



MOZAMBIQUE

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Mozambique made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. In August 2023, the government enacted Law No. 13/2023 that raised the minimum working age to 18, absent permission given by a legal guardian, and the Council of Ministers approved the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons 2023–2027. The Ministry of Labor and Social Security also carried out 856 awareness-raising talks on the worst forms of child labor. However, the established minimum age for work is not in compliance with international labor standards because it does not extend to informal employment. Lastly, existing social programs are insufficient to fully address the extent of the child labor problem in Mozambique.

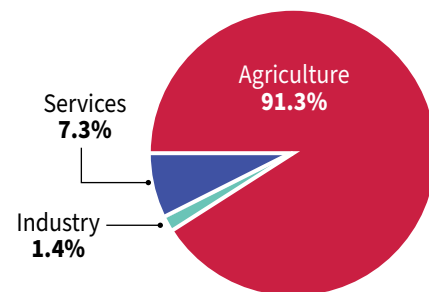


PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	16.2% (1,270,866)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	63.6%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	10.2%

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Mozambique are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced domestic work. Children also engage in dangerous tasks in the production of tobacco.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Working in farming, including the production of tobacco in small-scale farms,[†] and handling dangerous pesticides and tools, and herding livestock. Working in fishing,[†] including catching and transporting bait and fish, handling nets, and cleaning boats. Engaged in forestry,[†] including cutting and climbing trees, and hunting, including small and wild animals.



Industry

Engaged in artisanal mining[†] and working in construction.[†]



Services

Engaged in domestic work,[†] including childcare.[†] Engaged in street work, including street vending, and car washing.[†]



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor[‡]

Forced labor in domestic work, farming, mining, and vending. Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, stealing, assisting poachers in the illegal poaching industry, and recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict.

[†] 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 2023, children were forcibly recruited and used as soldiers, cooks, and laborers in northern Mozambique by the United States government-designated terrorist group ISIS-Mozambique.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

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

Legal Framework

Establish a compulsory education age of 18, the minimum age for employment.

Extend minimum age protections for all children, including children working outside of formal employment relationships.

Raise the minimum age for light work from 12 years old to 13 years old to comply with international labor standards.

Enforcement

Publish data on labor law enforcement and criminal law enforcement efforts, such as the number of prosecutions initiated, convictions secured, and whether penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor were imposed.

Provide labor inspectors with adequate financial resources, including vehicles and fuel, to ensure their capacity to enforce child labor laws.

Coordination

Ensure that responsibilities between the Multisectoral Group on Child Labor and the National Reference Group are clearly defined, and strengthen coordination between the two agencies.

Ensure that there is an effective approach to address and eliminate child labor in the informal sector.

Social Programs

Take measures to ensure that all children, including children in displaced communities, have access to education by providing supplies, uniforms, and an adequate number of schools, classroom space, and trained teachers; address barriers for children from rural areas; take preventative steps to protect children from physical and sexual abuse in schools.

Institute programs to address child labor in domestic work, and expand existing programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

By the end of 2023, approximately 850,000 people, many of them children, were internally displaced due to increased terrorist-related violence in Cabo Delgado Province and natural disasters, placing them at a higher risk of child labor. Children with HIV/AIDS or who are orphans of parents who passed away due to AIDS are particularly vulnerable to child labor and its worst forms.















BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Although primary education is tuition-free through the ninth grade, families must provide school supplies, uniforms, and, in most cases, meals. Barriers to education for children also include a lack of schools and classroom space, poor school infrastructure, a lack of meals at most schools, and an overall lack of school resources. Many students, particularly in rural areas, face difficulties traveling long distances to get to school. In addition, physical and sexual abuse is common in schools, and research found that some male teachers coerce female students into sex. The government estimates that only 49 percent of children complete their primary education. Further, some LGBTQI+ students faced discrimination at secondary schools, leading many to drop out before completing schooling. Children with disabilities also faced discrimination, in addition to a lack of accommodations. The increased rate of displacement due to insecurity in Cabo Delgado Province creates additional barriers to secondary education for some children due to a lack of secondary schools or overcrowding. Security forces occupied and used three schools in 2023.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Mozambique has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Mozambique's laws do not meet international standards on the minimum age for work because the law does not cover children working outside of formal employment relationships.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 18 Years		Article 29 of the Labor Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 29 of the Labor Law; Article 3 of the Hazardous Work List
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children, 18 Years		Hazardous Work List
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 10, 11, and 17 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Articles 196 and 198 of the Penal Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 5, 10, and 11 of the Trafficking in Persons Law
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 5, 10, and 11 of the Trafficking in Persons Law
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 33 and 40 of the Law on Drugs
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 23 of the Law on Military Service
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 2 of the Law on Military Service
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 5 and 10 of the Trafficking in Persons Law
Compulsory Education Age, 15 Years ‡		Article 41 of the Law of Basic Child Protection; Article 7 of the Law on the National System of Education
Free Public Education		Article 41 of the Law of Basic Child Protection; Article 7 of the Law on the National System of Education

‡ Age calculated based on available information

In August 2023, the new Law No. 13/2023 raised the minimum working age to 18, with exceptions granted for children aged 15 or older if permission is given by a legal guardian. The Labor Law’s minimum age protections do not meet international standards as they do not apply to children working outside of formal employment relationships. The Labor Law also states that children between the ages of 12 and 15 may work under certain conditions defined by the Council of Ministers, and the Regulations on Domestic Work allow children between the ages of 12 and 15 to perform domestic work with the permission of their legal guardian. However, this minimum age of 12 for light work is not in compliance with international standards, as the age for light work should be 13 years old.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Mozambique took actions to address child labor. However, the lack of resources to conduct labor inspections, including vehicles and fuel, hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MITESS): Enforces child labor laws and regulations. Monitors implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

Ministry of the Interior and the Attorney General’s Office: The National Police Force functions under the Ministry of the Interior and enforces all criminal laws, including those related to the worst forms of child labor. Through its National Criminal Investigation Service, investigates and refers cases of human trafficking and violence against women and children to the Attorney General’s Office. The Attorney General’s Office coordinates the government’s efforts against human trafficking and child labor, leads the National Reference Group for the Protection of Children and Combating Trafficking in Persons, and operates a phone hotline for reporting child labor cases.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

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

It is **unknown** whether Mozambique’s 156 labor inspectors conducted worksite inspections or whether child labor violations were found in 2023. It is also **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>Mozambique established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, it is unknown whether this mechanism took actions to coordinate efforts to address child labor during the reporting period.</p>	<p>Multisectoral Group on Child Labor: Led by MITESS, serves as the main coordinating mechanism for child labor and is responsible for implementing the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor. Includes representatives from every ministry, reports to the Prime Minister, and submits regular reports to the Council of Ministers. In collaboration with the National Reference Group—the entity responsible for addressing Mozambique’s human trafficking problem—assists children found in child labor. Research was unable to determine whether the Multisectoral Group on Child Labor was active during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>Mozambique established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor.</p> <p><i>† Policy was approved during the reporting period.</i></p>	<p>National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Aimed to address the underlying reasons for child labor in the geographic regions of concern (the provinces of Tete, Manica, and Maputo, and Maputo City), and focused on principal sectors in which child labor occurs (mining, domestic work, and agriculture). Included activities such as mapping 70 percent of occurrences of the worst forms of child labor by province and withdrawing 20,000 children from the worst forms of child labor and enrolling them in the Basic Social Subsidy program. Called for improved coordination between several key government agencies, including the Attorney General’s Office and the Office for Assistance to Families and Children Victims of Violence in the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Action, among others. Also created a multisector group comprising representatives from the government, civil society, unions, and employers in the formal and informal sectors to collaborate on issues identified in the plan. In 2023, the government trained frontline officials and community leaders, working with NGO partners, to provide services for children removed from child labor, and held 856 awareness-raising talks on combating the worst forms of child labor in all 11 provinces, focused on places where child labor is known to occur.</p> <p>National Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons (2023–2027):† Established in August 2023, aims to respond to trafficking in persons through the prevention, detection, investigation, and protection and assistance of victims. Also intended to reinforce coordination among stakeholders. Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Persons during the reporting period.</p>
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Mozambique participated in a program that includes the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, this social program is inadequate because it does not address the problem in all sectors.</p>	<p>Memorandum of Understanding to Combat Child Labor in Tobacco Growing (2018–2024): \$1.2 million, 3-year project funded by the Eliminating Child Labor in Tobacco Growing Foundation, focusing on education, awareness raising, institutional capacity building, and revision of the government’s legal framework. Incorporates training for law enforcement officials. During the reporting period, the government conducted at least one working visit to a remote province to assess the progress of anti-child labor efforts.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports