

In 2013, Armenia made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government adopted a National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons for years 2013–2015, which seeks to improve victim identification, including for child laborers, and to conduct surveys on working children. The Government is participating in a project to collect original data and analyze child labor in the country. However, although the extent of the problem is unknown, children continue to engage in child labor in the services sector. The Government lacks a mechanism to coordinate its child labor efforts. Likewise, there are gaps in programs to protect children from exploitative labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Limited evidence suggests that children in Armenia are engaged in child labor in the services sector.(1, 2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Armenia.

Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	8.1 (30,494)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	89.8
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	9.9
Primary Completion Rate (%)		100.1

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2008, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(3)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis of statistics from Demographic and Health Survey, 2010.(4)

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	Activities unknown* (2, 5)
Industry	Construction, activities unknown* (2, 6) Servicing cars, including washing them* (2, 5)
Services	Gathering scrap metals* (2, 7) Street work, including begging (2, 6, 8)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation as a result of human trafficking (1, 9, 10) Forced begging* (10)

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

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

Inequities in education in Armenia remain as a result of, gender, geography, and family income, and compulsory education is not well enforced.(8, 11-13) Limited evidence suggests that some children are dropping out of school to work in the informal sectors, including in agriculture and construction, car service, scrap metal, and family business.(2)




Armenia

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Armenia 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 15 of the Labor Code; Article 32 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia (14, 15)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 257 of the Labor Code (14)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	Yes		List of Work Categories Considered Excessive or Harmful for Persons Under the Age of 18, Women Who are Pregnant, and Women Caring for Infants Under the Age of One Year (16)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 32 of the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia (15)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 132 ² and 168 of the Republic of Armenia Criminal Code (17)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 132 ² of the Republic of Armenia Criminal Code (17)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 165, 166, 166.1 of the Republic of Armenia Criminal Code (17)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 5 of the Law on Mandatory Military Service (18, 19)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Law of the Republic of Armenia on Education (18, 20)
Free Public Education	Yes		Constitution of the Republic of Armenia (15)

In 2013, the Government introduced a draft law on improving the identification of and assistance to victims of trafficking and other forms of labor exploitation.(10)

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
The Police/Juvenile Police	Enforce criminal laws.(21) Investigate crimes in which children are victims or perpetrators.(9) Serve as key investigators for enforcing laws against the worst forms of child labor through the Third Division of the Criminal Intelligence Department and the Third Department of the Main Department for Combating Organized Crime, which focuses on human trafficking cases.(18, 22)

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (cont)

Organization/Agency	Role
The Police/The Anti-Trafficking Unit	Investigate and enforce criminal laws against child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children through a staff of seven field officers including the head of the unit.(23) Operate within the Department of Combating High-Tech related (Cyber) Crimes, Human Trafficking, Illegal Migration, and Terrorism, of the General Department on Combating Organized Crime.(21)
The Police/ Unit to Investigate Human Trafficking, Illegal Drug Trafficking and Organized Crime	Investigate and enforce criminal laws against child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.(22) Operate within the Department on Especially Serious Crimes within the General Department of Investigations, through a staff of 10 investigators including the head and the deputy head.(21)

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

Labor Law Enforcement

In July 2013, the Government adopted Decree #857-N that created a new Public Health Inspectorate under the Ministry of Health. The function of this body was formerly split between the State Hygiene and Anti-Epidemic Inspectorate under the Ministry of Health, and the State Labor Inspectorate under the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.(21) Although labor inspections are part of its mandate as noted in the decree, it is unclear what the primary function of the new body will be.(21)

In 2012, the Government employed 126 labor inspectors and had an allocated budget of approximately \$713,290. The inspectorate was also provided with 16 service cars and one laboratory car.(24) According to a government official, this number is not sufficient to cover the hundreds of thousands of entities in the country and to proactively investigate exploitative child labor.(25, 26) Research did not uncover the number of labor inspectors employed or the allocated budget for the reporting period. The Government does not have a specific mechanism for registering child labor complaints, and no cases of child labor were found during the reporting period.(11, 23, 25)

According to the Government, labor inspectors received training, which included issues pertaining to child labor.(18) Research did not uncover information on the extent to which child labor was addressed or whether the worst forms were included in the training. As a component of the National Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons for years 2013–2015, labor inspectors are to receive specific training on child exploitation issues, particularly child trafficking.(18)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2013, 340 police officers were trained on human trafficking issues, including the trafficking of children. Seventy-three police officers received additional training from two NGOs, Hope and Help and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), on anti-trafficking with a focus on the trafficking of children for labor.(21, 22) In addition, Armenian labor inspectors, police officers, investigators, and prosecutors participated in a roundtable event on forced labor and human trafficking, including child labor cases. Participants discussed inconsistencies in labor legislation, collaboration, and coordination of activities in the field, and scenarios for identifying and processing human trafficking cases quickly.(27)

In 2013, law enforcement investigated a total of 23 criminal cases involving minors.(18) Nine individuals were prosecuted and their cases were sent to the courts. In addition, 10 out of the 11 minor victims identified during the 2013 investigations were referred to social service providers Hope and Help, UMCOR Armenia, the Children Support Center Foundation, and the Zatik Children Support Center.(18) One case involving a trafficked minor resulted in a conviction and sentence of 7 years in prison.(10)

Implementing the provisions of the Criminal Procedural Code on victim and witness protection continued to be difficult due to lack of both funding and an appropriate victim-witness protection mechanism.(1, 28)

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

Although the Government has established coordinating mechanisms to combat human trafficking, research found no evidence of coordinating mechanisms to combat other worst forms of child labor (Table 6).

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
The Ministerial Council to Combat Human Trafficking (Anti-TIP Ministerial Council)	Implement, coordinate, and monitor government efforts on human trafficking.(10, 18) Chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and comprised of various officials from 17 government entities.(10)
Inter-Agency Working Group against Trafficking in Persons (IAWG)	Advise, organize, and implement decisions made by the Anti-TIP Ministerial Council.(10) Chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and comprised of officials from all government entities. Includes non-governmental stakeholders such as NGOs, international organizations, and social partners in regularly scheduled meeting sessions.(10, 18)

Various agencies in Armenia work on child protection, along with an interagency National Commission on the Protection of Children’s Rights.(18, 22) In 2013, the Commission created a working group to prevent begging by children throughout the country. The working group included representatives from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Education.(18) The Parliamentary Working Group on Child Rights continued to help strengthen child rights institutions in Armenia.(27)

The Government also has a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) which defines procedures and responsible government agencies for identification, referral, assistance, and protection of trafficking victims, including children.(10, 18) Victim assistance includes in-kind, legal, medical, and psychological support, and the integration into various social, education, and employment projects.(10) During the reporting period, the Ministerial Council to Combat Human Trafficking (Anti-TIP Ministerial Council) and the Inter-Agency Working Group against Trafficking in Persons (IAWG) met regularly to share information and make implementation and policy decisions.(21) The two groups focused on taking steps to address the National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons for years 2013–2015, particularly those related to child trafficking.(10)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Strategic Program on the Protection of the Rights of Children in Armenia for 2013–2016	Adopted through Government Decree #1694-N.(23, 24, 27). Focuses activities —through the child labor component of the program, “On approving the RA Strategic Program on the Protection of Children’s Rights for 2013–2016 and the schedule of activities of the 2013–2016 Strategic Program on the Protection of Children’s Rights for 2013–2016 and on recognizing as invalid the RA Government Decree of December 18, 2003 #1745-N”— in three areas: (1) data collection on working children, (2) awareness-raising on the rights of working children, and (3) implementation of oversight mechanisms for children’s work.(27)
National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons for years 2013–2015†	Expands upon the main objectives and activities of previous action plans and includes special provisions for trafficking of children. Objectives are to improve victim identification, including for child laborers, conduct surveys among working children, improve prevention efforts, and work with the media on the format and approach to reporting on human trafficking cases.(29) Strategies and activities fall under five sections: (1) legislation on action against trafficking in persons and enforcement of laws; (2) prevention of trafficking in persons; (3) protection of and support to victims of trafficking in persons; (3) cooperation; and (4) surveys, monitoring, and evaluation.(29)
Country Program for 2010–2015*	Develops plans, with UNICEF, for an enhanced child care system; a continuum of child protection services to identify and respond to violence, exploitation and abuse of children; and a comprehensive policy framework for protecting vulnerable children.(30)

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

† Policy was launched during the reporting period.

The Government collects information on trafficking of children as part of its reporting on trafficking in persons.(21) The National Commission on the Protection of Children’s Rights has concluded that more recent country-specific data are needed on the worst forms of child labor in Armenia.(23)

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

In 2013, the Government of Armenia 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
Global Research on Child Labor Measurement and Policy Development (MAP)†	USDOL-funded project implemented by the ILO in 10 countries, including Armenia, to increase the knowledge base around child labor by collecting new data, analyzing existing data, and building capacity to conduct research in this area.(31)
When September Comes program*	Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs program, implemented by charitable organizations, that assists families with children excluded from secondary education and families of “deceased freedom fighters” with three or more children of school age. Provides school supplies, clothing, and food.(18)
Secondary School Education to Contribute to the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia	Regional project supported by the IOM, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Education and Science to introduce a module on counter-trafficking, including child exploitation, into the school curriculum.(28, 32)
Police hotlines†	Police-supported hotline for human trafficking and migration-related calls.(22)
The UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) plan for Armenia (2010–2015)*	UN program that focuses on developing vocational training and technical assistance programs targeted at the most vulnerable youth.(27, 33)
The Stakeholders Acting Together for Strengthened Child Protection in Armenia*	3-year government and USAID project that aims to improve the well-being of the most vulnerable children by building the human resource and institutional capacity of the child protection system. Combined budget of \$2.5 million.(34)
Daycare Centers*‡	Government supported daycare centers providing alternatives to working children and day-time centers provide services for children with special needs.(21) In 2013, Government co-funded four day-time centers to support up to 250 children , and fully owned and operated an additional three to support up to 100 children each.(21, 22, 24, 35)
Shelter for victims of human trafficking‡	Co-funded Government shelter run by the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) Armenia that provides victims of human trafficking with medical, psychological, social, and legal services. In 2013, the Government allocated approximately \$16,100 in funding for the shelter.(10)

* 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 Armenia.

Research found no evidence of any programs specifically for assisting children engaged in agriculture or informal work in the country.

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 Armenia (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Fully enforce the compulsory education requirement.	2011 – 2013
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors and train them on child labor issues.	2009 – 2013
	Implement an adequate victim-witness protection mechanism for criminal proceedings.	2011 – 2013
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat child labor, including in all its worst forms.	2009 – 2013
Government Policies	Implement activities under the child labor component of the program on the protection of the rights of children in Armenia for 2013–2016 as intended under Government Decree #1694-N.	2012 – 2013
	Address the gender, geographic, and economic barriers that prohibit some children from accessing education.	2010 – 2013
	Develop policies to combat the worst forms of child labor in agriculture and the informal sector.	2010 – 2013

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Government Policies	Assess the impact of the Armenia Country Program's enhanced childcare system, continuum of child protection services, and comprehensive policy framework for protecting vulnerable children on the worst forms of child labor in the country.	2011 – 2013
Social Programs	Create programs to address the specific needs of children in the worst forms of child labor, such as children engaged in the informal sectors.	2009 – 2013
	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on child labor, including its worst forms.	2011 – 2013

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