

In 2017, Burkina Faso made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government trained law enforcement officials on child labor and began piloting a new child labor monitoring system. The government also validated a National Strategy to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor, which is still awaiting adoption by the Council of Ministers. However, children in Burkina Faso engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and artisanal gold mining. Children also perform dangerous tasks in cotton harvesting. Limited resources for the enforcement of child labor laws may hinder government efforts to protect children from engaging in the worst forms of child labor. In addition, the Labor Code does not identify the activities in which children may engage in light work.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Burkina Faso engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and artisanal gold mining. Children also perform dangerous tasks in cotton harvesting. (1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Burkina Faso.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	42.1 (2,116,752)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	41.9
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	21.7
Primary Completion Rate (%)		61.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2016, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (7)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Enquête Démographique et de Santé et à Indicateurs Multiples, 2010. (8)

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	Planting, weeding, and harvesting crops, including cotton and mangos (2; 3; 4; 9; 5; 10; 11)
	Raising and herding [†] livestock, including cattle and goats (4; 10; 12; 13; 14)
Industry	Artisanal mining [†] of gold, including digging [†] and crushing [†] rock, installing dynamite, [†] working underground, [†] carrying water and other heavy loads, [†] and using cyanide [†] and mercury [†] (2; 5; 12; 15; 16; 17; 11; 18; 19; 20; 21; 22; 23; 24; 25; 6; 26; 27)
	Quarrying [†] and transporting heavy loads [†] while working to extract granite (14; 28; 25; 29; 30; 31; 32; 33)
	Working in carpentry [†] and construction (12; 13)
Services	Domestic work (3; 10; 12; 13; 6; 34; 35)
	Street work, including vending [†] (10; 12; 13; 33)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor [‡]	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking (20)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (10; 6; 36; 37)
	Farming, including production of cotton and livestock raising, domestic work, begging, gold mining, and quarrying, each as a result of human trafficking (2; 4; 36; 38; 20; 39)

[†] 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.

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Burkina Faso is a destination, transit point, and source for child trafficking to and from other West African countries. (36; 40; 41; 42; 43) The practice of *confiage*, which involves sending a child to live with a relative or friend to attend school in a larger town or city, may place children at risk of internal human trafficking. (28) Child labor in artisanal gold mining is particularly acute and often exposes children to dangerous chemicals used in the gold extraction process, such as cyanide and mercury. (4; 5; 44; 45; 46; 47)

Although the Law Orienting the Education System mandates free education until age 16, uniform costs, school-related fees, teacher shortages, and school infrastructure shortfalls in rural areas hinder children's access to education. (1; 2; 6; 29; 48) About a quarter of children under age 5 in Burkina Faso lack a birth certificate. As birth certificates are required to attend school, many of these children remain out of school and vulnerable to child labor. (49; 50)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Burkina Faso 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 laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Burkina Faso's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including unspecific light work provisions.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 152 of the Labor Code; Order Deviating the Age of Admission to Employment (51; 52)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 149–150 of the Labor Code; Article 1 of the Hazardous Work List (51; 53)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 153 of the Labor Code; Articles 3–6 of the Hazardous Work List; Article 77 of the Mining Code (51; 53; 54)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 5 and 153 of the Labor Code; Articles 3–5 of the Law Suppressing the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; Article 1 of the Law on Combating Trafficking of Persons and Similar Practices (51; 55; 56)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 153 of the Labor Code; Articles 1–5 and 14–15 of the Law on Combating Trafficking of Persons and Similar Practices (51; 56)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 153 of the Labor Code; Articles 3–4, 7–10, and 20 of the Law Suppressing the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (51; 55)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 153 of the Labor Code (51)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (cont)

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
State Compulsory	N/A*		
State Voluntary	Yes	20	Article 2 of the Decree Organizing Operations Related to Convoking the Contingent (57)
Non-state	Yes	18	Articles 153 and 424 of the Labor Code (51)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 4 of the Law Orienting the Education System (48)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 6 of the Law Orienting the Education System (48)

* No conscription (58)

The light work provisions in the Labor Code are not specific enough to prevent children from involvement in child labor, as activities in which light work may be permitted are not identified in legislation. (51; 52)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established relevant institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Social Security (MFPTSS) that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Social Security (MFPTSS)	Enforce labor laws, including child labor laws and laws on the worst forms of child labor, and establish a government policy to combat child labor. (10; 45; 59; 60) Use provincial committees to raise awareness, conduct workshops for community members, and enforce laws at the local level. (41; 61)
Ministry of Women, National Solidarity, and Family (MFSNF)	Remove children from exploitative child labor, provide reintegration services through its mobile unit for intervention, and work with local village surveillance committees on awareness-raising efforts through participation in joint routine inspections with MFPTSS, the lead agency on child labor law enforcement. (10; 59; 62) Operate a free hotline to report child abuse. Maintain civil registry offices in maternity wards to register newborn babies. (1; 63; 64; 65) Use its National Council for Childhood to oversee all policies for the survival, protection, development, and participation of children in broader policy initiatives. (66)
Ministry of Territorial Administration, Decentralization and Interior Security (MATDSI)	Through its Morals Brigade in the MATDSI National Police Force, oversee criminal cases involving children and women, which are referred to the Ministry of Justice for prosecution. (67; 68) Assist MFPTSS through joint routine inspections related to child labor in the course of actions against traffickers. (62)
Ministry of Justice	Investigate and prosecute crimes related to child labor, including its worst forms. (69) Appoint one or more judges who specialize in child protection issues to each high court to oversee juvenile court cases. May also collaborate with MFSNF social workers in charge of child protection to conduct investigations on behalf of vulnerable children, including victims of child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, exploitative child labor, and begging. (70)
Parliamentary Network for the Promotion of Child Rights	Train government officials on children's rights, including child labor laws and other issues affecting children. (71; 72; 2)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2017, labor law enforcement agencies in Burkina Faso took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the MFPTSS that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including financial resource allocation.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$225,000 (29)	Unknown (47)
Number of Labor Inspectors	154 (29)	169 (47)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (29)	Yes (47)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (29)	Yes (47)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (29)	N/A (47)

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Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (cont)

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (29)	Yes (47)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown* (29)	Unknown* (58)
Number Conducted at Worksites	Unknown* (29)	Unknown* (58)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown* (29)	Unknown* (58)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	Unknown* (29)	Unknown* (58)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that were Collected	Unknown* (29)	Unknown* (58)
Routine Inspections Conducted	No (29)	Yes (47)
Routine Inspections Targeted	N/A (29)	Yes (47)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (29)	Yes (47)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (73)	Yes (47)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (29)	Yes (47)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (29)	Yes (47)

* The government does not publish this information. (58)

In 2017, the government employed 149 labor controllers to assist the 169 labor inspectors, who are in charge of conducting labor inspections; however, the government indicated that it lacks adequate resources to enforce labor laws throughout the country, including the human and financial resources needed to carry out a sufficient number of preliminary labor inspections and follow-up inspections to ensure remediation of notices to comply with labor law obligations. (1; 36; 59; 47) The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Burkina Faso's workforce, which includes over 8.5 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 40,000 workers in less developed economies, Burkina Faso should employ about 213 inspectors. (74; 75)

The government conducted a training for 35 government and non-governmental individuals—from the media, mining unions, and others—on the application of legal texts on the rights of children, including in situations of economic and sexual exploitation of children at gold mining sites and quarries. (76)

The MFPTSS publishes an annual report listing 12 types of labor infractions; however, none relate to child labor. (10) Law enforcement collaborates ad hoc with the Ministry of Women, National Solidarity, and Family (MFSNF) to provide social services to child labor victims. (73; 29) In 2017, the government began implementation and assessment of the pilot phase in the Mouhan region of the *Système de Surveillance du Travail des Enfants* (Child Labor Monitoring System), aiming to reduce and eliminate the incidence of child labor through increased surveillance. (47; 77) It is unknown how many cases of child labor were identified as a result of complaints made to the MFSNF hotline. (58)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in Burkina Faso took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including haphazard application of standard victim identification and referral procedures by authorities and front-line responders.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (29)	Yes (47)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (29)	Yes (47)
Number of Investigations	Unknown* (29)	Unknown* (58)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown* (29)	Unknown* (58)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (29)	Unknown* (58)

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (cont)

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Number of Convictions	Unknown (29)	Unknown* (58)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (29)	Yes (47)

* The government does not publish this information. (58)

Although the government has standard victim identification and referral procedures, authorities and front-line responders do not apply them uniformly. (43) As part of regional training, the UNODC provided a workshop for police and gendarme, and heads of justice schools on issues of illicit smuggling and trafficking of persons. (78)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms 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 efficacy in accomplishing mandates.

Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
National Coordination Committee for the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor (CNC-PAN/PFTE)	Supervise, evaluate, and oversee implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor. Chaired by the MFPTSS Directorate to Combat Child Labor and its Worst Forms, includes representatives from various civil society organizations, 24 government ministries, and 6 observers from donor countries and international NGOs. (10; 12; 59) Hold meetings twice a year to review efforts to combat child labor and identify needs. (59)
MFPTSS Directorate to Combat Child Labor and its Worst Forms	Coordinate and lead interagency efforts to combat child labor, including its worst forms; collect information on child labor; and conduct awareness-raising activities. Serve as the Secretariat for the CNCPAN/PFTE. (69; 47)
National Committee for Vigilance and Surveillance Against the Trafficking in Persons and Assimilated Practices (CNVS)	Coordinate actions at the national level to combat the worst forms of child labor, including human trafficking. Oversee Committees for Vigilance and Surveillance in each of the regions. (36; 41) The MFSNF serves as president and the MATDSI is vice president. (36; 63) Includes representatives from the MFPTSS, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Women and Gender, and NGOs. (36)
Child Protection Networks	Assist the CNVS with coordinating and facilitating the collection of statistical data on human trafficking, in particular the trafficking of women and children. Established by the MFSNF, comprises social workers, magistrates, judges, police officers, health workers, and NGOs in 23 of the country's 45 provinces. (79)

Poor coordination among ministries, lack of research to determine whether the coordinating bodies were active, and a lack of resources, such as computers and electricity, continued to hamper the government's ability to coordinate efforts to fully address child trafficking. (1; 36)

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 mainstreaming child labor issues into relevant policies and covering all worst forms of child labor.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor‡

Policy	Description
2015 National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking	Combats human trafficking; developed by the MFSNF and implemented by the CNVS. (36)
Communal Action Plan Against Trafficking (2013–2018)	Seeks to prevent child trafficking, raise awareness in local communities, and rehabilitate and reintegrate victims of child trafficking. Includes government plans to replicate elsewhere in the country, however currently piloted in Diébougou. (36; 79)
National Parenting Program	Aims to support families in their efforts to provide education and care for their children to reduce their vulnerability to child trafficking. (36; 79)

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (20; 29; 36; 80; 81; 82)

The First Lady of Burkina Faso, along with other leading figures, made a declaration in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on child protection, including child trafficking, exploitation, child labor, and all other forms of violence against children. (83; 84)

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Although the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor ended in 2015, a National Strategy to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor (SN-PFTE) was validated in 2017. The SN-PFTE is currently awaiting adoption by the Council of Ministers. (47; 85; 86; 87; 58) The government has not included child labor elimination and prevention strategies in the National Plan for Economic and Social Development. (29; 42; 88) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the 2015 National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking, Communal Action Plan Against Trafficking, and the National Parenting Program. (44; 47)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2017, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including adequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor†

Program	Description
National Program for the Fight Against Child Labor on Artisanal Gold Mining Sites and Quarries (2015–2019)†	The MFSNF program that aims to prevent and withdraw children from working in artisanal gold mines as part of the government’s efforts to eliminate child labor in mining by 2025. (1; 36; 73; 89; 90) Seeks to strengthen child protection systems, improve coordination among stakeholders, and implement existing legislation. Builds on the previous project (2009–2013) that aimed to eliminate child labor in mines and quarries. (73) Approximately \$42.9 million, 40 percent of the program costs, to be provided by the government. (1) In 2017, research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken.
Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labor II (CLEAR II)	USDOL-funded capacity-building project implemented by Winrock International and partners Verité and Lawyers Without Borders in seven countries to build local and national capacity of the governments to address child labor. (91; 92; 93) Additional information is available on the DOL website.
MFSNF Projects to Combat Human Trafficking†	MFSNF-funded programs aim to combat human trafficking through the operation of 23 transit centers that provide food, medical assistance, and counseling to child trafficking victims and children vulnerable to trafficking. (36; 42; 64; 43) The transit centers aim to reintegrate victims into their communities and facilitate repatriation of foreign victims when possible. (68) The National Parenting Program assists parents in managing and educating their children to combat child trafficking. (79) The government funds nationwide media campaigns to combat human trafficking by providing advocacy, raising awareness, and building capacity for key actors involved in child protection issues, including child trafficking. (79; 36) The government operates watchdog and monitoring committees to ensure that all cases of alleged trafficking of children are reported to the justice system by social workers. (94) In 2017, research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken.
World Bank-Funded Projects	Includes \$51 million Education Access and Quality Improvement Project to support the government in increasing access to preschool education in the two poorest regions and secondary education in the five poorest regions, and improve teaching and education. \$50 million Social Safety Net Project to provide income support to poor households and lay the foundations for a basic safety net system in Burkina Faso. (95; 96) In 2017, research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken.
Resilience and Economic Growth in the Sahel–Enhanced Resilience (REGIS–ER) (November 2013–November 2018)	Over \$70 million USAID-funded, 5-year project to increase food security and improve livelihoods in Niger and Burkina Faso. Works to increase the resilience of chronically vulnerable populations in marginal agricultural and agro-pastoral zones in Niger and Burkina Faso, particularly in 23 communes in the marginal agriculture and agro-pastoral belt. (44; 97; 98) In 2017, resulted in increased access to formal financial services for project participants—to savings by 646 percent and to credit by 1,300 percent. (62)

† Program is funded by the Government of Burkina Faso.

‡ The Government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (2; 10; 29; 99; 100; 101; 102; 103; 104)

Although Burkina Faso has social programs to address the worst forms of child labor in the production of cotton and in gold mining, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem. (1; 2)

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 Burkina Faso (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that light work provisions are specific enough to prohibit children's involvement in child labor.	2016 – 2017
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice ratio.	2014 – 2017
	Ensure that labor law enforcement receives sufficient resources to fulfill their mandates, including by conducting an adequate number of inspections and following up after preliminary inspections to ensure remediation of notices to comply with certain labor law obligations.	2009 – 2017
	Publish statistics on the enforcement of child labor laws, including funding, the number and type of labor inspections conducted, labor violations found, and penalties imposed and collected.	2009 – 2017
	Include the number of child labor infractions in the MFPTSS annual report.	2015 – 2017
	Establish a mechanism to log all calls to the MFSNF child protection hotline and track cases of child labor for referral to law enforcement or social services providers.	2015 – 2017
	Ensure that authorities and front-line responders apply standard victim identification and referral procedures uniformly.	2016 – 2017
	Publish statistics on the criminal enforcement of child labor laws, including the number of investigations, violations found, prosecutions, and convictions.	2016 – 2017
Coordination	Ensure that coordinating bodies receive adequate resources, such as computers and electricity, to accomplish their mandates.	2015 – 2017
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the National Plan for Economic and Social Development policy.	2013 – 2017
	Take steps to implement the 2015 National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking, the Communal Action Plan Against Trafficking, and the National Parenting Program.	2016 – 2017
Social Programs	Improve access to education by eliminating school-related fees and increasing the number of schools and teachers in rural areas.	2010 – 2017
	Make efforts to register children at birth to ensure access to social services, including education.	2010 – 2017
	Expand existing programs to fully address child labor in the production of cotton and in gold mining.	2009 – 2017
	Undertake activities to support the National Program for the Fight Against Child Labor on Artisanal Gold Mining Sites and Quarries projects and the MFSNF projects to combat human trafficking.	2016 – 2017

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