

In 2015, Zimbabwe made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government of Zimbabwe passed the Labor Amendment Act to increase the minimum age for work from 15 to 16 years, and the minimum age for apprenticeships from 13 to 16 years. The Government also established an inter-ministerial anti-trafficking committee to create a national action plan on trafficking in persons and promote the reintegration and rehabilitation of trafficking victims, including children. However, children in Zimbabwe continue to engage in child labor in agriculture and mining. Zimbabwe continues to lack specific social programs targeting sectors in which child labor is most prevalent. Gaps remain in the country's legal framework against child labor, such as the lack of prohibitions of hazardous activities for children, and education is not compulsory or free, which increases children's vulnerability.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Zimbabwe are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture and mining. The Government's 2014 Child Labor Survey report, released in 2015, determined that the number of children engaged in child labor between the ages of 5 and 17 increased from 341,000 in 2011 to 1.6 million in 2014.(1-4) Data on key indicators on children's work and education 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)	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		89.2

Source for primary completion rate: Data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(5)
Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2015.(6)

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	Production of tea,* cotton,* tobacco,*corn,* and sugarcane* (2, 3, 7-10)
	Fishing,* including casting nets,* hauling fish loads,* and sorting fish* (2, 3, 7, 8, 11)
	Forestry,* such as dragging logs from felling sites and loading logs for transport (2, 10)
	Cattle herding* (2, 3, 7)
Industry	Mining gold,* chrome,* and extracting material from underground passages and quarries*† (2, 3, 7, 12, 13)
Services	Street work, including vending, and begging* (2, 8-10, 14)
	Domestic work (2, 3, 8, 10, 15)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking* and gambling* (3, 7)
	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (2, 7, 10, 14, 16)
	Working in agriculture and domestic work, each as a result of human trafficking* (7, 16)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

† 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.

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Zimbabwean children are trafficked to South Africa, Mozambique, and Zambia, where they become victims of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor in domestic work. Zimbabwean children, especially orphans, are lured by family members with the promise of education or adoption, but instead are recruited to work within the country as domestic workers or forced to work in mining, drug smuggling, or other illegal activities.(17) During the reporting period, an NGO hotline, Childline, reported that 134 boys and 146 girls sought assistance after being sexually, physically, and sometimes verbally abused by their domestic work employers. (2) There are also reports of Mozambican children subjected to forced labor in Zimbabwe, including in street vending. (17)

According to UNICEF, approximately 100,000 of Zimbabwe's 1.3 million orphans survive on their own in child-headed households.(18) The breakdown of the family unit and poverty are major factors in children's vulnerability to child labor.(7, 11, 18, 19) Citizenship is derived from birth, but many children, especially orphans and children living in rural areas, are not registered due to poverty and lack of awareness of the requirements. (3, 7, 19) Children are unable to sit for exams and move on to secondary school without a birth registration, leading some to enter the workforce at a young age.(7, 19) School fees are often prohibitively expensive and limit access to education.(8, 11, 19). The deterioration of Zimbabwe's economy and manufacturing sector has also led to a recent increase in child labor.(8)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Zimbabwe 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, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Section 3 of the Labor Amendment Act (15, 20, 21)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Section 11(4) of the Labor Act (20)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Section 11(4) of the Labor Act(20), Section 10A of the Children's Act
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Sections 54 and 55 of the Constitution; Section 4A of the Labor Act (20, 22)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Section 3 of the Trafficking in Persons Act (23)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Section 87 of the Criminal Law Act; Section 3 of the Sexual Offenses Act; Section 8(2) of the Children's Protection and Adoption Act; Section 3 of the Trafficking in Persons Act (7, 10, 23-25)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Section 156 of the Criminal Law Act; Section 10 of the Children's Protection and Adoption Act (7)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Section 9 of the National Service Act (26)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	16	Section 5 and 10 of the National Service Act (26)
Compulsory Education Age	No		
Free Public Education	No		

Both Zimbabwe's Constitution and Children's Act state that children under the age of 18 should be protected from child labor unless working as a part of a course in a technical or vocational school. In addition, the 2015 Labor Amendment Act raised the minimum age for work from 15 to 16 and the minimum age for apprenticeships from 13 to 16.(21) Zimbabwean law does not mandate free schooling or establish a compulsory age for children's education.(27) The lack of a basic education may increase the risk of children's involvement in child labor.(3, 7, 19) Section 19 (3)(a) – (b) of the Constitution addresses child labor by requiring legislation to protect children from exploitative labor practices and from work that is inappropriate for their age or could harm their well-being, education, physical or mental health, or spiritual, moral, or social development.(7, 22)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Social Welfare (MPSLW) and Department for Child Welfare and Probation Services	Enforce labor laws and investigate labor-related complaints, including complaints involving child labor. Responsible for child protection services, including investigating, intervening in, and reporting on child abuse cases.(7, 10)
Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP)	Enforce laws relating to the worst forms of child labor in conjunction with the MPSLW and the Ministry of Justice and Home Affairs.(7) Address issues related to child labor through victim-friendly units in every district. Conduct transnational trafficking investigations through an anti-trafficking desk at Zimbabwe's INTERPOL office.(7)
Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs	Oversee all courts, including labor courts. Address trafficking and child victim cases through victim-friendly courts.(7)

During the year, the Department for Child Welfare and Probation Services (DCWPS), under the Ministry of Public Service, Labor and Social Welfare (MPSLW), trained 9,000 child care workers to identify victims of child labor and report suspected child labor violations.(2)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2015, labor law enforcement agencies in Zimbabwe did not take actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
Number of Child Labor Dedicated Inspectors	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
■ Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown* (10)	Yes (2)
Number of Labor Inspections		
■ Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
■ Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
■ Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
■ Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (10)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)

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Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (cont)

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Unknown (10)	No (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (10)	Yes (2)

*The Government does not make this information publicly available.

Research indicates that the Government continues to lack sufficient resources, mainly financial, to investigate child labor law violations.(2)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2015, criminal law enforcement agencies in Zimbabwe did not take actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Training for Investigators		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
■ Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
Number of Investigations	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
Number of Convictions	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Unknown* (10)	Unknown* (2)

*The Government does not make this information publicly available.

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committee to Address the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Address the worst forms of child labor. Chaired by the MPPLW and includes several government ministries including the Ministries of Health and Child Care, Primary and Secondary Education, and Youth, Indigenization, and Economic Development. Also includes international organizations and civil society groups, such as workers' and employers' organizations.(28, 29)
Ministry-level Committee on Children's Issues	Coordinate government ministries' efforts related to children's issues, including child labor. Meets on a quarterly basis. The Committee includes the MPPLW and the Ministries of Education, Women's Affairs, and Youth, Indigenization, and Economic Development.(7, 10, 29)
National Task Force on Street Children	Outline strategies to combat child labor, including feeding street children at drop-in centers, reuniting children with their families, and offering counseling sessions. Chaired by the MPPLW and includes NGOs that work on street children's issues.(7, 29) Also includes the Ministry of Home Affairs, represented by the ZRP. Meets quarterly. (7, 29)
Anti-Trafficking Inter-Ministerial Committee*	Create a national action plan on trafficking in persons and promote the reintegration and rehabilitation of trafficking victims, including children.(2, 30)

* Mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor was created during the reporting period.

The National Steering Committee did not meet during the reporting period, and research did not find evidence that the task forces listed in Table 8 were active during 2015.(2)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Zimbabwe has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor (NAP)	Strengthens understanding about child labor issues creates an entity to coordinate responses to the findings of this analysis. Consists of three focus areas: education assistance, poverty assistance through a cash transfer scheme, and health assistance.(7)
UNDAF (2012–2015) *	Outlines the key issues that the Government should address, including women's empowerment and gender equality; universal access to HIV/AIDS treatment; access to social protection services for vulnerable households; and access for all to basic social services, including education. Supports major data collection operations, including the Child Labor Survey, and aids in the development, planning, implementation, and monitoring of child labor issues.(31)

* Child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into this policy.

Although the MOL, in collaboration with the ILO, previously conducted a child labor rapid assessment that prompted the development of the National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor, the government took no action to operationalize the plan, and did not use the results of the assessment to inform policies or programs.(2)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2015, the Government of Zimbabwe funded and participated in programs that may contribute to the prevention or elimination of child labor (Table 10).

Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Phase II of the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (NAP OVC II) (2011-2015)†	UNICEF Child Protection Fund program that includes a focus on equity and access to quality education for children and providing child protection services. Provides a cash transfer program that encourages families to keep children in school.(14, 32, 33) With funding from the European Commission and the Governments of the Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK, provides food and health services to high-risk families, including child-headed households. Also provides protection services for child victims of abuse, violence, and exploitation.(14, 32, 33). During the year, the Government continued its financial support by compensating officials that manage the program and by providing program oversight. (2, 32, 33).
Child- Labor- Free Zones	Hivos-funded program that establishes child-labor-free zones through the Coalition Against Child Labor in Zimbabwe (CACLAZ). The CACLAZ includes the African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect, Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe, and the General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union in Zimbabwe. In 2015, the CACLAZ established child-labor-free zones in two wards of the district of Chiredzi. Teachers, labor inspectors, police officers, and other stakeholders support this initiative by sending child laborers back to school.(34)
Basic Education Assistance Module†	Government program, supported by the UK Department for International Development, which provides basic financial assistance to families for education costs, such as tuition and examination fees. Aims to keep children in school and to enroll children who lack access to school as a result of economic hardship.(33, 35, 36)

† Program is funded by the Government of Zimbabwe.

Although Zimbabwe has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Zimbabwe (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure the law establishes free and compulsory education for children through age 15.	2009 – 2015
Enforcement	Ensure adequate funding, human resources, and training for the labor law inspectorate to conduct child labor inspections.	2009 – 2015

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Make information publicly available regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the labor inspectorate's funding, ■ the number of labor inspectors, ■ the number of child labor dedicated inspectors, ■ whether the labor inspectorate is authorized to assess penalties and how it trains its inspectors, ■ the total number of labor inspections, as well as the number of conducted at worksites or by desk review, ■ the number of child labor violations found and whether penalties imposed and collected, ■ whether routine inspections are conducted or targeted, and ■ whether unannounced inspections are conducted. 	2009 – 2015
	Make information publicly available about the training system for investigators, number of investigations, number of violations found, number of prosecutions initiated, number of convictions achieved, and availability of a referral mechanism.	2015
	Establish a mechanism to receive child labor complaints.	2015
Coordination	Ensure that the National Steering Committee and task forces coordinate to address the worst forms of child labor, including trafficking in persons.	2011 – 2015
Government Policies	Implement the National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor.	2010 – 2015
Social Programs	Ensure that children are registered at birth to facilitate their entrance into secondary school.	2014 – 2015
	Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem.	2010 – 2015

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