

In 2017, Rwanda made a significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. During the year, the Ministry of Public Service and Labor released the Ministerial Instructions Related to the Prevention and Fight Against Child Labor. These instructions apply to both the formal and informal sectors, identify additional types of work permitted and prohibited for children, specify penalties for businesses that employ child laborers, and include penalties for parents who do not send their children to school. The Ministry of Public Service and Labor also integrated child labor elimination goals into local-level strategic policies. In addition, the government opened an additional 16 One-Stop medical center for victims of the worst forms of child labor, prosecuted cases involving commercial sexual exploitation of children, and published information for the first time about the number of child labor violations found and penalties collected. However, children engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children in Rwanda also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. Enforcement and implementation of child labor laws and regulations remain problematic, and social programs do not sufficiently address child labor in agriculture.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children in Rwanda also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. (1; 2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Rwanda.

Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	6 to 14	5.2 (151,257)
Attending School (%)	6 to 14	88.6
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	4.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		67.3

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2016, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (3)

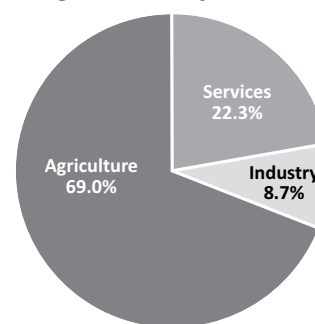
Source for all other data: Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis of statistics from Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey, 2013–2014. (4)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children’s work by sector and activity.

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming, including carrying heavy loads,† applying pesticides† and fertilizers† (5; 6; 7)
	Forestry activities, including transportation and loading of wood (8; 6)
	Production of sugarcane, bananas, and tea (9; 10; 11)
	Planting and harvesting beans, cabbage, coffee, corn, manioc, peas, pineapple, potatoes, pyrethrum, sweet potatoes, and sorghum (5; 12)
	Herding cattle and caring for cattle and pigs (5)
	Fishing activities, including netting, setting traps, and transporting goods to the market (6; 8)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14



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Table 2. Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity (cont)

Sector/Industry	Activity
Industry	Construction,† including fetching water, rock crushing, and laying bricks (10; 6; 13)
	Mining† coltan and chalk (14; 6; 8)
Services	Domestic work† (1; 10; 15; 6; 7; 13; 16; 2)
	Repair of motorcycles and motor vehicles (6)
	Street work, including begging,† collecting scrap metal,† lifting and carrying heavy loads,† portering, and vending (9; 17; 18; 19; 20; 21; 6; 22)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (23; 24; 6; 2)
	Forced agricultural labor and domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (23; 15; 25; 2)

† 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.




Children in Rwanda are trafficked internally for domestic work. Some Rwandan children are externally trafficked, primarily to Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in East Africa for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor in domestic work and in agricultural and industrial sectors. (2)

Although the Ministry of Education established a policy that provides free basic education for 12 years, of which the first nine are compulsory, in practice, the costs of uniforms, school supplies, and unofficial school fees may preclude some families from sending their children to school. (25; 26; 6) Additionally, the government reported that the likelihood of primary level completion is only 50%, which contributes to the low enrolment rate of 33% at secondary schools. (6) The government is currently conducting its 2017/2018 national household survey that includes child labor indicators; data is collected every four year. (6) The most recent data published for 2013/2014 showed that children ages 6-17 engaged in economic activity in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sectors. (6)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Rwanda 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’s laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 4 of the Labor Law (27)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 4 of the Labor Law (27)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 4–6 of Ministerial Order 2010-06; Kigali City Guidelines 2012–02; Mimuri Sector Child Labor Guidelines for Sugar and Rice Production (28; 29)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 8 and 72 of the Labor Law; Article 178 of the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (30; 27; 31)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 72 of the Labor Law; Article 28 of the Law on Prevention and Punishment of Gender-Based Violence; Articles 225, 251, and 258–261 of the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (30; 27; 31; 32)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 72 of the Labor Law; Articles 190, 211, and 260 of the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (30; 27; 31)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 72 of the Labor Law; Article 220 of the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (30; 27; 31)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	N/A*		Article 5 of Presidential Order 72/01 (33)
State Voluntary	Yes	18	Article 5 of Presidential Order 72/01; Article 50 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (30; 33)
Non-state	Yes	18	Article 221 of the Penal Code (31)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 47 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (30)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 47 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (26; 30)

* No conscription (23; 30; 34)

In 2017, the Ministry of Public Service and Labor released Ministerial Instructions Related to Prevention and Fight against Child Labor that applies both to the formal and informal sectors of the economy. These instructions identify additional types of work permitted and prohibited for children; specifies penalties for businesses that employ child laborers; includes penalties for parents that do not send their children to school; and underscores the importance of a child's right to education. (6; 35) In 2017, new legislation addressing the worst forms of child labor and human trafficking were drafted and await final approval in 2018. (6)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

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

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Public Service and Labor (MIFOTRA)	Enforce labor laws, including laws on child labor. (12; 6) In partnership with the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), reintegrate children withdrawn from child labor with their families and enroll them in school. (25)
Rwandan National Police (RNP)	Enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor and operate a free hotline to report incidents of gender-based violence and child abuse, including child labor. (12; 6) In the case of the RNP's Child Protection Unit and Anti-Trafficking Unit, enforce laws related to the worst forms of child labor. (1; 36; 37; 25) In the case of the Directorate for Anti-Gender-Based Violence, assist victims of the worst forms of child labor through anti-gender-based violence officers at each of the country's 78 police stations. (9)
National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA)	Prosecute violations of labor laws, including laws on child labor. (12)
Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration	Receive referrals for human trafficking cases and employ an anti-trafficking specialist. (38) Verify that children transported across the border are traveling with the permission of their parents or guardians. Train border and immigration officials to identify potential human trafficking victims. (12)

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Labor Law Enforcement

In 2017, labor law enforcement agencies in Rwanda took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Public Service and Labor that may hinder effective labor law enforcement, including with regard to human resource allocation.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$182,927 (25)	\$183,000 (6)
Number of Labor Inspectors	35 (25)	35 (6)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (25)	Yes (6)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (25)	Yes (6)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (25)	Yes (6)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (25)	Yes (6)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	1,051 (25)	1,269 (6)
Number Conducted at Worksite	1,051 (25)	1,269 (6)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown* (25)	239 (6)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	Unknown* (25)	239 (6)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed That were Collected	Unknown* (25)	239 (6)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (25)	Yes (6)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (25)	Yes (6)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (25)	Yes (6)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (25)	Yes (6)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (25)	Yes (6)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (25)	Yes (6)

* The government does not publish this information.

The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Rwanda's workforce, which comprises more than 6 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 40,000 workers in less developing economies, Rwanda would employ roughly 156 labor inspectors. (39; 40) Reports indicate that MIFOTRA inspectors encounter difficulty determining what constitutes child labor in the agriculture sector. (6) However, MIFOTRA reported it had adequate funding and transportation to carry out labor inspections in 2017. (25; 6) During the year, MIFOTRA conducted investigations in mines and quarries, rice and tea plantations, construction, and domestic work sites, and published for the first time the number of violations found and the amount of penalties imposed pertaining to child labor. (6)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in Rwanda took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Rwandan National Police that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including with regard to investigation planning.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (25)	Yes (6)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (25)	Yes (6)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (25)	Yes (6)
Number of Investigations	Unknown* (25)	Unknown* (6)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown* (25)	Unknown* (6)

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

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	14 (25)	4 (6)
Number of Convictions	8 (25)	0 (6)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (25)	Yes (6)

* The government does not publish this information.

During the year, the National Public Prosecution Authority reported prosecuting four cases involving Rwandan children subjected to commercial sexual exploitation as a result of human trafficking. (6) In December 2017, the RNP made arrests related to child domestic workers and children involved in hazardous agricultural activities. The cases are still under investigation and have yet to be referred to the NPPA for prosecution. (6) It was also reported that the RNP intercepted a perpetrator in Burera District who attempted to traffic four girls, ages 11 to 15, from Rwanda to Uganda. (41) Although the RNP operates a free hotline staffed by social workers to report incidences of gender-based violence and child abuse, including child labor, it is unknown how many of these complaints were related to child labor. (23)

In 2017, the Rwandan Demobilization and Reintegration Commission provided services to 10 child ex-combatants from the Democratic Republic of the Congo at the Musanze Child Rehabilitation Center in Northern Province. (6)

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 with regard to efforts to address all forms of child labor.

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

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Child Labor	Coordinate government efforts related to the worst forms of child labor, review child labor laws, advocate for the inclusion of child labor policies in national development plans, oversee the implementation of child labor interventions, and conduct field visits to assess the prevalence of child labor and to raise awareness of child labor. Met quarterly in 2017. (9; 36; 6)
Interagency Working Group on Human Trafficking	Enable national-level discussion and coordination of efforts to address human trafficking, including child labor. Includes representatives of the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), the Ministry of Justice, the RNP and the NPPA. (42)
National Commission for Children (NCC)	Monitor, promote, and advocate for children's rights; develop action plans to protect children from abuse and exploitation. Overseen by MIGEPROF and supported by a board of directors and an advisory council of 14 institutions. (9; 43) During the year, the NCC also noted difficulty in determining what activities constituted child labor in the agriculture sector. (6)
Roundtable on the Elimination of Child Labor for Sustainable Tea Forum (REST)	Implement policies and programs related to child labor in the tea sector. Representatives include MIFOTRA, Winrock International, and tea industry and civil society groups. (25) REST was superseded by NSCCLs and DSCCLs during the reporting period. (42)
Local Committees	Monitor incidents of child labor nationwide through 149 local committees. (9; 36) In the case of the Child Labor Committees, implement policies developed by the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Child Labor in 30 districts and coordinate district labor inspectors, police, and social services officers in conducting inspections, enforcing labor laws, and providing social services to child labor victims. In the case of Gender-Based Violence Committees, operate at the district level to raise awareness about gender-based violence and coordinate social services to assist gender-based violence victims. In the case of Child Protection Committees, identify and report cases of child rights violations at the district, sector, and cell levels. (1)
Kigali City Council Task Force	Coordinate activities to combat child labor in the districts of Gasabo, Kicukiro, and Nyarugenge. The Task Force met during the year to discuss strategies to combat child labor. (37; 6; 42)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9). However, gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including with regard to mainstreaming child labor issue into relevant policies.

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Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor‡

Policy	Description
National Policy for the Elimination of Child Labor (2013) and 5-Year Action Plan to Combat Child Labor	Aims to prevent at-risk children from entering exploitative child labor; withdraw children engaged in exploitative labor through the provision of education; rehabilitate former child laborers through counseling, life skills training, and medical care; raise community awareness about child labor; and establish monitoring and evaluation mechanisms on child labor. The government committed more than \$4.2 million to implement the activities listed in the National Policy and the Action Plan. (12; 44; 45; 46)
Trafficking in Persons Action Plan	Aims to improve government efforts to combat human trafficking through awareness-raising, research, poverty reduction strategies, improved services provision, enforcement, and collaboration. Developed by the Consultative Forum on Human Trafficking, Drug Abuse, and Gender-Based Violence. (23; 47)
Government Policies Advancing Youth Employment and Social Protection	Aims to increase understanding of child labor and economic exploitation, and provides employment for school dropouts. Includes the National Employment Policy and National Youth Policy. (48; 49; 50)

‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (34; 51; 52; 53; 54)

In 2017, MIFOTRA ensured that child labor elimination goals were integrated into local-level strategic policies. (6) The government also met in December to review its 2017–2024 National Strategy for Transformation. The new strategy, to be published in 2018, should address issues related to access to education, school dropout rates, and school feeding, among other things. (6) The government has not included child labor elimination and prevention strategies in Vision 2020, the National Social Protection Strategy, and National Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy. (48; 55; 56)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

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

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor‡

Program	Description
Programs to Combat Child Labor and Raise Awareness†	Government programs to combat child labor and raise awareness. Includes MIGEPROF’s campaign to teach parents and community leaders to recognize risk factors for human trafficking and to identify victims. (23) The Friends of the Family Program (<i>Incuti Z’Umuryango</i>), which trains volunteers to provide social services to families and children who are victims of the worst forms of child labor, identifies children at risk of trafficking or forced labor, and reports them to district governments and the RNP. This program also establishes monitoring committees at the village, cell, sector, district, and national levels to combat child labor. (23) The Vision 2020 Umurenge Program provides cash and in-kind transfers to child-headed households and street children. (12; 6) During 2017, the government also held several awareness raising campaigns* regarding child labor and Rwanda’s National Agricultural Export Development Board partnered with UNICEF to provide training to 30,000 local village volunteers to address child labor. (6; 57; 8) MIGEPROF received a budget of \$2.6 million for child rights protection. (6) The funding is used to support efforts to address gender based violence and support child protection units in police stations. (8)
Victim Assistance Programs†	Gitagata Center provides education, vocational training, and psychosocial support, and reunites former street children in the Bugesera District with their families. (9; 58) “One-stop” centers are located in hospitals and district capitals for victims of gender-based violence and human trafficking, both foreign and domestic, including individuals who have experienced child domestic work, commercial sexual exploitation, and forced labor. These centers provide medical care, counseling, legal aid, short-term shelter, and access to police services. In 2017, the number of centers increased from 28 to 44. (23; 6)
USDOL-Funded Projects	USDOL projects aim to collect data on child labor, remove children from child labor, and provide technical assistance to the government to develop policies to combat child labor. Includes Rwanda Education Alternatives for Children in Tea-Growing Areas (REACH-T)(2013–2017), a \$5 million project implemented by Winrock International. During the year, the government used the Child Labor Monitoring System developed by REACH-T to monitor child labor activities in tea-growing districts and intends to expand the use of the system in 2018 to other child labor activities. (6) The government also participates in the Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues (2011–2017), a \$15.9 million global project implemented by the ILO in 40 countries, including Rwanda. (59; 60) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.
McGovern-Dole School Feeding Program	\$25 million WFP and U.S. Department of Agriculture pilot program that works with the Government of Rwanda to provide school meals to 83,000 children in 4 districts (Karongi, Rutsiro, Nyamagabe, and Nyaruguru). (25)

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor‡ (cont)

Program	Description
Books Can Open Closed Doors	Save the Children and Children's Voice Today program to advocate for the rights of child domestic workers and offer services and support. Since 2015, the program has trained 42 children in vocational skills, provided social services to 98 children, withdrawn 5 children from child labor, and educated more than 6,000 children and 3,000 community members about child labor issues. (61)
Study on Violence Against Children†	The government, in collaboration with UNICEF and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is conducting a 2-year study on violence against children, including child labor. The study's findings will be published in 2018. (25)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Rwanda.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (9; 23; 62; 63)

Although Rwanda has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to address the extent of the child labor problem in the agriculture sector.

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 Rwanda (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Increase the number of inspectors to provide sufficient coverage for the workforce.	2009 – 2017
	Ensure the MIFOTRA labor inspectors receive sufficient training to determine what constitutes child labor in the agriculture sector.	2017
	Publish information about the number of criminal investigations and violations found related to the worst forms of child labor.	2015 – 2017
	Disaggregate the number of complaints received by the RNP's hotline that relate to child labor.	2013 – 2017
Coordination	Ensure that the NCC receives sufficient training to distinguish child labor from permissible children's work.	2017
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into Vision 2020, the National Social Protection Strategy, and National Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy.	2011 – 2017
Social Programs	Ensure that school costs, such as uniforms, school supplies, and unofficial school fees, do not diminish the impact of the 12-year education policy.	2010 – 2017
	Expand existing social programs to address child labor in the agriculture sector.	2017

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