

## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT CONTINUED PRACTICE THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

In 2020, Cambodia made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government passed new prakas—ministry-level regulations—creating an annual public service fee for enterprises in specific sectors that will pay for announced inspections by the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training in 2021. In an effort to address the rapid increase of cases related to the online sexual exploitation of children in the country, the Cambodian National Council for Children created a working group to strengthen local governance and provide parents information on how to monitor their child's online activity. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Cambodia is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because it continued



practices that delayed advancement to eliminate child labor. The government failed to take active measures to investigate, prosecute, convict, and sentence public officials who participate in or facilitate the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation of children and debt-based forced labor in brick kilns. In addition, judges were reported to have accepted bribes in return for dismissal of charges, acquittal, and reduced sentencing for individuals committing such crimes, especially for those with alleged ties to the government; this made children more vulnerable to child labor. Children in Cambodia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in forced labor in brickmaking. Insufficient resources hamper the labor inspectorate's capacity to enforce child labor laws, especially in rural areas where a majority of child laborers work. In addition, continuing challenges in accessing basic education and the absence of a compulsory education requirement increase children's vulnerability to involvement in the worst forms of child labor.

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

Children in Cambodia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in forced labor in brickmaking. (1-3) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Cambodia.

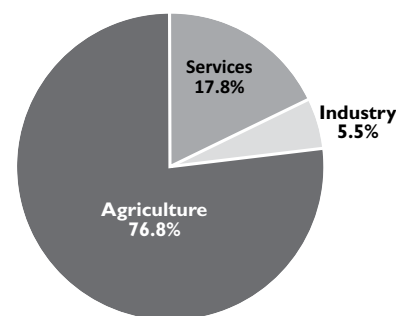
**Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	7.5 (243,371)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	87.6
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	6.3
Primary Completion Rate (%)		91.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2019, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021. (4)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Socio-Economic Survey (CSES), 2017. (5)

**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.

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**Table 2. Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity**

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Fishing, including deep-sea† and night fishing† (6-11)
	Peeling shrimp and shucking crabs (13)
	Production of palm oil, bananas, tobacco, cassava, rubber, and rice (9-11,13,14)
	Growing, cutting, tying, carrying†, and spraying pesticides† on sugarcane (9,10,14,15)
	Logging† for the production of timber (8,9,13)
	Production of salt (16)
	Production of bovines (17,18)
Industry	Making bricks,† including feeding clay into brickmaking machines, removing wood fuel from trucks and feeding to brickmaking machines, drying bricks, transporting bricks to the oven,† and loading bricks onto and off of trucks (1,6,8,10,14,19,20)
	Construction,† including operating transportation equipment† (6,8-11,14,21)
	Production of textiles, including bleaching,† dyeing,† and finishing with chemicals;† garments; and footwear (6,10,13,14,22,23)
	Production of alcoholic beverages† (6,8,13)
	Work in slaughterhouses† for the production of meat† (6,8)
	Manufacturing of wood and metal† products (6)
Services	Domestic work (6,11,12,14,24)
	Work as security guards† and in entertainment,† including as bartenders,† masseurs,† dancers,† and waiters† (6,10,11,14)
	Street work, including car washing, begging, vending, scavenging, collecting garbage, and exploitation by orphanages to fraudulently lure donations from tourists (9-12,14,21,25-27)
	Work as garbage pickers in dumpsites (9,10,14)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (10-12,24,27,28)
	Forced begging or street vending, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (8,11,12,14,29)
	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking (21)
	Forced labor in the production of bricks (1,10,11,13,14,21,24,30,31)
	Forced labor in fishing (11)

† 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.

In Cambodian brick factories, some children engage in forced labor, sometimes in dangerous conditions, to offset family debt to employers. (3,9-11,24,28,30,32) The rapid growth in the construction industry, particularly in Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville, has increased the demand for bricks and fueled child labor and debt bondage. (3,10,30,33) Failed harvests from droughts have compounded farmers' debts, which they sell to brick kiln owners, thus placing their families into hereditary debt bondage until the debts are repaid. (3,10,11,30,32,33,34,35) During the reporting period, the government released data from the 2019 census of all 486 operational kilns in the country, claiming to have found no instances of child labor or debt bondage. These results contradicted findings by independent researchers, which show high rates of child labor and debt bondage at brick kilns. (10,14,24,31,35-39)

In 2020, labor inspectors conducted surveys of 68 brick kilns, during which they interviewed workers, children, and kiln owners. However, the inspectors failed to take legal action or issue any fines or warnings related to child labor violations, claiming these visits were "educational" and they would impose fines in the future. (14,28,35,39) In addition, they continued to instruct owners to sign agreements saying that they would not loan money to their workers or engage in child labor. (14,28,35,39)

Research indicated that some children work on rubber plantations in northeastern Cambodia to help pay off loan debt taken on by their parents, putting them at risk for situations of debt bondage. There is also research indicating that children in domestic work face similar debt bondage conditions, including approximately 30 percent of child domestic workers under the age of 18. (14)

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During the reporting period, two surveys conducted by NGOs found an increase in the number of children engaging in child labor due to economic hardships brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. (14,40,41) The first nationwide survey of child labor since 2012, conducted in 2019 by the government and the ILO, has yet to be released and made publicly available. (10,13,14,37)

Children increasingly migrate to the Middle East and within Asia where traffickers may force them to work on fishing vessels, especially on Thai-owned and -operated fishing vessels, in the agriculture and construction sectors, in factories, domestic work (often through debt-based coercion), or they exploit them through commercial sexual exploitation. The pandemic decreased such migration along with all types of cross-border travel. (11,27,28) Children, girls in particular, are subject to human trafficking domestically, from rural to urban areas, and internationally, to countries such as Thailand and Vietnam, for commercial sexual exploitation (CSEC). (3,11,12,24,26,27) Girls as young as 14 are "bride trafficked" to China for CSEC, and research found that the number of these cases doubled during the reporting period due to pandemic-related job losses, especially in the garment, hospitality, and tourism sectors. (14,27,42)

The largely unregulated growth of Chinese casinos, entertainment establishments, and other commercial enterprises in Preah Sihanouk Province has led to an increase of Cambodian girls in forced labor, including sex trafficking. However, these numbers dropped sharply due to the pandemic and the government's ban on online gambling, which resulted in casinos shutting down due to a lack of revenue. (11,14,24,27)

Online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) is reportedly increasing in Cambodia, facilitated by an increase in cheap, high-speed Internet access. (9,10,26,27,43,44) Furthermore, during the reporting period, a survey conducted by NGOs noted a rise in the reported number of OSEC cases after schools closed at the height of the pandemic. With children spending more time online, it noted that 15 percent of children reported having been contacted by strangers on social media, and 2 percent reported having been asked to share intimate pictures or videos, or to perform inappropriate acts in front of their webcams. (14,41,45) To help address the emergence of OSEC within Cambodia, a local NGO set up an online platform and a hotline for people to report instances of OSEC. (46,47)

Research has found that children who are placed in residential care facilities or orphanages in Cambodia are at a higher risk of engaging in the worst forms of child labor, including child sexual exploitation, and are exposed to conditions that can negatively affect their developmental and health outcomes. (10,11,26,27,48) Of the 265 residential care institutions housing 7,634 children, many private institutions reportedly exploit children as "sham" orphans to lure donations from foreigners. (10,26,48)

Although the Education Law establishes free basic education, unofficial school-related fees, such as for building maintenance and school uniforms, are prohibitive for some families. (10,14,21,49) Other barriers to education include denied enrollment for children without birth certificates, limited transportation to schools in remote areas and at "floating schools," lack of drinking water, sanitation and toilet facilities in some schools, language barriers, threat of corporal punishment, and an insufficient number of teachers. These barriers particularly affect ethnic minority children, children with disabilities, and children from rural and disadvantaged communities. (8,10,11,14,48,50-55) Furthermore, children may only transfer schools during two designated periods per year, resulting in some children repeating a year of schooling because of the disruption in the school year, which can contribute to dropout rates among children living in temporary settings, including migrant children. (14,55)

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MOEYS) ordered all provincial Departments of Education to provide academic transcript certifications of foreign education for children of returning migrant families to help ensure that they could continue their studies upon their return to Cambodia. (28) In addition, MOEYS, in cooperation with several NGOs, designed and approved a new school curriculum entitled "Education to Prevent Trafficking in Persons," aimed at educating students from grade four through nine on the signs and dangers of human trafficking. The curriculum will be included in social studies and

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civic education coursework at public schools throughout Cambodia in 2021. (28) Furthermore, to address the needs of all Cambodian students—including indigenous students—MOEYS developed the Multilingual Education National Action Plan, 2019–2023, which has been implemented in 18 districts in the 5 targeted provinces of Ratanakiri, Stung Treng, Mondulakiri, Preah Vihear, and Kratié, and in 5 local languages. (56,57) This national action plan focuses on strengthening and extending equal and equitable educational access to indigenous and ethnic minority students, allowing them to increase their participation and commitment to attending school. (39,55,57)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Cambodia 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 Cambodia’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the minimum age for work and prohibiting the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	15	Article 177 of the Labor Law (58)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 173 and 177 of the Labor Law; Regulation on the Prohibition of Hazardous Child Labor; Articles 339–340 of the Penal Code (58–60)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 2 of the Regulation on the Prohibition of Hazardous Child Labor (59)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 15–16 of the Labor Law; Articles 10, 12, 15–17, and 19 of the Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation; Article 80 of Law on Juvenile Justice (58,61,62)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 10, 12, 15–17, and 19 of the Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation (61)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Articles 15, 28, 33–37, and 41 of the Law on Suppression of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation; Articles 284, 289, and 346 of the Penal Code (60,61)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 345 of the Penal Code; Articles 3 and 47 of the Law on Control of Drugs (60,63)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 42 of the Law on General Statutes for the Military Personnel of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (64)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		The Law on General Statutes for the Military Personnel of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (64)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		

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**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (Cont.)**

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Compulsory Education Age	No		
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 31 of the Education Law (49)

Although the Labor Code prohibits work by children under age 15, the law does not apply to children outside of formal employment relationships and, therefore, does not conform to international standards that require all children be protected under the law that sets a minimum age for work. (48,59) The Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MOLVT)'s regulation on household work extends minimum age protections for domestic workers to age 18 and provides clear definitions of household work. However, the regulation does not specify legal protections for household workers employed in informal relationships, including when working for their relatives without a contract. (9,48,58,65,66)

Cambodian laws also do not sufficiently prohibit the commercial sexual exploitation of children, as the use or offering of a child for pornographic performances is not criminally prohibited (21,60)

Education is free, but not compulsory, through grade nine. (48,49,66) The lack of compulsory schooling makes children under age 15 particularly vulnerable to child labor because they are not required to be in school but are not yet legally permitted to work. (49,58,66,67)

### 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
Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training (MOLVT) – National Committee on Countering Child Labor (NCCL)	Overseen by MOLVT. The head of MOLVT's Child Labor Bureau also serves as the NCCL Secretary General. (10,14,68) Enforces child-related provisions of the Labor Law, and trains Commune Committees for Women and Children that oversee local child labor monitoring systems. (68) Includes 24 MOLVT inter-departmental inspection teams. (69) Tasked with removing children from child labor, including at brick kilns. (10) Employs 1 child labor inspector in each of Cambodia's 25 provinces. (9,52,70) During the reporting period, funded a "Core Intervention to Prevent and Withdraw Children from the Worst Forms of Child Labor" program, providing food, school kits, and part-time teachers for 400 vulnerable children living on or near brick kilns in four provinces, provided their families with \$250, and offering skills training for children over age 15. Held a management course for labor inspectors and provided two training sessions for labor inspectors, including one on conducting online surveys of employers of young workers to 62 child labor department officials, and a second one to 50 labor inspectors on the worst forms of child labor. (14,39)
Ministry of the Interior—Cambodian National Police—Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Department (AHTJP), Anti-Cybercrime Department, and Department of Criminal Police of General Commissariat	Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Police are commanded by the Ministry of the Interior and report to the AHTJP Department Director. (21,26) Enforce laws against human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), in collaboration with municipal and provincial anti-human trafficking and juvenile protection offices. (21,26) Field complaints from the public about human trafficking, which can be filed through the anti-human trafficking hotline. (39) Oversee the Information and Technology Office, which searches for evidence of trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation of children on the Internet, in printed media, and in other sources. (27,68,69) During the reporting period, handled at least 21 cases and rescued 26 child victims of labor and sexual exploitation. (28) In February, arrested one suspected pimp who allegedly brought two underage girls for CSEC at a guesthouse in Phnom Penh; the case is ongoing. (14) In conjunction with a local NGO, placed placards with the anti-human trafficking hotline phone number on taxis and <i>tuk-tuks</i> throughout the country. Required all guesthouses and hotels in all 25 provinces to post a notice with the anti-human trafficking hotline phone number, and promoted the hotline phone number on the AHTJP and the Deputy Prime Minister's Facebook pages. (28)  Cambodian National Police Anti-Cybercrime Department is located within the Central Security Department and is responsible for investigating telecommunications crimes, including crimes committed via the Internet. (26,27,71)  Department of Criminal Police has broad responsibility for most criminal law enforcement, aside from specialized areas such as economic crimes, which are covered by other departments. (39,71)

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

Organization/Agency	Role
Provincial Police Commissariats—Bureau of Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection and Bureau of Criminal Police	Bureau of Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection enforces laws against human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children at the provincial level. Coordinates with the AHTJP. (14,39) Bureau of Criminal Police is responsible for criminal law enforcement at the provincial level. Coordinates with the Department of Criminal Police. (14,39)
Ministry of Defense—Cambodian Royal Armed Forces—Cambodia Royal Gendarmerie (CRG)—Bureau of Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection	Mandated to enforce laws against human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children found within the military. (39)
Ministry of Tourism—Tourism Police Department	Tourism Police Department works to combat the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism and child trafficking. Disseminates public awareness materials to counter child sexual abuse. (27)

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation (MOSAVY) launched a digital case management system called PRIMERO for child protection service providers; approved the Guidelines for Case Management during Infectious Disease Outbreaks; launched the Guidelines of Basic Competencies for Social Workforce; and launched the USAID-supported "Strong Family" Campaign, which aims to end violence against children and prevent unnecessary family separation. MOSAVY also organized two workshops on guidelines and procedures for identifying victims of human trafficking for law enforcement officials at the village and district level. (14,72,73)

### Labor Law Enforcement

In 2020, labor law enforcement agencies in Cambodia took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of MOLVT that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws, including financial resource allocation.

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$100,000 (10)	Unknown (14, 71)
Number of Labor Inspectors	649 (10)	602 (14)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (58)	Yes (58)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (10)	Yes (14)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (10)	N/A (14)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (10)	Yes (14)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	7,123 (10)	1,309 (14)
Number Conducted at Worksite	3,284 (10)	1,309 (14)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	3 (10)	4 (14)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	3 (10)	4 (14)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	3 (10)	4 (14)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (10)	Yes (14)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (10)	Yes (14)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (58)	Yes (58)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (10)	Yes (14)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (10)	Yes (14)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (10)	Yes (14)

During the reporting period, MOSAVY reported delivering services to 220 human trafficking victims, including 11 children. (28) In addition, MOSAVY processed the intake of 1,005 children it identified as either victims of, or vulnerable to, CSEC, including 63 children who had been deported by Thai authorities and sent back over the border to the MOSAVY-run Poipet Transit Center. (14)

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During the reporting period, labor inspections were halted for several months at the height of the pandemic and moved instead to Internet-based assessments and factory self-assessments. MOLVT held trainings for labor inspectors on these changes. However, the National Committee on Countering Child Labor (NCCL) continued conducting joint labor inspections with inspectors from other labor bureaus in the garment sector—in parallel with the ILO's Better Factories Cambodia inspections—to improve inspection efficiency while continuing to implement its zero-tolerance policy for child labor. (10,14,39) Children discovered in garment factories are immediately removed and placed in vocational training or other studies, and upon reaching the legal working age, are guaranteed employment. (10,14,22,74) Children discovered working in other sectors are removed and referred to MOSAVY for assessment. (9,10,75)

The NCCL relies on other bureaus within MOLVT to alert them to possible child labor issues in their specific sectors before inspections occur. Due, however, to the segregated nature of MOLVT, bureaus are not equipped with the proper technical training and expertise to identify child labor, resulting in bureau staff typically asking very few questions during inspections. (9,10) In an effort to improve labor inspectors' performance, MOLVT requires that, in order to continue working as labor inspectors, all national-level labor inspectors take and pass a yearly online examination that aims to assess and improve overall technical skills and legal knowledge; it is unknown whether this training took place in 2020. (10,39,76) During the reporting period, the government issued two new *prakas*—ministry-level regulations—that established joint inspection teams composed of officials from MOLVT, the Ministry of Industry and Handicrafts, the Ministry of the Environment, and the Ministry of Tourism. These teams are tasked with monitoring adherence to labor laws in the garment, tourism, industrial, handicraft, and entertainment and nightlife sectors. (14,39,77,78) However, MOLVT was unable to cite any specific examples of such joint inspections occurring in 2020, and acknowledged that these *prakas* have not been fully implemented. (14)

The government only proactively inspects two sectors for child labor: the brick kiln industry and the export garment sector. During the reporting period, MOLVT cited the construction and entertainment industries as two additional focus areas for inspections. (10,14,74) However, research indicated that labor inspectors were rarely able to conduct inspections in the constructions sector, as owners who were closely affiliated with government officials were able to obstruct labor inspectors from accessing their properties. (10,14,28,39,76) MOLVT officials said they had not yet conducted inspections in the entertainment sector, in part because they were not sure if they had sufficient legal authority to do so. (71) In the brick kiln industry, authorities often provided brick kiln owners with advance notice of inspections, enabling them to conceal abuses, including child labor violations. In addition, many police officers are unaware that the policing of brick kilns falls under their investigative purview. (11)

The government, the ILO, and NGOs all agree that the labor inspectorate is insufficiently funded, resulting in insufficient training opportunities for labor inspectors and an insufficient number of labor inspections. This, in turn, impacts the ability of the labor inspectorate to conduct inspections outside of Phnom Penh and in rural communities due to lack of funding for transportation costs, resulting in most child labor inspections occurring in the city of Phnom Penh and in the provincial, formal-sector factories rather than in rural areas in which a majority of child laborers work. (6,9,10,14,48,76) The lack of funding is also one factor preventing the labor inspectorate from conducting inspections in hospitality and nightlife establishments after business hours, because the labor inspectorate is unable to pay inspectors for overtime work. (9,14,48) In addition, the labor inspectorate does not have the ability to inspect child labor abuses on private farms or domestic work, which is overseen by the Sub-National Committee of Women and Children. Police, however, investigated cases of violence against child domestic workers. (9,10,14) While unannounced inspections are permitted, they rarely happen in practice. (9,10,14,52)

According to the government, the labor inspectorate will have sufficient funding in 2021 due to the passing of a new *prakas* called the "Joint Prakas on Public Service Fees." This new regulation, which was approved in March 2020, requires factories in the garment, footwear, and travel goods sectors to pay an annual fee of \$250 towards

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a fund that will help cover the cost of announced inspections. (14,79) Enterprises in other sectors have to pay an annual fee of \$100. Government officials noted that this new regulation will help rectify the previous insufficiency in labor inspectorate funding. (14,79)

MOLVT has established regulations for children on hazardous work in several sectors, including in agriculture, brickmaking, and fishing. However, malfeasance within MOLVT and law enforcement agencies limits the capacity of local authorities to adequately enforce these regulations, resulting in penalties related to the worst forms of child labor rarely being imposed in accordance with the law. (8-10,14,48,80-82) Overall, research indicates that the government lacks the capacity to deal with child labor and is overwhelmed by the scale of the issue, particularly in Preah Sihanouk, leading to an increase in the number of child laborers at construction sites and entertainment venues, including casinos, hotels, and karaoke bars. (10,14) Such child labor has become less common since Cambodia banned online gambling in 2019, which resulted in the closure of most casinos and the suspension of many construction projects. However, NGOs report that this has been replaced by a rise in child begging and other street work due to the economic impact of the pandemic and lack of economic opportunities. (71)

The government did not publish data on the number of labor inspections conducted at worksites.

### **Criminal Law Enforcement**

In 2020, criminal law enforcement agencies in Cambodia took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Cambodian National Police that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws, including training for criminal investigators.

**Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (10)	Unknown (14)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (10)	N/A (14)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (10)	Unknown (14)
Number of Investigations	7 (10)	21 (39)
Number of Violations Found	30 (10)	31 (14)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (10)	Unknown (14)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (10)	Unknown (14)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (10)	Unknown (14)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (10)	Yes (14)

Research found that criminal law enforcement officials, writ large, continued to fail to take significant actions on credible reports of government officials being complicit in the worst forms of child labor, including at entertainment establishments in which the commercial sexual exploitation of children is known to occur, and at brick kilns whose owners may subject families, including children, to debt-based forced labor in brick kilns. (11,14,24,48,75) In particular, police officers have reported that they sometimes avoid investigating child labor complaints at brick kilns, and instead assist in the capture and jailing of runaway brick kiln workers to avoid potential retaliation by politically connected owners who use their connections to avoid potential investigations and fines. (11,30,54,74,83) In 2020, the government failed to make significant efforts to investigate, prosecute, or convict government officials complicit in the worst forms of child labor. However, in February 2021, Prime Minister Hun Sen ordered that the Cambodian National Police arrest a district police chief accused of releasing a labor broker after they were arrested for facilitating the illegal movement of Cambodian migrant workers into Thailand; the case remains pending. (11,24,28,54,75)

In 2020, government officials profited directly from the commercial sexual exploitation of children and indirectly by being permissive of it, especially when undertaken in establishments owned by those with ties to the government. (11,28,74,84) Furthermore, research found that owners of entertainment establishments at which child sexual exploitation is known to occur sometimes used their connections to law enforcement officials to



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avoid investigation, prosecution, and fines. (11,24,54,74,84) Research also found instances when raids into these establishments were thwarted by “tip-offs” from working-level police in advance of the raids. (11,24,28) To minimize internal leaks, some provincial police chiefs turned over cases to the Anti-Human Trafficking Juvenile Police, which conducted independent raids without notifying the local authorities until moments before they began. (11,28)

Anti-trafficking police units lack the specific legal authority to conduct undercover trafficking in persons investigations, which constrains their ability to pursue human traffickers, including those involved in child sexual exploitation. (10,11,24,27,48,43) The government says it grants such authority to police on a case-by-case basis. (71) With the increasingly clandestine nature in which sex trafficking operations occur, anti-trafficking police were limited to investigating more obvious manifestations, including sex-on-premise establishments in which victims were more likely to self-report and testify. (11) In addition, many law enforcement officials, particularly those located in rural areas, are unaware of how to properly conduct anti-trafficking work, as most have not received training on basic law enforcement techniques. (11,24,28) Furthermore, law enforcement officials investigating suspected human trafficking cases are expected to personally cover all expenses, including transportation costs, and are rarely reimbursed in full or on time. This has led to officials reportedly pursuing cases for which costs will be covered on their behalf, and makes some law enforcement units more susceptible to malfeasance. (10,11,24,74)

Research also found that local officials allegedly facilitated cross-border human trafficking by accepting bribes to forge identity documents. (11) Intimidation of human trafficking victims and their families also occurred during the reporting period, perpetuated by a government regulation that bars NGOs from assisting human trafficking victims in seeking formal recognition and obtaining the required identification from the government to receive available victim services. This forced victims and their families to have to interact directly with criminal law enforcement authorities, resulting in most victims declining to file complaints and obtain the IDs necessary to receive services. (11,28)

In Cambodia, judges have discretion to determine whether perpetrators of crimes related to child labor will be imprisoned or fined and the amount of the fine. The penalties imposed are not uniformly administered and do not adhere to the parameters prescribed by law. (3,11,54) In some cases, citing resource constraints and pandemic-related shutdowns, not all trafficking in person cases were brought to court despite evidence being supplied by the police. Prosecutors and judges have been known to accept bribes in return for dismissal of charges, acquittal, and reduced sentencing, especially for those with alleged ties to the government. (11,27,28,54,74) Research also found that law enforcement misused resources at their disposal to detain, prosecute, and convict some individuals for politically motivated reasons or spurious trafficking in person charges. (11) Furthermore, law enforcement generally focused on deterring foreign involvement in CSEC, despite the fact that the local population constituted the main sources of demand. (11,28)

During the reporting period, the Phnom Penh Municipal Court opened the trial of a Chinese man and four Cambodians for allegedly trafficking at least four Cambodian girls to China to be brides for Chinese men. In October, prosecutors ordered the detention of an employer for torturing her 17-year-old domestic worker. (14) In addition, law enforcement authorities reported arresting five foreign individuals suspected of engaging in CSEC, but did not report whether they initiated prosecutions in any of these cases. (11)

Research indicates that the use of “judicial supervision,” where defendants are released on their own recognizance in advance of trial, has resulted in as many as 30 percent of human trafficking suspects not returning to participate in their criminal trials as law enforcement lacks the resources to monitor defendants. This severely limits the ability of law enforcement officials to hold criminals accountable, putting the population at risk. (11,24,28) Due to a lack of resources, including personnel, and a lack of clear guidelines in the criminal procedural code regarding judicial supervision, law enforcement rarely issued arrest warrants for absconded defendants unless NGOs were available to assist in the apprehension of said defendants. (11) In addition, the government has yet to fully implement the “Child Friendly Court” program that will make it easier for child

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victims to provide testimony by using video-conferencing technology instead of confronting defendants in person, which can result in re-traumatization. (11,24)

Cambodian law outlines channels for victim restitution, and research indicated an increase in the number of verdicts ordering traffickers to pay some form of financial recompense to victims. However, this restitution was extremely difficult to obtain due to a legal requirement delaying payment until after the completion of the trafficker’s jail term; convicted traffickers’ frequent abscondment further complicated this arrangement. (11,27,28) Coupled with the government lacking a procedure on how to calculate compensation, victims rarely received the amount promised, and many victims’ families settled out of court with traffickers or accepted bribes to drop the relevant charges. (11,27,28)

The government's ability to properly save and store data related to the worst forms of child labor was found to be inadequate, due to outdated data collection storage platforms and a lack of resources, including training, equipment, and funding. (24,28,39) The government did not provide information on initial training for new employees, refresher courses, the number of prosecutions initiated, the number of convictions, or the number of imposed penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor for inclusion in the report.

### 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 the efficacy in accomplishing mandates.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Child Protection Committees	<p>Cambodian National Council for Children coordinates child labor issues at the national level, including implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of all child rights policies and programs. (8,26,27,39) Ensures that projects and programs follow the National Plan of Action on the Reduction of Child Labor and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor. (8) Includes concerned ministries, businesses, trade unions, and NGOs. Oversees Provincial Committees on the Protection of Child Rights and Provincial Committees on Child Labor. (8) Coordinates all government ministries, institutions, international NGOs, development partners, and the community in promoting and protecting children's rights. (85) Oversees the National Child Protection Commission that coordinates and collaborates with government, civil society organizations, and NGOs. (86) During the reporting period, created a working group to discuss plans on how to prevent online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) by strengthening local governance and providing parents with information on how to monitor children's online activity. Held a 2-day workshop on investigative and judicial processes, and how to improve child protection in relation to OSEC. (47,87) Participants included 152 law enforcement officers, including 25 capital-provincial anti-human trafficking and juvenile protection officers and 12 anti-human trafficking officers from the Military Police. (39,87) In addition, provided a workshop on actions to combat CSEC to 73 participants, including children’s guardians, and provided relief assistance to 570 families in 6 provinces. (39)</p> <p>National Committee on Child Protection coordinates inter-ministerial action on strengthening Cambodia's child protection system, and preventing and combating all forms of abuses and violence against children. (14) Reviews and addresses gaps in the legal framework, government policies, and national action plans related to child protection and promoting the effectiveness of law enforcement. Provides technical advice and assistance to enhance child protection. (14) In January 2020, released initial analysis of OSEC in Cambodia and held a workshop on OSEC with 65 participants at the national, regional, and provincial levels to promote awareness of increased vulnerability during the pandemic. (14,39)</p> <p>National Committee to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children implements the National Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children, and coordinates, promotes, and monitors implementation activities of the national action plan. (14) During the reporting period, publicized the 2020 World Day Against Child Labor and conducted training on "positive parenting tools" designed to prevent violence against children in the home and promote better communication strategies to 9,751 parents in 6 targeted provinces. (14) Held Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation (MOSAVY)-led capacity building workshop on Law on Juvenile Justice for 340 local officials. (14) Conducted training on "Guidelines on Managing Violence Against Women and Children in the Health System" for 354 trainers in 15 referral hospitals and 135 health centers in 8 provinces. Coordinated with national police to provide special child protection rooms at local police stations in 25 communes in 5 priority provinces. (14)</p> <p>National Homeless Committee* aims to address and resolve issues related to homelessness and homeless people, including children. Established in 2020 and chaired by MOSAVY. (14,39)</p>

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**Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor (Cont.)**

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Commune Committees for Women and Children	Advisory entities that raise awareness of child labor regulations, promote school attendance, collaborate with provincial labor departments to monitor for child labor violations, and refer children at risk of or engaged in child labor to social protection services at the local level. Led by Ministry of the Interior's Director General of General Department of Local Administration. (21,26,39,88) Research was unable to determine whether this coordinating body was active during the reporting period.
Anti-Human Trafficking in Persons Committee	National Committee for Counter Trafficking (NCCT) coordinates government, NGO, civil society, and private sector efforts to address trafficking in persons and sexual exploitation. (24,26,28,89) Produces an annual report documenting the government's anti-trafficking in persons efforts. (28) Focuses on children's affairs, international cooperation, justice, law enforcement, migration, prevention, protection, recovery, reintegration, and repatriation. (90) Chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Ministry of Interior, with 4 vice chair ministries and 14 participating ministries. (3,27,70) Oversees Provincial Committees for Counter Trafficking in each province. (3,28,70) Has six working groups with inter-ministerial membership, each chaired by one ministry, including Prevention (Minister of Education); Protection, Recovery, Reintegration, and Repatriation (Minister of Social Affairs); Law Enforcement (Chief of the Cambodian National Police); Justice (Minister of Justice); International Cooperation (Minister of Women's Affairs); and Migration and Labor (Minister of Labor). (24,27,28) During the reporting period, maintained a monitoring working group to oversee the efforts of the inter-agency committee and provincial subcommittees. In addition, delivered 192 trainings to 7,491 law enforcement officers on anti-trafficking in persons laws, investigative techniques, and evidence collection. (28) Collaborated with NGOs to train 10,000 tuk-tuk drivers in Phnom Penh on how to identify suspicious activity. (91) Maintained victim identification manual and screening tool app in use at the Poipet Transit Center, and provided service provider contact information to victims. (11,26,74) Produced an annual report documenting anti-trafficking efforts; however, the report was not exhaustive amidst insufficient data collection. Hosted interfaith forum on combating human trafficking attended by high-level government officials and religious leaders. (11) In addition, partnered with the Ministry of Tourism to produce billboards, signs, posters, pamphlets, and other materials targeting potential perpetrators of CSEC, and participated in a counter-trafficking in persons inter-ministerial meeting co-hosted by the U.S. Embassy and the Ministry of Women's Affairs focused on analyzing government efforts. (11,14,28,39)  Online Child Sexual Exploitation (OSEC) Committee* is overseen by the Cambodia National Council for Children and was established in 2020. (14,39) Works in collaboration with nearly 20 institutions and ministries to combat online abuse and exploitation of children. (39)
Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking (COMMIT)	High-level policy dialogue comprising the six nations of the Greater Mekong Sub-Region. Meets regularly to discuss regional anti-trafficking agenda and share information. (24,28,92) Coordinates through Cambodian COMMIT Task Force, chaired by senior officials from the ministries of Justice and Women's Affairs. (24,28) Maintains annual COMMIT Work Plan with anti-trafficking programming and policies. (92) UN Action for Cooperation against Trafficking in Persons acts as COMMIT Secretariat and convenes meetings. (92) During the reporting period, the Ministry of Women's Affairs attended a virtual COMMIT Regional Taskforce meeting and the 14th COMMIT Senior Officials' meeting to discuss the Comprehensive Approach to Combating Human Trafficking. (28,39)
Ministry of Tourism—Child Safety Committee in the Tourism Sector	Child Safety Committee in the Tourism Sector works to prevent and protect the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism. Located in 24 provinces in Cambodia. (27)

\*Coordinating body was established during the reporting period.

During the reporting period, the government entered into an agreement with the Government of Thailand to establish standard operating procedures (SOPs) on bilateral anti-trafficking in persons law enforcement cooperation. The SOPs will establish official conduits for cooperation and information sharing between the two countries related to: 1) migrants and trafficking in persons; 2) regulating timely and effective investigation and prosecution on trafficking in persons; 3) outlining policies to govern victim rescue, and; 4) giving victims and witnesses additional legal protection. (28)

The Commune Committees for Women and Children continue to be underfunded. (39)

## 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 implementation.

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
National Plans of Action on Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor	<p>National Plan of Action on the Reduction of Child Labor and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2016–2025) aims to build the capacity of law enforcement officers, strengthen the enforcement of relevant laws, raise public awareness of child labor issues, and enhance child labor monitoring systems at the community level. (21) Overseen by MOLVT. (14) During the reporting period, provincial committees to counter child labor prepared 5-year progress reports to be approved by the National Committee to Counter Child Labor. (14,39) Creates a roadmap to the complete eradication of the worst forms of child labor by 2025 in various sectors, including services, agriculture, mining, and energy. (23,39,66,85) Mandates awareness-raising activities, legal action, and collaborations with civil society actors. (85) During the reporting period, mandated the inspection of brick kilns. Resulted in the establishment of provincial committees, which will prepare 5-year progress reports for approval by the National Committee to Counter Child Labor. (39)</p> <p>Third 5-Year National Plan of Action on the Suppression of Human Trafficking, Smuggling, Labor, and Sexual Exploitation (2019–2023) is coordinated by NCCT, with input from the ministries of Justice; Women's Affairs; Foreign Affairs; Labor; and Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation. (9) Aims to prevent and eliminate all forms of human trafficking, including by strengthening criminal law enforcement to protect children from exploitation in entertainment venues, integrating anti-human trafficking and child safety issues into the public school curriculum, and promoting the inclusion of vulnerable children in both formal and informal education. (90) Focused on four strategies: 1) strengthening cooperation in the formulation and implementation of laws, policies, and legal standards; 2) promoting efforts to prevent of all forms of human trafficking; 3) strengthening the criminal justice system; and 4) increasing protection of victims. (28) This policy was implemented during the reporting period. (39)</p>
Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Violence Against Children (2017–2021)	<p>Led by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. (69,86) Developed in response to the Cambodia Violence Against Children Survey conducted in 2013. (27,86) Aims to prevent and respond to violence against children, including the worst forms of child labor. (27,44,93) Provides OSEC-related interventions in policy and governance, including: providing training for teachers and developing curriculum to help children build online safety skills; providing OSEC materials to law enforcement; and developing an online hotline to help identify platforms that support the perpetuation of OSEC. (10,27) Works to properly assess the scale and specific nature of OSEC in Cambodia to inform developments. (10) During the reporting period, began drafting a Law on Child Protection and corresponding procedures for alternative care for children (such as adoption), including a <i>prakas</i> on child reintegration services. (14,39)</p>
National Policies on the Elimination of Child Labor in the Fisheries and Agricultural Sectors	<p>Action Plan for Gender Equality Promotion and Child Labor Elimination in the Fisheries Sector (2016–2020) was overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries under the Fisheries Administration of Cambodia (FiA). Aligned with the Strategic Planning Framework for Fisheries (2010–2019). (23) Sought to prevent and withdraw children from child labor and hazardous work in the fisheries sector. (94) During the reporting period, implemented awareness-raising activities, including four training workshops conducted in Kampong Chhnang and Pursat provinces with 60 participants, including 32 women. (39)</p> <p>The National Action Plan on the Elimination of Child Labor in Fisheries (2010–2020) was overseen by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries under the FiA. Aligned with the Strategic Planning Framework for Fisheries (2010–2019). During the reporting period, began drafting 5-year action plans for 2021–2025. (39)</p> <p>Policy on Childhood Development and Protection in the Agricultural Sector (2016–2020) established a strategic framework to protect children working in the agricultural sector. Sought to prevent and reduce child labor, especially in hazardous work, and improve agricultural vocational training for youth ages 15–17. (7) Research was unable to determine actions taken to implement this policy during the reporting period.</p>
National Child Protection Policies	<p>National Social Protection Policy Framework (2016–2025) aims to implement the national strategic plan to ensure income security for all citizens, promote their welfare, strengthen social solidarity, and maximize the impact of poverty alleviation. (14) Research was unable to determine actions taken to implement this policy during the reporting period.</p> <p>National Social Protection Strategy (2017–2021) aims to expand access to healthcare, nutrition, and educational services, and to promote the elimination of the worst forms of child labor. (95,96) Research was unable to determine actions taken to implement this policy during the reporting period.</p> <p>Capacity Development Plan for Family Support, Foster Care, and Adoption (2018–2023) is overseen by MOSAVY. Improves services for children without parental care who are vulnerable to child labor, ensuring they can still live in a family setting. (9) Maintains a comprehensive database of all children living in residential and foster care. Funded by USAID through UNICEF. (9) During the reporting period, through technical support from UNICEF and Save the Children, MOSAVY revised the draft plan, which is pending ministerial approval. (39)</p> <p>Education Strategic Plan (2019–2023) seeks to ensure equitable access to education and improve the education system's response to human trafficking and child labor. (97) During the reporting period, adopted the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Framework for Teachers and School Directors, the National Strategy for Development of Education Statistics, the Teacher Education College 5-Year Strategic Plan, the Performance Management System and Performance Appraisal, and the Community Preschool Curriculum and National Action Plan on Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities. In addition, approximately 32 percent of all early grade teachers in Cambodia were trained on early grade reading. (39) Furthermore, 122,228 scholarships and one meal a day were provided to primary and secondary school students to promote access to school and prevent dropouts. (39)</p>

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**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor (Cont.)**

Policy	Description
Strategic and Operational Plan for the Implementation of Juvenile Justice Law (2018–2020)	Overseen by MOSAVY, funded by UNICEF. Sought to build a sustainable juvenile justice system, and to provide effective protection and support to incarcerated juveniles who were vulnerable to child labor. (9) During the reporting period, focused on building a sustainable juvenile justice system, and providing effective protection and support to children in conflict with the law. As a result, children in conflict with the law who were in correction centers could more easily access education, healthcare, counseling, and guidance on vocational training. (14)

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (90,97-100)

**VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR**

In 2020, 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 in all sectors.

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

Program	Description
Cambodia Countering Trafficking in Persons (2015–2020)	\$10 million, USAID-funded, 5-year (included a 1-year cost extension) program implemented by Winrock International to strengthen the capacity of government and community stakeholders to prevent human trafficking, protect at-risk populations, and increase the number of successful prosecutions of perpetrators. (69,101) During the reporting period, produced 919 social media posts on safe migration and human trafficking, reaching more than 1 million Cambodians. Distributed 1,700 information cards on safe migration and on how to disseminate information to others to prevent human trafficking. (14) Continued to support a free job-seeking platform, <i>Bong Pheak</i> , on which employers can post job opportunities for low-skilled and unskilled job seekers. In 2020, <i>Bong Pheak</i> registered 190 employers and posted 1,325 positions on its platform. (14)
Better Factories Cambodia†	USDOL, the Government of Cambodia, Garment Manufacturers in Cambodia, and ILO-funded program to monitor garment factories' compliance with national and international labor standards, including those related to child labor. (8,69,102) Additional information is available on the program's website. During the reporting period, completed 300 factory assessments and found 4 cases of child labor. Plans to expand assessments to travel goods sector and make joint assessments with MOLVT labor inspectors in mid-2021. (14)
UN WFP Country Program† (2020–2024)	Multi-government and private sector-funded program implemented in collaboration with the Government of Cambodia that includes a school feeding program for children in need. (103) During the reporting period, provided \$600,000 in emergency assistance to help 3,725 families affected by natural disasters to purchase food, including \$100,000 in emergency food distribution to more than 2,550 families in Pursat Province. (14)
Child Protection Programs: Family Care First (FCF REACT) (2015–2023) and Cambodia Child Protection Program	Family Care First (FCF REACT) is led by MOSAVY. Funded by the European Union, USAID, the GHR Foundation, Save the Children Hong Kong, and UNICEF. (37,69) Aims to support more than 7,000 Cambodian children to live in safe, nurturing, family-based care. (37,69,104) Secretariat and Advisory Board collaborate with ministries, institutions, and relevant NGOs to review, amend, and develop policies, legal standards, concept notes, and strategic plans to support the common goal of ensuring safe, nurturing family-based care for Cambodian children. (10) During the reporting period, USAID expanded monetary support through 2023 and MOSAVY provided non-monetary support. Endorsed and launched the Guidelines of Basic Competencies for Social Workforce and the Guidelines for Case Management during Infectious Disease Outbreaks. (14,72,73)  Cambodia Child Protection Program (2009–2023) is led by UNICEF and MOSAVY. Aims to strengthen the child protection system in Cambodia and to prevent and reduce violence against children and unnecessary family separation. (14,39) Builds capacity of national and sub-national authorities in all 25 provinces to formulate and implement nationally approved institutional and legal frameworks. Includes capacity building of the government and civil society child protection workforce to provide direct service delivery to vulnerable children and families. (14) During the reporting period, extended program through 2023 with MOSAVY providing non-monetary support. Continued technical support to the development of the Child Protection Law and the Child Protection Sector Plan. (14) Trained and deployed 20 new social workers to support children and families during the pandemic by providing awareness-raising trainings on violence against children. (14,39)
Cambodia Consortium for Out of School Children—Phase II (2017–2023)	Implemented by Education a Child, Aide et Action, and the Cambodian Consortium for Out of School Children, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports. (105-108) Aims to improve access to equitable, high-quality education in 25 provinces in Cambodia for over 116,000 primary school children who are out of school. Focus is on equitable access, quality education, ownership, and accountability. (105,107)

† Program is funded by the Government of Cambodia.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (109)

During the reporting period, the Cambodian Government, with support from the Australian and German Governments, reinvested in a 2018 cash-transfer program called the Identification of Poor Households (IDPoor).

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This program allowed the government to provide financial assistance to the most vulnerable populations during the pandemic, including children ages 0 to 5, thus preventing children from engaging in child labor. (39, I 10-I 12) From June 2020–January 2021, over 685,000 families received approximately \$200 million through the IDPoor program. (39)

In addition, MOSAVY disseminated its guidelines on the “Minimum Standards on Residential Care for Victims of Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation” to shelters and other relevant stakeholders to address the management and proper care for victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation living in residential care facilities in Cambodia. (28)

The government lacked sufficient funding to put a system in place to monitor and promote the reintegration of victims of forced labor and human trafficking, including children, leaving victims vulnerable and at higher risk of re-victimization, and leaving the government heavily reliant on NGOs to fill this need. (11,27,28,74)

Many poor households in rural communities lack access to a social protection safety net, which increases the vulnerability of children to child labor as a means to supplement family income. (3, I 13) Although Cambodia has implemented programs that target child labor, the scope and resources provided to these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem. (9,10)

## 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 Cambodia (Table I I).

**Table I I. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that all children are protected by law, including children working outside of formal employment relationships and child household workers employed by their relatives.	2018 – 2020
	Criminally prohibit the offering and use of a child for pornographic performances.	2015 – 2020
	Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2020
	Institute a compulsory education age that is at least equal to the minimum age for work.	2009 – 2020
Enforcement	Build the capacity of labor law enforcement authorities to enforce child and forced labor regulations by providing more technical training opportunities on how to properly identify child labor during inspections, and offer sufficient resources to labor law authorities to ensure the enforcement of child labor laws through investigations and inspections, including unannounced inspections.	2012 – 2020
	Establish and uniformly administer penalties for violations of laws on child labor, including its worst forms, in accordance with the parameters prescribed by law.	2009 – 2020
	Collect, properly store, and publicly release disaggregated data on labor and criminal law enforcement efforts, including the number of inspections conducted at worksites, initial training for new criminal investigators, refresher courses, the number of prosecutions initiated, the number of convictions, and the number imposed penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.	2015 – 2020
	Ensure that malfeasance is addressed in all law enforcement agencies, including not accepting bribes to influence the outcome of cases or forging identity documents for trafficking in persons purposes, providing tip off in advance of raids, and investigating and prosecuting politically connected individuals and government officials who are complicit in facilitating and profiting from the worst forms of child labor, including debt-based forced labor in brick kilns.	2019 – 2020
	Ensure that all criminal law enforcement officials are sufficiently trained on the techniques of how to conduct anti-trafficking work, particularly those located in rural areas and in brick kilns.	2019 – 2020
	Ensure that funding for criminal law enforcement agencies is sufficient to cover all expenses, including transportation costs, for law enforcement officials.	2019 – 2020
	Address the misuse of resources by law enforcement to convict defendants for politically motivated reasons, and ensure that all individuals accused of commercial sexual exploitation of children are prosecuted and charged according to the law.	2019 – 2020
	Protect and prevent intimidation of trafficking victims and allow them access to protection services pending court proceedings.	2020

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Coordination	Ensure that the Commune Committees for Women and Children is able to carry out its intended mandate.	2019 – 2020
	Increase funding for Commune Committees for Women and Children.	2016 – 2020
	Ensure that annual reports produced by the National Committee for Counter Trafficking are comprehensive.	2020
Government Policies	Publish activities undertaken to implement the Policy on Childhood Development and Protection in the Agricultural Sector, the National Social Protection Policy Framework, and the National Social Protection Strategy during the reporting period.	2019 – 2020
Social Programs	Release the 2019 child labor survey and make the data publicly available.	2020
	Ensure that Residential Care Facilities and orphanages protect the health and well-being of children living in them.	2019 – 2020
	Increase access to free basic education by eliminating unofficial school-related fees and addressing issues related to limited transportation and inadequate school infrastructure, including the number of teachers, and the need for a birth certificate to enroll in school.	2013 – 2020
	Establish a system to accurately capture and monitor the reintegration of victims of the worst forms of child labor, including human trafficking.	2019 – 2020
	Expand social protection safety nets in rural areas to ensure that poor children and their families have access to services that may mitigate the risk of involvement in child labor.	2016 – 2020
	Provide sufficient resources to all social programs so that they can fully address the extent of child labor in Cambodia, including online sexual exploitation of children.	2019 – 2020

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