

Saint Lucia

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

In 2024, Saint Lucia made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Government officials worked with the International Labor Organization to align Saint Lucia with international labor standards and best practices, including working toward ratifying International Labor Organization conventions. In addition, Saint Lucia updated its National Social Protection Policy and Action Plan to improve information sharing and guide government efforts to reduce poverty. However, 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. It also did not publicly release information on its labor or criminal law enforcement efforts.

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education		
Children	Age	Percent and Population
Working	5 to 14	7.5% (2,017)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	99.7%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	8.2%

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.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity	
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

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

SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Saint Lucia’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Area	Suggested Action
Legal Framework	Determine the types of hazardous work prohibited for children in consultation with employers’ and workers’ organizations.
	Criminalize the use of a child for prostitution.
	Criminally prohibit the military recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.
	Ensure laws that establish free public education through the basic level that apply to all children
Enforcement	Ensure that adequate resources, including funding, are allocated to the labor inspectorate to enforce labor laws and conduct training.
	Collect and publish labor law enforcement data, including on labor inspectorate funding, the number of inspections performed (including routine, targeted, and unannounced), the number of child labor violations found, whether penalties for child labor violations were imposed and collected, and whether inspectors received training.
	Collect and publish criminal law enforcement data, including whether investigations into the worst forms of child labor were conducted, whether penalties were imposed for the worst forms of child labor crimes, the number of prosecutions initiated and perpetrators convicted, and whether investigators received training.
Coordination	Ensure that the Human Trafficking Task Force effectively coordinates actions by ministries and departments involved with labor issues.

Area	Suggested Action
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.
	Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers to education for all children by ensuring that gang violence does not affect school attendance.
	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.
	Implement the Basic Needs Trust Fund and make information about its activities publicly available.

BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

General gang-related violence might hinder some children from attending school in select localities. Children who do not attend school are vulnerable to engaging in child labor.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Saint Lucia has not ratified a key international convention concerning child labor, ILO C.138 Minimum Age for Work. In addition, Saint Lucia's laws do not sufficiently criminally prohibit the use of children for commercial sexual exploitation.

Laws and Regulations on Child Labor			
Standard	Age	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	15	✓	Article 122 of the Labor Code
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18	✓	Article 122(2) of the Labor Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		✗	Articles 126(b) and 214 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		✓	Article 4 of the Constitution; Article 6 of the Labor Code; Sections 3, 5, and 10(c) of the Counter-Trafficking Act 2010; Section 3 of the Counter-Trafficking (Amendment) Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		✓	Sections 3, 5, 7, and 10(c) of the Counter-Trafficking Act 2010
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		✗	Article 141 of the Criminal Code; Sections 2, 5, 7 of the Counter-Trafficking Act 2010; Sections 3 and 5 of the Counter-Trafficking (Amendment) Act; Article 16 of the Electronic Crimes Act.
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		✓	Articles 141 and 560 of the Criminal Code; Section 13 of the Drugs (Prevention and Misuse) Act
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		✗	
Compulsory Education Age	15	✓	Article 27 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		✗	Articles 14, 16, and 75 of the Education Act

† Country has no standing military

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, but research could not determine whether such a list has been established. The law does not criminalize the use of a child for prostitution. In addition, the law providing for free basic education does not meet international standards because it permits schools to charge tuition fees to some students who reside in Saint Lucia but are not citizens, though in practice tuition fees may be covered in certain circumstances.

ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2024, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Saint Lucia took actions to address child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Public Service, Home Affairs, Labor and Gender Affairs: Investigates labor violations and enforces child labor laws through labor inspections conducted by its Department of Labor. Criminal violations are referred to the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force for investigation and then to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions for prosecution. In 2024, several department representatives, including the Minister, attended a 2-day conference held by the ILO focused on strengthening labor relations, improving compliance and transparency, and aligning Saint Lucia's labor standings with ILO reporting requirements. The delegation also met with other Caribbean counterparts for technical sessions on international labor standards, social protection, labor laws, and best practices.

Royal Saint Lucia Police Force: Enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. In collaboration with the Division of Human Services, investigates cases of child labor, abuse, and neglect through its Vulnerable Persons Unit. The Vulnerable Persons Unit consists of 2 units of 12 officers each and uses a specific manual to investigate crimes related to children. Three officers are also dedicated to trafficking in persons investigations.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes
Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2024, **8** labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.

COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Saint Lucia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, a lack of coordination among agencies hindered its effectiveness.

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Human Trafficking Task Force: Coordinates the identification and referral of human trafficking cases among law enforcement, social services, and immigration officials. 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. Accepts complaints, including those about child labor, from government agencies, as well as civil society. The task force uses established standard operating procedures to organize resources for victim care and to launch criminal and legal proceedings against suspected perpetrators. In 2024, the task force met approximately monthly. However, poor coordination between ministries about labor issues hindered efforts.

Saint Lucia established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor
Trafficking in Persons National Action Plan (2023–2026): Ensures that the division of tasks and roles of different agencies are clear to help coordinate all counter-trafficking measures. The government implemented the plan in the reporting period.
National Social Protection Policy (2022–2030): Aims to ensure that the government addresses all dimensions of poverty, including as they pertain to children. In 2024, the government updated the related action plan and launched several new initiatives, including a Feedback Redress Mechanism for citizens and recipients of social assistance, and upgraded from a paper-based application system to an electronic form to facilitate information sharing and coordination efforts among government agencies and NGOs.

Saint Lucia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, research could not determine if all social programs were active during the reporting period.

Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor
Basic Needs Trust Fund: Caribbean Development Bank flagship poverty reduction program to improve standards of living and educational facilities, partnered with the Saint Lucia Social Development Fund. Research could not determine what activities were undertaken during the reporting period.
Community After-School Program: * Launched by the Ministry of Equity, Social Justice and Empowerment to provide academic support, life-skills training and psychosocial care to children from disadvantaged backgrounds after school hours.
Income Support Program: With funding from the Caribbean Development Bank, provided financial relief to displaced informal sector workers impacted by the economic challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. By the end of August 2024, over 4,500 individuals received a one-time cash payment of \$1,500.

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports