

In 2013, Albania made a significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government released data from its 2010 National Child Labor Survey. The Government also amended the Criminal Code to criminalize possession of child pornography and increase penalties for other offenses against children. Albania trained labor inspectors, police officers, prosecutors, and judges on trafficking issues; identified through inspections 26 cases of child labor and 11 cases of child trafficking; and prosecuted four child labor cases, with one conviction. In addition, the Government funds and participates in a wide range of social programs aimed at improving social inclusion for marginalized groups, reducing school dropout rates, and supplementing the livelihoods of the most disadvantaged families. However, children in Albania continue to engage in child labor in agriculture and in the worst forms of child labor in forced begging. The Government relies on NGOs to provide the bulk of services to children engaged in the worst forms of child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

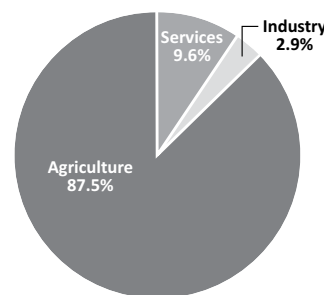
Children in Albania are engaged in child labor in agriculture and in the worst forms of child labor in forced begging. (1-6) During the reporting period, the Government supported the release of a National Child Labor Survey that was conducted by the National Institute of Statistics in 2010. The report provides information on the scope of the child labor situation in Albania. (7) Children, some as young as ages 4 and 5, are forced to beg. (5, 6, 8) Data from the National Child Labor Survey indicate that most child laborers work in agricultural. More girls (84.8 percent) than boys (78 percent) work as child laborers in agriculture. (7) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Albania. 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)	5-14 yrs.	4.6 (23,665)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	92.5
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	5.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		Unavailable

Source for primary completion rate: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014. (9)
Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from National Child Labour Survey (NCLS), 2010. (10)

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	Farming, activities unknown (2, 4, 5, 7)
	Working as shepherds* (2)
	Harvesting and processing of cannabis* (4)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Industry	Mining† (2, 4)
	Construction, activities unknown (2, 4, 7, 11, 12)
	Working in the textile,* garment,* and footwear* sectors (2, 3, 11)
Services	Begging (1-6, 13, 14)
	Street work, including vending, washing vehicles, and shining shoes (2, 11)
	Working wholesale and retail trade (4, 7)
	Working in hotels and restaurants (4, 7)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Drug running (11)
	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2, 5, 6, 11, 15)
	Begging and participation in illicit activities as a result of human trafficking (1, 3, 5, 11, 15)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

† 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.

Albania is primarily a country of origin for children trafficked abroad to Greece, Macedonia, and Kosovo.(14, 16) In addition, children are trafficked within Albania to large cities, tourist sites, border points, and ports. Sources indicate that ethnic minority children from the Roma and Egyptian communities make up the majority of street children and trafficking victims.(2, 17) Traditionally, these communities have suffered from pervasive marginalization and discrimination, which contribute to their acute poverty and difficulty in accessing social services.(14, 18) In addition, marginalized groups such as the Roma often remain outside the Albanian education system due to a lack of civil registration or their families’ inability to forgo the lost income from the child leaving work.(14, 17)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Albania 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 relevant laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 98 of the Labor Code (4, 17, 19)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Labor Code (4, 19)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	Yes		Occupational Safety and Health at Work Law; Labor Code (19, 20)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Labor Code (19)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Criminal Code (21)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor (cont)

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Criminal Code (21)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Criminal Code (21)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	19	Law on Military Service (4, 22)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Law on Pre-University Education System (11, 23)
Free Public Education	Yes		Law on Pre-University Education System (2, 11, 23)

* No conscription or no standing military.

In 2013, the Government amended the criminal code to criminalize the possession of child pornography and stiffen punishment for other offenses against children.(4, 24) Children between the ages of 14 and 16 may be employed part-time during school holidays, provided that the employment does not harm their health and development.(3, 19, 25) However, Article 98 of the Labor Code fails to define what constitutes permissible school holiday work, or the number of hours or conditions that would render employment acceptable.(25) In addition, pursuant to exemptions created by Articles 5 and 6, the Labor Code does not cover children who perform “family jobs” or do not have an employment contract. This leaves children engaged in child labor who do not have an employment contract unprotected under the law.(19, 25)

During the reporting period, the Government drafted an amendment to the Labor Code which, if passed, would increase the minimum age for children to be employed during school holidays and in vocational training from 14 to 15. The Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth also drafted a Decisions of the Council of Ministers (DCM) that would require medical monitoring of child employees.(24)

Albania provides 13 years of free education, 9 of which are compulsory; however, the costs of school supplies and classroom resources are prohibitive for many families.(2)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MLSA) – State Labor Inspectorate	Enforce labor laws, including child labor laws.(4, 12)
Ministry of Interior’s General Directorate of Police	Enforce all laws, including child labor and child trafficking laws.(4, 26)
Serious Crimes Prosecution Office	Has nationwide jurisdiction to prosecute cases involving trafficking.(4, 26)
Child Rights Units (CRUs)	Monitor the situation of high-risk children and families at the regional level, coordinate protection and referral activities at the local level, and identify and manage individual cases.(3, 4, 27, 28)
Child Protection Units (CPUs)	Identify children in danger at the municipal level and subsequently refer them to a safe environment, as defined by the State Social Services.(4, 12, 23)

Law enforcement agencies in Albania took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2013, the State Labor Inspectorate had 115 inspectors.(24) Approximately 50 labor inspectors were trained on child labor laws and procedures for handling victims of trafficking.(4, 24) According to the Government, the Labor Inspectorate conducted 25 child

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labor inspections and cited 26 cases of child labor violations. The Government reported 26 children were removed or assisted as a result of the inspections, and no penalties were applied in any of the cases.(4) The law allows labor inspectors to determine whether to apply penalties for certain violations documented. Additionally, lack of funds for adequate office space and transportation, and training compromises the quality of inspections.(4)

Criminal Law Enforcement

During the reporting period, 37 prosecutors, judges, and police officers were trained on trafficking issues, and the State Police referred 11 cases involving the trafficking of children to prosecutors.(29) In 2013, the Government reported prosecuting four cases involving the worst forms of child labor and one conviction.(4) The Government also provided services to 43 children rescued from trafficking.(29) Nationwide, there are approximately 30 police investigators for child rights. However, the Ombudsman of the Albanian Government recommends that each of the approximately 70 police commissariats have several child rights investigators and believes the effectiveness of the CRUs and CPUs is low. (4) In addition, NGOs report inadequate funding for child protection at the regional and local level.(29, 30)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Council for the Protection of the Rights of Children (NCPRC)	Coordinate the protection of children's rights, including children involved in child labor.(12)
Office of the National Coordinator for the Fight Against Trafficking in Human Beings (NCAT)	Coordinate all anti-trafficking efforts in Albania, including 12 regional anti-trafficking committees.(26, 28, 29)
National Referral Mechanism (NRM)	Coordinate the identification, protection, referral, and rehabilitation of trafficking victims between government and civil society organizations.(3, 28) Chaired by the NCAT.(29)

In 2013, the NCAT restarted 12 regional anti-trafficking committees. The NCAT also provided training on identifying and providing referral services to victims of trafficking to the 12 regional anti-trafficking committees, government officials, and approximately 245 school teachers.(29) During the reporting period, the NRM met several times. A source indicates that cooperation between government agencies and civil society has increased during the reporting period.(29)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Albania has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Action Plan for Children 2012 to 2015*	Aims to strengthen institutional structures and monitor the implementation of children's rights at national and regional level. Promotes the drafting of policies for the protection and social involvement of children.(3, 24, 30, 31)
Albanian Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor by 2016 (ARCL)	Outlines a plan to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in Albania by 2016.(32) Includes the adoption and implementation of effective legislation and law enforcement to address the worst forms of child labor; the provision of free, quality education for all children; the provision of social protection to families and children in need; and the implementation of labor market policies that promote youth employment and the regulation and formalization of the informal economy.(32)
National Anti-trafficking Strategy 2011 to 2013	Designates responsible agencies and outlines anti-trafficking actions to be taken.(3, 4, 16)
National Strategy for Development and Integration 2007 to 2013 (NSDI)	Calls for enforcing compulsory education and creating vocational training opportunities for vulnerable children as a key strategy to prevent and reduce child labor, including the worst forms of child labor.(3, 4)

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
National Strategy for Social Inclusion 2007 to 2013 (NSSI)*	Seeks to reduce poverty among Albania's vulnerable groups, including children and Roma communities.(33) Promotes an increase in formal labor market participation, the inclusion of policies that involve vulnerable children in education and training, and the formation of modern social protection systems.(12, 33) In 2013, Limited progress was made toward achieving the NSSI's goals, in part due to limited funds, poor coordination, and limited resources and inclusion of local governments.(18)
National Action Plan for the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 to 2015*	Strives to improve access to and the quality of social services for Roma communities.(4, 34)

*The impact of this policy on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

In 2013, the Government of Albania funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
UN Support to Social Inclusion†	UN program, works with several government ministries to improve implementation of social inclusion by developing informed policies and strengthening institutions.(35)
Albania-UN Program of Cooperation*	UN program builds on the piloted One UN Program 2007–2011 and coordinates 19 UN agencies to focus on four thematic areas with the Government and civil society: governance and rule of law, economy and environment, regional and local development, and inclusive social policy. Aims to increase civil society's role in development.(36)
Empowering Vulnerable Local Communities of Albania*	UN-supported program, addressed social exclusion issues in the Roma and Egyptian communities. Strengthened the Government's institutional capacities of employment centers and vocational training centers to increase access to the Roma and Egyptian communities; promoted primary education for Roma and Egyptian children who lack access to early learning.(37)
Zero Dropouts Program*	UNICEF-supported program, worked to reduce school dropout rates among the Roma and Egyptian communities. Program's Second Chance Project worked to reintegrate children who have dropped out of school.(4, 38)
National Emergency Transition Center†‡	NGO-supported Government transition center supports vulnerable, mostly Roma, families, including children at risk of street begging. To receive benefits, families must keep their children enrolled in school.(4)
National Reception Centre for Victims of Trafficking (NRC)‡	Government-funded program, operates a reception center that houses victims of trafficking identified in Albania.(16, 39) In 2013, the Ombudsman reported that the Government's NRC lacked adequate resources to provide reintegration services, including educational and vocational training.(29)
Child Allowance Program (Ndihma Ekonomike)*‡	Government-funded cash transfer program, provides a child allowance for families already benefiting from economic aid through Albania's Law on Social Assistance and Services.(4) Child allowance payments to eligible families are still deemed too low to significantly reduce the number of children living in poverty, and therefore are unlikely to have an impact on reducing child labor.(4)
Decent Work Country Program	ILO technical assistance project detailing the policies, strategies, and results required to realize progress toward the goal of decent work for all. Outcomes include strengthening the effectiveness and quality of labor inspection systems, enhancing the capacity of policy makers to address informal and vulnerable employment of young people, and ensuring that labor laws better adhere to international labor standards, including those on the worst forms of child labor.(40)

*The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

† Program was launched during the reporting period.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Albania.

Civil society organizations, rather than government organizations, generally provide social services for children engaged in the worst forms of child labor. These civil society organizations often lack well-trained staff and coordination with other protection services, especially at the local level.(4, 18, 30, 41)

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Albania (Table 9).

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Define permissible work, including hours and conditions thereof, for children between the ages of 14 and 16 years.	2011 – 2013
	Ensure that children who fall outside contract work are protected.	2009 – 2013
Enforcement	Provide inspectors with adequate training and the tools needed to carry out their tasks effectively.	2010 – 2013
	Ensure there are an adequate number, nationwide, of police investigators for child rights.	2013
	Provide CRUs and CPUs with adequate funding to carry out their work effectively.	2013
Government Policies	Assess the impact that existing policies may have on child labor.	2011 – 2013
	Fully implement the National Strategy for Social Inclusion (2007–2013), including sufficient funding at the local level.	2012 – 2013
Social Programs	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on child labor.	2013
	Eliminate the costs of school supplies and classroom resources to ensure all children have access to school.	2013
	Increase payments to families eligible for assistance under the Social Assistance and Services Law.	2011 – 2013
	Increase resources, access to civil registration, and the number of social services available to children, including Roma and Egyptian children, engaged in or at risk of engaging in child labor.	2011 – 2013
	Conduct research on children working in farming and construction to inform policies and programs.	2013

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