

# Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2022, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government passed amendments to the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act to strengthen penalties for offenders. Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines engage in child labor in agriculture. Gaps remain in the legal framework, as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines 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. The government also did not publicly release information on its labor law enforcement efforts.

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

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 (%)		115.6

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2020, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2023. (1)  
Data were unavailable from International Labor Organization's analysis, 2023. (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
Agriculture	Farming, activities unknown (3)

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. (4-7) 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).



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**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 inadequate hazardous work protections.

**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	14	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 (11,12)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Part II, Article 7 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act; Chapter VIII, Parts 130 and 131 of the Criminal Code; Section 15 of the Cybercrime Act (10-13)
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 (5)
Free Public Education	Yes		Part III, Articles 14–16 of the Education Act (5)

\* Country has no conscription (14)

† Country has no standing military (15)

In March of 2023, Parliament unanimously passed amendments to the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act to strengthen penalties for offenders. (12, 16, 17) The amendments remove the possibility of receiving a monetary fine as a penalty for trafficking offenses, and instead impose criminal penalties. (12, 17)

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines does not meet the international standard for hazardous work for children because it allows children ages 14 to 17 to perform industrial activities, including mining and construction, and does not adequately protect children from hazardous work that may jeopardize their health, safety, or morals. (8)

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The government also has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for all children under age 18. (8,9) In addition, laws have not been established that prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including drug production. The law does not fully meet international standards for the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children, as it does not prohibit the use of children for prostitution, pornography, or pornographic performances. (11) Moreover, 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. (5)

### 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 Labor	Enforces child labor laws through its Department of Labor and refers victims to appropriate social services. (4) If the Department finds a criminal violation, it forwards the case to the Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force. (18) Conducts inspections at businesses and workplaces, with the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit (ATIPU), to ensure labor laws are followed. (19)
Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force	Makes criminal arrests, including those involving the worst forms of child labor. Addresses human trafficking through its ATIPU; refers survivors to appropriate social services and funds financial requests made by ATIPU. (18,20) During the reporting period, held a "Walk Against Human Trafficking" and panel to raise awareness of labor and sex trafficking. (17)
Office of the Director of Public Prosecution	Prosecutes criminal violations, including those related to the worst forms of child labor. (18)

#### Labor Law Enforcement

Research did not find information on whether labor law enforcement agencies in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines took actions to address child labor (Table 6).

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$591,907 (7)	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	6 (18)	Unknown
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	No (21)	No (21)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	N/A (7)	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite	35 (7)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (18)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (18)	Unknown
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (21)	Yes (21)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (18)	Unknown
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (18)	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (18)	Unknown

#### Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2022, 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	2021	2022
Training for Criminal Investigators Provided	Yes (22,23)	Yes (19)
Number of Investigations	0 (18)	0 (19)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (18)	0 (19)
Number of Convictions	0 (18)	0 (19)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	No (18)	N/A (19)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (18)	Yes (19)

In 2022, only data on child trafficking was reported by the government, and information about the number of investigations, prosecutions, convictions, and penalties imposed for other worst forms of child labor is not known. Reports indicate that insufficient resources, including limited personnel and vehicles, hampered the capacity of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit (ATIPU) to address human trafficking throughout the country. (20) In 2022, ATIPU was staffed by two people, which the government reported was inadequate. (24)

In 2022, ATIPU officers received training on evidence collection and increasing the quality of victim services in courses offered by the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, and regional counterparts from the Royal Jamaican Constabulary. (17) Training on child trafficking and victim identification was provided for 108 police recruits. (19) There is a dedicated human trafficking hotline and a monitored e-mail address to report suspected cases to ATIPU. (24) ATIPU increased patrols in at-risk areas and during Carnival. (17) When a victim is identified, they are interviewed by ATIPU then referred to the Crisis Centre or other social services while the investigation is launched. (19)

## 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). However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including the lack of a mechanism to address all forms of child labor.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Activities
National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons	Coordinates government policies and efforts to prevent and eliminate human trafficking, and coordinates training. Comprises senior officials within the government and members of civil society; chaired by the Prime Minister. (19) Develops plans to provide housing, employment, education, counseling, and other services to victims, and coordinates the collection and sharing of human trafficking data among government agencies. (11) The government did not report how often the National Task Force met during the reporting period. (24)

Although Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has a National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons to coordinate efforts to address human trafficking, there is no coordinating mechanism to address other forms of child labor. (11)

## 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 & Activities
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. (25) Government continued to fund and support the Plan during the reporting year, but did not report whether the budget was sufficient. (24)
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Countering Human Trafficking in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Coordinates anti-TIP implementation efforts between signatory agencies and the ATIPU. Includes the Department of Labor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Social Services Division, Police, and others. (20) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the MOU during the reporting period.

Although Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has adopted the National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, research found no evidence of a policy on other 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 lack of programs to address child labor in all sectors.

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

Program	Description & Activities
Zero Hunger Trust Fund†	Government program that provides textbooks, cash for the purchase of school supplies, and daily meals to students in grades 4 and 5 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. (26) Active in 2022. (26)

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 Vincent and the Grenadines.

During the reporting period, the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines provided resources toward human trafficking awareness campaigns, including placing banners at the cruise ship port and broadcasting a live radio program. (17,19) Sessions on human trafficking were also organized for 341 individuals at children's summer camps and schools, providing training for at-risk populations. (17) Although the government has implemented a program to address educational and food needs, research found no evidence that it has carried out programs specifically to address child labor, including in agriculture.

## 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 – 2022
	Ensure that laws criminally prohibit the use of children for prostitution, pornography, and pornographic performances.	2017 – 2022
	Ensure that laws criminally prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of children for illicit activities, including in the production of drugs.	2011 – 2022
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2022
	Raise the minimum age for work from 14 to 16 to align with the compulsory education age.	2018 – 2022
Enforcement	Establish a mechanism to assess civil penalties for child labor violations.	2016 – 2022
	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 – 2022

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Collect and publish labor law enforcement data, including information on the number of inspectors, inspectorate funding, the number of worksite inspections, the number of unannounced inspections conducted, training, and number of child labor law violations.	2022
	Publish information about the complaint mechanism to receive child labor complaints and the referral mechanism between labor authorities and social services.	2022
	Publish comprehensive criminal law enforcement data on all worst forms of child labor.	2022
Coordination	Establish a coordinating mechanism to prevent and eliminate all worst forms of child labor.	2019 – 2022
	Publish information about the activities and meetings of the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons.	2022
Government Policies	Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant forms of child labor, such as farming.	2021 – 2022
	Ensure that resources and budget for the National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons are sufficient to support its activities.	2022
	Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement the Memorandum of Understanding on Countering Human Trafficking in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and publish results from activities implemented on an annual basis.	2019 – 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 and make education accessible for all children, including children in rural communities, by providing public transportation.	2018 – 2022
	Institute a program to address child labor in agriculture.	2021 – 2022

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