Moldova

In 2011, Moldova made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government of Moldova adopted the National Action Plan on the Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor for 2011-2015 and expanded the National Referral System to all regions of the country to assist victims of trafficking and child labor. The Government also launched two new projects to improve institutional capacity on child protection. However, children continue to be involved in the worst forms of child labor, particularly in hazardous activities in agriculture. The Government has not committed sufficient funding to support programs that specifically target children working in these sectors.

Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	82.2
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	31.8
Primary Completion Rate		Unavailable

Sources:
Primary completion rate: *UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)*
All other data: *Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from ENCOVI Survey, 2006.(2)*

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Moldova are engaged in the worst forms of child labor including in agriculture and on the streets.(3) The 2009-2010 National Child Labor Survey estimated that 109,000 children were engaged in dangerous child labor, mostly in family businesses and on farms.(3) These data were not analyzed in time for use in this report and are not included in the chart above. Children's work in agriculture may involve using dangerous machinery and tools, carrying heavy loads and applying harmful pesticides.(4) Reports indicate that school directors, farms and agricultural cooperatives signed contracts that required students to help with the harvest during the high season in autumn.(5)

Children work on the streets selling goods in Moldova.(6) Children working on the streets may be exposed to many dangers including severe weather, vehicle accidents and crime.(7)

Moldovan children are trafficked abroad and within the country for commercial sexual exploitation, begging and forced labor.(5, 8)

In 2006, UNICEF reported that the migration of adults in search of work has left approximately 40,000 children without either parent.(9) These children often lack adult supervision and are at greater risk of trafficking, forced labor and sexual exploitation.(9)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Article 46 of the Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 16 and article 255 sets the minimum age for employment in hazardous work at age 18.(3, 10) In certain cases, children age 15 can work with parental or legal authorization if the work will not interfere with their education, health or development.(10, 11) Government Decision No. 562 establishes a list of 32 jobs, including construction, agriculture, food processing, and textiles, prohibited to persons younger than age 18.(11) Employing children under age 18 in a hazardous industry can lead to fines and imprisonment.(3)

The Constitution forbids forced labor and the exploitation of minors.(11, 12) Article 206 of the Criminal Code and article 6 of the Law on Child Rights prohibits trafficking in children for labor and sexual exploitation and lays out penalties for the use of children in illicit activities, forced labor, prostitution and the creation of pornography.(3) Article 6 of the Law on Child Rights also prohibits and lays out penalties for child soldiering.(3, 11) The Law on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings provides guidelines for combating

child trafficking including prevention, victim assistance and repatriation for child victims.(13)

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	16
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	17
	Free Public Education	Yes

The legal framework also includes several other laws that address child labor. These laws include the Law on Labor Force Migration, which calls for protection and care of children left behind by migrant parents; the Law on Occupational Safety and Health, which states that children of working age are individuals in need of specific protections in the workplace, and the Code of Contraventions which establishes fines for those violating a child's rights.(14)

The age for military recruitment is 18.(3, 15)

Education is free and compulsory until the age of 17.(5, 16) However, many schools are not adequately funded, and parents are sometimes charged for school supplies and text books.(5, 17) The law also requires children to have access to education in their native language.(16) Roma children are particularly vulnerable to barriers in accessing education due to poverty.(5, 17)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The National Steering Committee on the Elimination of Child Labor coordinates all child labor efforts and is chaired by the Deputy Minister of Labor, Social Protection and Family. It includes representatives from the Government, workers' organizations, NGOs and academia.(3)

The National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Persons coordinates government efforts to combat human trafficking including child trafficking. Parliament also appoints an ombudsperson who specializes in child protection.(3) The ombudsperson ensures that the interests of children are given consideration by central and local public authorities.(3)

The Labor Inspection Office (LIO) within the Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection is responsible for enforcing all labor laws in the Republic of Moldova. In 2011, the LIO operated on a budget of $490,000 and with a staff of 96.(3) In 2011, labor inspectors participated in four training activities on labor related issues, which included some training on child labor.(3) Within the LIO, the Child Labor Monitoring Unit is responsible for monitoring government efforts to reduce child labor.(3)

The law permits child labor inspections for both legally registered workplaces and individual persons, thus covering informal worksites.(10) Inspectors are also allowed to seek assistance from local public administrators to suspend licenses of employers who repeatedly neglect labor inspection recommendations. Between January and November 2011, the LIO conducted a total of 5,981 inspections and uncovered 222 child labor violations.(3) During this same time period, the LIO referred 16 child labor violations to Moldovan courts and collected fines amounting to $1,500 in 11 cases.(3)

The Center for Combating Trafficking in Persons (CCTIP) is responsible for investigating child trafficking cases. CCTIP employs 40 police officers with an additional 43 officers at individual police stations who specialize in enforcing the Criminal Code along with cases of child trafficking.(3) CCTIP officers and prosecutors are trained on interviewing child victims of trafficking and exploitation. The CCTIP annual budget is approximately $290,000.(3) Between January and November 2011, the Government opened 23 investigations on child trafficking. Of those cases, 17 children were victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.(3) During the reporting period, there were 14 cases tried in the reporting period that resulted in two convictions and 23 child victims assisted.(3) The Government of Moldova operates a call center to provide advisory and emergency assistance on issues related to trafficking.(18)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In 2011, the Government adopted the National Action Plan on the Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor for 2011-2015. The National Action Plan outlines 45

action items to be implemented by 30 stakeholders working on child labor issues.(3) The action items include training key stakeholders on the prevention of the worst forms of child labor, institutionalizing a child labor monitoring system and developing public informational campaigns on child labor issues. The Ministry of Labor, Social Protection and Family is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the plan and the National Steering Committee will draft annual progress reports.(3, 19)

In 2007, the Collective Convention on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor was signed by the Government, the National Confederation of Employers, the Trade Unions Confederation and the Free Trade Union Confederation.(3) This agreement outlined actions aimed at eliminating the worst forms of child labor and included specific work activities and hazards prohibited to children such as underground work and work which exposes them to machinery, electric shock, extreme temperatures and chemical or biological agents.(20)

The National Youth Strategy, through its Plan of Action for 2009-2013, aims to facilitate youth employment, provide access to education, encourage youth participation in public life, build the capacity of youth institutions and develop health and social protection services. The Government allocated $24 million for the Strategy's implementation.(21) The question of whether this policy has an impact on the worst forms of child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

The National Plan for Prevention and Combating of Trafficking in Human Beings (2010-2011) lays out specific actions to be taken to combat child trafficking including building capacity of those providing services to child victims, awareness-raising to prevent trafficking in human beings, and investigating cases of complicity by public servants in trafficking of persons.(22)

Social Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

During 2011, the Government completed activities related to a 4-year, USDOL-funded global project worth $4 million, which aimed to assist countries in establishing or implementing their national plans of action to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The project assisted in the drafting of the National Action Plan which was adopted in 2011.(23)

The National Referral System, implemented by the Ministry of Social Protection, Labor and Family in collaboration with the IOM, offers assistance to victims of trafficking and child labor. The program started in 2006 with five pilot regions and was expanded to cover all regions of Moldova in 2011.(3) The Government also participates in USDOS-funded programs to address human trafficking. These programs, with a total of $1.67 million in funding, build capacity of local government officials and police to better investigate and try trafficking cases, as well as strengthen victim identification and assistance. One project supports the development of a monitoring system to assess the implementation of the National Referral System. A separate project works in the remote rural areas of secessionist Transnistria to provide anti-trafficking training to health, education, judicial and law enforcement officials.(24, 25)

In 2011, the Government launched a new project entitled, "Addressing the Negative Effects of Migration on Minors and Families Left Behind." This 18-month, $2.5 million project, funded by the European Union, will work towards improving the Government's public information system on child protection, promoting employment opportunities for young people through vocational training, supporting business start-ups and conducting awareness campaigns regarding the negative consequences of migration.(3, 26)

In 2011, the Government began to participate in an 18-month project designed to improve the capacity of government institutions to identify and support vulnerable children in two districts of Moldova.(27)

While the Government of Moldova provides some financial support to programs addressing both child labor and trafficking, all major child labor programs have been donor funded. These programs do not appear to be sustainable without outside financial assistance.(3)

The Government of Moldova has various social programs to support vulnerable groups, including vulnerable children.(3) One such program is the *Ajutor* Social Program, which is a cash benefit program targeted for the poor.(28) Another social program includes the Government's provision of the equivalent of $29 each to qualifying children from vulnerable families to cover the cost of school supplies.(5) In 2011, $391,877 was spent on school supplies for children from vulnerable families.(29) Additionally, Moldova's Social Investment Fund works to empower poor communities and vulnerable population groups to manage their priority needs through a small grants program.(30) The question of whether these programs have an impact on child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Moldova:

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Monitor schools to ensure that children are not charged extra educational fees or required to participate in farm work during the harvest season.	2010, 2011
Policies	Assess the impact the National Youth Strategy and its Plan of Action for 2009-2013 may have on addressing the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
Social Programs	Ensure current child labor programs are sustainable by providing increased financial support.	2010, 2011
	Enact programs to prevent children's involvement in exploitative child labor in agriculture.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Increase school funding to ensure that children have access to mandated free education through age 16.	2010, 2011
	Assess the impact that existing policies and programs such as the *Ajutor* Social Program may have on reducing child labor.	2011

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