2) of the Labor Code (8)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		Articles 126(b) and 214 of the Labor Code (8)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 4 of the Constitution; Article 6 of the Labor Code; Sections 3, 5, and 10(c) of the Counter-Trafficking Act; Section 3 of the Counter-Trafficking (Amendment) Act (8,10-12)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Sections 3, 5, and 10(c) of the Counter-Trafficking Act; Section 3 of the Counter-Trafficking (Amendment) Act (11,12)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Article 141 of the Criminal Code; Sections 2, 5, and 7 of the Counter-Trafficking Act; Sections 3 and 5 of the Counter-Trafficking (Amendment) Act (11-13)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 141 and 560 of the Criminal Code; Section 13 of the Drugs (Prevention and Misuse) Act (13,14)
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	15	Article 27 of the Education Act (6)
Free Public Education	No		Article 16 of the Education Act (6)

\* Country has no conscription (15)

† Country has no standing military (15)

Saint Lucia has not determined by national law the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. The law allows a government minister to establish a hazardous work list by regulation, although research could not determine whether a list has been established. (8) The use of children for commercial sexual exploitation is not criminally prohibited. (11-13) In addition, the law providing for free basic education does not meet international standards because it permits schools to charge tuition fees for some students who reside in Saint Lucia but are not citizens. (6)

### 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 & Activities
Ministry of Public Service, Home Affairs, Labor and Gender Affairs	Enforces laws on child labor through labor inspections conducted by its Department of Labor. The Department of Labor is responsible for investigating labor violations. (7) If found, criminal violations are turned over to the RSLPF for investigation and then to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for potential prosecution. (7)
Royal Saint Lucia Police Force (RSLPF)	Enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. (7) Through its Vulnerable Persons Unit, in collaboration with the Division of Human Services, RSLPF investigates cases of child labor, abuse, and neglect. (7,16) The Vulnerable Persons Unit consists of 2 units of 12 officers each and leads in the enforcement of child labor laws. It uses a specific manual to investigate crimes related to children. (7) Three officers are dedicated to trafficking in persons investigations. During the reporting period, the RSLPF provided anti-trafficking enforcement training via the Police Training Academy, in partnership with a local NGO, for government officials. (16)

#### Labor Law Enforcement

In 2022, labor law enforcement agencies in Saint Lucia took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including insufficient financial resource allocation.

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$496,296 (17)	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	8 (17)	Unknown
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (8)	Yes (8)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	Yes (17)	No (7)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite	45 (17)	50 (7)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (17)	0 (7)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A (17)	N/A (7)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A (17)	N/A (7)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (17)	Yes (7)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (17)	No (7)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (8)	Yes (8)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (17)	Yes (7)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (18)	Yes (7)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (18)	Yes (7)

The government reported that the Department of Labor conducts planned inspections that include child labor, in addition to those carried out in response to complaints. Inspections took place island-wide in the construction, hospitality, tourism, finance, mining and quarrying, wholesale and retail, and manufacturing sectors, with an emphasis on the population centers of the North and the South. (7) Inspectors look for child labor and forced labor violations during all inspections, and the government reported that inspections conducted by staff were sufficient. (5,7) However, insufficient funding may hamper the labor inspectorate's capacity to enforce child labor laws in all relevant sectors and there was no training for new inspectors provided by the Department of Labor during the reporting period. (5,7,19) The inspectorate is not authorized to assess penalties. Instead, the Department of Labor can refer suspected child labor violations to the police and public prosecutor's office for investigation. (7) When a case of child labor is found, children are primarily referred to the Ministry of Social Transformation and the Department of Social Services for social services. (7)

# Saint Lucia

## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

### Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2022, the government's criminal law enforcement agencies appeared to function adequately in addressing child labor (Table 7).

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

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Training for Criminal Investigators Provided	Yes (17)	Yes (7)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (18)	3 (7)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (18)	0 (7)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (18)	0 (7)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (18)	0 (7)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (18)	Yes (7)

In 2022, the government launched their new Border Control Management System, which will assist authorities in identifying trafficking in persons cases. (16) Members of the Human Trafficking Task Force partnered with U.S. and Saint Lucian trainers for programs, including an overview of Saint Lucia's trafficking law, and worked through culturally appropriate case studies, site visits, and staff training. (5,7) In addition, public awareness campaigns, including radio broadcasts and pamphlets at the main ports of entry, and trainings were organized by the government, local non-governmental organizations, and international partners to sensitize the public to trafficking in persons issues. (16) The Human Trafficking Task Force investigated three separate cases involving four children but determined that trafficking charges were not applicable in any of the cases. (7)

There is special funding to manage operations aspects related to trafficking in persons cases, as well as the ability to fast-track cases in court. (5) Investigators and prosecutors received training on addressing child trafficking. (7)

## 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
Human Trafficking Task Force	Coordinates the identification and referral of human trafficking cases among law enforcement, social services, and immigration officials, under the Counter-Trafficking Act. Includes public servants and representatives from, but not limited to, the Department of Labor, police, and victim services NGOs, and is led by the Department of Home Affairs. (5,11,16) Accepts complaints, including those about child labor, from government agencies, as well as civil society. In such cases, the task force works through an established standard operating procedure to organize resources for victim care and to launch criminal and legal proceedings against suspected perpetrators. (7) Convened stakeholders, including the RSLPF, customs, probation, and parole officers, to receive U.S. Homeland Security investigation training. During the reporting period, reviewed its Standard Operating Procedure to strengthen internal processes and improve interagency collaboration. (16,20) The Department of Home Affairs requests funding from the Minister of Finance for operations. (16)

## 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 covering all worst forms of child labor.

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

Policy	Description & Activities
Trafficking in Persons National Action Plan (2023–2026) <sup>†</sup>	Ensures that the division of tasks and roles of different agencies are clear to help coordinate all counter-trafficking measures. (21) During the reporting period, was updated to be valid until 2026. (16)
National Social Protection Policy (2014–2024)	Aims to ensure that the government addresses all dimensions of poverty. (22) In 2022, the government held public consultations for updating its National Social Protection Policy to enhance the responsiveness of social protections programs. (7) Revised policy includes increased support for vulnerable citizens. (22)

<sup>†</sup> Policy was approved during the reporting period.

Although Saint Lucia has adopted the Trafficking in Persons National Action Plan, research found no other evidence of a policy on other worst forms of child labor.

### VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2022, the government funded and participated in programs that may contribute to preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including the adequacy of programs to address child labor in relevant sectors.

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

Program	Description & Activities
Education Quality Improvement Project (EQulP)	Caribbean Development Bank funds an EQulP within the Ministry of Education to improve policy formulation and review the Education Act. The project recently graduated 75 teachers from a certificate course in special needs education, provided equipment for four special education centers, and made climate-resilient renovations to three primary schools. (7) EQulP is also piloting the formation of parent-teacher-community associations at several schools. (7)
Education Access Fund†	Department of Education, Innovation and Vocational Training program to pay facility fees for public school students at the primary and secondary levels. (23)

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 Saint Lucia.

The government increased subsidies for some school costs such as transportation and school lunch, and allocated additional resources for smart classroom technology. (5,7) Although the Government of Saint Lucia has implemented programs to aid access to education, 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 Lucia (Table 11).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children in consultation with employers' and workers' organizations.	2017 – 2022
	Ensure that laws criminally prohibit using a child for commercial sexual exploitation.	2016 – 2022
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the military recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2022
	Ensure that laws providing free basic education include all children in Saint Lucia, including non-citizens.	2022
Enforcement	Ensure that the labor inspectorate receives sufficient funding.	2015 – 2022
	Collect and publish labor law enforcement data, including information on labor inspectorate funding and the number of inspectors, and strengthen the labor inspectorate by initiating targeted inspections based on analysis of data related to risk-prone sectors and patterns of serious incidents.	2022
	Ensure that all inspectors receive training related to child labor.	2022
	Ensure that adequate resources are allocated to the labor inspectorate to enforce labor laws, including funding.	2022
Government Policies	Adopt policies that not only address trafficking in persons, but also address all worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2022
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2017 – 2022
	Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers to education, and make it accessible for all children by ensuring that gang violence does not affect school attendance.	2018 – 2022
	Design, implement, fund, and participate in social programs that specifically target and assist children engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation.	2013 – 2022

# Saint Lucia

## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

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