



SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT

Although research found no evidence that child labor exists in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in 2023, the government made minimal advancement in efforts to prevent the worst forms of child labor. Multiple government agencies participated in "Operation Carisica," a joint training with other Caribbean countries to detect crimes like migrant smuggling and human trafficking. The government increased its operations to identify and investigate potential labor trafficking, including through inspections and by distributing materials to the public to raise awareness. However, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' laws do not meet international standards because the use of children for prostitution is not prohibited. In addition, the minimum age of 14 for hazardous work falls below international standards and there is no legislation prohibiting the use, procuring, and offering of children in illicit activities, including in the production of drugs. The government also did not publicly release information on its labor law enforcement efforts.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that child labor exists in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Establish 18 as the minimum age for hazardous work and identify hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children.

Criminally prohibit the use of children for prostitution.

Criminally prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of children for illicit activities, including in the production of drugs.

Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.

Raise the minimum age for work from 14 to 16 to align with the compulsory education age.

Ensure that laws providing free basic education include all children in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, including non-citizens.

Enforcement

Establish a mechanism to assess civil penalties for child labor violations.

Increase resources, including personnel and vehicles, for the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit to expand its capacity to address human trafficking throughout the country.

Collect and publish labor law enforcement data, including information on the number of inspectors, inspectorate funding, the number of worksite inspections, the number of unannounced inspections conducted, training, and the number of child labor law violations.

Social Programs

Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.

Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including children in rural communities, by providing public transportation and by addressing the bullying of LGBTQIA+ students.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

LGBTQIA+ youth experience stigma and discrimination. NGO reporting indicates that LGBTQIA+ students endure physical and verbal bullying, sexual harassment, and violence, leading some to leave school early.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

All children in the country are able to access education; however, inadequate public transportation for children in rural villages makes it necessary to walk long distances to school, a hardship that may make attending school difficult. Children out of school are vulnerable to engaging in child labor.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines' laws do not meet international standards, including inadequate hazardous work protections and a lack of legislation prohibiting the use, procuring, and offering of children in illicit activities, including in the production of drugs.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 14 Years		Article 8 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 14 Years		Schedule, Part I, Articles 1, 2, and 5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Part I, Sections 3 and 4, and Articles 1, 2, and 5 of the Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act; Section VI(37) of the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Occupational Safety and Health Act of 2017
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Chapter XII, Part 207 of the Criminal Code; Articles 2 and 5–8 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Articles 2 and 5–8 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 2 and 5–8 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act; Chapter VIII, Parts 130 and 131 of the Criminal Code; Section 15 of the Cybercrime Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	N/A*	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 2 of the Education Act
Free Public Education		Articles 14–16 of the Education Act

* Country has no conscription

† Country has no standing military

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines does not meet the international standard for hazardous work for children because the law allows children ages 14 to 17 to perform industrial activities, including mining and construction, and does not adequately protect children from hazardous work that may jeopardize their health, safety, or morals. The government also has not determined by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for all children under age 18. In addition, laws have not been established that prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, including drug production. The law does not fully meet international standards for the prohibition of commercial sexual exploitation of children, as it does not prohibit the use of children for prostitution. Moreover, as the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. Laws providing for free basic education do not meet international standards because they permit schools to charge tuition fees for some students who reside in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines but are not citizens.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for enforcement actions to address child labor, including its worst forms. However, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has established relevant institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Labor: Enforces child labor laws through its Department of Labor and refers victims to appropriate social services. If the Department finds a criminal violation, it forwards the case to the Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force. Conducts inspections at businesses and workplaces, together with the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Unit (ATIPU), to ensure labor laws are followed. In 2023, the government increased its operations to identify and investigate potential labor trafficking, launching five labor trafficking investigations and increasing patrols, inspections, and monitoring in areas frequented by perpetrators and victims.

Royal Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force: Makes criminal arrests, including those involving the worst forms of child labor. Addresses human trafficking through its ATIPU; refers survivors to appropriate social services and funds financial requests made by ATIPU. In 2023, the ATIPU used live radio programs, television interviews, social media, school visits, distributed brochures to raise awareness about human trafficking, and had their funding increased by the government.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	N/A

In 2023, an **unknown** number of labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. The government also conducted **0** investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor, initiated **0** prosecutions, and convicted **0** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor.</p>	
<p>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for policies to address child labor.</p>	
<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>As there is no evidence of a problem, there appears to be no need for social programs to address child labor. However, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines funded and participated in a program that may contribute to preventing child labor.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.</i></p>	<p>Zero Hunger Trust Fund:† \$132,800 government program that provides textbooks, cash for the purchase of school supplies, and daily meals to students in grades 4 and 5 in 12 primary schools. Seeks to alleviate poverty and improve the standard of living of primary school-age children through its "Adopt a Classroom" program. In 2023, the first cohort of students completed the 2023 Caribbean Primary Entrance Assessment, and 12 primary schools were supported by school feeding programs, along with other educational supports.</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