

In 2018, Rwanda made a significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government adopted several new laws to strengthen protections for children, including a revised Labor Law, a comprehensive anti-trafficking law, a law imposing heightened penalties for the use of children in armed conflict or illicit activities, and the Law on Child Protection that supplements the existing 2012 law. The government also established the Rwanda Investigation Bureau, which conducts investigations into criminal matters, including child labor, and actively partnered with the United States Agency for International Development and the International Organization for Migration to conduct a research study on human trafficking trends in Rwanda. In addition, the government obtained one conviction in a child trafficking case and launched a 5-year advocacy campaign against child labor. However, children in Rwanda engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. The number of labor inspectors does not meet the ILO's technical advice for the size of the workforce. In addition, resource constraints limited some government efforts to combat child labor, and social programs did not address all relevant sectors where child labor was present.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Rwanda engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. (1-3) In 2018, the government released the results of the Fifth Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey conducted in 2016/2017, which revealed a decrease of 3 percentage points in the percentage of working children since the 2013/2014 survey. (4) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Rwanda. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

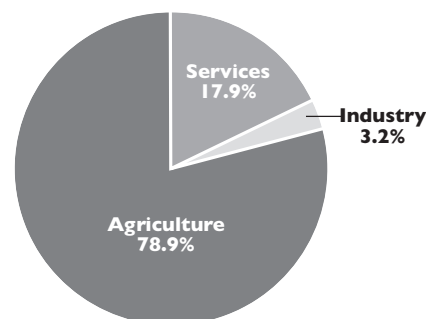
Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	6 to 14	5.4 (156,522)
Attending School (%)	6 to 14	89.4
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	4.9
Primary Completion Rate (%)		Unavailable

Primary completion rate was unavailable from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019. (5)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV-5), 2016-2017. (6)

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

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
Agriculture	Production of bananas, beans, coffee, maize, potatoes, sorghum, sugarcane, and sweet potatoes, including carrying heavy loads† and wielding machetes (1,2)
	Forestry activities (1)
	Production of tea, including applying fertilizers,† carrying heavy loads,† planting, plucking tea leaves, and weeding (7)
	Fishing† (1)
Industry	Construction,† including laying bricks (1,3,8)
	Mining† tantalum ore (coltan) and quarrying (1,3,9)
Services	Domestic work† (1,2,8,10-12)
	Repair and cleaning of motorcycles and motor vehicles (1,13)
	Street work, including collecting scrap metal,† carrying heavy loads as porters,† and small-scale vending (1,13-16)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (12,13,17)
	Forced labor in agricultural and domestic work, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (8,10,17)

† 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.







Data collected in a 2016/2017 national household survey showed that approximately 3.6 percent of all children in Rwanda are engaged in child labor, primarily in the agriculture and service sectors. (4) Although Rwanda is not a destination for child trafficking, it is a source and transit country for children, primarily those heading to Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and elsewhere in East Africa for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor in domestic work, and in the agricultural and industrial sectors. (12,17)

Although the Ministry of Education established a policy that provides free basic education for 12 years, of which the first 9 are compulsory, in practice, the costs of uniforms, school supplies, and unofficial school fees may preclude some families from sending their children to school. (18-20) On January 9, 2019, the Ministry of Education issued a statement expressing concern that schools were levying high school fees on families and prohibited schools from increasing fees during the first term of the 2019/2020 school year. (3) In 2016, the government authorized sanctions against parents who do not send their children to school or individuals whose employment of children prevents them from going to school, but there were no reports of such sanctions being applied. (20-22) During the 2017/2018 school year, there was a slight decrease in the number of children transitioning from primary to secondary school over the previous year—from 74.5 percent to 71.6 percent. (23)

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	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 5 of the Labor Law; Article 9 of the Ministerial Instruction Relating to Prevention and Fight Against Child Labor (24,25)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 6 of the Labor Law (24)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 6 of the Labor Law; Articles 4–6 of Ministerial Order Determining the List of Worst Forms of Child Labor; Kigali City Guidelines 2012–02; Articles 7–9 of the Ministerial Instruction Relating to the Prevention and Fight against Child Labor (24–27)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 3, 20, and 7 of the Labor Law; Article 178 of the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child; Article 9 of the Ministerial Instruction Relating to Prevention and Fight against Child Labor (24,25,28,29)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 18–20 and 22–24 of the Law on Prevention, Suppression, and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons; Article 28 of the Law on Prevention and Punishment of Gender-Based Violence; Articles 225, 251, and 259–261 of the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child; Article 31 of the Law Relating to the Protection of the Child; Article 9 of the Ministerial Instruction Relating to Prevention and Fight against Child Labor (25,28–32)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 24 of the Law on Prevention, Suppression, and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons; Articles 190, 211, and 260 of the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child; Articles 34 and 35 of the Law Relating to the Protection of the Child; Article 9 of the Ministerial Instruction Relating to Prevention and Fight against Child Labor (25,28,29,31,32)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 23 of the Law on Prevention, Suppression, and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons; Article 220 of the Penal Code; Article 51 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child; Article 9 of the Ministerial Instruction Relating to Prevention and Fight against Child Labor; Article 263 of the Law Determining Offenses and Penalties in General (25,28,29,31,33)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 5 of Presidential Order 72/01 Establishing Army General Statutes; Article 7 of Presidential Order 32/01 Establishing Rwanda Defense Forces Special Statute; Article 50 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (28,34,35)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*		Article 5 of Presidential Order 72/01 Establishing Army General Statutes; Articles 99(8) and 100(2) of the Law Determining Offenses and Penalties in General (33, 34)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Article 221 of the Penal Code (29)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 47 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child; Articles 34, 36, and 38 of the Law Governing the Organization and Functioning of Nursery, Primary and Secondary Education (28,36)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 47 of the Law Relating to the Rights and Protection of the Child (28)

* No conscription (28,34,35)

In 2018, the government adopted a number of new laws. A revised Labor Law grants labor inspectors broader authority and raised the minimum period of imprisonment from 6 months to 2 years for subjecting children to prohibited forms of work; new legislation preventing trafficking in persons more closely aligns Rwanda's legal framework with the Palermo Protocol; a new law determining offenses and penalties includes heightened penalties for the use of children in armed conflict and illicit activities; and a Child Protection Law supplements the 2012 Law on the Rights and Protection of the Child. (24,31–33)

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 the Ministry of Public Service and Labor that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

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Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Public Service and Labor (MIFOTRA)	Enforces labor laws, including laws on child labor. (20) In partnership with the Ministry of Education, reintegrates children withdrawn from child labor with their families and enrolls them in school. Mobilizes other ministries and agencies providing social services (including the Ministry of Gender and Family, the National Commission for Children, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Local Government) to take an active role in child labor law enforcement. (3)
Rwandan National Police (RNP)	Enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor and operates a free hotline to report incidents of gender-based violence or child abuse, including child labor. Through its Child Protection Unit and Anti-Trafficking Unit, enforces laws related to the worst forms of child labor. (3,17,20) It is unknown how many calls to the hotline were related to child labor.
Rwanda Investigation Bureau*	Conducts investigations into criminal matters, including child labor, and operates a free hotline to report incidents of gender-based violence and child abuse, including child labor. In the case of the Directorate for Anti-Gender-Based Violence, assists victims of the worst forms of child labor through anti-gender-based violence officers at each of the country's 78 police stations. (3)
National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA)	Prosecutes violations of labor laws, including laws on child labor. (3) Through its anti-Gender Based Violence unit, 12 prosecutors work with an additional 60 prosecutors trained in handling relevant cases at the district level. (37)
Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration	Receives referrals for human trafficking cases and employs an anti-trafficking specialist. Trains border and immigration officials to identify potential human trafficking victims and verify that children transported across the border are traveling with the permission of their parents or guardians. (3)

*Agency responsible for child labor enforcement was created during the reporting period.

In April 2018, the Rwanda Investigation Bureau assumed some functions of the Rwandan National Police (RNP), including the investigation of the worst forms of child labor. (3)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2018, 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 adequate labor law enforcement, including human resource allocation.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$183,000 (13)	\$155,287 (3)
Number of Labor Inspectors	35 (13)	35 (3)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (13)	Yes (3)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (13)	Yes (3)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (13)	Yes (3)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (13)	Yes (3)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	1,269 (13)	912 (3)
Number Conducted at Worksite	1,269 (13)	912 (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	234 (13)	51 (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	234 (13)	Unknown (3)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	234 (13)	Unknown (3)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (13)	Yes (3)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (13)	Yes (3)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (13)	Yes (3)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (13)	Yes (3)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (13)	Yes (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (13)	Yes (3)

In addition to district-level funding, the Ministry of Public Service and Labor also provided a supplementary budget to support specific investigations and the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion had a budget of \$1.4 million for activities related to child protection. Although the National Public Prosecution Authority brought

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1,866 cases of child defilement to court in 2018, it did not track how many of the 1,168 convictions were related to child labor. (3)

The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Rwanda's workforce, which includes 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 about 156 labor inspectors. (38,39) Reports indicate that officials at the local level had difficulty identifying characteristics of child trafficking and child labor. (37)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2018, criminal law enforcement agencies in Rwanda took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the RNP that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including investigation planning.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (13)	Yes (37)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (13)	Yes (37)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (13)	Yes (37)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (13)	Unknown (37)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (13)	7 (3)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	4 (13)	2 (3)
Number of Convictions	0 (13)	1 (3)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	No (13)	Yes (22)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (13)	Yes (3)

The National Public Prosecution Authority reported receiving 86 cases of human trafficking, of which 53 were brought to court. Although it is not known how many of these cases related to children, courts convicted one person of transnational child trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. The perpetrator was sentenced to 3 years in prison, which was upheld upon appeal. (22,37) Reports cited by the UN Committee against Torture indicate that the RNP systematically detained children working on the street, and that some children were held with adults and beaten while in custody. (20,40)

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 efforts to address all forms of child labor.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Child Labor	Coordinates government efforts related to the worst forms of child labor; review child labor laws, advocates the inclusion of child labor policies in national development plans, oversees the implementation of child labor interventions, and conducts field visits to assess the prevalence of child labor and to raise awareness of child labor. (3) MIFOTRA coordinates and provides monitoring and evaluation, including the publication of annual updates on program and policy implementation related to child labor. (22)
Interagency Working Group on Human Trafficking	Enables 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. (3)
MIGEPROF's National Commission for Children	Monitors, promotes, and advocates children's rights; develops 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. (3)

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Local Committees	Monitor incidents of child labor nationwide and implement policies developed by the Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Child Labor in 30 districts by coordinating with district-level officials in enforcing labor laws and providing social services to child labor victims. (3) 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. (3,12)
Kigali City Council Task Force	Coordinates activities to combat child labor in the districts of Gasabo, Kicukiro, and Nyarugenge. The Task Force met twice during the year, once to discuss strategies to combat child labor and a second time to implement child labor elimination committees at the village level. (3)

All committees were active during the reporting period, but reports indicate that poor coordination and resource constraints hindered efforts to combat human trafficking and that efforts focused on transnational rather than domestic human trafficking. (3,17,37)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

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

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; withdraws children engaged in exploitative labor through the provision of education; rehabilitate former child laborers through counseling, life skills training, and medical care; raises 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. (41,42) In 2018, carried out awareness-raising activities in five districts and provided refresher training on child labor to national and local officials. (22)
It Takes Every Rwandan to End Child Exploitation†	5-year advocacy campaign against child labor and sexual abuse of children supported by MIGEPROF, the National Commission for Children, and World Vision Rwanda. (3)
7 Years Government Programme: National Strategy for Transformation (2017–2024)†	Aims to smooth the transition between Vision 2020 and Vision 2050 and improve standards of living for Rwandans, including access to quality education. (43)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (19,44-46)

In 2018, the government actively partnered with USAID and the IOM to conduct a research study on human trafficking trends in Rwanda. The results will be used to update the expired National Action Plan on Combating Human Trafficking. (22)

The government has not included child labor elimination and prevention strategies in Vision 2020, the National Social Protection Strategy, and the National Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy. (47-49)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2018, 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 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†	Includes MIGEPROF's campaign to teach parents and community leaders to recognize risk factors for human trafficking and to identify victims; and the Friends of the Family Program (<i>Incuti Z'Umuryango</i>), which trains volunteers to prevent and respond to child protection issues and establishes monitoring committees at various levels to combat child labor. (3) In 2018, the government held several awareness-raising campaigns regarding child labor. (3)
Victim Assistance Programs†	Musanze Child Rehabilitation Center in Northern Province assists children separated from armed groups. (20) Gitagata Center provides education, vocational training, and psychosocial support, and reunites former street children in the Bugesera District with their families. "One-stop" centers located in 44 hospitals and district capitals assist victims of gender-based violence and human trafficking. (3,17) Between January and October 2018, the Musanze Center assisted 19 children separated from armed groups and one-stop centers provided medical care, counseling, legal aid, short-term shelter, and access to police services. (3)
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 415,000 children. This program was active in 2018. (48,49)
Strengthening Social Protection Project (2017–2021)*	\$80 million World Bank-funded project in support of the Vision 2020 Umurenge Program which aims to deliver cash transfers and improve social safety nets. (50) Formally launched in May 2018 and completed preparatory activities. (51)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Rwanda.

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 and domestic work. Research also indicates there is an absence of long-term care facilities for victims of human trafficking, and some one-stop centers lacked sufficient resources. (17,37)

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	Disaggregate the number of complaints received by the Rwandan National Police's hotline and the National Public Prosecution Authority's investigations that relate to child labor.	2013 – 2018
	Publish information about the number of penalties imposed and collected for child labor violations, and the number of criminal investigations conducted.	2015 – 2018
	Increase the number of inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.	2009 – 2018
	Ensure that labor inspectors and criminal investigators receive sufficient training to identify cases of child labor, including its worst forms.	2017 – 2018
	Cease the practice of systematically detaining and beating children who work on the street and ensure that children in detention are not subjected to beatings or poor detention conditions.	2018
Coordination	Ensure that coordinating bodies receive adequate resources and are able to combat both domestic and transnational human trafficking.	2018
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into Vision 2020, the National Social Protection Strategy, and the National Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy.	2011 – 2018
Social Programs	Ensure that school costs, such as uniforms, school supplies, and unofficial school fees, do not diminish the impact of the 12-year free education policy.	2010 – 2018
	Expand existing social programs to address all relevant sectors of child labor, including agriculture and domestic work, and ensure adequate resources to implement all programs, including long-term care facilities.	2017 – 2018

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