

In 2019, Bangladesh made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government acceded to the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons and, through its programs in 2019, removed over 1,000 working children from 558 factories, provided education for 1,254 street children, and rehabilitated 3,501 children. Since 2017, government programs have removed 90,000 children from hazardous labor conditions, and over 35,000 children from exploitative work. Within 15 ministries responsible for children in some way, the government of Bangladesh increased its spending on children by 17 percent between the 2017-2018 and 2018-2019 fiscal years. However, children in Bangladesh engage in the worst forms of child labor, including forced child labor in the production of dried fish and bricks. Children also perform dangerous tasks in garment and leather goods supply chains. Moreover, the Bangladesh Labor Act does not apply to the informal sector, where most child labor in Bangladesh occurs, and hazardous work prohibitions are not comprehensive. Additionally, labor inspectors are not authorized to assess penalties and, when courts do impose them, the fines are too low to deter child labor law violations.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Bangladesh engage in the worst forms of child labor, including forced child labor in the production of dried fish and bricks. (1,2) Children also perform dangerous tasks in the production of garments and leather goods. (2-5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Bangladesh.

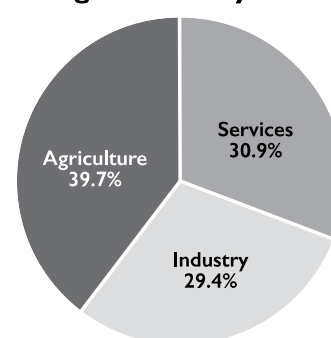
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	4.3 (1,326,411)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	89.4
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	1.9
Primary Completion Rate (%)		67.8

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020. (6)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Labour Force Survey (LFS), 2013. (7)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



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	Harvesting and processing crops, including tobacco, raising poultry, grazing cattle, and harvesting tea leaves (2,8-12)
	Fishing and drying and processing fish (1,2,8,10,11,13-15)
	Harvesting and processing shrimp (2,11)
Industry	Producing garments, textiles, and jute textiles (16-22)
	Producing leather,† leather goods, and footwear† (2,23-30)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Industry	Manufacturing bricks,† glass,† hand-rolled cigarettes (bidis),† matches,† soap,† furniture (steel),† aluminum products,† and metal products (2,8,11,31-35)
	Ship breaking† and battery recycling† (2,29,36-38)
	Construction† and breaking bricks† and stones† (8,10,11)
Services	Domestic work (2,10,11,14,39-42)
	Garbage sorting and recycling (43)
	Working in transportation, including ticket tacking, welding, pulling rickshaws, driving, and repairing automobiles† (2,8,10,14,25,42-45)
	Working in tea shops and retail shops (8,10,14)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Use in illicit activities, including smuggling and selling drugs (2,11,46,47)
	Forced begging (2,14,46)
	Forced labor in the drying of fish and the production of bricks (1,2,13-15)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2,14,48-51)
	Forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2,10,11,14,46,52,53)

† 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.

The prevalence of child labor in Bangladesh’s formal sector has decreased as Bangladesh’s economy has grown. The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics estimates that there are 1.28 million children working in hazardous sectors. (111) The government of Bangladesh declared the formal garment sector and shrimp sector are free from child labor, but acknowledge additional resources are required to address child labor in all sectors. (111) However, many children in Bangladesh engage in dangerous work in informal manufacturing sectors and the dried fish industry. (2-5,13,39) According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, over 85% of the economy is informal. (43) In the dried fish industry, children work all day without protective gear and are exposed to the insecticide DDT, salt, and the sun. (13) In the shipbreaking sector, children are exposed to toxic materials such as asbestos and work in dangerous conditions without personal protective equipment, and often at night. (38) The few older children who still work in tanneries lack protective equipment and experience continuous exposure to heavy metals, formaldehyde, and other hazardous substances. (3,4) Children working in informal garment production work as many as 16 hours a day and often carry heavy loads, use hazardous machinery, and handle chemicals without protective equipment. (16,27)

Reports of violence against child workers in various sectors, including in domestic work, have also been documented. (2,21,42,54,55) In 2018, a survey by an international organization found more than 400,000 children in domestic work in Bangladesh. Across Bangladesh, street children are coerced into criminality or forced to beg, and begging ringmasters sometimes maim children to increase earnings. (43) Children are forced, especially in border areas, to produce and transport drugs, especially “yaba” tablets (methamphetamine). (56)

Nearly 400,000 Rohingya children are living in refugee camps in Bangladesh following the Burmese military’s ethnic cleansing operations in 2017. Children residing in the camps are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. (14,46,57-59) Rohingya girls are trafficked from the refugee camps for commercial sexual exploitation in Bangladesh, India, and Nepal. In some cases, girls are promised jobs in domestic service but are instead forced into commercial sexual exploitation. (14,28) Foreigners create demand for child sex tourism, including exploitation of Rohingya girls near Cox’s Bazar. (56) Some girls are forced into domestic service, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and are abused by their employers. (46,52,53) Rohingya children recruited to work outside the refugee camps are reported to be underpaid or unpaid, unable to communicate with their families, and subjected to excessive working hours. (46,60) Rohingya boys typically work in construction, fishing, and shops. (14,53) Rohingya children are further sold into bonded labor in the fish drying industry by their parents, primarily in the city of Cox’s Bazar. Bonded laborers work to pay off their parents’ debt over a nine month fishing season. (14,15)

Children throughout Bangladesh are sexually exploited through the country's legal and illegal brothels, and child commercial sexual exploitation remained widespread. False promises of work are used to lure poor women and children into sex trafficking and fabricate exorbitant debts the women, and girls as young as 10, must work to repay. (56) Children fleeing abusive child marriages are especially vulnerable to being sold to brothels for commercial sexual exploitation. Some children of sex workers are put to work in brothels and made to take steroids to appear older. (56)




Although the 2010 National Education Policy raised the age of compulsory education from fifth grade (age 10) to eighth grade (age 14), the new compulsory education scheme is not enforceable until the legal framework is amended to reflect the revised policy. (61) In order to accommodate the larger number of students receiving compulsory education, Bangladesh is building new schools to accommodate students. In the 2018-2019 fiscal year, Bangladesh upgraded 764 schools, constructed 77 new schools, built 10,039 classrooms, installed sanitation facilities in 2,920 schools, and installed tube wells in 750 schools. (43) While poverty was the most common reason children did not attend school, as 31% of families depend on child labor for needed additional income, inadequate access to education remains a concern. (43)

While Rohingya refugee children are not permitted to attend school in Bangladesh, including in private educational institutions, due to their lack of documentation, the government has permitted international organizations, such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and UNHCR, to provide some basic education services to primary school-aged Rohingya children, and hundreds of learning centers were created. (43,62,63) According to UNICEF, 90 percent of children aged 4 to 14 years in the refugee camps have access to learning centers and non-formal education. However, aid groups are barred from teaching the Bangla language, using Bangladesh's educational curriculum, and providing accredited education to refugees. (43) In 2019, the government of Bangladesh agreed to allow international partners to implement the Myanmar Curriculum Pilot. The pilot, scheduled to start in 2020 with 10,000 children, would allow children to follow Burma's educational curriculum with the goal of preparing for their return in the future. The pilot will teach children the Burmese language, which they are not allowed to learn in Burma/Myanmar. (43) Limited access to education makes refugee children more vulnerable to labor exploitation. (2,64)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Bangladesh has ratified most 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	✓

In 2019, the government acceded to the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. (65)

The government has established laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Bangladesh's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the minimum age for work.

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Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	14	Section 34 of the Bangladesh Labor Act (66)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Sections 39–42 of the Bangladesh Labor Act (66)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Sections 39–42 of the Bangladesh Labor Act; Statutory Regulatory Order Number 65 (66,67)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Sections 370 and 374 of the Penal Code; Sections 3, 6, and 9 of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act (68,69)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Sections 3 and 6 of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act; Section 6 of the Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act (69,70)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Sections 372–373 of the Penal Code; Sections 78 and 80 of the Children's Act; Sections 3 and 6 of the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act; Section 8 of the Pornography Control Act (68,69,71,72)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Section 79 of the Children's Act (71)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	No	16	Army and Air Force Regulations titles unknown (112,113,114)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		Article 38 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (74)
Compulsory Education Age	No	10	Section 2 of the Primary Education (Compulsory) Act (73)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 17 of the Constitution (74)

* No conscription (75)

Minimum age protections in the Bangladesh Labor Act do not cover children working in the informal sector, where most child labor in Bangladesh occurs, which includes domestic work, street work, and work on small agricultural farms. (66,76,77) In addition, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not cover garment production and drying fish; both are areas of work in which there is evidence that children work in unsafe and unhealthy environments for long periods of time. (1,2,5,13,67)

Bangladesh prohibits, but does not criminalize, the use of children in pornographic performances and in the production of drugs. (69,71,78) Sources indicate that the minimum age for recruitment in the Army is 17 and requires parental consent in addition to birth documents verifying age. (113) Army recruitment and training take one year, ensuring that recruits reach the age of 18 before entering regular duty. (112) The minimum age for recruitment in the Air Force is 16. (114) However, there are no laws that set the minimum age of voluntary recruitment by the state armed forces. Additionally, although the Constitution prohibits the formation of non-state armed groups, the legal framework does not criminally prohibit the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups. (74,79)

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 Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE)	Enforces labor laws, including those relating to child labor and hazardous work. (80) DIFE is within the Ministry of Labor and Employment (MOLE). (81)
Bangladesh Police	Enforce Penal Code provisions protecting children from forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. (2) In the case of the Trafficking in Persons Monitoring Cell, investigates cases of human trafficking and enforces the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act's anti-trafficking provisions. (82)
Bangladesh Labor Court	Prosecutes labor law violations, including those related to child labor, and imposes fines or sanctions against employers. (83) In 2019, Bangladesh established three new labor courts. (43)
Child Protection Networks	Responds to violations against children, including child labor. Comprised of officials from various agencies with mandates to protect children, prosecute violations, monitor interventions, and develop referral mechanisms at the district and sub-district levels between law enforcement and social welfare services. (77) Reporting indicates that Child Protection Networks, intended to be a referral mechanism between law enforcement and social services, are not operating due to a lack of funds. (84)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2019, labor law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Department of Inspections for Factories and Establishments that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including a shortage of inspectors.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$3,700,000 (85)	\$4,140,000 (85)
Number of Labor Inspectors	319 (85)	302 (85)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (83)	No (2)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (76)	Yes (2)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (86)	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (85)	Yes (85)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	42,866 (85)	42,703 (85)
Number Conducted at Worksite	42,866 (86)	42,703 (85)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	1,234 (86)	1,426 (85)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	16 (84)	42 (85)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	16 (85)	42 (85)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown (76)	Yes (85)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (76)	Yes (85)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (76)	Yes (85)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (76)	Yes (85)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (76)	Yes (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	No (76)	Yes (43)

The Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (DIFE) only conducts labor inspections in the formal sector according to an inspection road map and plan. In addition to normal inspections, labor inspectors are authorized to conduct special visits for a number of reasons, including suspected child labor and night work. (85) In 2019, DIFE removed 1,021 working children from 558 factories. (85) However, it is reported that children are moved to night shifts to evade inspectors, indicating that the frequency of night inspections is insufficient. (38) DIFE also lacks the authorization to impose penalties and conduct unannounced inspections in Bangladesh's Export Processing Zones. (43) In addition, the current penalty of \$63 for a child labor law violation and the low rate of penalties imposed is inadequate to act as a deterrent. (77)

The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Bangladesh's workforce, which includes more than 66 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector

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for every 40,000 workers in less developed economies, Bangladesh would employ about 1,666 labor inspectors. (2,87-89) Reports indicate that DIFE is insufficiently funded and has not filled its 575 approved labor inspector positions. (90) Additionally, recruitment of inspectors suffers from a lack of incentives to join the department. (43)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2019, criminal law enforcement agencies in Bangladesh took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Bangladesh Police that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including insufficient funding.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (76)	Yes (2)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (76)	Yes (85)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (76)	Unknown (2)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (76)	Unknown (2)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (76)	Unknown (2)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (76)	Unknown (2)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (86,91)	Unknown (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Unknown (76)	Yes (43)

In 2019, the Bangladesh Army and Rapid Action Battalion were deployed to assist in identifying and investigating violations related to the possible trafficking of Rohingya refugees, a population with children vulnerable to child labor and commercial sexual exploitation. (14,91,92) However, sources indicate that some border guards, police, and military members are involved in facilitating the trafficking of children, including into prostitution. In registered brothels, some police accepted bribes to not check documentation that workers were older than 18 and to procure falsified documents for workers, some as young as ten years old. (56) In particular, in 2018 two border guards were accused of raping two girls after they refused to engage in commercial sex while a third border guard stood watch. (56,110) The guards' commanding officer dismissed the allegations as "rumors" and NGO personnel were prevented from visiting the girls in the hospital. (14) In January 2019, Rapid Action Battalion units arrested an Armed Police Battalion officer on charges of forcing two 12-year old girls into prostitution. (14,50) However, the government subsequently denied the case. (56)

Border guards, police, and coast guards received training during the reporting period. In addition, new police posts were established. (85) However, the Trafficking in Persons Monitoring Cell reportedly lacks the necessary funds and staff to adequately address cases of child trafficking. (93) Reporting also indicates that Child Protection Networks, intended to be a referral mechanism between law enforcement and social services, are not operating due to a lack of funds. (84) The government also did not provide information on the number of investigations, violations found, prosecutions initiated, convictions, or penalties imposed for violations related to the worst forms of child labor for inclusion in this report.

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 a lack of coordination among agencies.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Child Labor Welfare Council	Coordinates efforts undertaken by the government to guide, coordinate, and monitor the implementation of the National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Child Labor. Chaired by MOLE, it is comprised of officials representing relevant government ministries, international organizations, child advocacy groups, and employer and worker organizations. (94) In 2019, organized meetings at the divisional, district, and sub-district levels. (85)
Counter-Trafficking National Coordination Committee, Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA)	Coordinates the work of government agencies and international and local NGOs on international and domestic human trafficking, including child trafficking, through bimonthly meetings. (82) Oversees district counter-trafficking committees, which manage counter-trafficking committees for sub-districts and smaller administrative units. (82) In 2019, some of the 555 district and sub-district level counter-trafficking committees allocated funding for coordination and victim support while others did not function. (14)
Rescue, Recovery, Repatriation, and Integration Task Force, MOHA	Coordinates efforts by the governments of Bangladesh and India to rescue, recover, repatriate, and reintegrate victims of human trafficking, particularly women and children, between the two countries. Liaises with various ministries, government departments, NGOs, and international organizations that assist trafficked children. (14,60,95) In 2019, the task force repatriated over 100 Bangladeshi nationals. (96) However, the government lacks the capacity to track its citizens abroad, case management systems have not been developed, and the process to repatriate human trafficking victims is lengthy. (95,96)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

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

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Plan of Action on the Elimination of Child Labor (2012–2021)	Identifies strategies for developing institutional capacity, increasing access to education and health services, raising social awareness, strengthening law enforcement, and creating prevention and reintegration programs. (64) In 2019, the MOLE formed a National Child Labor Monitoring Core Committee. The Committee makes regular visits to sectors with a high risk for child labor and educates the employers on not using child labor. The committee held its first meeting on July 7, 2019 and visited tanneries in Savar on July 20 and November 20, 2019. (85) Also during the reporting period, MOLE broadcast an awareness raising program on 30 private television channels. The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs assisted 700 children through Child Development Centers and rehabilitated 972 street children. (43)
Seventh Five Year Plan (2016–2020)	Includes the elimination of the worst forms of child labor, with a focus on child domestic workers and other vulnerable groups. Sets out actions to be taken by the government, including forming a policy for children working in the formal sector; providing assistance to street children to protect them from exploitation, coordinating with stakeholders for effective rehabilitation, increasing working children's access to formal and non-formal learning, and providing livelihood support to poor households with children. (97) During the reporting period, 1,250 street children were brought into schooling. (43)
Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy	Sets the minimum age for domestic work at 14 years; all children under 18 require parental permission to engage in domestic work. (98) However, the policy is not legally enforceable until the legal framework is amended to reflect the revised policy. (99) In 2019, the government formed a Central Monitoring Cell on Domestic Workers to monitor implementation of the policy and two awareness-raising workshops were conducted in Khulna and Barishal. (85)
National Plan of Action for Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking (2018–2022)	Establishes a plan to build government capacity to address trafficking in persons and provide economic and social safety nets for victims and vulnerable populations, particularly children. (100,101) In 2019, the government took steps to implement the plan including creating 2,866 new Bangladesh Police posts, organizing training courses for police, border guards, and coast guard officials; and establishing a 24/7 legal advice hotline. It rehabilitated or reintegrated 3,501 children, and referred 2,677 children to legal aid, and 4,204 children to government, private, and NGO services. (43,85)

The government has a National Education Policy that sets the compulsory age for free education through eighth grade (age 14). In 2019, the government supported education through constructing new classrooms, providing textbooks, training teachers, and providing stipends and meals to students in need. (85) However, the government has yet to include child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the National Education Policy. (61)

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VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2019, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, issues exist in these social programs, including lack of adequate programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Elimination of Hazardous Child Labor, Phase IV (2018–2021) [†]	A \$35 million Government of Bangladesh-funded, 3-year project implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Employment. Removed 90,000 children from hazardous labor in phases I–III by providing informal and technical education, stipends, and awareness raising for employers and families. (43,86,102) In 2019, although implementation of the program was delayed, selection of NGOs to support the program continued. (85)
Child Labor Improvements in Bangladesh (CLIMB) (2017–2021)	USDOL-funded project implemented by Winrock International that aims to build the capacity of civil society to more effectively detect and combat forced child labor and other labor abuses in the dried fish sector in Bangladesh. In 2019, the program included research on forced child labor in the dried fish industry in Cox's Bazar. (103) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.
Accelerating Protection for Children (2017–2021) [†]	Project funded by the government and UNICEF and implemented by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs to assist children engaged in exploitative work. (85) Since July 2017 through the reporting period, the project removed 35,454 child laborers from exploitative work, provided them with stipends, and reached 167,500 people with awareness raising activities on child marriage, child labor, and child torture. (85)
Enabling Environment for Child Rights [†]	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs program, supported by UNICEF, which rehabilitates street children engaged in child labor and enrolls them in school. (104,105) Active in 2019. (106)
Child Help Line 1098 [†]	Ministry of Social Work-implemented and UNICEF-supported 24-hour emergency hotline. Connects children vulnerable to violence, abuse, and exploitation with social protection services. (107) The hotline receives approximately 80,000 calls a year and was accessible from anywhere in the country. (43) Active in 2019. (106)

[†] Program is funded by the Government of Bangladesh.

[‡] The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (108,109)

During the reporting period, with technical and financial support from UNICEF, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics conducted the Bangladesh Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), which includes child labor statistics. The Government of Bangladesh is expected to release the data in 2020. (2) In addition, the Ministry of Labor and Employment is expected to conduct a national survey on child labor by 2021. (2)

Within 15 ministries responsible for children in some way, the government of Bangladesh increased its spending on children by 17 percent between the 2017–2018 and 2018–2019 fiscal years. Although the government has implemented 91 action programs to eliminate hazardous child labor, research found that the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the child labor problem, including in tanneries, the informal garment sector, and the dried fish industry. (43)

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 Bangladesh (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Amend the national law to reflect the amended Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare policy.	2018 – 2019
	Extend the law's minimum age protections to children working in the informal sector, including in domestic work, on the streets, and in small-scale agriculture.	2009 – 2019
	Ensure that the types of hazardous work prohibited for children are comprehensive, in particular by including garment production and fish drying.	2016 – 2019
	Establish criminal prohibitions on the use of children for pornographic performances.	2015 – 2019
	Establish criminal prohibitions on the use of children in illicit activities, particularly in the production of drugs.	2015 – 2019

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Establish age 16 as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment by the state military, with safeguards for voluntariness.	2016 – 2019
	Establish criminal prohibitions on the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2019
	Ensure that education is compulsory through eighth grade and is consistent with the minimum age for work.	2012 – 2019
Enforcement	Ensure enforcement of citations and penalties for labor law violations, including authorizing the labor inspectorate to assess penalties for child labor law violations and increasing penalties for child labor law violations to be an adequate deterrent.	2014 – 2019
	Significantly increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.	2009 – 2019
	Ensure that labor inspections are conducted with sufficient frequency during night shifts.	2013 – 2019
	Create mechanisms for labor and criminal law enforcement to refer children involved in child labor to appropriate legal and social services and create a mechanism for screening children removed from factories for signs of human trafficking.	2013 – 2019
	Ensure that law enforcement personnel are investigated, prosecuted, and convicted for offenses related to the worst forms of child labor, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2019
	Publish information related to criminal law enforcement, including the number of investigations, violations found, prosecutions initiated, convictions, and penalties imposed for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.	2012 – 2019
	Provide police with sufficient resources to enforce violations involving human trafficking, forced labor, and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2014 – 2019
	Ensure that Child Protection Networks are sufficiently funded to provide a functional referral mechanism between law enforcement and social services.	2016 – 2019
Coordination	Adequately coordinate with India's Rescue, Recovery, Repatriation, and Integration Task Force to ensure the timely repatriation of human trafficking victims.	2018 – 2019
	Ensure that counter-trafficking committees are funded and are able to function.	2019
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the National Education Policy.	2014 – 2019
Social Programs	Provide sufficient education services for Rohingya refugee children and remove other barriers to their school attendance.	2017 – 2019
	Expand programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, including developing and implementing programs to address child labor in the informal garment, leather, and fish drying industries.	2016 – 2019

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