



The Government  
of Belize



# Belize National Child Labour Policy and Strategy, 2022-2025



# **Belize National Child Labour Policy and Strategy 2022-2025**



Photo, Government of Belize Press Office: National Children's Parliament, Belize, 2021 (also on cover)

## ► Foreword

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On 27 April 2021, the Government of Belize gave approval for the development of a National Child Labour Policy and Strategy for our country. Less than one year later, we are very proud that we have developed such a Policy – a Policy that is comprehensive but pragmatic, a Policy with ambitious but achievable goals and a Policy that leaves no child behind or family behind.

The Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government is in the “people business”. We are here to advocate for and protect the rights of our children. We are here to protect labour – both employees and employers. We are here to support our citizens in commerce and industry. By our being in the “people business” and doing all of these things, we are confident that Belize will achieve great success in eliminating all forms of child labour by 2025, in keeping with our commitment to achieving the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals - Goal 8, Target 8.7.



Child labour is a complex issue and requires strong partnerships, social dialogue and collaboration. We therefore take the opportunity to thank all our local and international partners who have continued to work with us over the years. The ILO provided immeasurable support throughout the development process of this National Child Labour Policy and Strategy, and we are very appreciative of the expertise, support and guidance provided by every member of the team including the Primary Consultant. In addition, special commendation is extended to the staff of the Labour Department and the members of the National Child Labour Tripartite Committee who have worked tirelessly to have this Policy developed. We also acknowledge the invaluable contributions of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

Not only is our vision to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, but it is also to make Belize the best place in the world to raise children and families. I therefore implore all Belizeans to take the issue of child labour seriously and do something about it. Yes, you can. If you look at this Policy carefully, there is something in it that each of us can do in a positive way to improve the lives of our children. This would be taking them out of harmful and hazardous work and giving them a safe place in our schools, in our homes and in our hearts.

By the end of 2025, when this Policy comes to an end, let it be that each of us did something, anything, to eradicate all forms of child labour. Let us be a model for the world. Thank you.

Hon. Oscar Requena  
Minister of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government  
March 2022



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## ► List of acronyms

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ASC	Aquaculture Stewardship Certification
ATIPS	Anti-Trafficking in Persons Council
BOOST	Building Opportunities for Our Social Transformation
BPD	Belize Police Department
BSCFA	Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CAS	Child Activity Survey
CBM	Community Based Monitoring
CET	Centre for Employment Training
CLEAR	Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labour
CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
DHS	Department of Human Services
DL	Department of Labour
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
HTI	Human Trafficking Institute
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMMARBE	International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize
ISCED	International Standard Classification of Education
ITVET	Institute for Technical and Vocational Education and Training
LAB	Labour Advisory Board
LFS	Labour Force survey
LRC	Legislation Review Committee
MESCTEG	Ministry of Education, Culture, Science & Technology, E-Governance
MHANGI	Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries
MHDFIPA	Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MLA	Maya Leaders Alliance
MOE	Ministry of Education

MRTCDLLG	Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government
MTDR	Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations
MTYS	The Ministry of Transport, Youth, and Sports
NBER	National Bureau of Economic Research
NCFC	National Committee for Families and Children
NCTVET	National Council for Technical and Vocational Training and Education
SIB	Statistical Institute of Belize
SSB	Social Security Board
TIP	Trafficking in persons
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
YICMR	Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation

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## ► Glossary

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**A child:** A person under the age of eighteen (18) years of age<sup>1</sup>.

**Child Labour:** ILO identifies [Child Labour](#) as work that deprives children (any person under 18 years of age) of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to their physical and/or mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, or morally dangerous and harmful to children and/or interferes with their schooling by:

- depriving them of the opportunity to attend school;
- obliging them to leave school prematurely; and
- requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work.

Extreme forms of child labour encompass children being enslaved, separated from their families, or exposed to serious hazards and potential illnesses. Whether or not particular forms of “work” can be called “child labour” depends on the child’s age, the type and hours of work performed, and the conditions under which the child “works”.

For practical purposes, “Child labour” refers to two concepts:

1. **Work undertaken by children below legal minimum working age.** In most countries the age is at least 15 years, with possibility of exceptions: an interim declaration of a minimum age of 14 years is possible in countries with insufficiently developed economies and education systems. It is a fundamental principle to protect the rights of children so that they have access to education and to finish at least compulsory education, before entering the labour market<sup>2</sup>.
2. Work classified within the “worst forms of child labour” irrespectively of the age of the child (see below).

The concepts are embedded within the following International Labour Standards: the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)<sup>3</sup>; and its accompanying [Minimum Age Recommendation, 1973 \(No. 146\)](#); the [Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 \(No. 182\)](#)<sup>4</sup> and its accompanying [Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 \(No. 190\)](#).

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 1. Within the Belize legislation, the definition of a child is found within the Families and Children Act Cap. 173. This age definition is reflected in the Marriage Act (Cap. 174). Some laws, however, specifically provide for earlier attainment of majority. For example, the Summary Jurisdiction (Procedure) Act (Cap. 99, S. 2) defines an “adult” as anyone aged 16 years or over, a “child” as anyone under 14 years of age, and a “young person” as anyone between the ages of 14 and 16 years inclusive. The Factories Act (Cap. 296, S. 2) defines a “young person” as anyone between the ages of 14 and 17 years inclusive. The Juvenile Offenders Act Cap. 119 (S. 2) defines a “child” as anyone under the age of 14 years.

<sup>2</sup> See Alliance 8.7 (2017) “2016 GLOBAL ESTIMATES OF CHILD LABOUR, Frequently asked question” available [here](#). The interested reader may also refer to ILO: “Global estimates of child labour: Results and trends, 2012-2016 International Labour Office (ILO), Geneva, 2017: “for statistical concepts and definitions used in that report.

<sup>3</sup> C138 sets a general minimum employment age (14 years in the case of Belize); a minimum age for involvement in hazardous work (18 years); a minimum age for “light work” for a specified number of hours in work not likely to be harmful to their health or development or prejudice their attendance in school (12 to 14 years in the case of Belize); and an exception to the minimum age for participation in the performing arts with the issuance of a permit. Further, Article 1 of Convention No. 138 addresses the pursuit of “a national policy designed to ensure the effective abolition of child labour”. To this end Belize established the National Child Labour Committee (NCLC), with one of its tasks being the formulation of a National Child Labour Policy (NCLP).

<sup>4</sup> C182 concerns the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Article 3 defines the worst forms of child labour, and Article 7(1) indicates that countries shall enforce the prohibitions of the worst forms of child labour, including by establishing and applying appropriate penal or other sanctions to expedite the elimination of the WFCL.

Article 32 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989, which specifies that child labour is a breach of a child's right to be protected "from economic exploitation on and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development".

**Direct education costs:** These are costs that an educational/training institution will charge directly to the parents and include registration/enrolment fees, tuition fees, and examination entry fees.

**Hazardous work:** Hazardous child labour is defined by Article 3 (d) of ILO Convention No. 182 (C182) as: "work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children". It includes work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions that could result in a child being killed or injured/maimed, and/or made ill, often permanently, because of poor safety and health standards and working arrangements.<sup>5</sup> Article 4 of C182 identifies the State's obligation to clearly define hazardous work and to periodically examine and revise the list of the types of hazardous work as necessary. This aforementioned definition was applied in the assessment of the Child Labour Situation section of the Policy, however, it should be noted that for the purposes of Policy implementation, the following definition of 'hazardous work' (see **Appendix 1** for a comprehensive list of hazardous work), as approved by the Labour Advisory Board (LAB) on 14 December 2021, should be utilized):

Work which is likely to harm the health, safety, morals or education of a child, including but not limited to —

- a) Work which exposes a child to physical, psychological, technological or sexual abuse;
- b) Work that is performed underground, under water, at dangerous heights, or in confined spaces;
- c) Work with dangerous machinery, equipment, and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads;
- d) Work in an unhealthy environment, which may expose a child to dangerous substances, agents, or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health; (Consider including a table with a weight chart)
- e) Work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or between the hours of 6 pm and 6 am, or work where the child is confined to the premises of the employer;
- f) Work that exceeds two hours on a school day or six hours on a non-school day, and in any case exceeds twenty-eight hours per week except, during school vacation periods or where the child has completed compulsory education; and

Under certain circumstances, a young person i.e., a child that is age 16 or under the age of 18 years, or who is 17 years and older, may perform work listed on the hazardous work list if the work is identified as a hazard that can be mitigated and adequate training, supervision and safety measures are provided, as necessary.

**Indirect education costs:** These are costs borne by the parents as a result of their child being enrolled in an educational/training institution and include uniforms, stationary, textbooks, IT equipment (i.e., laptop and access to internet), equipment required for practical subjects (i.e., protective gear) and costs attached to extra-curricular activities.

**Light work:** According to Article 7 of ILO Convention No. 138, national laws or regulations may permit the employment or work of persons from 13 years of age (or 12 years in countries that have specified the general minimum working age as 14 years, such as Belize) in light work. The latter must: (a) be not likely to be harmful to their health or development; and (b) be such as not to prejudice their attendance at school, their participation in vocational orientation or training programmes approved by the competent authority or their capacity to benefit from the instruction received. The aforementioned definition was applied in the assessment of the Child Labour Situation section of the Policy, however, it should be noted that for the purposes of Policy implementation the following definition of ‘light work’ (see **Appendix 2** for a comprehensive list of light work), as approved by the Labour Advisory Board (LAB) on 14 December 2021, will be the reference:

Work that

- a) may be performed by a child who is 13 years of age or older;
- b) is not likely to be harmful to a child's physical health, mental health, safety, moral or general welfare or development;
- c) does not prejudice the child's school attendance or participation in training and vocational programs, or the child's capacity to benefit from such instruction;
- d) Is not performed between the hours of 6 pm and 6 am; and
- e) If a child is registered in school and:
  - (i) If the child is 13 years of age, 1 hour on a school day or 2 hours on a non-school day and in any case does not exceed 7 hours per week; or
  - (ii) If the child is between 14 and under 18 years of age, 2 hours on a school day or 6 hours on a non-school day and in any case does not exceed 28 hours per week, except during school vacation period; or
  - (iii) If a child is not registered in school and has not completed compulsory education and is under 18 years of age, 8 hours a day and in any case does not exceed 40 hours per week, provided that they are not recipients of any social protection programmes.

**Minimum age of admission to employment:** The ILO's Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) stipulates that the minimum age of admission to employment or work in any occupation shall not be less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling or less than 15 years.<sup>6</sup> Convention No. 138 makes an exception to the age limit of 15 years in ILO member countries in which the economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed. In such circumstances, the minimum age of admission to employment or work in any occupation shall not be less than 14 years. The Convention also makes provisions for national law to further delimit categories of employment/work where the minimum age can vary, once there is agreement among tripartite constituents. In particular, it is stated that children between the ages of 13 and 15 years old may do light work, as long as it does not threaten their health and safety or hinder their education or vocational orientation and training.

<sup>6</sup> In Belize, schooling is mandatory until age 14 and the legal minimum age for work in Belize is 14 as specified in: (i) section 164(1) of the Labour Act in a public or private “industrial undertaking” or in a branch thereof and (ii) Section 3 of the Shops Act provides for employment in shops. Note that there is no specific provision ensuring that the minimum age of 14 applies to all economic sectors. For further details on the national legislative framework, please see Table 11.

**School feeding programme:** In general, a school feeding programme is a school-based health/social support service that offers a free meal (either or both breakfast and lunch) to children attending school with the aim of promoting child education and health and can be targeted at children from economically vulnerable families.

**Tutoring:** Primary school-led tutoring can be described as a teacher, teaching assistant or other professional educator providing intensive and individualised academic support to pupils in either one-to-one or small group arrangements within a primary school setting.<sup>7</sup>

**Working children:** The concept encompasses most production activities undertaken by children, whether for the market or not, paid or unpaid, for a few hours or full time, on a casual or regular basis, in the organized or unorganized (formal or informal) sector, and whether the activities are legal or illegal; it excludes household chores undertaken in the child's own household, and activities that are part of schooling. Work in family enterprises and in household-based production activities is included, as is domestic work performed in another household for an employer. To be counted as employed, that is, as working, a child must have worked for at least an hour on any day during a seven-day reference period.<sup>8</sup>

**Worst forms of child labour:** These are activities that are particularly harmful to children and their future development. Convention No. 182, Article 3 states that the worst forms of child labour comprise:

- all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery (including sale and trafficking and forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict);
- the use of a child for prostitution or pornographic performances;
- the use of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs; and
- work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children, also called hazardous work.

The aforementioned definition was applied in the assessment of the Child Labour Situation section of the Policy; however, it should be noted that for the purposes of Policy implementation the following definition of 'worst forms of child labour', as approved by the Labour Advisory Board (LAB) on December 14, 2021, should be utilized:

- a) All forms of slavery and similar practices including trafficking, bonded labour, and forced labour;
- b) Using, procuring, or offering a child for prostitution, producing pornography or similar practices;
- c) Work that is likely to harm the health, safety, morals or education of a child; or
- d) Using, procuring, or offering a child for illicit activities including –
  - (i) the production or trafficking of drugs;
  - (ii) gang activity;
  - (iii) trafficking of firearms or ammunition; or
  - (iv) importation and handling of contraband.

7 Definition taken from School-Led Tutoring Guidance, November 2021, UK Government Department for Education see [here](#).

8 See Report III Child Labour Statistics (2008) 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians Geneva, 24 November–5 December 2008, International Labour Office, Geneva. see [here](#).

## ► Introduction

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In 1990, Belize ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This was followed in 2000 by its ratification of International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions on Minimum Age (for entry into work), C138, and the Worst Forms of Child Labour, C182, committing the country to prioritizing the implementation of all necessary measures to uphold the rights of all children including the elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Subsequently, Belize signed the UNCRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict; the UNCRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; and the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. All those legal commitments reflected the country's sustained dedication to ensure the protection of all children.

In support of its international obligations, Belize produced its first National Child Labour Policy and established a National Child Labour Committee in 2009. Yet, despite Belize's committing to international conventions and protocols, the existence of a National Child Labour Policy, and a National Child Labour Committee, child labour issues continued to persist throughout the country. Indeed, a 2013 Statistical Institute of Belize/ILO Child Activity Survey (CAS) found child labour to most prevalent in rural areas and amongst boys engaged in hazardous work.

Since the 2013 CAS, a number of programmes and initiatives were implemented through international and local collaborations that provided technical and financial support. These included:

- The Project Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labour Project (CLEAR II Project);
- A legislative review of existing child labour laws and the preparation of recommendations for amendments to the Labour Act and several other associated pieces of legislation which address child labour and child activity; and
- The establishment of a National Child Labour Focal Point Person/ Desk at the Department of Labour.

Furthermore, in 2015 Belize adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which includes Target 8.7 to end all forms of child labour by 2025.

In 2021, the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government and the National Child Labour Committee, cognisant:

- of Belize's international commitments pertaining to the elimination of child labour;
- of the need to update the National Child Labour Policy 2009; and
- that the child labour situation has likely been exacerbated by the social and economic challenges emanating from the COVID-19 crisis,

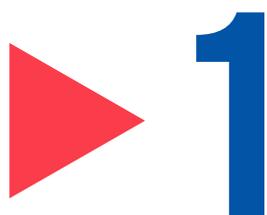
engaged in a collaboration with the ILO which resulted in the development of the National Child Labour Policy and Strategy 2022-2025.

## Policy development process

The development of the Belize National Child Labour Policy and Strategy 2022-2025 was an iterative process that commenced in August 2021. A literature review was undertaken accompanied by an extensive series of bilateral consultations with multiple stakeholders spanning representatives from the Government of Belize, civil society, and the private sector. These actions resulted in the drafting of a situation analysis of child labour in Belize. This draft situation analysis was the subject of a written consultation in early November 2021, and thereafter, a final situation analysis emerged, providing the foundation for the writing of a draft action matrix containing policy goals, outcomes, and associated outputs. This draft action matrix was the focus of a national consultation in late November 2021. Following analysis of feedback received during the consultation, a second version of the action matrix was drafted. This draft was the subject of an advanced discussion by way of a second national consultation held in December 2021. The merging of the situation analysis with the third version of the action matrix gave rise to a draft policy, with its action matrix being the subject of a final national validation workshop held in January 2022. Feedback from this workshop, converging with further bilateral discussions, resulted in the Belize National Child Labour Policy and Strategy 2022-2025.



Photo, Government of Belize Press Office: National children's Consultation on disaster risk reduction, Belize



# National context

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## Location and geography

Belize occupies an area of 8867 sq. miles, bordered on the east by the Caribbean Sea, on the north and north-west by Mexico, and on the west and south by Guatemala. It is one of three mainland countries (along with Guyana and Suriname) belonging to the 15 Member States in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). Belize is the only English-speaking country in Central America, and as such it represents a link between the Caribbean and Latin/Central America, with more than 50 per cent of the population being bilingual (English- and Spanish-speaking). As a result of its geo-political positioning Belize is also a full member of the Central American Integration System (SICA).

## General demographic profile

The population of Belize at July 2021 was estimated at 430,191<sup>9</sup>, with substantially equal proportions of women and men and comprising a child (5 to 17 years old) population of 114,176. It is composed of several ethnic groups distributed as follows: Creole 26.2 per cent, Mestizo 47.5 per cent, Maya 9.9 per cent, Garifuna 7.2 per cent, and 9.6 per cent other (Asian, East Indian, Caucasian). In 2019, life expectancy at birth was 74.6 years.<sup>10</sup>

## Socio economic profile

Belize is a small, upper-middle income country with a per capita income of US\$5,078 (current) in 2019, then reduced to US\$4,435 in 2020.<sup>11</sup> The country has undergone significant economic transformation over the last two decades, mainly due to the growing tourism industry and to the commercial oil discovery in 2005, although the oil rents as percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) peaked in 2011 (6.5 per cent). Tourism, agriculture, and services in general are the main sources of income and employment. Tourism accounts for nearly 60 per cent of all foreign exchange earnings and 40 per

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9 Statistical Institute of Belize, Mid-year population estimates 2021.

10 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?locations=BZ>, World Bank, World Development Indicators, download 1 10 2021.

11 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?locations=BZ>, World Bank, World Development Indicators, download 25 10 2021.

cent of GDP (IMF: 2021)<sup>12</sup>, while the share of agriculture, forestry, and fishing, has been constantly declining over the past decade (9.1 of total GDP in 2020)<sup>13</sup>.

Belize's Human Development Index (HDI) was 0.716 in 2019 - which put the country in the high human development category - positioning it at 110 out of 189 countries and territories. Between 1990 and 2019, Belize's HDI value increased from 0.610 to 0.716, an increase of 17.4 per cent.

As noted by the IMF (2021), while the COVID-19 crisis severely impacted the country's economic performance, real GDP growth had slowed from 4.7 per cent in 2000-09 to 2.8 per cent in 2010-14 and 1.8 per cent in 2015-19. Moreover, the economy was in recession when the pandemic hit, with real GDP contracting by 2.2 per cent year on year in the last quarter of 2019 and 6.3 per cent in the first quarter of 2020. Real GDP contracted by 14.1 per cent in 2020 in the wake of a 72 per cent decline in tourist arrivals and is projected to grow by 1.5 per cent and 6.2 per cent in 2021 and 2022, reverting to its pre-pandemic level only in 2025.

► **Table 1. GDP at constant prices, 2018-2026**

Year	2018	2019	2020 Preliminary	2021 Projection	2022 Projection	2023 Projection	2024 Projection	2025 Projection	2026 Projection
GDP growth at constant prices	2.9	1.8	-14.1	1.5	6.2	4.2	2.0	2.0	2.0

Source: IMF (2021) article iv consultation—staff report. Belize

The IMF (2021) also notes that public debt is projected to remain above 110 per cent of GDP between 2021 and 2031, a level that is deemed “unsustainable”.

## Poverty and inequality

Latest available estimates (2018) indicate a national poverty rate of 52 per cent<sup>14</sup> (106,202 households) corresponding to 201,616 persons living in poverty. This compares to 41 per cent poverty rate (or 136,640 persons) in 2009. In terms of geographical distribution, the poverty rate in the rural areas of the country rose to 59 per cent (compared to 55 per cent in 2009). In the urban areas the increase was more substantial (from 28 per cent in 2009 to 43 per cent in 2018). All districts, except for the Corozal district, saw increases in the level of poverty in 2018 when compared to 2009. Toledo had the highest overall poverty (82 per cent, a sharp increase from 60 per cent in 2009) and indigence rate (30 per cent). Next were Orange Walk (57 per cent), Cayo (52 per cent), Stann Creek (47 per cent), Belize and Corozal (45 per cent). By ethnic group, the Mayans had the highest poverty rate in 2018 at 77 per cent followed by Garifuna (52 per cent), Mestizo (49 per cent) and Creole (47 per cent). However, the latter showed the largest change in the level of poverty since 2009, with an increase of 15 percentage points.

12 IMF (2021) “ARTICLE IV CONSULTATION—STAFF REPORT”. Available [here](#).

13 World Bank, WDI.

14 For a full overview, see [here](#).

## Labour market

The general population unemployment rate estimated at 11.2 per cent (April 2021)<sup>15</sup> masks inequalities along several dimensions. The district of Stann Creek had an unemployment rate of 14 per cent, whilst the Garifuna and Maya ethnic groups had unemployment rates of 22.1 per cent and 12.4 per cent respectively, with Garifuna females having an unemployment rate of 35.5 per cent. The age group 14-24 years had the highest unemployment rate of all working age groups at 20.6 per cent with the young female rate being almost three times higher than that of males.

## Education profile

Data from UNESCO<sup>16</sup> show the net primary enrolment rate was 94 per cent in 2020 with 69 reported out-of-school children. Such value represents the minimum since 2014 (96.4 per cent), most likely a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis and possibly an indication of potential involvement of children in underage work. For secondary education, the net enrolment rate in 2020 was 68.8 per cent (71.1 for girls vs 65.5 per cent for boys) with 4,683 out-of-school adolescents (2,425 girls and 2,258 boys). In this case as well, the value was lower than the peak value over the past decade (72.1 per cent in 2016). Conversely, 2020 tertiary education gross enrolment rates were the highest of the decade at 25.6 per cent (32.2 per cent for women and 19 per cent for men).

In terms of progress and completion, additional indicators presented in Table 2 seem to indicate dropout becoming a problem at the end of primary education with a rate of survival to the last grade of primary rate of 88.3 per cent and a rate of effective transition of 97.8 per cent from primary to lower secondary general education.

► **Table 2. Selected indicators, school completion**

	Male	Female	Total
School life expectancy ISCED 1-8 (years)	12.99	12.68	13.29
Percentage of repeaters in primary (%)	6.9	8.2	5.5
Survival to the last grade of primary (%)	90.18	91.98	88.32
Gross intake ratio into the last grade of primary (%)	104.5	104.5	104.4
Effective transition rate from primary to lower secondary general education	98.1	98.5	97.8

Source: <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/bz> download 21 10 2021

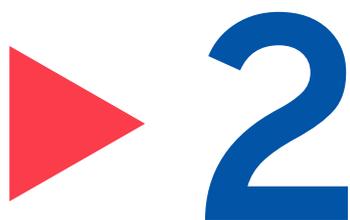
From the supply standpoint, in 2018 the Ministry of Education (MOE)<sup>17</sup> reported 227 pre-schools, 311 primary schools and 62 secondary schools active in the country. These institutions were either Government, denominational, community or private. Of the secondary schools, 37.1 per cent were Government-aided denominational, 24.7 per cent Government, 25.8 per cent private, whilst 9.7 per cent were Government-aided community schools.

<sup>15</sup> Labour Force Survey tables, April 2021, Statistical Institute of Belize 2021.

<sup>16</sup> See <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/bz> download 21 10 2021.

<sup>17</sup> Abstract of Education Statistics 2018-2019, Ministry of Education, Belize.





# Child labour situation in Belize

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## Preamble

ILO and UNICEF (2020)<sup>18</sup> statistics indicate that 160 million children were in child labour in 2019, accounting for almost one in ten of all children worldwide. The total for the Latin American and Caribbean region was 13.7 million (8.2 million in child labour and 5.5 in hazardous work). Likely, the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the situation.

Against the above framework, availability of statistical indicators regarding children's economic activities and child labour in Belize is limited although not negligible. Specifically:

- ▶ Dedicated household surveys (National Child Activity Survey (CAS)) were conducted in [2001](#) and [2013](#) by the Statistical Institute of Belize (SIB) in collaboration with the ILO. In addition to the two summary survey reports<sup>19</sup>, a third one complementing the former was published by Roy Young in 2003<sup>20</sup>.
- ▶ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), (round 4 and 5) were carried out in [2011](#) and [2015-6](#) respectively by the SIB, in collaboration with UNICEF. Within the 2015-6 survey, however, the initially planned for child labour module was not an object of [data collection](#).
- ▶ The labour force survey (LFS) conducted biannually provides some insight on the employment of children aged 14 and above.
- ▶ In addition to the CAS reports mentioned previously there are also studies and reports further highlighting the child labour challenges in the country:

<sup>18</sup> International Labour Office and the United Nations Children's Fund, Child Labour: Global estimates 2020, trends and the road forward, ILO and UNICEF, New York, 2021.

<sup>19</sup> ILO (2004) "Belize: Child activity survey 2001 - Summary of the results" and ILO (2015) Report on the National Child Activity Survey - Belize 2013 / International Labour Organization, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), Statistical Institute of Belize - Geneva: ILO, 2015.

<sup>20</sup> See Roy Young in 2003 "Child Labour in Belize: [A qualitative study](#)".

- The USA Bureau of International Labor Affairs publishes an [annual report](#) titled “Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Belize”. The latest (2020) version of the report is available [here](#). Aside from the analysis of policy and regulatory developments, such reports generally rely on secondary data including, for what concerns economic activities carried out by children, the above-mentioned sources.
- Fairtrade International published an original study in 2018 “[Involvement and working conditions of youth in sugar cane cutting in Belize – 2018](#)” collecting qualitative information of particular interest regarding involvement of children in the sugar cane value chain.
- ILO published in 2006<sup>21</sup> a study about the commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC).
- Recent academic literature relying on the above-mentioned data sources includes, at times, Belize as one of the countries as an object of aggregate analysis<sup>22</sup>.

The following sections provide an overview of the main available demographic and child activity indicators while including additional findings from consultations held in 2021 with national stakeholders. Together those are helpful to guide the policy-making process and to understand specific aspects of the child labour challenge.

## Demographic trends for children

- Children aged 5 to 17 constitute about one quarter of the total population and their number has increased during this century. The trend is expected to continue in the coming decade.
- Individuals aged 5 to 17 years old (those potentially engaged in child labour) were 114,176 in 2021 or 26.7 per cent of the total population of Belize. Point estimates indicate that boys (58,582) slightly outnumbered girls (55,595) while most children (60.6 per cent, 69,268) lived in rural areas. If compared with the figures presented in Table 3, it clearly appears that the child population has been steadily increasing during the past 20 years, although at a decreasing rate.
- In terms of future trends, the population projections from the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2019) presented in Figure 1 show that the population within the 5 to 19 age bracket is bound to grow in headcount<sup>23</sup> until 2035, with the sub brackets 5 to 9 and 10 to 14 years old growing the most (13.2 and 10.9 per cent respectively versus 3.7 per cent for the 15 to 19 years old).

21 See ILO (2006) “[The commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents in Belize](#)”. San José, C.R., International Labour Office, 2006

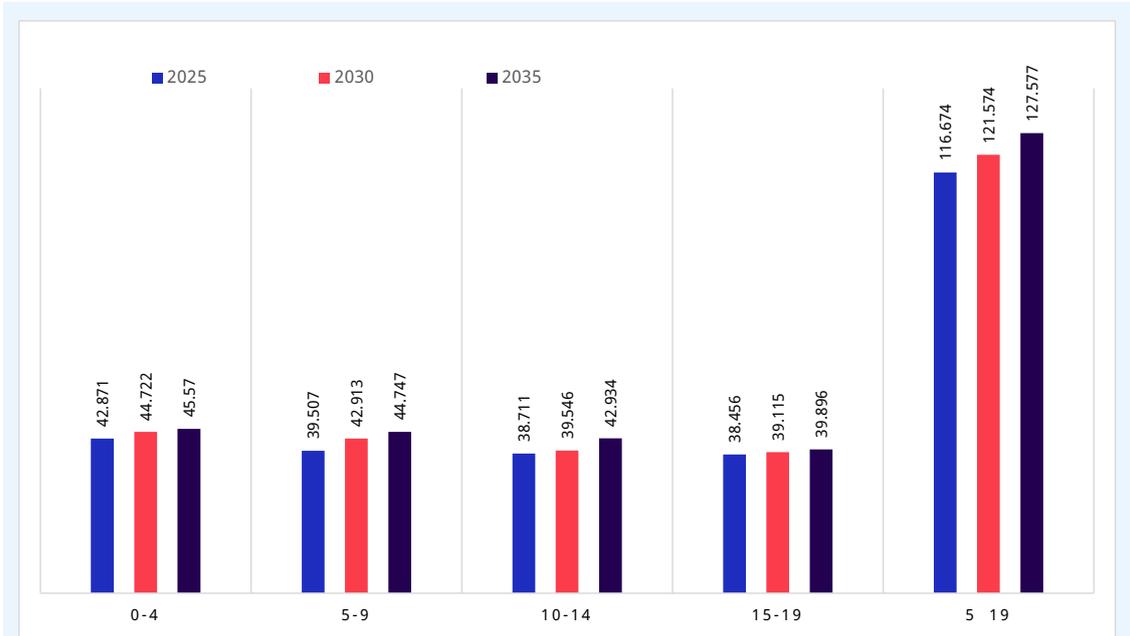
22 The interested reader may refer (in reverse order of publication) to: (i) Lin, F. (2021). “Agriculture exports, child labour and youth education: Evidence from 68 developing countries”. *Review of International Economics*, 00, 1– 24; (ii) Eric V. Edmonds and Maheshwor Shrestha “The Impact of Minimum Age of Employment Regulation on Child Labour and Schooling: Evidence from UNICEF MICS Countries NBER Working Paper No. 18623; (iii) Hugh D Hindman “The world of child labour: an historical and regional survey” 2009, ME Sharpe Inc, New York, USA; (iv) Roggero, Paola, Mangiaterra, Viviana, Bustreo, Flavia, Rosati, Furio. (2007). “The Health Impact of Child Labour in Developing Countries: Evidence from Cross-Country Data”. *American journal of public health*. 97. 271-5; (v) Edmonds, Eric V. and Nina Pavcnik (2006). “[International trade and child labour: cross-country evidence](#),” *Journal of International Economics*, 2006, v68(1 Jan), 115-140; (vi) Ray, Ranjan. and Lancaster, Geoffrey. (2005), “The impact of children’s work on schooling: Multi-country evidence”. *International Labour Review*, 144: 189-210.

23 Conversely the relative share over total population is bound to decrease due to an increase in the total population.

► **Table 3. Children population by age bracket - April 2021**

	Total (headcount and share of total population)			Urban (headcount and share of total population)		Rural (headcount and share of total population)	
Total	Total population	427,848	100.0%	190,951	100.0%	236,897	100.0%
	Under 6	50,297	11.8%	21,279	11.1%	29,018	12.2%
	13 - 14	16,799	3.9%	6,592	3.5%	10,207	4.3%
	15 - 17	27,316	6.4%	10,155	5.3%	17,161	7.2%
	5 - 12	70,062	16.4%	28,161	14.7%	41,901	17.7%
	13 - 17	44,114	10.3%	16,747	8.8%	27,368	11.6%
	5-17	114,176	26.7%	44,908	23.5%	69,268	29.2%
Male	Total male population	214,001	100.0%	93,241	100.0%	120,761	100.0%
	Under 6	27,543	12.9%	11,610	12.5%	15,933	13.2%
	13 - 14	8,785	4.1%	3,262	3.5%	5,524	4.6%
	15 - 17	13,526	6.3%	4,905	5.3%	8,621	7.1%
	5 - 12	36,271	16.9%	14,246	15.3%	22,024	18.2%
	13 - 17	22,311	10.4%	8,167	8.8%	14,144	11.7%
	5-17	58,582	27.4	22,413	24.0	36,169	30.0
Female	Total Female Population	213,847	100.0%	97,711	100.0%	116,136	100.0%
	Under 6	22,754	10.6%	9,669	9.9%	13,085	11.3%
	13 - 14	8,013	3.7%	3,330	3.4%	4,684	4.0%
	15 - 17	13,790	6.4%	5,250	5.4%	8,540	7.4%
	5 - 12	33,791	15.8%	13,915	14.2%	19,877	17.1%
	13 - 17	21,803	10.2%	8,580	8.8%	13,223	11.4%
	5-17	55,595	26.0%	22,495	23.0%	33,100	28.5%
Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, Labour Force Survey, April 2021							

► **Figure 1. Population (age 0 to 19) growth projections, 2025-2035**



Source: World Population Prospects 2019, Online Edition. Rev. 1. Projection variant: "No change"

## Child activity indicators (2001-2013)

► **Table 4. Summary child activity indicators (survey-based point estimates) 2001-2013**

Indicator	Year			
	2001 <sup>24</sup>		2013 <sup>25</sup>	
Total children aged 5-17 (headcount)	Total		Total	
	79,061		109,990	
	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
	40,162	38,898	56,054	53,936
Children aged 5-17 attending school (% of the total population)	Total		Total	
	86.1%		88.5%	
	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girl</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girl</b>
	85.7%	86.5%	88.6%	88.4%
Children (5 -17 years old) in employment (headcount and % out of total children population)	Total		Total	
	8,581 10.9%		5,188 4.7%	
	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girl</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girl</b>
	5,781 14.4%	2,800 7.2%	3,629 6.7%	1,360 2.7%
	Total <sup>27</sup>		Total <sup>28</sup>	
Child labour (underage or hazardous work) rate (headcount and % out of total children population) <sup>26</sup>	5,578 7.0%		3,528 3.2%	
	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girl</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girl</b>
	4,145 10.3%	1,433 3.7%	2,869 5.1%	659 1.2%
	Total (<14 years old)		Total (<12 years old)	
Underage work (headcount and % out of total children in child labour)	3,032 54.4%		147 4.2%	
	Total		Total	
Children in hazardous employment (not underage) (headcount and % out of total children in child labour)	2,546 45.6%		3,381 95.8%	
	Total <sup>29</sup>		Total <sup>30</sup>	
Children engaged in household chores (5-17 years) for over 14 hrs /week) (Headcount and % of total population)	3,558 4.5%		7,332 6.6%	
	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girl</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girl</b>
	978 2.4%	2580 6.6%	2,618 4.6%	4,714 8.7%
	Total		Total	
Total children engaged in child labour or household chores for over 14 (10) hours weekly (Headcount and % of total population)	9,166 11.6%		10,860 9.8%	
	Elaboration based on ILO (2004): "Summary of the results of the child activity survey in Belize" and ILO (2015): "Report on the National Child Activity Survey – Belize 2013 / International Labour Organization, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), Statistical Institute of Belize - Geneva: ILO.			

24 Data for 2001 are elaborated from ILO (2004): "Summary of the results of the child activity survey in Belize".

25 Data for 2013 are elaborated from ILO (2015): "Report on the National Child Activity Survey – Belize 2013 / International Labour Organization, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), Statistical Institute of Belize - Geneva: ILO.

26 Includes only children who are "economically active", i.e., who are working and engaged in economic activities (excluding housekeeping activities).

27 The following groups of children are considered child labourers by ILO (2004): working children between 5 and 17 years in mining and quarrying; construction; electricity, gas and water supply; and transport, storage and communications; working children between 5 and 17 years who work in shifts between 5pm and 8pm or between 8pm and 5am; working children between 5 and 17 years who use tools, equipment or machinery as part of their work; working children below 12 years of age; working children between 12 and 13 years who work more than two hours a day on average.

- Drawing from the latest CAS (2001 and 2013), Table 3 allows the highlighting of two notable findings.
  - On the one hand, despite some issues of comparability between 2001 and 2013, the incidence of child labour seemed to decline, even halving if the figures concerning potentially excessive hours of household chores are not considered.
  - On the other, especially in 2013, the issue of child labour seemed to be mainly one of engagement of boys in hazardous work rather than one of underage work. Specifically, ILO (2015:55) states “Age-wise, the majority (84.5 per cent; 2,981) of child labourers were between the ages of 14 and 17 years” and that “more than three-quarters (77.3 per cent) of working boys were involved in hazardous work, compared to about two out of every five (42.4 per cent) working girls”.
  
- The 2013 CAS report underscores some additional elements most likely still valid to inform the present policy, including:
  - **Child labour and employment.** ILO (2015:55): “in 2013, the vast majority (70.7 per cent; 3,528) of working children were victims of child labour, both by virtue of their age and their involvement in hazardous work”. This meant that once a child engaged in an economic activity, it was highly likely that activity entailed child labour. In terms of potential determinants of employment ILO (2015:63) identified nonattendance of school as the single most significant feature associated with employment. Age (increase), sex (male), living in a single male led household, low level of education of parents, residence in Cayo, Toledo and Belize (in that order) and in rural areas were also significantly associated with an increase in the likelihood of being employed. With regards to ethnicity, children of Maya and Mestizo descent were less likely to be employed than Creole children.
  - **Gender differences.** ILO (2015:55): “Boys formed the bulk of the child labour victims – 81.3 per cent (2,869) of all child labourers were boys”.
  - **Geographical and ethnic differences.** ILO (2015: 55): “four out of every five (2,822) child labourers resided in the rural areas”. Moreover “Three out of every five working children (60.6 per cent) who lived in the urban areas were victims of child labour, compared to almost three-quarters (73.8 per cent) of the working children who lived in the rural areas”. In terms of district, it appeared that children appeared most vulnerable in certain districts: “Corozal had the largest share of the children who were victims of child labour (23.5 per cent; 830), while another 17 per cent (610) resided in Toledo, and about 15 per cent (525) in

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28 The 2013 survey considered as child labourers all the 5- to 11-year-olds involved in economic activities and those involved in designated hazardous occupations and industries. The difference in age limit with respect to the 2001 survey is due to the implementation of the international standards for measuring child labour (implemented in 2008). Despite the discrepancies, given the fact that most of the children engaged in child labour seem to be engaged in hazardous work (rather than underage work) some level of comparability is maintained.

29 ILO (2004) and ILO (2015) do not consider excessive hours to perform household chores as child labour. The latter may, however, represent hazardous unpaid household services, commonly referred to as hazardous household chores. The practice to include hazardous household chores as part of child labour statistics started more recently but, it is worth noting, statistical standards for measuring child labour in household chores are less developed and subject to national choices. Amongst others, the threshold considered may vary with the age of the child (older children being allowed higher number of weekly hours performing household chores without being considered in hazardous household chores). ILO and UNICEF (2020) utilize the threshold of 21 hours or more per week to measure child labour prevalence. Unsurprisingly, the inclusion of hazardous household chores as part of child labour increases the overall rates for both sexes, but generally, the rise in female child labour is much larger.

30 Includes children engaged in household chores for over 10 hour a week. ILO (2015:90) noted that this value includes “one per cent of children did in excess of 40 hours of household chores”.

Orange Walk. Almost nine out of every ten (85.5 per cent) working children in Toledo were child labourers, compared to approximately seven out of every ten in Corozal and Orange Walk. Additionally, Toledo had the largest proportion (85.5 per cent) of working children in hazardous occupations, followed by Corozal (72 per cent) and Orange Walk (68 per cent)". Concerning the ethnic groups, "the Mennonites had the highest child labour rate at 9.5 per cent, two and a half times as high as any other ethnic group. Approximately 4 per cent of Maya children were victims of child labour, as well as 3.3 per cent of children who were of Mestizo/Hispanic descent".

- **Occupation and industry of employment.** The 2013 CAS provides some insights into the occupations of child labourers, their industry of employment and the inherent or actual dangers. Those are summarized in Table 5 below:

► **Table 5. Occupations of child labours (excerpts from Child Activity Survey 2013)**

Girls	Boys
Kitchen helpers, cooks and assistant cooks (exposing them to gas and open flames, extreme temperatures, and dangerous tools).	Work as divers or fishermen (inherently dangerous for the danger of drowning and the use of potentially dangerous tools such as anchors, fish traps, chipping hammers and spears as a matter of course, as well as carry heavy loads). Losses of limbs were reported.
Poultry slaughterers, chicken helpers or banana scalers (exposing them to sharp knives, mechanical scalers, in unhealthy environments).	"Gas man", to pump fuel (exposing them to hazardous conditions).
Farm labourers (use of dangerous tools such as machetes and hoes). Papaya processing was reportedly combined with unhealthy working environments (loud noise/vibrations, insufficient ventilation, extreme temperatures and the use of chemicals, absence of breaks, confinement in the workplace, abuse).	Employment in sales subjecting them to carry heavy loads.
	Employment as subsistence farmers or farm helpers, mainly in the planting of corn, rice and beans, or as livestock farmers, raising cows and chickens. This entailed carrying heavy loads, using dangerous tools as well as exposure to chemicals. Work as common labourers in the agricultural sector mostly had to deal with the cleaning of the cane or citrus fields and farms.
	Carpenters, mason-helpers or construction workers had to carry heavy loads and they were using potentially dangerous tools such as power saws, shavers, sanders, power drills, skill saws, sandblasting machines, hammers and chisels and were as well exposed to dust/fumes, loud noise/vibrations and extreme temperatures.
	Operators of heavy equipment such as tractors, cement mixers and bulldozers often accompanied by exposure to loud noise/vibrations and exposure to extreme heat/cold.  Welders, mechanics, and mechanic's helpers entailing exposure to dust/fumes, fire/gas/open flames, as well as loud noise/vibration (loss of a limb reported).
	Packers (bananas, at the corn-mill, the wholesale depot, conch and lobster) entailing work in water, and in insufficiently ventilated areas, while exposed to dust/fumes and loud noises/ vibrations.

- Status in employment. A key element to designing effective policy responses is the identification of the employment status of children. ILO (2015: 41) highlights that amongst the children in employment (i.e., not necessarily in child labour) the majority (58.1 per cent) were employed as salaried workers, about one third (33 per cent) were employed as contributing family workers (i.e., in family enterprises) and unsurprisingly a small but not insignificant share (8.9 per cent) were self-employed. This data has implications pertaining to the targeting of policy interventions. If over half of children work for a third-party, employers need to be involved in any intervention and similarly, the high number of children working in family enterprises has significant consequences.
- School attendance. ILO 2015 found that almost all 5- to 13-year-old children were attending school, while a significant proportion of the 14- to 17-year-olds were not attending. Further, there seemed to be a greater proportion of urban than rural children attending school, and, amongst the working children, males were more likely than girls to be out of school. Given the strong linkage between school attendance and employment (and between employment and child labour), any element impacting on school attendance is likely to impact on child labour.
- Extreme vulnerability. The 2013 CAS evidenced some situations of extreme vulnerability. For instance, some children (estimated at 70) were reportedly engaged in household chores for over 40 hours per week and some others (80) were found to be working, studying, and doing household chores in excess of 10 hours per week.
- Household size: households which had working children were larger than households where there were no working children.

## Child activity indicators 2018 to present

- **Employment and school attendance of 14- to 17-year-old children (2018-2021).** In the absence of specific data on children's activity, the LFS conducted biannually by the SIB sheds some light on labour market participation for children between 14 and 17 years of age, including some indicators which may signal involvement in child labour.<sup>31</sup>

31 According to International Labour Standards, while children over the minimum age (14 in the case of Belize) can be legally employed, they should not be engaged in any of the worst forms of child labour including, hazardous child labour. Children over the age of 14 should only be engaged in non-hazardous work: hazardous work is any work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children (in accordance with Article 3 (d) of Convention No. 182). This includes, for example, work underground, under water, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces; work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads; work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health; or work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer (Paragraph 3 of the Worst Forms of Child Labour Recommendation, 1999 (No. 190)).

► **Table 6. Population 14 to 17 years old by employment status, sex and geographical area 2018, 2019 and 2021 (April)**

Status	Apr-21						Apr-19						Apr-18						
	Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural		Status	Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural		Status	Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural
Total	34,982	17,192	17,790	12,833	22,149		Total	37,358	18,999	18,359	15,807	21,551		Total	36,788	19,031	17,757	15,027	21,760
Employed	6,097	4,152	1,946	1,929	4,169		Employed	5,982	4,123	1,859	1,208	4,774		Employed	5,094	3,806	1,289	1,495	3,600
Employment to population ratio	17.4	24.1	10.9	15.0	18.8		Employment to population ratio	16.0	21.7	10.1	7.6	22.1		Employment to population ratio	13.8	20.0	7.3	9.9	16.5
Unemployed	1,336	818	518	429	907		Unemployed	1,509	775	735	412	1,098		Unemployed	2,204	1,121	1,083	618	1,585
Unemployment rate	18.0	16.5	21.0	18.2	17.9		Unemployment rate	20.1	15.8	28.3	25.4	18.7		Unemployment rate	30.2	22.8	45.7	29.3	30.6
PNLF	27,362	12,036	15,326	10,476	16,887		PNLF	29,829	14,064	15,765	14,187	15,642		PNLF	29,315	13,930	15,385	12,775	16,540
% of population outside the labour force	78.2	70.0	86.1	81.6	76.2		% of population outside the labour force	79.8	74.0	85.9	89.8	72.6		% of population outside the labour force	79.7	73.2	86.6	85.0	76.0
DK/NS	186	186	-	-	186		DK/NS	38	38	-	-	38		DK/NS	175	175	-	139	36

Source: Statistical Institute of Belize, Labour Force Survey, April 2018, 2019 and 2021

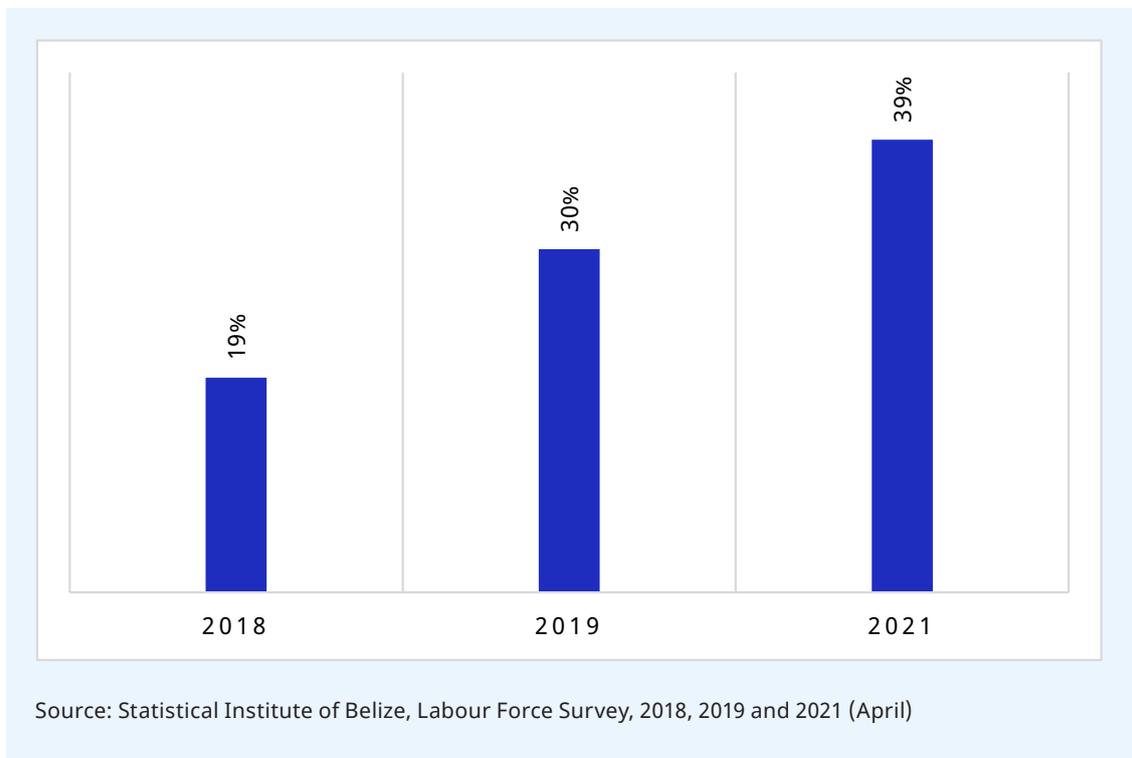
- The main finding from the analysis of the evolution of the labour market status over the past three years (Table 6) is the marked increase in the number of 14 to 17-year-old children employed (5,094 in 2018 versus approximately 6,000 over 2019 and 2021)<sup>32</sup> accompanied by an increase in the employment to population rate (17.4 per cent in 2021 vs 13.8 per cent in 2018). Through child labour lenses, these trends have two main implications:
  - **the potential number of children at risk of engaging in hazardous work has been increasing over the past years. Recalling from the 2013 CAS that most employed children of that age were child labourers (working in hazardous conditions) it clearly appears that an increase in employment is likely to have been accompanied by an increase in child labour. If - for indicative purposes only - we were to apply to the ratio of children in hazardous employment over the total children in employment from the 2013 CAS (65.2 per cent) to the figures for 2021, that would result in 3,972 children in hazardous labour.**
  - It is likely that the COVID-19 crisis has pushed more young children into employment, to contribute to meeting household needs. The latter finding has an added nuance. While the percentage of 14 to 17 years old outside the labour force has decreased, so has the percentage of unemployed ones. Assuming constant (or even negative) labour demand due to the economic downturn, children may be pushed into jobs with suboptimal conditions thus being potentially more exposed to the risk of hazardous employment.
- Noteworthy is also the repartition (and associated child labour risk) by sex and geographical location. Consistently with the data from the child activity surveys, 14 to 17 years old males employed (4,152 in April 2021) outnumber females (1,946) and also the number of those employed in rural areas (4,169) versus in urban areas (1,929).

Figures 2 and 3 present other potentially significant insights. On the one hand, the share of 14 to 17 years old who are simultaneously employed and attending school is significant. Such share has been increasing over the past years peaking in 2021 (39 per cent). While (at least in 2021) distance learning may have somehow enabled employment, the marked increase may have two implications: potential negative impact on educational performance<sup>33</sup> and confirmation of the finding that the COVID-19 crisis pushed more children into employment even amongst those enrolled in school.

32 The child activity survey indicated the 14 to 17 years old were 4,408 in 2013 (14.1 per cent employment to population rate).

33 Regarding Belize, ILO (2003: xxi) noted that “children who combine work and school have a tendency to leave school prematurely”. International literature confirms this finding. See for example Peter Orazem and Victoria Gunnarsson (2003) “Child labour, school attendance and academic performance: a review” Working Paper - International Labour Office, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), M.E. G. Bezerra, A.L. Kassouf and M. Arends-Kuenning (2009) “The Impact of Child Labour and School Quality on Academic Achievement in Brazil”, IZA Discussion Paper No. 4062 March; (2008) L. Guarcello, S. Lyon, F.C. Rosati (2008) “Child labour and Education for All: an issue paper” Working Paper UCW WORKING PAPER SERIES and Friedrich Huebler (2008) Child labour and school attendance: Evidence from MICS and DHS surveys” paper presented at Seminar on child labour, education and youth employment, Understanding Children’s Work Project, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid Madrid, 11-12 September 2008.

► **Figure 2. Population 14 to 17 years old currently employed and attending school (2018, 2019, 2021, April)**

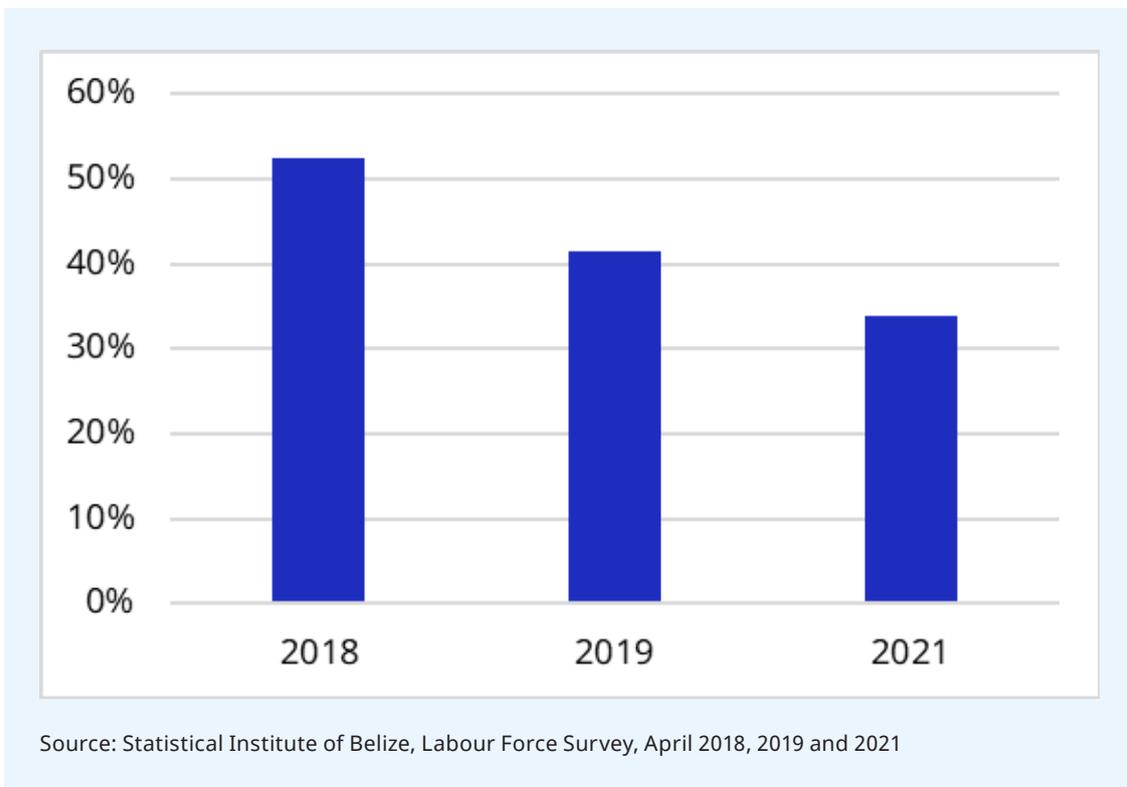


► While there is no conclusive evidence that the children newly employed were engaged in child labour, Figure 3 provides analysis of one specific element: the evolution of the share of 14 to 17 years old who were employed for over 40 hours weekly.<sup>34</sup> Such share has been decreasing over the past years. While the decrease over 2021 may be attributed to mobility constraints linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, the fact that such a trend began in 2019 could be interpreted positively. At the same time, the fact that over 30 per cent of the employed 14 to 17 years old are working long hours<sup>35</sup>, and therefore may be engaged in hazardous work, remains troublesome.

34 Recall that the 2020 ILO-UNICEF Global Estimates of Child Labour excessive working hours performed for 43 or more hours per week are considered as hazardous work.

35 Paragraph 3 of ILO Recommendation No. 190 identifies work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours as type of hazardous work.

- **Figure 3. Share of 14 to 17 years old employed for over 40 hours weekly (2018, 2019, 2021, April)**



## Education trends 2016 onward

Expanding on the information presented in the educational profile section in Chapter 1 above, Table 7 presents a breakdown of the evolution of key enrolment and completion indicators by gender for the period 2016 onward.

► **Table 7. Education trends**

Indicator		2015/16		2016/17		2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
		No.	%								
Primary school enrollment	Total	68,084		67,298		66,465		65,993		66,465	
	Boys	35,296		34,790		34,439		34,079		33,677	
	Girls	32,788		22,508		32,026		31,914		31,305	
Primary school repeaters	Total	3,987	5.9	3,991	5.9	4,175	6.3				
	Boys	2,466	7.0	2,520	7.2	2,573	7.5				
	Girls	1,521	4.6	1,471	4.5	1,602	5.0				
Primary school drop-out	Total	448	0.7	387	0.6	439	0.7				
	Boys	273	0.8	253	0.7	262	0.8				
	Girls	175	0.5	134	0.4	177	0.6				
Primary school completion rate	Total		77.2		81.1		-				
	Boys		73.6		78		-				
	Girls		81.1		84.3		-				
Transition rate	Total	6,145	84.2	6153	85.6	6,190	83.9	6,195	84.6	6109	85.3
	Boys	3,002	82.7	3,080	85.5	3,022	81.9	3,020	82.5	3,033	84
	Girls	3,143	85.7	3,073	85.7	3,168	85.8	3,175	86.7	3,076	86.6
Secondary school enrollment	Total	22,112		22,036		22,027		22,313		22,280	
	Male	10,537		10,527		10,426		10,631		10,662	
	Female	11,575		11,509		11,601		11,682		11,618	
Secondary school repeaters	Total	1,445	6.5	1,319	6.0	1,282	5.8				
	Male	844	8	777	7.4	773	7.4				
	Female	601	5.2	542	4.7	509	4.4				
Secondary school drop-out	Total	1,498	6.8	1,247	5.7	974	4.4				
	Male	823	7.8	697	6.6	503	4.8				
	Female	675	5.8	550	4.8	471	4.1				
Secondary school completion rate	Total		64		66.7		66.2		69.0		
	Male		59.3		61.2		60.4		63.6		
	Female		68.5		72.0		71.4		74.2		

Source: MOE Abstract-of-Education-Statistics-2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, 2019/20

The following can be gleaned from the educational data presented in Table 7:

- A slight decline in numbers enrolled in primary school over the period 2016-2020, with boys enrolling in higher numbers than girls.
- Primary school repetition increased slightly over the period 2016-2018, with boys posting consistently higher repetition rates compared to girls.
- Primary school drop-out rates remained essentially unchanged over the period 2016-2018, however boy drop-out rates were higher.
- Over the period 2016-2017 primary school completion rates increased slightly, with more girls completing than boys.
- Primary to secondary school transition rates for the period 2016-2020 remained around 85 per cent, with girls recording slightly higher rates.
- Numbers of children enrolled in secondary school for the period 2016-2020 has shown little variation over the period, but a greater number of girls enrolled annually persists, around 4 per cent more than boys.
- Secondary school repeaters and drop-outs over the period 2016-2018 decreased, however boys still repeated and dropped out at slightly higher rates than girls.
- Secondary school completion rates increased from 64 to 69 per cent over the period 2016-2019.

The above confirms that educational outcomes are seemingly gendered, with additional rural/urban disparities. Despite greater numbers of boys being enrolled in primary school, they dropped out and repeated at higher rates and completed and transitioned to secondary school at lower rates. At secondary school level, despite girls being in the majority, boys again dropped out and repeated at higher rates. This continuing scenario has implications for the numbers of children, particularly boys in rural areas, potentially found to be in child labour.

Also, interesting to highlight is the potential impact of the level of education on wages. An Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) study<sup>36</sup> demonstrated that primary education was not significantly different from no education at all with secondary education only affording a slightly higher wage increase of 3.2 per cent. Indeed, in 2020, 37.6 per cent of the labour force possessed only primary education, whilst 13 per cent possessed none.<sup>37</sup> Such circumstances have implications regarding the 'value' of a primary, and even secondary education in terms of a child's earning potential on leaving school.

In summary, gendered path and the relative low return on additional years of schooling after primary and before secondary, seem to support the narrative regarding employment and child labour being a predominantly boys' problem: as boys perform worse in primary and secondary school and are at higher risk of dropping out, they become employed and at risk of child labour significantly more so than girls. This was true in 2013 and is likely to have remained valid since 2016.

## Additional education data

An often meaningful indicator for the sake of determining the extent of the child labour challenge is education truancy, defined as any intentional, unjustified, unauthorized, or illegal absence from compulsory education. While not exclusively linked to child labour and potentially related to a range of family level challenges, truancy data could shed light on the risk of underage work. Table 8 presents reported primary school truancy data for four districts over the past four school years.

36 Challenges and Opportunities in the Belize Education Sector, IDB, 2013.

37 Labour Force Survey, September 2020, Statistical Institute of Belize.

► **Table 8. Truancy indicators, 2017-2021**

District	Number of cases											
	Period											
	2017-2018			2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021		
	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
Cayo	316 (of which 271 are absentees)	271 (of which 242 are absentees)	204 (of which 188 are absentees)	258 (of which 225 are absentees)	147 (of which 125 are absentees)	111 (of which 100 are absentees)	178 (of which 150 are absentees)	104 (of which 91 are absentees)				
Corozal				509	237	272	585	286	299	749	365	384
Orange Walk	180	90	90	138	78	60	70	44	26			
Stann Creek	496	260	236	571	307	264						
<b>Percentages</b>												
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Cayo	17,060	8,893	8,176	17,021	8,793	8,228						
Truancy as a percentage of school enrolment	1.85*			1.52*								
Corozal	8,044	4,231	3,813	7,913	4,091	3,822						
Truancy as a percentage of school enrolment				6.43								
Orange Walk	9,568	4,959	4,492	9,451	4,959	4,492						
Truancy as a percentage of school enrolment	1.89			1.4								
Stann Creek	9,451	4,959	4,492	7,601	3,936	3,666						
Truancy as a percentage of school enrolment	5.2			7.5								
*Percentages calculated through adding absentees and truants recorded.												
Source: Truancy Reports for Cayo, Corozal, Orange Walk and Stann Creek obtained from the Ministry of Education. Percentages calculated through adding absentees and truants recorded.												

The following can be gleaned from the data:

- Though the data doesn't encompass all six districts of Belize, the four districts still demonstrate a disparity in truancy rates.
- Over the period 2018-2019, the only period when all four districts can be compared, Corozal and Stann Creek have rates approximately three times higher than those of Cayo and Orange Walk districts. Of note is the fact that the Sugar Belt spans the Orange Walk and Corozal districts, yet these have contrasting truancy rates. This may be related to recent initiatives under the Fairtrade International umbrella and the awareness raising consultations carried out within the framework of the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) CLEAR II project in those districts (see Table 13).
- In the district of Orange Walk, child labour was cited as a reason for truancy for only ten<sup>38</sup> of the 180 cases reported in 2017-2018.
- In Cayo, most truant students were noted<sup>39</sup> to be from neighbouring Guatemala with students returning to Guatemala when challenged with their truancy.
- In Cayo it was noted that truants comprise those from rural villages and the truancy occurred mainly during the harvest season with students assisting parents in the field and selling crops<sup>40</sup>.
- Other reasons for truancy across all four districts were lack of adequate food/clothing money (poverty), unexpected illness (parental and child), undocumented transfers and transportation access.<sup>41</sup>
- In summary, educational truancy appears to be a sizable issue although data cannot confirm that child labour is the main contributory factor. The latter, however, most likely plays a role in rural areas, and for migrant children.

## Impact of COVID-19 crisis

Although hard to confirm with data, there is strong anecdotal evidence that the COVID-19 crisis has had (or will have) an impact on child labour, worsening its incidence. ILO and UNICEF (2020)<sup>42</sup> reviewed the literature concerning previous crises and their impact on child labour, discussing some of the main channels of influence. Notwithstanding the fact that most of those channels are connected, there are lessons to be singled out for the Belize case.

In 2018, Belize recorded a national poverty rate of 52 per cent which has probably increased through the disruption of global supply chains, manufacturing processes and travel, all of which have increased the global and local economic insecurity. These phenomena have negative impacts on the Belize economy, particularly in agriculture and tourism, two of the largest sectors of employment, resulting in reduced employment and further stress on the Government's social protection system. Moreover, because of the global economic crisis, associated losses in remittances that, in 2020, contributed to

38 Truancy Reports for Orange Walk, 2017-2020, obtained from the Ministry of Education.

39 Truancy Reports for Cayo 2018-2020, obtained from the Ministry of Education.

40 Ibid.

41 Truancy Reports for Cayo, Corozal, Orange Walk and Stann Creek obtained from the Ministry of Education.

42 ILO and UNICEF (2020) "COVID-19 and child labour: A time of crisis, a time to act".

6.8 per cent of the country's GDP<sup>43</sup>, are also speculated to have occurred. The aforementioned factors are all likely to contribute to a rise in the country's poverty rate that inevitably impacts child labour. Indeed, past studies demonstrated that a one percentage point rise in poverty leads to at least a 0.7 percentage point increase in child labour<sup>44</sup>.

The declines in trade and reduced employment opportunities will also have given rise to lower living standards, demonstrated to worsen child labour<sup>45</sup>; whilst the reduction in parental labour market opportunities, with attendant wage reduction and expansion of the informal sector, are expected to increase the vulnerability of children becoming engaged in exploitative or hazardous work.

As Belize adjusts to the pandemic and imposed restrictions are lifted, the demands of the tourism market and agricultural productivity should increase, and in turn, likely raise child labour rates. Both sectors are indeed major employers of relatively unskilled labour with studies showing that unskilled labour-intensive exports discourage education and promote child labour<sup>46</sup>.

School closure also appears to have had negative effects on child labour rates. School dropout rates are likely to have increased - a result of diminished household income converging with increased pressure on children to contribute to household finances or through a greater allocation of household chores, primarily to girls. The latter was also likely exacerbated by the 'digital divide' linked to lack of infrastructure or access to technology required for participation in online schooling which could have geographic as well as economic dimensions. In Belize City there have been anecdotal reports<sup>47</sup> of an increase in children begging or selling on the City's streets, including those younger than 14 years of age. Moreover, many working children could be required to work longer hours or become more vulnerable to working in hazardous conditions.

Finally, the impact of COVID-19 deaths on families is hard to qualify, but it is understood that the loss of a parent or grandparent (or guardian) previously employed could force children within the household into child labour.

In summary, the COVID-19 pandemic and associated mitigation measures have resulted in labour markets damaged by disruption in trade along global supply chains, massive capital outflows and job losses. The consequent increase in poverty converging with school closure has increased children's vulnerability to child labour, including exposure to hazardous work and the worst forms of child labour.

## Worst forms of child labour

An absence of systematically collected data exists concerning the worst forms of child labour in Belize. However, existing studies, reports and anecdotal evidence, including the feedback collected for the elaboration of the present policy, suggest that the worst forms of child labour are found in Belize and notably include commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.<sup>48</sup>

43 <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=BZ>.

44 [COVID-19 and child labour: A time of crisis, a time to act - UNICEF DATA](#).

45 Davies, R. B., and A. Voy, 'The effect of FDI on child labour', *Journal of Development Economics*, vol. 88, no. 1, 2009, pp. 59–66.

46 Blanchard, E. J., and W. W. Olney (2017) 'Globalization and human capital Investment: Export composition drives educational attainment', *Journal of International Economics*, vol. 106, 2017, pp. 165–183.

47 Key informant interviews.

48 Findings on the worst forms of child labor: Belize (2020) United States Department of Labor, 2020.

Belize is recognized as being a destination for child sexual exploitation, with children trafficked in areas frequented by tourists or seasonal workers, including San Pedro, Punta Gorda, and Belize City.<sup>49</sup> Two other trafficking trends identified are the ‘Sugar Daddy<sup>50</sup>’ and ‘Fichera<sup>51</sup>’ phenomena. Further, boys from the South Side of Belize City, and San Pedro, have been reported to be involved in the transportation and selling of drugs as well as the sale and use of firearms in the control of drug blocks and gang turf.<sup>53</sup>

Moreover, this appears to be supported by data presented in Table 9 on minors (children under 16) arrested, by district, and the crimes for which they were arrested.

► **Table 9. Number of minors (Under 16 years of age) arrested, May 2018-September 2021**

	District																							
	Belize				Cayo				Corozal				Orange Walk				Stann Creek				Toledo			
	May-Dec 2018	2019	2020	2021	May - Dec 2018	2019	2020	2021	May - Dec 2018	2019	2020	2021	May - Dec 2018	2019	2020	2021	May - Dec 2018	2019	2020	2021	May - Dec 2018	2019	2020	2021
Major crime	21	29	15	8	6	11	1	4	3	4		1	1	3	7	1	18	2	7	2	1		2	1
Drugs	7	25	19	8	16	16	4	5	5	7	3	7	4		6	8	4	5	10	2	1	2	2	
Firearms	5	15	15	12	2	5	3	7	1	2	1				1	4	1	2	4				1	

Source: Own elaboration from data obtained from Joint Intelligence Coordinating Centre, Belize Police Department

The data above, although not disaggregated by sex, indicates Belize District, when compared to the other districts, as having a considerable number of children under the age of 16 being arrested for major crimes<sup>54</sup>, drugs and firearms offences. Only the Stann Creek district has shown similar figures, and this was for one period, May – December 2018. Such data has implications for future targeted child labour interventions, notably those aimed at eliminating the worst forms of child labour.

49       ibid.

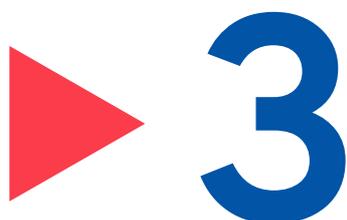
50       Relatively wealthy, often older, males who engage in sexually exploitative relationships with children (frequently girls) in exchange for cash payments, the payment of school fees or the purchasing of groceries.

51       Findings on the worst forms of child labour: Belize (2020) United States Department of Labor, 2020.

52       Men pay a higher price to drink in the company of young women (and girl children) who work in bars. The practice has been identified as a gateway introduction to prostitution. See Joy Ngozi Ezeilo (2013), Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, on her mission to Belize (12-16 December 2013). Available [here](#).

53       Findings on the worst forms of child labour: Belize (2020) United States Department of Labor, 2020.

54       Major crimes encompassed murder, rape, and assault with a weapon.



# Legislative and Policy framework

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## Belize adherence to international treaties on child labour

In 2003, Belize achieved a crucial millstone by ratifying the last of the six essential international Conventions that address child labour (Table 10). By ratification, Belize took the obligation to ensure that its statutory laws and policies are fully aligned with the Conventions and all required actions are taken to guarantee their implementation.

### ► Table 10 Key International Conventions concerning child labour ratified by Belize

International Convention	Date of entry into force	Date of ratification by Belize
ILO Convention No. 138, Minimum Age	June 19, 1976	06 Mar 2000 - minimum age specified: 14 years
United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child <sup>55</sup>	September 2, 1989	02 May 1990
ILO Convention No 182, Worst Forms of Child Labour	November 19, 2000	06 Mar 2000
Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	25 December 2003	26 Sep 2003 (accession)
UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	January 18, 2002	01 Dec 2003
UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	February 12, 2002	01 Dec 2003

<sup>55</sup> This Convention defines children as being persons under 18 years of age and that such persons must be allowed to grow, learn, play, develop and flourish with dignity. Three articles are particularly pertinent to the issue of child labour:

**Article 28:** refers, in part, to a State's responsibility to provide free, compulsory, primary education for all children.

**Article 31:** refers, in part, to the child's right to rest and leisure.

**Article 32:** addresses directly, the issue of child labour, stating: "1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. 2. States Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of the present article. To this end and having regard to the relevant provisions of other international instruments, States Parties shall in particular: a. Provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment; b. Provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment; c. Provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article."

Other international labour standards with provisions relating to child labour include the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006) (ratified by Belize in 2014), the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) (not ratified by Belize), which includes the specific objective of contributing to the effective abolition of child labour amongst domestic workers and the Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184) (not ratified by Belize), which prohibits hazardous work in agriculture for persons under 18 years of age.

Adopting the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development in 2015, Belize committed to “take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025, end child labour in all its forms” as stated by Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals which is linked to several others, including Target 16.2 aimed at ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children, Goal 1 on poverty, Goal 4 on Education and Goal 5 on ending violence against women and girls and gender equality, including harmful practices.

## National legislation on child labour

Several legislative provisions within the Belize legal apparatus deal directly or indirectly with the child labour issue. Table 11 summarizes those.

► **Table 11. Summary national legislation of relevance to the child labour issue**

Legal instrument	Year law came into force	Relevance
National Constitution	1981	There is clear reference to labour neither being exploited nor forced nor undertaken in inhumane conditions. Further, children, no matter their social status, should be afforded equal protection and access to health services and education.
Labour Act: Chapter 297 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition, 2020	1960	Governs relations between employer and employee. It was amended in 2020 – although the amendments do not have an impact on the provisions related to child labour. Establishes the minimum age for employment as 14 years, specifically, according to section 164(1) of the Labour Act, no person shall employ a child (a person under the age of 14 years, as defined under section 2) in a public or private “industrial undertaking” or in a branch thereof. However, section 169 is in direct conflict with and appears to make an exception to section 164, as it provides for children who are 12 years of age to work in under specific conditions, including in occupations that are not likely to be injurious to their life, limb, health or education, provided that this work is performed for no more than two hours on school days or Sundays and is not performed before the end of school hours or at night, in conformity with Article 7(4) of the ILO C.138. Moreover, section 170 provides that the Minister may establish regulations authorizing the employment of children under the age of twelve years, notwithstanding anything in section 169(a) of the Act, by their parents or guardians in light agricultural or horticultural work on their parents’ or guardians’ lands or gardens only. Section 163 requires every employer who employs persons under the age of 18 to keep a register of the names, dates of birth and hours of work of those children.

► **Table 11. Summary national legislation of relevance to the child labour issue** *(continued)*

Legal instrument	Year law came into force	Relevance
The Shops Act Chapter 287 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition, 2020	1959	Amended in 1963, 1979 and 1999, provides under Section 3, for a minimum age of 14 years for employment in shops: “No person under the age of 14 years shall be employed in or about any shop”.
The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) (Prohibition) Act	No. 3 of 2013	<p>Defines commercial sexual exploitation to include the employment and other forms of exploitation of a child, (defined under section 2 as a person under the age of 18 years), and creates several offences and determines several penalties of up to life imprisonment, for persons who employ a child to engage in sexual intercourse or any other sexual activity with themselves or any other person. No amendments have been made to this Act since it came into force in 2013.</p> <p>The Ministry of Human development, Families and Indigenous People’s Affairs is currently reviewing the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2013 and the Commercial Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act, 2013 with the intention to repeal both Acts and replace them with one single Act.</p>
International Labour Organization Conventions Act Chapter 304:01 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition, 2020	2000	Gives the force of law to the ILO Conventions ratified by Belize and specifies that where a conflict arises between the provisions of this Act and the Labour Act, the provisions of the ILO Conventions Act shall prevail.
Families and Children Act Chapter 173 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition, 2020	1993	Defines a child as someone under the age of eighteen years and states that no child shall be employed or engaged in any activity that may be detrimental to their health, education, or mental, physical or moral development. No amendments have been made to this Act since it came into force in 1998.
Education and Training Act Chapter 36:01 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition, 2020	2010	Determines compulsory schooling between the ages of 5 and 14 years. It also states that all Government and all Government-aided primary schools should not charge tuition fees, moreover, all Government secondary schools should not charge tuition fees. However, special fees can be levied with the approval of the Chief Education Officer. No amendments have been made to this Act since it came into force in 2010.
Criminal Code Act Chapter 101 of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition, 2020	1981	<p>Section 47 (amended in 2014) of the Act provides for the offence of unlawful sexual intercourse with a child under the age of fourteen years, to be punishable by a term of not less than twelve years but which may be extended to life imprisonment.</p> <p>Section 49 (amended in 2014) states that it is an offence to procure a person to become a prostitute [...] punishable by imprisonment for a term of eight years [...] if you procure a child to have unlawful sexual intercourse or other sexual activity.</p>

► **Table 11. Summary national legislation of relevance to the child labour issue** (*continued*)

Legal instrument	Year law came into force	Relevance
Factories Act Cap 296, of the Substantive Laws of Belize, Revised Edition, 2020	1943	Provides a definition for “young person” under section 2 as a person who is aged 14 but has not attained the age of 18. The Act also provides for the Minister to make Regulations regarding the number of hours a week to be worked, the period of employment in any one day and the intervals for rest and meals for every young person employed in a factory and the requirement of a certificate of fitness for every such young person. No amendments have been made to this Act since its revision in 2011.
Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act (the Trafficking Act)	2013	The Act provides a definition of “exploitation” to include servitude, slavery and forced labour. The Act also provides a definition for “forced labour” and provides that, if found guilty of trafficking, the penalties range from imprisonment for three years to life imprisonment.  The Ministry of Human development, Families and Indigenous People’s Affairs is currently reviewing the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2013 and the Commercial Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act, 2013 with the intention to repeal both Acts and replace them with one single Act.
The Summary Jurisdiction (Offences) Act	2000	Establishes, inter-alia, the offences of keeping a brothel and trading on prostitution. It also criminalizes, inter-alia, any acts causing, procuring, or encouraging any child to beg or gather alms. Such a provision could be used to prosecute potential cases of trafficking of children for the purpose of forced begging.
Resolution DG-004 on the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC, 2006) of 1 May 2013 of the of the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE)	1999	Part B, Section 1, establishes a minimum age of 16 for engagement or work on board a ship, and prohibits the employment, engagement or work of seafarers under the age of 18 where the work is likely to jeopardize their health or safety. It further specifies that night work is prohibited to persons under 18, as is work as a ship’s cook.

- Recently, the Government recognized the need to update legislation pertaining to child labour. In 2018 the Government of Belize became beneficiary of the Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labour (CLEAR) USDOL funded project, often referred to as the CLEAR II project. As one of the project’s outputs, a multi-sector Legislation Review Committee (LRC) was established. The Committee reviewed all legislation pertinent to child labour issues with the intention to bring national laws into compliance with international standards. As a result, in 2019, the LRC produced recommendations<sup>56</sup> that identified amendments to 13 pieces of legislation to bring national laws into international compliance. Among the 13 Acts with identified amendments are the Labour Act, Chapter 297, with recommendations to include the definitions for a child, light work, hazardous work and the worst forms of child labour; and the Families and Children Act, Chapter 173, which includes the recommendation to remove the conditions for employment of a child and reference the definition of hazardous work in accordance with the Labour Act.

- The LRC recommendations were discussed by the LAB which approved those with some changes on 14 December 2021. It should be noted that the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government, intends to undertake a comprehensive review of the Labour Act with the intention of bringing that piece of legislation in line with internationally recognized standards.

## Implementation of international labour standards on child labour

In the supervision of the application of Conventions Nos 138 and 182 by Belize<sup>57</sup>, the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations<sup>58</sup> has made requests concerning the following legislative and application issues:

Regulatory:

- Ensuring that the minimum age applies to all sectors of employment or work (not limited to industrial undertakings (under the Labour Act) or shops (under the Shops Acts));
- Adoption of a list of types of hazardous work in laws or regulations (that is enforceable);
- Determination of types of light work activities, that is included in legislation or regulations;
- Requirement to ensure the keeping of a register of employment for persons under 18 in all sectors (and not only industrial undertakings, as currently specified in the Labour Act).
- Legislative prohibition of the involvement of a child in illicit activities, in conformity with Article 3(c) of Convention No. 182.

Implementation:

- Measures to ensure that, in practice, thorough investigations and robust prosecutions are carried out for persons who engage in the trafficking of children, and that sufficiently effective and dissuasive sanctions are imposed.
- Strengthened efforts to ensure the protection of children and adolescents under 18 years of age against the worst forms of child labour, particularly trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation and the engagement of children in hazardous work.

In addition, in its supervision of the MLC, 2006, the Committee of Experts noted, with respect to the implementation of Regulation 1.1 and Standard A1.1 (paragraph 4) of the Convention on minimum age, that the resolution DG-004 on the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 of 1 May 2013 of the International Merchant Marine Registry of Belize (IMMARBE) provides that no seafarer under the age of 18 shall be employed or engaged or work as a ship’s cook. The Committee of Experts recalled that, pursuant to Standard A1.1, paragraph 4, the types of work, which are likely to jeopardize the health and safety of seafarers shall be determined by national laws or regulations or by the competent authority, after consultation with the shipowners’ and seafarers’ organizations concerned. It requested the Government to indicate the measures taken to adopt the list of such types of work after consultation with shipowners’ and seafarers’ organizations.

## Relevant policies and programmes

Belize has several policies pertinent to the child labour issue. These are presented in Table 12.

<sup>57</sup> The most recent comments of the Committee of Experts on the application of these Conventions can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

<sup>58</sup> The Committee of Experts is a body of independent legal experts, with the task of providing an impartial and technical evaluation of the application of international labour standards in ILO member States.

► **Table 12. Summary national Policies relevant to the child labour issue**

Policy	Year	Key elements and relevance
National Plan of Action for Children and Families	2004-2015	<p>Sought to identify key programmes supporting children and subsequently promote their implementation through partnerships with Government and non-government sectors. One of six main areas of attention was the area of child protection. Target 2 of this area sought to prevent and eliminate the worst forms of child labour as defined by national and international legislation. Strategies and action encompassed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Amend the Labour Act to include provisions that address child labour issues.</li> <li>► Develop and implement protocol and regulations for all social service agencies to deal with the withdrawal and rehabilitation of children and adolescents engaged in the worst forms of child labour.</li> <li>► Strengthen the institutional capacity of the Labour Department and the other relevant social service providers to ensure enforcement of the Labour Act in relation to the provisions for child labour.</li> <li>► Strengthen programmes aimed at the prevention of child labour activities.</li> <li>► Develop and implement public awareness programmes addressing child labour issues.</li> </ul>
The National Children’s Agenda	2017-2030	<p>Builds on the National Plan of Action for Children and Families (2004-2015). It contains five national outcomes, each with four interconnected mutually reinforcing aims. National Outcome 3, Safe and Protected from Harm, notes that children and adolescents are also at risk of exploitation through pornography, prostitution, human trafficking, and labour exploitation.</p>
National Youth Development Policy	2012	<p>The aim of this Policy is to create an enabling and supportive environment that fosters improved well-being and quality of life for all Belizean Youth to enable a successful transition to adulthood. Within this Policy is a goal to ‘ensure young people are empowered’, which is supported by a priority area identified as ‘Lifelong Learning’. Under this priority area are several targets including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Reform the system for the allocation of financial resources to primary and secondary schools to facilitate greater access to school for young people across the country.</li> <li>► Expand the number of secondary school places, especially in rural communities.</li> <li>► Promote internet access across the country and provide access to online education for both children and adults. Develop alternate mechanisms for delivery of education - TV, radio, internet, modules delivered at alternative, non-traditional spaces</li> <li>► Expand access to adult and “second chance” educational opportunities, including vocational education for young people out of school.</li> <li>► Promote vocational education, agriculture education and other non-traditional education as viable education options.</li> </ul>

► **Table 12. Summary national Policies relevant to the child labour issue** *(continued)*

Policy	Year	Key elements and relevance
Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association (BSCFA) Youth Policy and Guidelines	2021	<p>To be developed in partnership with Fairtrade International, this Policy seeks to enable youth to access decent employment, skills development, and business opportunities. A youth working group consisting of farmers, farm workers and BSCFA staff will be convened. The group will be trained to conduct focus groups in the collection of information on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) supply and demand constraints and root causes facing youth in securing decent employment, skills development and/or business opportunities in agriculture; and</li> <li>b) The type, terms and conditions of agricultural work of youth who secured employment, skills development and/or business opportunities at BSCFA and members operations, including recommendations to make these better.<sup>59</sup></li> </ul> <p>The youth working group is expected to submit its draft policy to the BSCFA Management Committee. The Committee will, in turn, review, adjust and present it to the General Assembly for a formal ratification.<sup>60</sup></p>
Child Labour Policy	2009	<p>Priority areas of this Policy encompassed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Legislation and enforcement</li> <li>► Education and training</li> <li>► Awareness raising and advocacy</li> <li>► Employment and entrepreneurship</li> <li>► Living environment</li> <li>► Institutional strengthening/capacity building</li> <li>► Occupational safety and health; and</li> <li>► Protection, withdrawal and rehabilitation of victims.</li> </ul> <p>Amongst others, the 2009 National Child Labour Policy contained a list of hazardous occupations prohibited for children and adolescents. The latter was the basis for the elaboration of the list produced in 2019 by the LRC and subsequently approved by the LAB on 14 December 2021. While the two do not substantially differ, the LAB approved includes some more elements along the lines of “sector, subsector, task, why it is hazardous, whether or not there should be mitigation measures for 16–17-year-olds and requirements for mitigation (must include training and supervision)”. The Policy also included a comprehensive light work list broken down by sector. However, both lists were never integrated in any legislative provision.</p> <p>Since the Policy’s inception, there has been capacity building/training of various public officers, including Labour Inspectors, members of the protective services and Social Security Board Inspectors. Further, the Government and civil society stakeholders collaborated on a project to address child labour in the sugarcane industry.<sup>61</sup></p>

59 See Breaking Belize News article dated Thursday 17 June 2021 [here](#).

60 See Amandala Newspaper article dated Wednesday, 3 November 2021 [here](#).

61 Findings on the worst forms of child labour: Belize (2017) United States Department of Labor, 2017.

► **Table 12. Summary national Policies relevant to the child labour issue** *(continued)*

Policy	Year	Key elements and relevance
The Revised National Gender Policy	2013	<p>The revised Policy contains five policy areas, namely:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Health</li> <li>2. Education and skills training</li> <li>3. Wealth and employment generation</li> <li>4. Violence producing conditions</li> <li>5. Power and decision-making.</li> </ol> <p>Under the chapter titled objectives and commitments exists 'Wealth and employment generation' with one commitment identified as 'Eliminating all forms of child labour, particularly the worst forms of labour.' Furthermore, the Policy includes human trafficking in its definition of gender-based violence and advises for the establishment of a cohesive, human rights-oriented legal framework.</p>



Photo, Government of Belize Press Office: Breaking ground for schools in Caye Caulker and San Pedro, Belize



# 4

## Mapping of key entities and relevant past or current interventions

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This section presents an overview of the primary systems and structures that support the Government's thrust to reduce child labour including the worst forms of child labour.

► **Table 13. Summary of main institutions/interventions providing direct and indirect support to the goal of eliminating child labour**

Stakeholder	Mandate*	Any other relevant info
Direct support (Initiatives/interventions primarily focused on eliminating child labour, reducing children's vulnerability to child labour or supporting victims of child labour)		
Child Labour Secretariat and Inspectorate (CLSI), Labour Department, Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government (MRTCDLLG).	Coordinates other agencies and reports on all child labour activities. Leads the monitoring and enforcement of laws and policies in collaboration with other agencies.	A targeted child labour inspection programme was created in 2018. This programme encompasses inspections to identify child labour, education on child labour, as well as training and coordination with appropriate agencies enabling criminal authorities and social services to share information on children found in child labour.
The Department of Human Services, Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs (MHDFIPA).	Receives referrals for child labour cases and supports child survivors of human trafficking through welfare services that encompass medical and psycho-social support. Provides referral training to the Belize Police Department, immigration officials and labour inspectors.	The Human Services Department has a case management system named FAMCare, which is used in all cases (that would include child labour/trafficking in persons) referred to the DHS through multiple referral routes using designated telephone numbers or walk-in offices (Members of the public, police, immigration, courts etc.).

► **Table 13. Summary of main institutions/interventions providing direct and indirect support to the goal of eliminating child labour** (*continued*)

Stakeholder	Mandate*	Any other relevant info
Direct support (Initiatives/interventions primarily focused on eliminating child labour, reducing children's vulnerability to child labour or supporting victims of child labour)		
		<p>The Human Services Department, Child Protection Services Division, has the legal mandate, under the Family and Children's Act (FACA) Cap.173, in tandem with the Police Department, to receive and investigate reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation of children which includes child labour encompassing victims of human trafficking.</p> <p>Child Placement Specialised Services Division, also in the Human Services Department, is primarily responsible for providing the most appropriate accommodation (includes safe houses and foster homes) for children who are placed in the care and custody of the Department, including those removed from child labour including worst forms of child labour (victims of trafficking).</p>
The Community Rehabilitation Department, MHDFIPA.	Develops and implements prevention, diversion, and rehabilitation programmes targeting at-risk youth, first-time offenders, and children who come in conflict with the law.	
Anti-trafficking in Persons Unit, Belize Police Department.	Investigates cases of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking.	
Department of Public Prosecutions.	Prosecutes trafficking offenses.	
Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, E-Governance (MESCTEG).	Liaison Officers investigate school truancy offenses and can issue fines to parents/guardians pertaining to a child's truancy.	
The National Child Labour Committee.	With the Child Labour Secretariat and Inspectorate serving as Secretary, The National Child Labour Committee coordinates other Government ministry initiatives to combat child labour and will implement the National Child Labour Policy and Strategy 2022-2025.	

► **Table 13. Summary of main institutions/interventions providing direct and indirect support to the goal of eliminating child labour** (*continued*)

Stakeholder	Mandate*	Any other relevant info
Direct support (Initiatives/interventions primarily focused on eliminating child labour, reducing children’s vulnerability to child labour or supporting victims of child labour)		
Anti-Trafficking in Persons Council.	The Council, led by the MHDFIPA, and seeks to improve the Governmental response to human trafficking through equipping frontline workers to better identify human trafficking, comprises: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Ministry of Human Development, Social Transformation and Poverty Alleviation (Department of Human Services)</li> <li>► Ministry of Foreign Affairs</li> <li>► Attorney General’s Ministry</li> <li>► Immigration Department</li> <li>► Office of Public Prosecutions</li> <li>► Police Department</li> <li>► Labour Department</li> <li>► Customs Department</li> <li>► Health Department</li> <li>► Belize Tourism Board (BTB)</li> <li>► The National Committee for Families and Children (NCFC)</li> <li>► National Organization for the Prevention of Child abuse and Neglect (NOPCAN)</li> <li>► Youth Enhancement Services (YES)</li> </ul>	The ATIPS Council comprises three committees: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Operation committee that addresses issues of prosecution and protection;</li> <li>2. Information / education / communication committee that addresses issues of prevention; and</li> <li>3. Monitoring and evaluation committee</li> </ol> Through a partnership with the Human Trafficking Institute frontline workers within the Department of Labour, Department of Human Services, Police Department, and Immigration will be trained in first quarter of 2022 in the screening and identification of human trafficking cases.
National Committee for Families and Children	A statutory body that promotes, monitors, and evaluates Belize’s compliance with national legislation and international commitments relevant to the care and protection of children.	Published, 2008, Belize Protocol: How to care for child and adolescent victims of commercial sexual exploitation.
Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association	Represents the cane farmers of Northern Belize in support of their development. Delivers three programmes aimed at reducing child labour in sugar cane farming.	Fairtrade premium: Support of education and community welfare programmes in the northern districts of Corozal and Orange Walk.

► **Table 13. Summary of main institutions/interventions providing direct and indirect support to the goal of eliminating child labour** (*continued*)

Stakeholder	Mandate*	Any other relevant info
Direct support (Initiatives/interventions primarily focused on eliminating child labour, reducing children's vulnerability to child labour or supporting victims of child labour)		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation (YICMR), commenced in 2015 in two communities, now up to 18 communities to date. Awareness, sensitization and monitoring of child labour in communities. Monitoring is through use of a household level tool that is able to pick up different kinds of child labour leading to withdrawal and or remediation as required.</li> <li>2. Internal Control System Programme: Undertaken in collaboration with Labour Dept and Human Services Dept (Min of HD).</li> <li>3. An ILO supported Assistance and Remediation Programme (LABOUR) encompassing small enterprise development aimed at assisting youth and women in single headed households.</li> </ol>	
Social Security Board	34 inspectors whose main duties are the enforcement of compliance with the Social Security Act. The Act allows for contributions from persons 14 years and over, however there are no records of persons under the age of 14 being found at worksites.	
Indirect support: Initiatives/interventions that don't directly address child labour, but rather contribute to reducing a child's vulnerability to becoming engaged in child labour.		
Ministry of Human Development, Families, and Indigenous Peoples' Affairs.	In collaboration with all relevant partners, the Ministry seeks to facilitate policy development and implement programmes that promote social justice and equity, so as to enable people to be self-sufficient, responsible and productive citizens.	Building Opportunities for Our Social Transformation (BOOST): A co-responsibility cash transfer programme that provides conditional small cash assistance to poor households and promotes the capacities of secondary school children who are at working age <sup>62</sup> .

62 Comprehensive Review of Belize's Social Protection System with policy recommendations for systems strengthening, technical report, February 2016, Otter, T. & Barria, C.V.

► **Table 13. Summary of main institutions/interventions providing direct and indirect support to the goal of eliminating child labour** (*continued*)

Stakeholder	Mandate*	Any other relevant info
<p>Indirect support: Initiatives/interventions that don't directly address child labour, but rather contribute to reducing a child's vulnerability to becoming engaged in child labour.</p>		
		<p>Conditionalities encompass education (minimum school attendance of 85%) and health (immunization of children under 5 and pre-natal check-ups for pregnant women). Minimum amount of BZD44 per month and maximum amount of BZD82 per month. Of note is that BOOST is not universally promoted due to budget constraints.<sup>63</sup> It should be noted that as a result of COVID-19 mitigation measures, this provision is currently suspended.</p> <p>Food Pantry: An application is made, an assessment is undertaken, and the provision, if granted, consists of the issue of a one-off purchase order (valued between BZD90.00 to a maximum of BZD300). In special cases, the assistance may be provided twice. Of note is that the Food Pantry is only available in Toledo, Belize City and Cayo, with benefits deemed to be insufficient on their own.<sup>64</sup> It should be noted that as a result of COVID-19 mitigation measures, this provision is currently suspended.</p>
<p>National Resource Centre for Inclusive Education, Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, E-Governance</p>	<p>Committed to improving nationwide access to lifelong learning by ensuring the holistic development of children.</p>	<p>School Nutrition Unit: Financially supports and coordinates the school feeding and nutrition programme.</p> <p>School-Community Liaison Officer and Security Unit: Enforcement of school attendance laws; improve attendance of all school aged children. Encourage inter-ministerial and inter-agency cooperation and support for students from marginalized families. Ensure the provision of safe school environments. Capacity building for school liaison and security officers.</p> <p>Special Education Unit: Provides educational services including screening, diagnostics assessments, teacher-training, parent and school support, and specific therapies for students with special needs.</p>

63 Ibid.  
64 Ibid.

► **Table 13. Summary of main institutions/interventions providing direct and indirect support to the goal of eliminating child labour** (*continued*)

Stakeholder	Mandate*	Any other relevant info
Indirect support: Initiatives/interventions that don't directly address child labour, but rather contribute to reducing a child's vulnerability to becoming engaged in child labour.		
Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, E-Governance	To provide equitable access to and efficiently deliver quality and relevant education, at all levels, for all Belizeans.	In 2018, the Ministry <sup>65</sup> , reported 227 pre-schools, 311 primary schools and 62 secondary schools present in the country. These educational institutions are either Government, denominational, community or private. Of the secondary schools, 37.1% are Government-aided denominational, 24.7% are Government, 25.8% are private, whilst 9.7% are Government-aided community. The MOE recurrent spending per student for the period 2018-2019 was recorded as follows: secondary school BZD3784.71 per student, whilst pre and primary school expenditure per student was BZD1,720.67. <sup>66</sup>  The Ministry provides the following: High school subsidy; secondary scholarships; Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) and Belize National Vocational Qualifications (BZNVQ) Assistance Programme; Early Childhood Education and Development Centre - Preschool grant.
Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government.	Provides referral services to vocational training.	
Department of Youth Services, The Ministry of Transport, Youth, and Sports.	To facilitate the development and implementation of programmes and initiatives that create an enabling environment for youth empowerment and active citizenship.	Two training centres (through the amalgamation of previous entities) have been established:  1. Western regional Youth Training Institute; and 2. Central Regional Youth Training Institute.

65 Abstract of education statistics 2018-2019, Ministry of Education, Belize.

66 Ibid.

► **Table 13. Summary of main institutions/interventions providing direct and indirect support to the goal of eliminating child labour** (*continued*)

Stakeholder	Mandate*	Any other relevant info
<p>Indirect support: Initiatives/interventions that don't directly address child labour, but rather contribute to reducing a child's vulnerability to becoming engaged in child labour.</p>		
		<p>Both deliver 8-months - 1-year skills-based training programmes in agriculture or tourism with a cross cutting component of building and maintenance and an apprenticeship component.</p> <p>Currently 180 youths engaged from all over the country. Access online through youth centre in their district, or through a community centre where they are able to use the internet of specifically identified persons.</p> <p>An MOU was recently signed with a Dominican Republic based company to deliver online trading training to 5000 young persons.</p>
<p>Intercultural Bilingual Education, Maya Leaders Alliance</p>	<p>Maya Leaders Alliance (MLA) is a coalition of Maya organizations and leaders collectively working to promote the long-term well-being of the Maya people through defending their collective rights to their territories.</p>	<p>This initiative encompasses the teaching of modern science and technology infused with Mayan practices including key moments of a child in the life of a family:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► Building houses</li> <li>► Planting</li> <li>► Harvesting</li> </ul> <p>This approach builds 'connectedness' and social skills that will serve the individual in any sphere of society.</p>
<p>Statistical Institute of Belize</p>	<p>Supply of data to inform policy and intervention development. CAS 2013.</p> <p>Support to working groups/ advisory groups within the Department of Labour.</p>	<p>Data supplied include National Census, CAS, LFS.</p> <p>LFSs are undertaken every six months, April/September, whilst future National Census and Child Activity Survey should be undertaken in 2023.</p>
<p>*Coverage is national unless stated otherwise.</p>		
<p>Source: Own elaboration based on information available on institutional websites or from key informant interviews.</p>		

Available assessment of some of the above direct and indirect interventions indicate that:

- To address the worst forms of child labour, the Government has continued to raise public awareness and improve responses to human trafficking through the delivery of education and training to police and investigative officers.<sup>67</sup>
- Through the work of the Human Trafficking Institute (HTI), the Government sent police, prosecutors, and victim specialists to the Institute’s first Global Human Trafficking Academy<sup>68</sup> for intensive hands-on training. Moreover, the Institute signed a formal agreement<sup>69</sup> with the Head of the National Police Force in Belize to expand Belize’s law enforcement capacity by supporting the newly formed specialized anti-trafficking Unit’s investigation and prosecution of human traffickers. Furthermore, the Institute also entered into a formal agreement with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Belize to hire an Institute Lawyer<sup>70</sup> to help process cases more efficiently. In September 2019, the [Institute partnered with the Belize Police Department](#) to hold a series of five training activities at the Belize Central Prison to train prison employees on how to identify potential victims of trafficking.<sup>71</sup> On 10 March 2020, a second conviction was secured under the 2013 Trafficking in Persons Act<sup>72</sup>, the first being in 2016. Additionally, two persons were sentenced in October 2021, for charges related to child trafficking, after being convicted in September 2021. These are the first convictions under Belize’s Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Act of 2013.<sup>73</sup>
- Despite the advances identified above, there remains an absence of official data on sex tourism and investigations into child labour violations, including the worst forms of child labour, which have been limited by insufficient resources including office supplies and vehicles.<sup>74</sup>
- Regarding reducing children’s vulnerability to child labour, it has been reported<sup>75</sup> that many of the social protection initiatives were not fully implemented, either as a result of non-operationalization or limited capacities in implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The underpinning reasons for this scenario encompassed a need for greater human and material resources; more qualified and committed staff for servicing rural areas; and management procedures that are able to effectively address human resource, operational and maintenance issues.<sup>76</sup>
- Improvements to the social protection system and associated initiatives should encompass strengthened inter-agency coordination inclusive of information sharing; wider service coverage (reach); greater resources, human and material; enhanced disaster/shock preparedness; and an enhanced data collection capacity to inform policy and implementation focus.<sup>77</sup>

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67 Findings of the worst forms of child labour: Belize (2019) United States Department of Labor, 2019.

68 For further information on the Academy see [here](#).

69 For further information on the formal agreement see [here](#).

70 For more information see [here](#).

71 For additional information see [here](#).

72 For details see [here](#).

73 For further information see [here](#).

74 Findings on the worst forms of child labour in Belize (2019), United States Department of Labor 2019.

75 Comprehensive review of Belize’s Social Protection System with policy recommendations for systems strengthening, technical report, February 2016, Otter, T. and Barria, C.V.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

 **5**

# Summary findings from consultations with national stakeholders

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The development of the Belize Child Labour Policy hinged on consultations with a vast range of national stakeholders. Representatives from over 25 entities were interviewed to gather feedback on the perceived determinants of child labour, as well as on the effectiveness and suitability of existing interventions and potential directions for improving them or implementing new ones. Appendix 4 provides a full list of the stakeholders consulted.

The process allowed substantiation of literature findings and desk review and the addition of relevant elements. Respondents understood and underscored that child labour is the combined product of many factors, such as poverty, social norms condoning child labour, lack of decent work opportunities for adults and adolescents, migration, and emergencies. It was highlighted how an integrated and systemic approach needs to be adopted to ensure desired results are achieved, while at the same time advising on some of the priority areas that the Policy should develop.

The following recurrent items summarise the views of national stakeholders collected during consultations regarding determinants of child labour, practices, and obstacles to its elimination:

1. **Gaps in legislation.** A weak legislative environment including the absence of a comprehensive hazardous work list was mentioned in several instances and highlighted as one of the key areas to be addressed as a priority. Additionally, the Labour Act was acknowledged as requiring comprehensive review with consideration of provisions for strengthened Labour Inspector powers.
2. **Socio-economic factors impacting poverty.** Respondents highlighted:
  - A higher-than-average national youth (15 to 24 years) unemployment rate rendering them more vulnerable to exploitation was noted by a representative from the MRTCDLLG.
  - Low minimum wage not catering to the needs of the poorest and pushing families and children into employment and, most likely, into child labour. Employment opportunities limited to primarily agriculture, tourism or the public sector was noted by a representative from the Child Development Foundation.

- Inadequate social protection failing to assist families to satisfy their basic needs and pushing families and children into employment and, most likely, into child labour was pointed out by several respondents.
- 3. Social norms.** The national social norms identified in consultations with several stakeholders were highlighted as potentially impacting the incidence of child labour:
- Childcare practices that included parents leaving children with grandparents who allow children freedoms outside of the safety of the home, especially in rural communities.
  - Agricultural practices (livelihoods steeped in agriculture) in which children are introduced to agricultural work from an early age as a way of inculcating farming skills and traditions in support of future labour contributions to family farms or access to work on farms owned by other persons.
  - An adult population that has difficulty in distinguishing between permissible light work and hazardous work. This occurs as a result of a lack of clarity regarding current labour legislation converging with social norms pertaining to child labour and a lack of general awareness of what constitutes hazardous work.
  - A prevalent adult perception that if children do not work, they will become idle, so it is better to have them engaged in work if they are not in school – working will occupy their time and focus their efforts on constructive activities as opposed to them possibly becoming engaged in criminal activities.
  - Working life starting at an early age across all ethnic groups, particularly prevalent in groups whose livelihoods and/or traditions were based on agricultural practices.
- 4. Barriers to accessing education.** The issue of barriers to accessing education was another recurrent theme. Detailed inputs include:
- Physical access to schools, particularly those in rural areas: can be difficult because of physical distance, poor infrastructure, or poor transport services.
  - Cost of schooling financially burdens parents: although the Government pays for primary school tuition, school enrollment (in some cases), stationary, uniforms, books and extra-curricular activities come at a cost to the parent(s). Furthermore, secondary school tuition fees and all other costs associated with education are borne by parents.
  - An academically skewed curriculum with an absence of technical/vocational learning opportunities: this limits the learning opportunities of students who are not academically inclined or are kinesthetic learners.
- 5. Undocumented migration.** Respondents pointed out that this phenomenon can increase a child's vulnerability to exploitation in the job market as they are unable to access primary or secondary education, or the associated protections offered to documented migrants.
- 6. Education and coordination issues.** It was highlighted that awareness raising of what constitutes child labour, hazardous work and work that can be undertaken by children is not consistent or easily accessible. Moreover, an absence of consistent data sharing and inter-agency coordination between agencies that sought to address child labour was noted.
- 7. Elements specific to Mayan and Mennonite communities.** Both these communities are steeped in agricultural traditions, but their experiences demonstrate both differences and similarities. The Mayan representatives noted a tension that has arisen out of the transition from subsistence

farming practices to communities interfacing with a ‘cash’ economy which has resulted in ‘cash’ poverty within the communities. This differs from the Mennonite experience wherein primarily successful commercial agricultural practices have necessitated the need for the community to diversify into multiple commercial enterprises encompassing construction, hardware supplies, manufacturing, and retail stores. However, similarities arise as representatives from both communities stressed that children’s inculcation in agricultural work exposes them to agricultural practices and skills and offered them a foundation on which to develop into adults who were able to support both family and community. As a result, children in both communities worked on farms from an early age, often being exposed to hazardous working conditions.

- 8. Low returns to education and opportunity cost of attending school.** A 2017 study<sup>78</sup> noted that ‘the evidence on the topic of child labour and child work is value-laden and dominant narratives on these issues are increasingly being challenged and nuanced.’ Moreover, the same study noted, inter-alia, a lack of higher returns on basic schooling as being a driver of child labour. Indeed, it was noted that education had been found to contribute to a process of ‘deskilling’ rural children, through the devaluing and neglect of agricultural skills and practices. Mayan respondents alluded to this situation occurring in many of their communities which left many Mayan children between a rock and a hard place – not having enough cultural and agricultural knowledge to contribute to the sustainability of the community, and neither qualified enough to enter the wider ‘cash’ economy. Interestingly, the literature finds benefits in schools considering children’s specific interests and their learning opportunities outside of the school curriculum, which included the incorporation of practical learning in school.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, it was noted that low risk, age-appropriate tasks could contribute to children’s well-being and development, particularly in rural environments with low returns to formal education, labour-intensive agricultural livelihoods, including subsistence farming and social norms accepting of child working<sup>80</sup>.
- 9. Incidence of child labour appears to vary across agriculture sectors.** The citrus and banana industries reported child labour as minimal, and this was posited to be as the result of international certification (Rainforest Alliance and Global Gap were identified) required for export with its associated monitoring practices including announced and unannounced audits as well as the requirement for employers to obtain permission from Commissioner of Labour to employ children and then only in certain types of work. Moreover, as at 2015, 90 per cent of Belize’s shrimp farms were noted to have received Aquaculture Stewardship Certification (ASC)<sup>81</sup> that requires ensuring there is no child labour in the processing of shrimp for international export. Conversely, major stakeholders in the sugar industry have stated that child labour in the industry may not be as low as some imagine.

78 Prevalence and impacts of child labour in agriculture (2017), Becky Carter with Keetie Roelen, Institute of Development Studies, 5 May 2017 (revised version 20 October 2017).

79 Ibid.

80 Ibid.

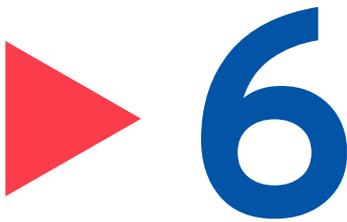
81 Aquaculture Stewardship certification (ASC requires aquaculturist to:

- be responsible in their use of natural resources;
- reduce the excessive use of antibiotics and chemicals;
- pay fair wages;
- ensure no child labour; and
- achieve a positive impact on local communities.

For more details see [here](#).



Photo by Maksim Romashkin, Pexels.com



# Policy framework

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## Summary problem statement

Child labour in Belize appears to be mostly an issue of employment in hazardous work with limited but still worrisome occurrence of underage work and exposure to worst forms of child labour, notably sexual exploitation and criminal activities. It also appears that becoming employed is strictly associated with hazardous work, highlighting how - barring underage work - ensuring occupational health and safety as well as respect for fundamental labour rights hold a paramount place for the sake of eliminating child labour altogether.

In terms of root causes, available data presented in the situation analysis section indicate that a household's ethnicity, economic positioning, experience of multidimensional poverty, geographical location, sector of parental economic activity and educational attainment of the parents, social and gender norms, access to education as well as the sex of the child converge to increase or decrease a child's vulnerability to child labour. The vulnerability to the type of child labour that the child could be exposed to is by and large determined by the geographical location of the child. Rural children are most likely to be exposed to child labour through agriculture, including fishing, and to a lesser degree service sector work. However, urban children would be more likely to be engaged in industry, the service sector, and the illegal activities of gangs subjecting them to hazardous working conditions and exposure to worst forms of child labour.

The risk of children being exposed to child labour has also, most likely, increased because of the social dislocations and economic strains caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and which has brought about an increase in the number of adolescents employed to be likely associated with hazardous working conditions. Furthermore, a natural disaster, such as a hurricane, would also increase vulnerability through limiting physical access to education and the loss of household income/livelihoods.

Consultations with national stakeholders corroborated much of the above-mentioned findings and added few additional elements and nuances. Consensus indicated determinants of child labour as household poverty, barriers to accessing education including high direct costs (for secondary school attendance) and high opportunity costs (children not being able to support the economic needs of their families if attending school and children not obtaining sufficient return from investment in human capital). In addition, the existence of a limited number of sectors offering employment opportunities for both parents and children was indicated as limiting earning potential and access to safe working conditions. Social norms intended as general acceptance of certain forms of child labour

and limited sensitivity to occupational health and safety and respect for fundamental labour rights for working adolescents were also commonly mentioned by respondents.

In addition, the issue of child labour was considered to be perpetuated through the convergence of:

- Inadequate legislation, particularly the absence of a comprehensive list of hazardous work.
- A lack of targeted and consistent education/awareness initiatives on child labour, often considered as permissible or needed for the sake of supporting family needs.
- An absence of clear inter-agency communication or operational protocols, particularly between the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples Affairs and the Department of Labour.
- An absence of timely inter-agency data-sharing practices and mechanisms.
- An absence of bargaining units in agriculture, fishing and domestic work, allowing for negotiation of enhanced employment conditions for children who are legally allowed to work in those sectors.
- The need for more effective and numerous labour inspections, based, amongst others, on full and systematic coordination between labour inspectorates and child protection services.
- The need for harsher penalties for violations of existing legal prescriptions.

## Policy statement

The Government and people of Belize are committed to eradicating child labour and the worst forms of child labour in our country.

To achieve this vision, we all are committed to:

- Accelerate the 2022 National Child Labour Policy Work Programme;
- Legislate, monitor and enforce laws that address child labour and the worst forms of child labour;
- Rural transformation and community development must be pursued in order to reduce poverty and enhance social protection in order to reduce child labour;
- Reduce the education exclusion rate by facilitating primary and secondary school enrolment and regular attendance; and
- Promote child advocacy in keeping with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

## Policy goal

To reduce the incidence of child labour in Belize and take significant steps to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by 2025.

## Policy objectives

Considering the above problem statement, the Policy objectives are four-fold:

1. To address existing legislative and information gaps, providing necessary legal protection for all children of Belize who are engaged or potentially engaged in child labour.
2. To increase compliance with labour laws for the benefit of children and their families.

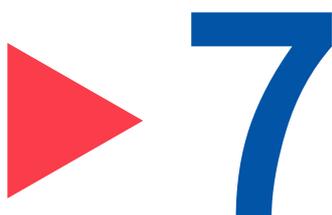
3. To substantially reduce barriers to school access and ensure continuous school attendance throughout legal age for every Belizean child.
4. To ensure adequate support and economic resilience for children and their families as way to pre-empt engagement in child labour.

The above four Policy objectives are directly reflected, within the action matrix below, as outcomes to be achieved.

## Key strategies

1. Strengthen legislation pertaining to labour, education, and elimination of the worst forms of child labour.
2. Build awareness among children, their families and the society as a whole about the danger of child labour, the existing legal provisions and how to access legal support while tackling gender and social norms and taking into account the different population groups, culture and approach to child labour.
3. Ratify unratified pertinent international conventions.
4. Strengthen data collection on child labour.
5. Strengthen Government agency data sharing.
6. Raise identification rate of working undocumented child migrants.
7. Strengthen child labour detection and prosecution of violators in tandem with the child protection legislation and child protection services to ensure the protection of children.
8. Strengthen the formalization of mechanisms to ensure no child labour in agriculture.
9. Strengthen mechanisms to reduce child labour in the tourism industry.
10. Strengthen awareness of signs of trafficking in persons among utility workers.
11. Strengthen detection and prosecution re: worst forms of child labour.
12. Build public awareness regarding the reduction of child labour and elimination of the worst forms of child labour.
13. Strengthen bargaining power of workers (including children).
14. Increase school access and completion (secondary).
15. Expand access to vocational and technical education.
16. Increase social protection service access.
17. Extend the social protection floor.
18. Increase economic resilience of families.
19. Strengthen social dialogue on issues related to child labour and access to education.





# Action matrix

## ► Table 14. Action matrix, part 1 overall Policy goal

Overall goal: Reduce incidences of child labour in the country
<p><b>Indicator #1: Rate of children engaged in child labour over total children aged 5 to 17</b>            Baseline: 3.2 % of the total children aged 5 to 17 engaged in hazardous or underage work (2013 Child Activity Survey).            Target: decrease by 30% by 2025. Note: where possible the evolution by industry of employment should be monitored.</p>
<p><b>Indicator #2: Rate of children engaged in underage work</b>            Baseline: 0.13% of the total number of children aged 5 to 17 engaged in underage work (2013 Child Activity Survey).            Target: decrease by 30% by 2025. Note: where possible the evolution by industry of employment should be monitored.</p>
<p><b>Indicator #3: Rate of children engaged in hazardous work</b>            Baseline: 3.5% of the total number of children aged 5 to 17 engaged in hazardous work (2013 Child Activity Survey).            Target: decrease by 30% by 2025. Note: where possible the evolution by industry of employment should be monitored.</p>

Achievement of the overall **Policy goal** will require the realization of the **four Policy Outcomes**. In turn, the attainment of the Policy Outcomes will require the fulfilment of all associated **Outputs** for each respective Outcome. Outcome 1 consists of eleven Outputs; Outcome 2, thirteen Outputs; Outcome 3, nine Outputs; and Outcome 4, three Outputs.

The following section presents, for each Policy Outcome: a rationale for each Output associated with the outcome followed by a table that presents, inter-alia, all Outputs associated with the outcome, indicators for the achievement of these Outputs, and relevant implementation timelines.

## Policy outcomes

### Outcome 1. Existing legislative and information gaps addressed, providing necessary legal protection for all children of Belize engaged or potentially engaged in child labour

#### *Rationale*

##### ► Output 1.1 Amend the Labour Act

The amendment of the Labour Act that encompasses comprehensive hazardous and light work lists specifying conditions under which hazardous work can be undertaken in sector-specific tasks, particularly in agriculture and specifically in the cane industry, and fulfilment of trade related international standards; a definition of the worst forms of child labour; the minimum age for work in all sectors; enhanced penalties for violations of child labour provisions; the raising of the minimum age for work to 16 years and 13 years for light work (see Output 1.4) should eliminate any ambiguities of employers understanding child labour law violations, particularly with regard to light and hazardous work in the agriculture sector and support the enforcement of child labour laws limiting the legal space to engage in prohibited activities.

Multiple stakeholders identified limitations in the Labour Act relevant to child labour, in particular the absence of hazardous and light work lists, the absence of trade-related standards, the absence of employee records in some business establishments and varying minimum ages of employment in different sectors (Labour Act versus Shops Act) all stymie the Government's efforts to reduce child labour.

In 2019, the LRC recommended amendments to the Labour Act. On 14 December 2021, the LAB approved the recommended amendments including hazardous and light work lists (found at Appendices 2 and 3 respectively). These lists will be included in the 2022 Revised Edition of the Labour Act and the Attorney General's Ministry will have a critical role to play in the drafting and subsequent enactment of this legislation.

Cost: The main cost embedded in the realization of this Output is linked to holding (tripartite) consultations and run relevant internal processes (staff time, operational cost of various nature).

##### ► Output 1.2. Include in regulations the requirement to keep a register of employment for persons under 18 years of age in all sectors.

In addition to the LAB revised and approved LRC recommendations listed under Output 1.1, amendment(s) to the Labour Act should include the requirement to create and maintain a register of employment for persons under 18 years of age in all sectors (not only industrial undertakings) which specifies their ages or dates of birth.

The finalization of these amendments will give effect to the requests made by the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) concerning [Belize's implementation of Convention No. 138](#). In particular, the CEACR requested that the Government take measures to:

- ▶ Ensure that the minimum age applies to all sectors of employment or work;
- ▶ Adopt a list of types of hazardous work in laws or regulations (that is enforceable);
- ▶ Determine the types of light work activities in legislation or regulations; and
- ▶ Ensure the keeping of a register of employment for persons under 18 in all sectors.

A suggestion by stakeholders was the mandated sharing of child labour data with the Department of Human Services in support of child protection interventions vis-à-vis child removal from child labour.

Cost: The main cost embedded in the realization of this Output is linked to holding (tripartite) consultations and run relevant internal processes (staff time, operational cost of various nature). To be noted is that the LAB approved LRC recommendations are already clearly drafted for legislative amendments.

▶ **Output 1.3. Amend associated pieces of legislation (see list below), as per LAB approved LRC recommendations to ensure consistency in the definition of the child.**

The LRC reviewed twenty-one other associated pieces of legislation and made recommendations for the amendment of thirteen Acts to eliminate inconsistencies in these laws in relation to the definition of a child, the age at which children can be employed and the type of work children can do which will support Government enforcement of child labour laws and offer clear parameters under which children can be employed. See [here](#) for details of amendments. The LAB approved the LRC recommendations for the following six pieces of legislation on 14 December 2021:

1. Equal Pay Act, Cap 302:01
2. Factories Act, Cap 296
3. Factories Regulations, Cap 296
4. Shops Act, Cap 287
5. Workmen's Compensation Act, Cap 303
6. Labour Act, Cap 297

The other pieces of legislation requiring amendment, listed below, fall under the purview of the other ministries:

1. Criminal Code Act, Cap 101
2. District Courts Act, Cap 97
3. Education and Training Act, Cap 36
4. Families and Children Act, Cap 173
5. Government Workers Regulations, SI 145 of 1992
6. Juvenile Offenders Act, Cap 119
7. Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Act, Cap 230
8. Penal System Reform (Alternative Sentences) Act, Cap 102:01
9. Social Security Board Act
10. Marriage Act

The proposed amendments were referred to by several stakeholders as important in strengthening the legislative environment in support of Government's efforts to reduce child labour. Moreover, the Social Security Board Act, which currently has implications regarding a child's ability to claim NIS benefits (having contributed through employment) in the event of an accident, as well as the Marriage Act, were also additionally recommended to be reviewed to ensure consistency in the age definition.

The LAB approved LRC recommended amendments to legislation under the purview of the MRTCDLLG will be sent forward to the Minister of RTCDLLG, whilst all LRC recommended amendments applying to legislation not under the purview of the MRTCDLLG will be sent forward to other relevant Ministers to take before the Cabinet for approval. Upon Cabinet's approval, instructions will be sent by the MRTCDLLG and all other pertinent Ministries to AGM, who will amend legislation. Amendments will then be brought into force.

Cost: The main cost embedded in the realization of this Output is linked to holding (tripartite) consultations and running relevant internal processes (staff time, operational cost of various nature). To be noted is that the LAB approved LRC recommendations are already clearly drafted for legislative amendments.

► **Output 1.4 Amend Education and Training Act to raise the compulsory school leaving age to 16 years**

The raising of the compulsory school leaving age to 16 years will support the protection of children by keeping them out of the labour market until 16 years of age (which must be done simultaneously with raising the age at which children are allowed to work to 16 (under Output 1.1)). However, for this to be effective, secondary school education costs will have to be severely reduced, or eliminated, otherwise an unintended consequence of this Output will be an increase in the number of children working (including in child labour) in an attempt to meet school expenses (for themselves or siblings) that, as a result of a raised compulsory school leaving age, have been extended for a longer period of time. Moreover, this amendment will have to be taken in tandem with raising the minimum working age to 16 years with light work permitted for children aged 13 years.

Multiple stakeholders argued that one of the reasons child labour was found in Belize was because of the age at which children were no longer legally obligated to attend school. They further noted that #planBelize contained the pledge 'Truly free education from pre-school to 6th form' which, if fulfilled, would ensure that should the school leaving age be raised, families will not experience additional costs – on the contrary they would experience a marked reduction.

The MESCTEG will write to Cabinet for approval to amend legislation. Upon Cabinet's approval, instructions will be sent by MESCTEG to the AGM along with instructions to amend and prepare the legislation for publication.

Cost: Tripartite discussions on modification of the legal text, external consultancies may be envisaged. Financial feasibility and cost assessment may be envisaged as a pre-emptive investigation.

► **Output 1.5 Legislative prohibition of the involvement of a child in illicit activities, in conformity with Article 3(c) of Convention No. 182**

The legislative prohibition of the involvement of a child in illicit activities, in conformity with Article 3(c) of Convention No. 182 will respond to an explicit request of the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations [concerning Belize's implementation of Convention No. 182](#).

Cost: The main cost embedded in the realization of this Output is linked to holding (tripartite) consultations and run relevant internal processes (staff time, operational cost of various nature). To be noted is that the LAB approved LRC recommendations are already clearly drafted for legislative amendments.

▶ **Output 1.6. Review the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2013 and the Commercial Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act, 2013 with the intention to repeal both Acts and replace them with one single Act.**

The review, and subsequent merging of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2013, and the Commercial Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act, 2013, will serve to strengthen legislative provisions to address trafficking in persons and the worst forms of child labour and harmonize national legislation with CARICOM laws and international conventions, including pertinent articles of the UNCRC. Under the aegis of the Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples Affairs (MHDFIPA), the review of the two pieces of legislation started in 2021 with the assistance of the IOM. Subsequent repeal of the two Acts and replacement by one Bill should follow. The replacement Bill will be submitted to the Governor General for assent.

Cost: Tripartite discussions on modification of legal text, external consultancies may be envisaged.

▶ **Output 1.7 Ratify Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)**

Ratification of this Convention will signal the Government's commitment to the protection of domestic workers, ensuring their inclusion in national labour laws so that they are entitled to the same basic rights as those available to other workers in the country, including weekly days off, limits to hours of work, minimum wage coverage, overtime compensation, social security, and clear information on the terms and conditions of employment. Articles 3 and 4 of the Convention are particularly relevant to the issue of child labour.

Several stakeholders identified the issue of child labour in domestic work and the National Trade Union Council of Belize (NTUCB) identified the need for protections of domestic workers including those under the age of 18.

The Government of Belize will first adopt, through the regular legislative procedure, the decision to ratify the Convention, followed by the communication of the instrument of ratification to the Director-General of the ILO. The Convention will come into force one year after the deposit of the instrument of ratification. In line with Article 5 of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144) (ratified by Belize), this process will include consultations with representatives of employers and workers.

Cost: Tripartite discussions on ratification of Convention (within the LAB).

▶ **Output 1.8 Ratify Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184)**

Ratification of this Convention will affirm the Government's commitment to end child labour in agriculture.

Multiple stakeholders identified the existence of child labour in the agricultural sector. Despite the certification processes implemented in the commercial export of sugar, banana, citrus and shrimp, child labour still exists and persists on smaller farms.

The Government of Belize will first adopt, through the regular legislative procedure, the decision to ratify the Convention, followed by the communication of the instrument of ratification to the Director-General of the ILO. The Convention will come into force one year after the deposit of the instrument of ratification. In line with Article 5 of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144) (ratified by Belize), this process will include consultations with representatives of employers and workers.

Cost: Tripartite discussions on ratification of convention (within the LAB).

► **Output 1.9. Ratify Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)**

Ratification of this Convention will directly provide an additional legislative instrument in the fight against child labour. The vulnerability of young girls to violence and harassment was highlighted by few national stakeholders. The linkage between the prevention and elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work for the effective abolition of child labour is explicitly made within article 5 of C.190.

The Government of Belize will first adopt, through the regular legislative procedure, the decision to ratify the Convention, followed by the communication of the instrument of ratification to the Director-General of the ILO. The Convention will come into force one year after the deposit of the instrument of ratification. In line with Article 5 of the Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144) (ratified by Belize), this process will include consultations with representatives of employers and workers.

Cost: Tripartite discussions on ratification of convention (within the LAB).

### *Information gaps*

► **Output 1.10 Collect child labour data via one or more survey instrument to track the evolution of the phenomenon in the country and disseminate results**

Availability of timely and widely available data on child activity is paramount to determine the incidence of child labour, as well as the impact of policy measures, including those incorporated in the present Policy. Survey based instruments are the most accurate tools to respond to the data needs. Understanding that the implementation of stand-alone surveys may be costly and constrained by financial and human resources, especially stand-alone Child Activity Surveys (CAS), Output 1.9 spells out three potential ways through which it may be possible to at least obtain / collect and disseminate up-to-date data. It is noted and highlighted that the three Outputs may complement themselves (if one survey is carried out in a given year, there will not need to be another one) and that realization of any of those shall not be limited to data collection but incorporate detailed dissemination of data collected.

**Output 1.10.1** will consist of the adaptation of the biannually conducted Belize Labour Force Survey to include within its questionnaire and sample design, elements allowing collection of data on child labour indicators, specifically with an additional module. While not ideal because of potential biases which may arise, in a restricted economic environment the relatively inexpensive adaptation of the Labour Force Survey (LFS), using MAP16 project support (see [here](#) for details), will enable the collection of pertinent child labour indicators that inform district and sector specific child labour reduction interventions, as well as provide timely insights into the progress toward achieving the Child Labour Policy goal of reducing incidences of child labour in the country. Data so collected will then be disseminated along the lines of what happens with labour market indicators (biannual bulletins or similar). The collection of data on child activity may be limited to one period per year (special module). In addition to the dedicated module, the possibility to perform additional data collection with mixed methodology/ qualitative kind of investigation specifically targeting detection of worst forms of child labour will be considered. The ILO could assist with the latter.

Cost: Costs typically linked to the proposed exercise include the resources needed for the adaptation of the questionnaires, their pilot testing, data collection (additional costs for enumerators' salary linked to additional costs to run individual interviews and the training of enumerators) and data analysis. Additional training on mixed methodologies for the collection of child labour data to be considered and performing of the related data collection will come with an attached budgetary cost. The ILO will assist with the endeavour.

**Output 1.10.2** will consist of undertaking a Multi Indicator Cluster Survey in 2024, including employment modules consistent - to the extent possible - with data collected via the Labour Force Survey.

The implementation of a Multi-indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in 2024, which will include employment modules homogenous with equivalent data sets of the LFS and its subsequent publication, will expand the number of national data sources pertaining to child labour indicators, corroborate or challenge labour force survey and support the assessment of Child Labour Policy progress, the adaptation of current child labour interventions and the development of future interventions.

Although the MICS 2011 survey contained child labour indicators, these were not congruent with CAS indicators, making the comparison of data difficult. Furthermore, stakeholders noted the absence of contemporary child labour data in Belize, and the impact of this data absence on the effectiveness of child labour reduction interventions and the development of future interventions.

The SIB, with the support of UNICEF and the ILO, will implement and subsequently publish the outcomes of the MICS 2024.

Cost: Estimated cost of running MICS survey (in principle, UNICEF to bear).

► **Output 1.11 Enhance mechanism for sharing child labour related data**

Stakeholders noted a lack of inter-agency coordination with regard to reducing the incidence of child labour. Most identified enhanced inter-agency communication and data sharing protocols as offering potentially immediate benefits, particularly administrative data that reflects individual Government entity operational outcomes and possibly individual cases of violations (or abuses). In order to bolster the national performance in this domain, two specific interventions were suggested.

► **Output 1.11.1 Establishing clear inter-agency communication and data sharing protocols for all Government agencies that address aspects of child labour issues**

National stakeholders highlighted data sharing as one specific gap in the coordination of interventions on child labour. Be it data concerning institutional operations or casework, there appear to be substantial delays or gaps in ensuring that potentially involved institutions are sufficiently informed.

In turn, availability of extended and punctually available data concerning institutional operations of pertinence to child labour could have several beneficial effects and constitute the basis for better labour inspections (**Outputs 2.2 and 2.3**), truancy detection (**Output 2.4**) and a strengthened Child Labour and Trafficking Protection Casework and Management System (CLTPCMS) situated within the FAMCare database (see **Output 2.5**). For the aforementioned Output to materialize, clearly articulated and universally accepted (through MOU or mandate) inter-agency communication and data sharing protocols that identify each agency's roles and responsibilities, the type of data to be shared, and the modality with timelines need to be agreed upon and respected. The Department of Human Services within the MHDFIPA; the Department of Labour within the MRTCDLLG; the Department of Immigration within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration (MFAFTI); Education Support Services within the MESCTEG, the BPD and the SSB, will draft and implement these protocols ensuring that:

- (i) Standard operating procedures for all operations that address or detect child labour violations are mutually shared and known across ministries and entities.

- (ii) Necessary communication and data sharing protocols are in place, clearly identifying for each ministry and entity, the roles, focal points, yearly deadlines, breadth, and depth of the data to be shared.

Once the protocols are established, the data will be shared on the platform established via Output 1.11.2.

Reference to good practices from the Latin American and the Caribbean region on developed joint institutional mechanisms of child labour and child protection may guide the establishment of the system.

Cost: Staff time, depending on the scope of the undertaking, external consultancies may be envisaged, development of written material and/or knowledge sharing events.

► **Output 1.11.2. Establishing integrated data sharing platforms to facilitate the input of child labour key performance indicators/ related data (repository)**

This Output aims at establishing two integrated data sharing platforms. **The first one (A repository)** to facilitate the collection of child labour data through providing pertinent agencies access to a repository in which they will upload any data/Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) required by the Child Labour Committee, other policy makers, and other Government agencies. Those data will reflect general child labour indicators (e.g., incidence of child labour by SIB) and operations of individual agencies (e.g., number of violations detected, characteristics of violations such as industry, establishment, geographical area, etc.) The repository will also provide multiple agencies with a one-stop access to child labour relevant data and facilitate the operation of the inter-agency data sharing protocol developed in Output 1.10.1 previously mentioned, in addition to supporting the fulfilment of Outputs 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5.

**The second one (B, individual database)**, directly supporting **Output 2.5** and aiming at expanding access and utilization of the FAMCare software for case management to relevant Government agencies. Such expansion will allow the full incorporation of child labour cases within the general child protection framework and within a single registry, thus allowing individual agencies to readily access data for individual casework management. In this regard, reference could be made to Panama's Computer Application for the Child Labor Monitoring System (SMTI). This was "developed as a web application and has a single and centralized Database, where the data is stored. The SMTI allows the registration, detection, referral, monitoring and removal of children and adolescents (NNA), in a situation of child labour in Panama".

The MRTCDLLG, with support from the ILO, will operationalize an electronic platform under (A) apt to fulfil the data gathering needs as well as maximizing the efficiency of their collection. The MHDIFIPA will lead the undertaking under the platform (B) building on the FAMCare database and the different extensions incorporated in the software (both thematic and access wise) over the past seven years.

Cost: For platform A, the cost is linked to the establishment of new platforms for data sharing. Affordable options already exist online. For platform B, the costs are linked to warranting accessibility and training of users on FAMCare database.

► **Table 15. Action matrix, part 1 overall Policy goal**

Outcome 1. Existing legislative and information gaps addressed, providing necessary legal protection for all children of Belize engaged or potentially engaged in child labour								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
Strengthen labour legislation	<p>1.1. Amend Labour Act and develop subsidiary regulations as per LAB approved recommendations (based on LRC review) to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>► a comprehensive listing of hazardous work;</li> <li>► a comprehensive listing of light work</li> <li>► a definition of the worst forms of child labour;</li> <li>► the minimum age applying to all sectors of employment or work (not limited to industrial undertakings (under the Labour Act) or shops (under the Shops Acts);</li> <li>► enhanced penalties for violations of the child labour provisions;</li> <li>► raise the minimum age to work to 16; and</li> <li>► Raise the minimum age for light work to 13 years of age.</li> </ul>	<p>1.1.a Comprehensive listing of hazardous work incorporated into Labour Act by December 2023.</p> <p>1.1.b Comprehensive listing of light work incorporated into Labour Act by December 2023.</p> <p>1.1.c Definition of worst forms of child labour incorporated into the Labour Act by December 2023.</p> <p>1.1.d Consistent indication of minimum age for work incorporated into all relevant legislation by December 2023.</p> <p>1.1.e Enhanced penalties for child labour violations included in the Labour Act by December 2023.</p> <p>1.1. f Revised general minimum age for work to 16 years in the Labour Act by December 2023.</p> <p>1.1.g Revised general minimum age for light work to 13 years in the Labour Act by December 2023.</p>	Every quarter until completion.	4/2022-12/2023	MRTCDLLG	AGM to assist with drafting, Cabinet to approve and parliament to validate.	Cost of consultations and relevant internal processes.	ILO to support national stakeholders in the process.

► **Table 15. Action matrix, part 1 overall Policy goal (continued)**

Outcome 1. Existing legislative and information gaps addressed, providing necessary legal protection for all children of Belize engaged or potentially engaged in child labour								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
	1.2 Include in the Labour Act and regulations, the requirement to keep a register of employment for persons under 18 years of age in all sectors (and not only industrial undertakings) specifying their age or date of birth.	1.2 Revised general regulations including requirement approved by December 2023.	Every quarter until completion.	4/2022-12/2023	MRTCDLLG	AGM to assist with drafting; Cabinet to approve and parliament to validate.	Cost of consultations and relevant internal processes.	
	1.3 Amend associated pieces of legislation (see list below in the rationale section), based on LRC review, to ensure consistency in the definition of the child.	1.3 Revised legislation and regulations to ensure consistency in the definition of child by June 2025.	Every quarter until completion.	4/2022-6/2025	MRTCDLLG and all ministries responsible for each piece of legislation.	AGM to assist with drafting; Cabinet to approve and parliament to validate.	Cost of consultations and relevant internal processes.	
Strengthen education legislation	1.4 Amend Education and Training Act Cap. 36:01 to raise school leaving age to 16 years, based on LRC review, and in support of the #planBelize pledge of 'Truly free education from pre-school to 6th form'	1.4 Education and Training Act amended to raise school leaving age to 16 years by December 2025	Every quarter until completion.	4/2022-12/2025	MOECST	AGM to assist with drafting; Cabinet to approve and parliament to validate.	Cost of consultations and relevant internal processes. Broader cost implications linked to need to support students to access secondary school.	
Strengthen legislation associated with the worst forms of child labour	1.5 Legislative prohibition of the involvement of a child in illicit activities, in conformity with Article 3(c) of Convention No. 182.	1.5 Legislative provision incorporated in relevant legislation by December 2023	Every quarter until completion.	4/2022-12/2023	MRTCDLLG	AGM to assist with drafting; Cabinet to approve and parliament to validate.	Cost of consultations and relevant internal processes.	

► **Table 15. Action matrix, part 1 overall Policy goal (continued)**

Outcome 1. Existing legislative and information gaps addressed, providing necessary legal protection for all children of Belize engaged or potentially engaged in child labour								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
	1.6 Review the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2013 and the Commercial Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act, 2013 with the intention to repeal both Acts and replace them with one single Act.	1.6 New act combining Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Act, 2013 and the Commercial Exploitation of Children (Prohibition) Act, 2013 approved by December 2023.	Every quarter until completion.	4/2022-12/2023	MHDFIPA	AGM to assist with drafting; Cabinet to approve and parliament to validate.	Cost of consultations and relevant internal processes.	Activity already started, under review right now, in sync with CARICOM directives. IOM assisting.
	1.7 Ratify the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)	1.7 ILO Convention 189 - inform the Competent Authority by November 2023	Every quarter until completion.	4/2022-11/2023	MRTCDLLG and LAB	Cabinet to approve and parliament to validate	Cost of consultations and relevant internal processes.	ILO to support national stakeholders in the process
	1.8 Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention, 2001 (No. 184)	1.8 ILO Convention 184 - inform the Competent Authority by November 2023	Every quarter until completion.	4/2022-11/2023	MRTCDLLG and LAB	Cabinet to approve and parliament to validate	Cost of consultations and relevant internal processes.	ILO to support national stakeholders in the process
	1.9 Ratify the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (C190)	1.9 ILO Convention 190 - inform the Competent Authority by November 2023	Every quarter until completion.	4/2022-11/2023	MRTCDLLG and LAB	Cabinet to approve and parliament to validate	Cost of consultations and relevant internal processes.	ILO to support national stakeholders in the process
Strengthen data collection on child labour	1.10 Collect Child Labour data via one or more survey instrument to track the evolution of the phenomenon in the country and disseminate results							

► **Table 15. Action matrix, part 1 overall Policy goal (continued)**

Outcome 1. Existing legislative and information gaps addressed, providing necessary legal protection for all children of Belize engaged or potentially engaged in child labour								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
	1.10.1 An adapted version of the Labour Force Survey to enable the collection of data on selected child labour indicators possibly in conjunction with investigation performed with mixed methodologies (quantitative and qualitative data) to detect worst forms of child labour.	1.10.1a Number of biannual labour force surveys collecting child activity data via revised questionnaires and sample per year. 1.10.1b Number of reports presenting results of employment of children disseminated per year. 1.10.1c Number of investigations held via mixed methodologies aimed at detecting worst forms of child labour.	Semi-annually from q2 2023.	4/2023-10/2025	SIB		Cost for adaptation of questionnaires, pilot testing, data collection and data analysis. Possible cost for training in mixed methodologies and related data collection.	ILO/UNICEF to provide technical assistance
	1.10.2 Inclusion of employment module(s) in the 2024 Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey.	1.9.3a Incorporation of employment modules into MICS 2024 survey by February 2024. 1.9.3b. Dissemination of results on child activity indicators by August 2024	Every quarter until completion starting in q3 2023.	1/2024-9/2024	SIB		Cost to be covered within MICS survey.	UNICEF/ILO to provide technical assistance Note 2011 MICS contained child labour data, 2015/16 did not.
Strengthen Government agency data sharing	1.11. Enhance mechanism for sharing child labour related data.							

► **Table 15. Action matrix, part 1 overall Policy goal (continued)**

Outcome 1. Existing legislative and information gaps addressed, providing necessary legal protection for all children of Belize engaged or potentially engaged in child labour								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
	1.11.1 Establish clear inter-agency operational, communication and data sharing protocols for all Government agencies that address aspects of child labour issues: MHDIFIPA (Department of Human Services); MRTCDLLG (Department of Labour); BPD; MFAFTI (Immigration Department); MESCTEG (Education Support Services); Social Security Board (SSB).	1.11.1a. Number of bilateral or collective data sharing protocols signed by September 2022. 1.11.1b. Percentage of data sharing protocols adhered to through complete data sharing during the course of each year (2022-2025).	Every quarter until completion.	4/2022-12/2025	MHDIFIPA (Department of Human Services); MRTCDLLG (Department of Labour); BPD; MFAFTI (Immigration Department); MESCTEG (Education Support Services); Social Security Board (SSB)		Staff time to elaborate and validate relevant protocols and actual sharing of data	
	1.11.2 Establish an integrated data sharing platform (repository) to facilitate the input of child labour KPIs/ and casework management data (see Output 2.5).	1.11.2.a Number of active data sharing platforms utilized for reporting relevant statistical indicators at the end of each year (2022-2025). 1.11.2.b Number of agencies actively utilizing the Dept of Human Services - FAMCare database - for case management/ tracking of cases - Dept. of human services with police access.	Every quarter until completion.	4/2022-12/2025	MHDIFIPA (Department of Human Services); MRTCDLLG (Department of Labour); BPD; MFAFTI (immigration); MESCTEG (Education Support Services); Social Security Board (SSB); Belize Crime Observatory (MNDBS)	SIB	1) Cost linked to the establishment of new platforms for data sharing; and 2) cost linked to warranting accessibility and training of users on FAMCare database.	Regional initiative Latin America and the Caribbean free of Child Labour may have some templates to share from the Latin American experience

## Outcome 2. Compliance with labour laws increased for the benefit of children and their families

### *Rationale*

#### ► **Output 2.1 Tighter border control practices with respect to unaccompanied minors**

The identification of unaccompanied minors at land borders is posited to reduce the potential number of migrant children involved in child labour. Furthermore, if unaccompanied minors are identified, psychosocial support should be accessible, and legislated alternatives to child detention and subsequent deportation pursued. It was noted from consultations that unaccompanied minors crossed land borders and a proportion of these (not specified) could be found in child labour.

Immigration staff will be trained in interview techniques that will support their identification of unaccompanied minors attempting to cross borders. Systems used in Ecuador and Panama may offer possible options and learning activities could be organized.

Cost: Cost embedded in the Output realization linked to training of officers and development of adequate monitoring tools to be used once tighter controls are in place. FAMCare database could suit the purpose (**Output 2.5**).

#### ► **Output 2.2 Increase effectiveness of immigration inspections at potential places of work for undocumented immigrants through available data on potential violations (Outputs 1.10.1 and 1.10.2)**

Some stakeholders noted that migrant children in child labour could be found in specific industry sectors, primarily agriculture (as seasonal workers), hospitality and tourism (as sexually exploited workers) and suggested that increased inspections by Labour Inspectors and Immigration personnel could increase detection of these children and subsequently reduce the incidence of child labour. In order to address such a problem, the Output proposes to increase the effectiveness of **immigration inspections at potential places of work for undocumented immigrants notably via:**

- The triangulation of labour department data, immigration data, MESCTEG truancy data, and police department inputs with respect to child labour (**Outputs 1.10.1, 1.10.2 and 2.5**) to identify potential places of work for undocumented migrant children.
- The increase in the number of immigration inspections conducted on the basis of the available data including via definition of operational protocols for joint inspections (labour/immigration). The focus should notably be on unannounced joint immigration and labour inspectors at potential places of employment of undocumented migrant children.
- The treatment of victims of detected violations exploring alternatives to detention and deportation.

Stakeholders also noted that suitable monitoring mechanisms will be required to eliminate abuses/corruption within the proposed inspection approach.

Cost: Specific resources (human, training) to be earmarked for periodic analysis of data, development of joint protocols and actual conduction of inspections.

#### ► **Output 2.3 Increase effectiveness of labour inspections including via performance of unannounced inspections**

A number of stakeholders posited that if the number of labour inspections were increased, then this will increase the number of child labour violations detected. Moreover, stakeholders noted that fit for purpose

labour inspection monitoring mechanisms will be required to eliminate abuses/corruption as part of a strategy to ensure compliance with child labour provisions in all sectors. This Output will combine:

- a. Institutional collaboration between labour inspectors, truancy officers (School Community Liaison Inspectors), and community-based monitoring (**Outputs 2.4, 2.7 and 2.8**) based on and data sharing protocols (**Outputs 1.10, 1.11 and 2.5**);
- b. The execution of proactive and unannounced inspections in all sectors; and
- c. Strengthening the capacity of officials (labour inspectors).

The Output aims to increase the number and effectiveness of labour inspections - including unannounced ones - and subsequently increase the number of detected cases of child labour.

Specifically, data uploaded by the Immigration Department, the Police Department, the Human Services Department and the Labour Department (**Outputs 1.10.1, 1.10.2 and 2.5**) will be used by the Labour Department - upon the work of adequately trained officers - to target establishments with unannounced inspections. This in turn will lead to more cases being brought to the Courts and subsequent convictions regarding employer child labour violations. It should be noted that the increase in convictions will only serve as a deterrent if fines for such violations are substantially increased through the amendment of labour legislation (**Output 1.1**).

Cost: Actual cost to carry out inspections and training of officers in data analysis.

#### ► **Output 2.4 Increase the effectiveness of school truancy inspections**

Several stakeholders suggested that child labour could be reduced by increasing the number of truancy inspections as they noted that some children truant as a result of economic demands, often at certain times of the year (planting and harvesting seasons) and were therefore vulnerable to child labour. To that scope, the Education and Training Act for officers who monitor attendance prescribes an enlarged list of powers (s. 65 of the Act)<sup>82</sup> which, according to stakeholders, are seldom fully applied. Ensuring the appropriate application of existing powers and consistently combining (i) Sharing of data collected by the Human Services Department (child protection), the Labour Department (child labour), and the Ministry of Education (daily pupil registration records) and Education Support Services (**Outputs 1.10.1 and 1.10.2,2.5**) and (ii) operational protocols ensuring an increased number of evidence-based truancy inspections by School Community Liaison Inspectors, could increase detection of truants found in child labour and vice versa.

Moreover, children who are identified as truant child labourers should be given immediate and special attention. This could include the paying of school fees in full and providing school supplies inclusive of textbooks and uniforms with no expenses borne by the children's parents. An example of relevant good practice applied locally can be found in the ILO's pilot Action Programme on Child Labour in two Mayan Communities (see [here](#)).

82 65 (1) A School Community Liaison Officer or any person duly authorized by the Chief Education Officer, upon first asking for permission to enter, may enter any yard, house, building or place between the hours of eight o'clock in the morning and five o'clock in the evening of any day of the week except weekends and public holidays to make enquiries as to any child there residing or employed. (2) Subject to the provisions of sections 65 (1) to 65 (2) of this Act, Everyone who, (a) wilfully hinders or obstructs such persons as mentioned in subsection (1) of this section, in the performance of their duty under this section; or (b) wilfully makes any false representations to such persons with respect to the age or employment of a child who is under the compulsory school age; or (c) wilfully refuses to afford to such persons reasonably requiring it, any information that he possesses as to the age or employment of a child who is under the compulsory school age, commits an offence and is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars. (3) A member of the Police Department shall, when called upon by a School Community Liaison Officer or persons duly authorized by the Chief Education Officer, render such assistance as such officer may need in the performance of his functions under this Act.

Cost: Actual cost to revise and amend existing protocols linked to conducting inspections enabling the exercise of the full power of officers monitoring attendance and cost to actually carry inspections via revised modality. Cost of provision of school fees and school supplies.

► **2.5 Establish a fully-fledged Child Labour Casework and Management System within the framework of the existing child protection system via (a) the expansion of the FAMCare data base and (b) the development of adequate operational protocols for case management of child labour victims**

The establishment of a CLCMS will support the consistent identification, removal, remediation and reintegration of child labourers. Discussions with stakeholders identified the need for greater inter-agency coordination in the identification of child labourers, the removal of children from child labour and their subsequent remediation and reintegration with a fully-fledged case management procedure addressing child labour issues.

A child labour case management system could be established through the development of relevant inter-ministerial protocols and the addition of a Child Labour module to the FAMCare database (in the same way a Trafficking in Persons Module was added in 2021 to strengthen the data collection and case management systems for ATIPs). Such a module, coupled with BPD, Labour Department, Immigration and Education Support Services data access will offer data in support of the coordination of child labour identification; the removal of children from child labour; remediation; and reintegration of former child labourers. The system could be further tailored to account for the child labour violations encountered in agriculture, specifically sugar cane.

Additionally, the Labour Department made a commitment in 2019, in support of the CLEAR II Project's sustainability, to the establishment of a confidential and toll-free Child Labour Hotline. The establishment of this Hotline (Child Labour Inspectorate - 0-800-childbz) under the auspices of the MRTCDLLG, will enhance the effective operations of a fully-fledged Child Labour Casework and Management System.

Cost: For the expansion of FAMCare, the costs are linked to enabling the child labour module and to warranting accessibility and training of users to the revamped FAMCare database. For the definition of protocols, the cost is linked to resources needed for the process. For the Hotline, costs are linked to its establishment, operationalization, and maintenance.

► **Output 2.6 Model standard contracts for the banana and citrus industries, along the experience of the BSI/CO-OP contract initiatives**

The establishment and subsequent implementation of model standard contracts pertaining to one or more roles linked to the agricultural work in the banana and citrus farms will support the elimination of child labour in the agricultural sector through the improvement of labour standards. Modelled along the undertaking within the sugar cane industry, where the BSI/CO-OP contract initiative (developed in partnership with an overseas organization (UK based CO-OP)) allowed for the explicit description of contents for cane cutters' contracts and formalize their employment relationship, the idea is to develop relevant standard contract templates to be applied within the banana and citrus industry incorporating basic elements (pay, work hours, time of work, shifts, minimum protective equipment, etc.), minimum required qualifications, previous experience and minimum age. This will add to and customize the existing legal checks and balances to prevent employment of children in hazardous work, employment of undocumented migrants and observance of safety protocols. In addition, the Output will seek to expand the standard contracts available in the sugar cane industry to the roles of loader/operator and truck driver. The Banana Grower and Citrus Grower Associations will refer to the practice by BSI to realize this Output and the needed steps which could include drafting of standard model contracts, approval by relevant industry stakeholders, and consistency with national labour legislation.

Cost: Main cost linked to the development of relevant model standard contracts and consultations for adoption by industry associations via tripartite consultations.

► **Output 2.7 Hotel/guesthouse/tourist-oriented businesses produce written Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies and demonstrate commitment to The Code of Ethics Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents ('The Code').**

The tourism sector within Belize employs children within food and alcohol service and hospitality, as tour guides, maintenance personnel, and security guards, all of which potentially expose them to child labour. Additionally, stakeholders noted the presence of commercial sexual exploitation within the industry, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. A tourism industry entity's explicit commitment to written operations - specific CSR Policy and 'The Code' - will demonstrate to travelers, both local and international, that the business has a zero-tolerance policy to child labour including the one on the worst forms of child labour, commercial sexual exploitation. It should be noted that Government-led reduction strategies should be the primary driver of reducing child labour in the tourism industry. Moreover, CSR and Code commitments alone will not serve to reduce child labour but will require enforcement through timely and effective monitoring mechanisms.

Research (see [here](#)) noted that multiple businesses throughout the globe have adopted self-regulating corporate social responsibility (CSR) policies often containing highly defined child labour prohibitions. Moreover, this research found CSR policies in tourism-oriented businesses to be an 'invaluable weaponry in the battle against the exploitation of children'. Any hotel/guesthouse/tourist-oriented business registering with Belize Tourism Board (BTB) [travelBelize.org](http://travelBelize.org) website or with the Belize Tourism Industry Association (BTIA) should produce a corporate social responsibility (CSR) Policy. Such a policy should 'enumerate prohibitions on child labour throughout the supply chain, consistent, at minimum, with international standards.' A further dimension of the CSR Policy could be the establishment of scholarship funds for children in communities where the businesses are situated. The availability of such funds will demonstrate the businesses' commitment to ensuring children stay in school thereby reducing their vulnerability to child labour within the tourism sector.

'The Code' has been identified as one of the most effective initiatives aimed at eliminating incidence of child sex work and child trafficking within major hotel and tourism chains. The Code is a multi-stakeholder initiative with the mission to provide awareness, tools and support to the travel and tourism industry to prevent the sexual exploitation of children. It comprises a voluntary set of six criteria that members commit to, to keep children safe. Moreover, The Code is represented around the globe by local organizations who provide support to the travel and tourism industry on the ground to implement the six criteria of The Code. For more information see [here](#). Research has suggested that a businesses' explicit commitment to The Code may significantly contribute to the disruption of the demand side of the sex trafficking trade.

During stakeholder consultations, certification practices similar to those applied in the agriculture sector were suggested as a way of combatting child labour within the sector.

The Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations (MTDR), in collaboration with the BTB and the BTIA, could undertake collaborative research on CSR Policy and The Code implementation within the industry and plan future actions/initiative based on the research outcomes.

Cost: Cost to be internalized by establishments. Possible costs associated with the coordination role of MTDR (advocacy, provision of standard templates).

► **Output 2.8 Integrating the BSCFA Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation (YICBMR) model into operations of national and local Government.**

In 2015, the Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association (BSCFA), with support from Fairtrade International, commenced the establishment of the Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation (YICBMR) System on Child Labour. The YICBMR approach comprises three phases: (1) the establishment of the monitoring and response system in pilot communities; (2) scaling-up monitoring to include additional communities; and (3) **integrating the monitoring and response system with the Government's child labour monitoring system, where information is shared by the producer group and its partners with the Government and its stakeholders.** Stakeholders noted that the Department of Human Services should be involved at the point of identification of a child labourer so that follow-up/ remediation is coordinated and effective.

Phase 1 and 2 of implementation is completed and the YICBMR system has shown positive results in addressing the problem of child labour in sugar cane production in targeted communities. It should be noted that scaling up of the system is a priority but one that cannot be sustained by the BSCFA alone, requiring, inter-alia, continued Fairtrade International support, the fulfilment of **Outputs 1.1, 1.10, 1.11, and 2.5** and a sustainable financing mechanism.

The MRTCDLLG, in collaboration with BSCFA and Fairtrade International, will incorporate BSCFA YICBMR system into Government child labour monitoring system through adequate training of relevant officers and allocation of resources to run the system daily.

Cost: Running cost linked to hosting and managing of the child labour monitoring apparatus.

► **Output 2.9 Expand community-based monitoring (CBM) mechanisms similar to BSCFA/Fairtrade International. 1) Within citrus, banana, cacao, rice and poultry industries, possibly leading to international certification; and 2) Within the tourism industry, possibly incorporating adherence to 'The Code' and CSR polices within the tourism sector**

Community-based monitoring (CBM) approaches utilise local knowledge and insights, supported by identified community values, to provide a community-based oversight mechanism in support of established formal monitoring mechanisms of international partners to reduce child labour within identified employment sectors. CBM engages young persons based in communities that contain industrial sectors within which child labour can be found.

In 2015, the Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association (BSCFA), with support from Fairtrade International, commenced the establishment of the Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation (YICBMR) System on Child Labour. The first two phases of the system have been implemented and have shown promise in supporting the monitoring of child labour within the industry.

From stakeholder consultations it emerged that BSCFA YICBMR approaches had supported the industry's reducing of child labour and could be adopted (if they were not already in use) by other agricultural sectors as supporting actions to the reduction of child labour within those sectors.

The adoption or adaption of the BSCFA YICBMR approach by the banana, citrus, cacao, rice, and poultry industries will support continued reduction of child labour within these agricultural sectors. Moreover, implementation of a system similar to the BSCFA YICBMR within the agriculture sector could augment current international certification processes.

The tourism industry could also consider adoption/adaptation of the BSCFA YICBMR that will support adherence to 'The Code' and CSR polices (that will include the establishment of scholarship funds)

within the sector. Such adoption may also support internationally recognized certification within the industry.

The BSCFA, with support from Fairtrade International, will collaborate with the Government to ensure incorporation of the CBM within Government child labour monitoring systems. Implementing CBM modalities within banana, citrus, cacao, rice, poultry, and tourism industries will rely on the lead of relevant industry associations such as the Banana Grower Association, the Citrus Grower Association, the Toledo Cacao Growers Association, and rice and poultry industry organizations, and the BTB and BTIA will refer to the practice by BCSFA/Fairtrade International to realize the respective Outputs and the steps required which could include drafting of YICBMR system, inclusive of a sustainability plan, and approval by relevant industry stakeholders.

Costs: Coordination and delivery of awareness raising of CBM (possibly with Fairtrade International or other international certification body support) in other agricultural sectors and the tourism sector; sharing of good practice among potential partners; and feasibility studies/convening of meetings within communities re: CBM application.

► **Output 2.10.1 Train utility workers (Telecom, electricity, water, internet providers) on how to identify victims of TIP (Trafficking in Persons) and how to report**

Utility workers have access to homes at the invitation of the homeowner. This gives the utility worker an advantage as they are in a position to potentially observe something untoward. When they have received training on how to identify victims of TIP and the requisite reporting processes, they become another valuable source of data gathering in support of efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

The ATIPS council identified the training of utility workers on how to identify victims of TIP and how to report as one of the future initiatives they were going to pursue.

ATIPS Council has commenced the initial stages of this Output and will implement training of the utility workers and the necessary monitoring and sustainability mechanisms.

Cost: Training and reporting via adequate monitoring tools.

► **Output 2.10.2 Develop and implement TIP identification and referral guidelines**

Creating awareness of:

- indicators that a person may have been trafficked; and
- the referral procedures to be followed should a person, who has possibly been trafficked, be identified,

amongst workers of specific Government agencies will support mechanisms currently operating to eliminate the worst forms of child labour.

The Human Trafficking Institute, through the Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries (MHANGI), and in partnership with other Government Ministries, have commenced the development of "TIP identification and Referral Guidelines" for frontline workers from the Human Services Department, The Immigration Department, The Labour Department and Justices of the Peace. Stakeholders suggested that the Child Justice Steering Committee should also be included. Such guidelines will be disseminated with relevant modalities, particularly to the benefit of Government officers (police officers, labour inspectors, immigration agents and social workers) in the position to detect abuses.

Cost: Guideline development, printing, promotion via organized training courses, and distribution.

► **Output 2.11 Design and subsequently implement awareness/education campaigns tailored to different communities and different types of child labour prevalent in those communities**

The design of education/awareness campaigns that consider geographic, socio-cultural and linguistic nuances of a community/area, will send localized messages and be more successful in creating an awareness of the child labour issues, as opposed to a generalized national awareness campaign. Such campaigns could incorporate ILO SCREAM approaches (see [here](#) for details) that support educators in raising child awareness of child labour, particularly in agriculture, as well as the worst forms of child labour and include awareness of hazardous work and light work as identified in **Output 1.1**. The subsequent implementation of tailored education/awareness campaigns in identified communities will heighten the awareness of community members to the issues of child labour prevalent in their community. This heightened awareness will contribute to greater community support for child labour reduction efforts by the Government, the private sector and civil society and afford greater success to the reduction efforts. Moreover, building on an existing and recommended good practice, the campaigns could also promote the benefits of written employment contracts within the agricultural sector. The latter was indicated by stakeholders as an effective tool to ensure commitment for workers and employers and to enable access to regularized jobs, and in turn, allowing for NIS payments. Such tool proved particularly helpful in small and medium enterprises dealing with sugar cane.

Multiple stakeholders noted that greater citizen awareness of child labour, including telephone numbers that could be called if child labour is suspected, is required if citizens support of initiatives that seek to reduce child labour is to be increased.

Design of the localized education/awareness campaigns incorporating telephone contact numbers, inclusive of SCREAM approaches, could be founded on the implementation of Knowledge, Attitudes and Behaviour (KAB) surveys or the use of CAS/MICS/ modified LFS data. The implementation of the tailored education/awareness campaigns by Government, private sector and CSOs will be coordinated by the CLC utilizing media appropriate to each community/area.

Cost: Awareness raising campaigns cost depending on width, depth and chosen media.

► **Table 16. Breakdown of Outcome 2: Compliance with labour laws and a strengthened support and reintegration system for victims of child labour**

Outcome 2. Compliance with labour laws increased for the benefit of children and their families								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
Raise detection/ identification rate of working irregular child migrants	2.1 Tighter border control practices (in line with Government protocol) with respect to unaccompanied minors based on revised interview techniques and provision of alternatives.	2.1a # of interviews of unaccompanied minors undertaken per year.	Annually	4/2022-12/2025	Immigration Department (MFAFI).	Human Services Department (MHDHFA)	Cost embedded in the Output realization linked to training of officers and development of adequate monitoring tools to be used once tighter controls are in place. FAMCare database could suit the purpose (Output 2.5).	
	2.2 Increase effectiveness of immigration inspections at potential places of work for irregular immigrants.	2.2a # of joint inspections (immigration, DOL and DHS) undertaken per year. 2.2b # of irregular child migrants identified per year as a result of inspections. 2.2c Existence of a revised system of checks and balances to prevent misuse of new system.	Annually	4/2022-12/2025	Immigration Department (MFAFI).	Labour Department (MRTCDLLG) Human Services Department (MHDHFA) Education Support Services (MESCTEG)	Specific resources (human, training) to be earmarked for periodic analysis of data, development of joint protocols and actual conduct of inspections.	

► **Table 16. Breakdown of Outcome 2: Compliance with labour laws and a strengthened support and reintegration system for victims of child labour (continued)**

Outcome 2. Compliance with labour laws increased for the benefit of children and their families								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
Strengthen child labour detection and prosecution	2.3 Increase effectiveness of labour inspections, including via performance of unannounced inspections.	2.3a # of joint inspections (labour and DHS) undertaken per year. 2.3b # of unannounced labour inspections (that include DHS) per year. 2.3c # of child labourers identified per year as a result of (i) announced inspections; and (ii) unannounced inspections. 2.3d Existence of a revised system of checks and balances to prevent misuse of new system.	Annually	6/2022-12/2025	Department of Labour (MRTCDLLG)	Human Services Department (MHD/FIPA)	Actual cost to carry out inspections and training of officers in data analysis.	
	2.4 Increase effectiveness of school truancy inspections ensuring legal powers of school community liaison officers are enabled, inconsistencies between districts in truancy inspections are limited and linkages between labour inspections/ truancy inspections are ensured.	2.4a Revised guidelines for truancy inspectors available by 14/2022. 2.4b # of School Community Liaison Officers per district per year. 2.4c Ratio of # of School Community Liaison Officers to # of students per district. 2.4d # of truancy inspections undertaken by district per year. 2.4e # of children identified (by age, sex, ethnicity) in child labour by district as a result of truancy inspections per year.	Annually	4/2022-12/2025	Ministry of Education, Department of Labour (MRTCDLLG)	MHDFIPA	Actual cost to revise and amend existing protocols linked to conducting inspections enabling the exercise of the full power of officers monitoring attendance and cost to actually carry out inspections via revised modality.	

► **Table 16. Breakdown of Outcome 2: Compliance with labour laws and a strengthened support and reintegration system for victims of child labour** (continued)

Outcome 2. Compliance with labour laws increased for the benefit of children and their families								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
Strengthen support and reintegration system for children removed from child labour or worst forms of child labour.	2.5 Establish a fully fledged Child Labour Casework and Management System (CLCMS) within the framework of the existing child protection system via (a) the expansion of the FAMCare data base; and (b) the development of adequate operational protocols for case management of child labour victims.	2.5a. # of Operational protocols for case management of child labour victims designed and validated by 10/2022. 2.5b A child labour module is established in the MHDFFPA FAMCare system by May 2022 (same as 1.11.2b). 2.5c Labour Dept, Police Department, Immigration Department and Education Support Services are able to access FAMCare Child Labour Module Database by Dec 2022. 2.5d # of children removed from child labour identified and assisted via the casework system per year, of which are: (i) unaccompanied minors; (ii) irregular child migrants; (iii) truant; (iv) other child labourers.	Semi-annually	4/2022-12/2025	MHDFFPA	BPD, MRTCDLLG, MESCT, MFAFTI	For the expansion of FAMCare, the costs are linked to enabling the child labour module and to warranting accessibility and training of users to the revamped FAMCare database. For the definition of protocols, the cost is linked to resources needed for the process.	
Strengthen the formalization of mechanisms to ensure no child labour in agriculture.	2.6 Expand BSI/CO-OP contract initiatives including citrus, banana, cacao, rice and poultry industries.	2.6a # of standard model contracts for identified roles within each agricultural sector developed and disseminated by Oct 2023 by industry.	Semi-annually	4/2022-10/2023	CLC, Department of Labour (MRTCDLLG)	BGA, CGA, TCGA	Costs linked to the development of relevant model standard contracts and consultations for adoption by industry associations via tripartite consultations.	

► **Table 16. Breakdown of Outcome 2: Compliance with labour laws and a strengthened support and reintegration system for victims of child labour** (*continued*)

Outcome 2. Compliance with labour laws increased for the benefit of children and their families								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
Strengthen mechanisms to reduce child labour in the tourism industry.	2.7 Hotel/guesthouse/tourist-oriented businesses produce written Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policies and demonstrate commitment to The Code of Ethics against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents ('The Code').	2. 7a # of Hotel/guesthouse/tourist-oriented businesses with new written CSR policies by year. 2. 7b # of Hotel/guesthouse/tourist-oriented businesses with scholarship funds for children. 2. 7c # of Hotel/guesthouse/tourist-oriented businesses with demonstrated (written) commitment to The Code by Dec 2022.	Annually	4/2022-12/2025	Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations	BTB and BTIA	Cost to be internalized by establishments. Possible costs associated with coordination role of MTDR (advocacy, provision of standard templates.	
	2.8 Embed BSCFA Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation (YICBMR) model into Government operations.	2.8 Phase III of YICBMR (incorporation YICBMR systems within Government child labour monitoring apparatus) achieved by Dec 2023.	Semi-annually	2-2022/12-2023	CLC (MRTCDLLG) could take the lead as a way to expand labour inspections. Central and local Government to be on board with implementation	ILO (tools), Fairtrade International, BSCFA, MHD/FIPA	Running cost linked to hosting and managing of the child labour monitoring apparatus.	
	2.9 Expand community-based monitoring mechanisms similar to Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association (BSCFA) /Fairtrade Youth Inclusive Community-Based Monitoring and Remediation (YICBMR) system.	2.9 a (i) phase I (establishment) adoption or adaptation of BSCFA/ Fairtrade YICBMR system achieved by industry (banana, cocoa, citrus, rice and poultry, tourism) by Dec 2022.	Semi-annually	4/2022-12/2025	CLC BSCFA, BGC, CGA, TCGA, BTIA, BTB		Costs linked to coordination and delivery of awareness raising of CBM (possible Fairtrade or other international certification body support) in other agricultural sectors and tourism sector;	

► **Table 16. Breakdown of Outcome 2: Compliance with labour laws and a strengthened support and reintegration system for victims of child labour** (continued)

Outcome 2. Compliance with labour laws increased for the benefit of children and their families								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
	1) Within citrus, banana, cacao, rice and poultry industries possibly leading to international certification (intl); 2) within the tourism industry possibly incorporating adherence to 'The Code' and CSR policies within the tourism sector.	2.9 b (ii) phase II (scaling-up) adoption or adaptation of BSCFA/ Fairtrade YICBMR system by industry (banana, cocoa, citrus, rice and poultry, tourism) achieved by Dec 2023.  2.9.c (iii) phase III (Integration) adoption or adaptation of BSCFA/ Fairtrade YICBMR system achieved by industry (banana, cocoa, citrus, rice and poultry, tourism) by Dec 2024.					sharing of good practice among potential partners; and feasibility studies/convening of meetings within communities re: CBM application.	
Strengthen detection and prosecution re: worst forms of child labour through raising the awareness of signs of trafficking in persons among utility workers.	2.10.1 Train utility workers (Telecom, electricity, water, internet providers) on how to identify victims of TIP and how to report.	2.10a # of utility workers trained (identified by utility represented) (total per year and (% of the total number of utility workers per year).  2.10b # of reports submitted by trained utility workers per year	Annually	4/2022-12/2025	ATIPS Council, MHDFIPA		Cost of training and reporting via adequate monitoring tools.	

► **Table 16. Breakdown of Outcome 2: Compliance with labour laws and a strengthened support and reintegration system for victims of child labour** *(continued)*

Outcome 2. Compliance with labour laws increased for the benefit of children and their families								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
	2.10.2 Develop and implement Trafficking in Person identification and referral guidelines.	2.10.2a TIP identification and referral guidelines published by June 2022. 2.10.2b # of practitioners trained/made of aware of guidelines (by Dept, position) by June 2023.	Semi-annually	4/2022-6/2023	Ministry of Home Affairs and New Growth Industries (MHANGI) with support from HTI	MRTCDLLG (Labour Department) MHDFFIPA (Human Services Department) MFAFTI (Immigration Department) Justices of the Peace, Child Justice Steering Committee.	Costs linked to guideline development, publishing and promotion.	
Build public awareness regarding the reduction of child labour and elimination of the worst forms of child labour	2.11 Design and subsequently implement awareness/ education campaigns tailored to different communities, different types of child labour prevalent in those communities and the benefits of written employment contracts, particularly in the agricultural sector.	2.11a # of tailored campaigns designed. 2.11b # of campaigns implemented and # of people reached per year. 2.11c # of people sensitized to the benefit of written employment contracts within the agricultural sector per year.	Semi-annually	4/2022-12/2025	MRTCDLLG, NCLC and NCFC, MHDFFIPA	Government Information Services	Awareness raising campaigns cost depending on width, depth and chosen media.	

### **Outcome 3. Existing barriers to school/apprenticeship/internship access substantially reduced and continuous attendance throughout legal age for every Belizean child ensured.**

#### *Rationale*

#### **► Output 3.1 Increase primary school children and their parent's awareness of child rights, child labour, and education support services available**

The heightened awareness of child rights among parents and children of what constitutes child labour, will serve to create allies in support of efforts to reduce child labour. Several stakeholders noted that absence of child rights/child labour awareness campaigns at the primary school level. In addition, unawareness about already existing Government services such as child labour desk and the hotline to report occurrences was emphasised. Such campaigns, delivered through primary schools, will build awareness among primary age children on child rights including those regarding child labour. Such campaigns could also be used to increase parental awareness of child labour and the publicising of relevant existing initiatives such as the telephone numbers to report abuses and child labour, the child labour desk and social support services in general, partially overlapping with Output 4.2. Further, heightening parental awareness regarding education support services that are available could be incorporated into the campaign to ensure the full utilization of such services. This will support Government's initiatives that seek to reduce children's vulnerability to child labour.

The campaign and associated activities will be designed with the support of UNICEF and ILO and implemented nationally through primary schools.

Cost: Cost linked to the design of the campaign and possibly training of teachers (primary school).

#### **► Output 3.2 Reduce direct secondary school and ITVET costs**

The elimination or substantial reduction of direct and indirect secondary school costs (tuition, registration, CXC exam fees, books/tablets, uniforms, and transportation) will greatly reduce the financial burden borne by poorer parents in support of their children's secondary school education. The reduction of this financial burden will allow for money previously used to send the secondary aged children to school to support (in other ways) their continued education to Form 4 and to sit CXC exams that may give rise to future possible opportunities to pursue higher education. This will lead to a more qualified workforce; a possible reduction in the child's vulnerability or their siblings being exposed to child labour. The costs of attending an ITVET were also identified as a barrier to accessing technical/vocational qualifications which some children would have liked to pursue. Children in such circumstances would be less likely to remain in secondary school, with its academically skewed curriculum, and therefore would have a higher vulnerability to being exposed to child labour.

Multiple stakeholders noted that current secondary school education and ITVET costs (which were noted as being higher than secondary school costs at BZD600-800 per course) placed a financial burden on poorer families. This resulted in children within those families dropping out of school, or unable to attend an ITVET, and working, either to support their own education/training or that of their younger siblings. This situation was determined to exacerbate a child's vulnerability to being exposed to child labour. Stakeholders further noted that reducing direct secondary school costs was a part of the Belize Education Secondary Reform Programme, and if so, the Programme or aspects pertinent to this Output could be reviewed and implemented.

Cost: Cost linked to coverage of additional expense related to elimination of direct and indirect costs.

### ► **Output 3.3 Increase the number of scholarships**

If the number of primary and secondary school scholarships are increased this will increase access to secondary schooling for academically oriented children in poorer families. Such action will, for poorer families, reduce the financial burden associated with primary and more so secondary education, increasing the likelihood of the children completing secondary school, attaining CXC qualifications and possibly pursuing further academic endeavours. Moreover, this action will contribute to reducing the number of children vulnerable to child labour.

Child respondents consulted for the elaboration of the present Policy identified the small number of scholarships available as a barrier to children from poorer families completing secondary school education and contributing to children dropping out of school and their subsequent vulnerability to engaging in child labour. It should be noted that stakeholders identified the action of increasing the number of scholarships available as part of the Belize Education Secondary Reform Programme, in which case the Programme or aspects pertinent to this Output could be reviewed and implemented.

Cost: Cost linked to expansion of the number of scholarships plus administration.

### ► **Output 3.4 Expand school feeding programme**

Expansion of the school feeding programme (primary and secondary schools) to provide meals for all children in school will serve as a social protection measure, alleviating some of the parental financial burdens associated with schooling, ensuring children receive a nutritional meal, supporting their remaining in school, and thereby contributing to reducing their vulnerability to being exposed to child labour.

Several respondents noted that school feeding programmes were not universal in that not all schools provided such programmes and that some children/families who should benefit from such programmes do not. It was determined that this situation contributed to children dropping out of school and seeking work, which increased their vulnerability to being exposed to child labour. Moreover, stakeholders also noted that expanding the school feeding programme was a part of the Belize Education Secondary Reform Programme, so the Programme or aspects pertinent to this Output could be reviewed and implemented. It should be noted that there is a pending expansion of the BOOST Programme with recommended structuring of a school feeding facility for children of participants. Moreover, it should be further noted that one strategy Belize has been using to promote food security and nutrition in the country is the redesign, scale up and strengthening of its national school feeding programme through the implementation of a pilot project of a model called "Sustainable Schools" (for more details see [here](#)).

Cost: Cost linked to addition of beneficiaries to school feeding programs plus administration

### ► **Output 3.5 Institute structured primary school tutoring services**

Ensuring access to localized structured tutoring services, particularly for primary school children, will support their academic achievement and increase the likelihood of them remaining in school beyond the age of 14 years and achieving CXC qualifications. Such a situation will contribute to reducing the vulnerability of the child to being exploited through child labour.

Respondents posited that primary children often fail academically due to a lack of access to academic support outside of school. Once children were not successful in their primary school education, they would either become repeaters or dropouts. If additional academic support was not provided when repeating a school year, the likelihood of the child dropping out would increase. When a child from a poorer family drops out of school, their vulnerability to being exposed to child labour increases.

As a possible implementation modality, teachers graduating from training college and not in employment, will be employed as tutors and zoned so a tutor will address the needs of pupils across an identified number of primary schools. The tutors will teach those children identified as being in need of academic support in small groups after school hours.

Cost: Cost linked to expansion of school tutoring programmes plus administration

► **Output 3.6 Establish and subsequently integrate English as an Additional Language (EAL) provisions within primary schools**

The establishment/formalization of English as an EAL provision for Spanish and Mayan language speakers, whose first language is not English, will support their inclusion and academic achievement as they progress through the school system.

Multiple stakeholders cited the continued growth of the Spanish-speaking population within Belize and the subsequent rise in the number of children who attend school whose first language is not English as a contributory factor to school dropout rates. It was argued that many of the children from this population face the dual task of learning English and learning through English and do not receive the English language support necessary for them to access and achieve in the English-language based curriculum taught in schools. Such a situation can result in children displaying low self-esteem, poor academic achievement and subsequent school dropout or repetition and consequent increased vulnerability to child labour exposure.

The suggested solution for this scenario was the provision of EAL support in primary schools where the demand for such support exists, enabling children to access the curriculum, increase learning engagement opportunities through the English language instruction medium and ultimately remain in school. Such provision will require the training of selected primary school teachers in EAL pedagogies and the subsequent implementation of such pedagogies where required.

► **Output 3.7 Create an Internship and Apprenticeship Programme**

A number of stakeholders identified as a potential remedial measure to child labour, the need to provide training options for students who were not academically inclined, through internship and apprenticeship programmes. The discussion of either programme has been ongoing in Belize for several years and an Internship Programme already exists within the Ministry of Transport, Youth and Sports (MTYS). Moreover, stakeholders noted the existence of an agreed apprenticeship model framework in need of operationalization.

It is proposed that the existing Internship Programme be expanded whilst the already developed model framework for the Apprenticeship Programme be implemented. In the expansion of the Internship Programme and prior to the implementation of Internship Programme, data from the SIB concerning child labour should be considered, allowing the internships and apprenticeships offered to be tailored to the needs of child labourers and their educational and socio demographic features.

Cost: Additional resources for existing internship programme, in particular ensuring outreach to rural areas. Resources needed to implement apprenticeship model framework.

► **Output 3.8 Expand access to the Institute of Vocational Education and Training (ITVET) including the recognition of prior learning to the benefit of children engaged in employment from a young age**

The incorporation of ITVET courses into the secondary school curriculum (as per Secondary Reform Programme) and offering of same as a remediation option within the FAMCare database will facilitate

access to ITVET courses for children of secondary school age and reduce children's vulnerability to child labour.

Several respondents in stakeholder consultations noted the limited opportunities available to students in secondary school who were not academically inclined but motivated to obtain qualifications that would increase their chances of decent work. Such a scenario left them vulnerable to dropping out of school and possibly becoming engaged in child labour. Moreover, it was also noted that many children had acquired skills through employment, particularly fishing and agriculture, that were not formally certified. Such validation via recognition of prior learning will support the formalization of employment and prevention of hazardous work within these sectors.

There are currently five ITVETs in Belize, one in Belize city, one in Corozal, one in Orange Walk, one in Stann Creek, and one in Toledo, offering vocational education and training to persons aged 14 years and upwards, however courses are not free.

It should be noted that an ILO study published in 2018 (see [here](#)), contained, in reference to Belize, the following:

- No CVQ programmes are being pursued, so no issuing of Skills Certificates to facilitate free movement of certificate holders within CARICOM.
- CVQ offerings were tabled to commence by September 2019.
- No tracer studies, providing statistics on the employment status of graduates of the TVET system and the NVQ, hence no evidence of either the NVQ or CVQ certification facilitating the attainment of employment. Despite this short-coming, the social partners are of the view that TVET graduates are being employed, though not necessarily in their respective disciplines. This conclusion was arrived at, in spite of the absence of information / data on BCCI graduates. Anecdotally, the ITVETs and ETES explained instances of graduates informally advising the institutions of their employment.

Cost: Cost of assessment of current ITVET and feasibility for upgrade, and costs linked to restructuring ITVET attendance fees, restructuring of secondary school curriculum to incorporate ITVET courses

► **Output 3.9 Re-establish a Centre for Employment Training component (CET) under the ambit of the Western Regional Youth Training Institute and the Central Regional Youth Training Institute.**

During stakeholder consultation, the previous existence of a Centre for Employment Training was noted, and it was posited that its reestablishment would support greater access to TVET opportunities which would notably benefit the 14- to 17-year-olds.

As per previously existing procedure, young persons that have undergone an initial eight-month training at either the Western Regional Youth Training Institute or the Central Regional Youth Training Institute will move onto a two-year tech/voc course at a Centre for Employment Training, thereby affording them the opportunity to gain the skills and qualifications necessary to enter the formal job market and consequently contributing to a reduction in the vulnerability to be subjected to child labour.

Cost: Identification /restoration/refurbishment of district/ regionally based CET; curriculum design; and staffing of centres.

► **Table 17. Breakdown of Outcome 3: Education/training access increased**

Outcome 3. Existing barriers to school/apprenticeship/internship access substantially reduced and continuous attendance throughout legal age for every Belizean child ensured								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
Increase child rights and child labour awareness in primary school children and their parent's awareness of child rights, child labour, and education support services.	3.1.1 Design and implement a national primary school-based awareness campaign.	3.1.1 Design of primary school awareness campaign by December 2022. 3.1.2a # of schools in which campaign was delivered per year. 3.1.2b # of children reached by campaign per year.	Annually	6/2022-12/2024	MRTCDLLG, MESCTEG, MHDFIPA	Government information services	Cost linked to the design of the campaign and possibly training of teachers (primary school).	
Increase secondary school and ITVET access and completion	3.2 Eliminate direct and indirect secondary school and ITVET costs.	3.2a % reduction in each identified direct secondary school cost per year. 3.2b % reduction in each identified indirect secondary school cost per year. 3.2c # of children accessing secondary school (by age, sex, ethnicity, district, urban/rural) per year. 3.2d # of children completing secondary school (sitting CXC, by age, sex, ethnicity, district, urban/rural) per year.	Annually	4/2022-12/2025	MESCTEG	MHDFIPA	Cost linked to coverage of additional expense related to elimination of direct and indirect costs.	

► **Table 17. Breakdown of Outcome 3: Education/training access increased (continued)**

Outcome 3. Existing barriers to school/apprenticeship/internship access substantially reduced and continuous attendance throughout legal age for every Belizean child ensured								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
		3.2e % reduction in each identified direct ITVET cost per year. 3.2f % reduction in each identified indirect ITVET cost per year. 3.2g # of children accessing ITVET (by course enrolled, age, sex, ethnicity), district, urban/rural) per year. 3.2h # of children completing ITVET/attaining qualifications (by qualification attained, age, sex, ethnicity), district, urban/rural) per year.						
	3.3 increase the number of primary and secondary school scholarships.	3.3a Increase in # of primary school scholarships per year by district, rural/urban income, sex, ethnicity. 3.3b Increase in # of secondary school scholarships per year by district, rural/urban income, sex, ethnicity.	Annually	4/2022-12/2025	MCEST		Cost linked to expansion of the number of scholarships plus administration.	
	3.4 Expand school feeding programme.	3.4a # of children per year (by age, sex, ethnicity, district, rural/urban, form/standard) accessing school feeding lunch programme. 3.4b # of children per year (by age, sex, ethnicity, district, rural/urban, form/standard) accessing school feeding breakfast programme.	Annually	4/2022-12/2025	MCEST	MHDFIPA, CSO/ Private Sector	Cost linked to addition of beneficiaries to school feeding programs plus administration	It was noted that as part of the Government's COVID-19 recovery strategy, BOOST would be reintroduced and this conditional cash transfer includes ensuring that children in the Programme receive a meal whilst at school.

► **Table 17. Breakdown of Outcome 3: Education/training access increased** *(continued)*

Outcome 3. Existing barriers to school/apprenticeship/internship access substantially reduced and continuous attendance throughout legal age for every Belizean child ensured								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
	3.5 Institute structured primary school tutoring services.	3.5 # of primary school children per year (by age, sex, ethnicity, district, rural/urban, and standard) accessing structured primary school tutoring services.	Annually	4/2022-12/2025	MCEST	CSO/private sector	Cost linked to expansion of school tutoring programmes plus administration.	
	3.6 Establish and subsequently integrate English as an Additional Language (EAL) provision within primary schools.	3.6a # of primary school teachers trained in EAL pedagogies per year. 3.6b a # of primary schools with trained EAL teachers (No. per school, by district) per year. 3.6c # of children in each school accessing the EAL provision (by school, by district, by sex) per year.	Annually	6/2022-12/2025	MCEST		Cost for training teachers to teach English as an additional language and for running the programme over the duration of the Policy.	UNICEF to assist with technical support.
Expand opportunities for enrolment in internship and apprenticeship programmes.	3.7a Expand Internship Programme currently on offer in MTYS. 3.7b Implement already approved apprenticeship model framework	3.7ai # of children engaged in internship run by the MTYS programme (by district, urban/rural, ethnicity, sex) per year. 3.7aii availability of labour market performance assessment for graduates of internship programmes per year. 3.7bi # of children enrolled in apprenticeship programme (by district, by urban/rural, ethnicity, sex) per year. 3.7bii availability of labour market performance assessment for graduates of apprenticeship programmes per year.	Annually	4/2022-12/2025	MTYS, MCEST National Council for Technical and Vocational Training and Education (NCTVET)		Additional resources for existing internship programme, in particular, ensuring outreach to rural areas. Resources needed to implement apprenticeship model framework.	

► **Table 17. Breakdown of Outcome 3: Education/training access increased (continued)**

Outcome 3. Existing barriers to school/apprenticeship/internship access substantially reduced and continuous attendance throughout legal age for every Belizean child ensured								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
Expand access to Institute for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (ITVET) including the recognition of prior learning to the benefit of children engaged in employment from a young age.	3.8 Expand technical/vocational training opportunities including accreditation for non-certified vocational/technical skills (particularly in agriculture and fishing)	<p>3.8a Evaluation of current ITVET provisions re: school dropouts enrolled in programme by May 2022.</p> <p>3.8b Incorporation of ITVET courses into secondary school curriculum to ensure the inclusion of potential school-dropouts by December 2023.</p> <p>3.8c ITVET courses include certification for skills learnt within the agriculture and fishing sectors by December 2023.</p> <p>3.8d # of children gaining ITVET certification in agricultural and fishing associated skills per year (from 2024).</p> <p>3.8e ITVET identified as a remediation option for former child labourers within the CLCMS by Dec 2022.</p>	Annually	4/2022-12/2025	MCEST NCTVET		Cost linked to evaluation of current ITVET performance and, subsequently, to restructuring ITVET attendance fees, restructuring of secondary school curriculum to incorporate ITVET courses.	
	3.9 Re-establish a Centre for Employment Training (CET) component under the ambit of the Western Regional Youth Training Institute and the Central Regional Youth Training Institute.	<p>3.9a CET re-established by Dec 2023.</p> <p>3.9b # of children enrolled at CET per year (by age, sex, ethnicity, district, rural/urban) (from 2024).</p> <p>3.9c # of children graduating from CET (by age, sex, ethnicity, district, rural/urban) per year (from 2024).</p>	Annually	6-2022/12-2025	MCESTEG, NCTVET	MTYS	Cost linked to Identification /restoration/ refurbishment of district/regionally based CET; curriculum design; and staffing of centres.	

## Outcome 4. Adequate support and economic resilience for children and their families ensured as the way to pre-empt engagement in child labour

### *Rationale*

#### ► **Output 4.1 Greater social protection for single mothers (particularly in rural areas) to include parental support services**

The expansion of social protection for single mothers in rural areas will support children in continuing education, particularly boys, rather than having to work, invariably in agriculture, to supplement the family's income and consequently become a victim of child labour. School scholarships, though considered a form of social protection, are not included in this Output as these are covered in **Output 3.3**.

Stakeholders noted that social protection provisions appeared particularly limited in rural areas and suggested that a focus on single mothers in these areas would support children staying in school as opposed to working to supplement the family income. It was also noted that consideration would need to be given to those single mothers who are migrant workers within the agricultural sector as their status may affect the social protections available to them. Accessory services which could indirectly support single mothers and children in the pursuit of decent working conditions and/or access to school should also be considered, including expansion of police presence and safe transportation.

The Human Services Department of the MHDFIPA will utilize data to identify vulnerable single mothers whose children are child labour victims in rural areas where there is high incidence of child labour, and subsequently ensure the available provisions (Food Pantry, BOOST, Community Parent Empowerment Programme) are adequately disbursed to them based on a special set of child labour assistance and reintegration criteria.

Cost: The Output aims at ensuring better targeting of existing statutory disbursements. As such, protocols, or surveys to ensure proper means testing will be its building blocks. Should the fiscal space allow, an expansion of the dedicated budget for disbursement could be envisaged.

#### ► **Output 4.2 Implement awareness campaigns re: access to Government /NGO social support**

National multi-lingual awareness campaigns that identify social services offered, service access stipulations, and service access loci will serve to support the equitable and extended distribution of services thereby ensuring outreach to the most vulnerable and in need. It should be considered that, reportedly (see [here](#)), as a result of resource constraints, some social services are not promoted to avoid creating false expectations for service seekers.

In addition, stakeholders noted that families in particular districts (or especially in rural locations) were unable to access certain social services that are available to families in other districts. This lack of access was noted to perpetuate the family's vulnerability to multiple dimensions of poverty and contribute to children's vulnerability to exploitation through child labour. It is noted that such an awareness campaign could also be utilized to notify citizens of the reintroduction of the BOOST programme.

Cost: Costs linked to awareness raising campaigns, possibly piggybacked on similar undertakings aimed at raising awareness of available Government services and/or endeavours to facilitate online access/registration to electronic registries and repositories within the framework of the National Digital Agenda.

**► Output 4.3 Expand Small Mid-size Enterprise (SME) training opportunities**

With consideration for the limited number of sectors offering employment, the expansion of Micro, Small Mid-size Enterprise (MSME) training opportunities will offer individuals, particularly children not in education, employment or training, an opportunity to build the necessary skills to become self-employed and afford them some semblance of financial autonomy, contributing to a reduction in their vulnerability to child labour.

Opportunities for SME training were noted, by stakeholders, to be limited. Furthermore, they suggested that the inculcating of entrepreneurs in this digital age would expand legitimate income generating horizons. While the issue of entrepreneurship support is broad and relies on the fulfilment of several systemic conditions, two existing programmes were identified as being the ones susceptible to provide the most immediate benefit to child labourers and/or their families: (i) the SME programme under the aegis of the Women and Family Support Division; and (ii) the Beltraide MSME Program (“Belize Enterprise Revolving Fund” (BERF) Project) – which has a focus on women, indigenous people and ‘at-risk’ youth.

Cost: The implementation of this Output aims relies on the expansion and/or better implementation of (i) the SME Programme in Women and Family Support Division; and (ii) Implementation of Beltraide MSME Program (“Belize Enterprise Revolving Fund” (BERF) Project). Within the framework of the Child Labour Policy an increase in the number of beneficiaries and an improvement in the impact of the support is sought with all the necessary financial implications.

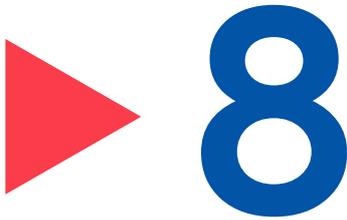


► **Table 18. Breakdown of Outcome 4: Strengthened social support and family economic resilience**

Outcome 4. Adequate support and economic resilience for children and their families ensured as way to pre-empt engagement in child labour								
Strategy	Key activities/Outputs	Indicators	Frequency of collection of indicators	Timeline for implementation	Responsibility	Co-responsibility	Financial implications	Additional comments
Extend the social protection floor	4.1 Greater social protection for single mothers (particularly in rural areas) to include parental support services.	4.1a # of single mothers accessing social protection services (by district, by ethnicity, rural/urban) per year.	Annually	Feb 2022 - Dec 2025	MHDFIPA		Cost of adequate targeting via operational protocols and/ or surveys, if needed, cost of extended disbursements.	Currently no 'food basket or BOOST available, however, stakeholders noted that BOOST will be reintroduced as part of the post-COVID recovery strategy.
Increase social protection service access	4.2 Implement awareness campaigns re: access to Government's social support including the reintroduction of BOOST.	4.2a # of events/ advertisements/ messages promoting Government's social protection services carried out via Government channels per year.	Annually	June 2022 - June 2025	MHDFIPA	Government Information Services	Costs of awareness raising campaigns. Piggybacking on other existing initiatives to be considered.	
Increase economic resilience of families	4.3 Expand Small Mid-size Enterprise (SME) training opportunities.	4.3a # of institutions offering entrepreneurship training and MSMEs support services per year, by number of beneficiaries; district and age of the beneficiary under the aegis of the SME programme within the Women and Family Support Division and the Belize Enterprise Revolving Fund. 4.3b # of children aged 14-17 and single mothers undertaking entrepreneurship training and benefitting from MSMEs support services within the framework of the SME programme within Women and Family Support Division and the Belize Enterprise Revolving Fund. 4.3c # of children aged 14-17 and single mother beneficiaries of the SME Programme within Women and Family Support Division and the Belize Enterprise Revolving Fund registering a MSME per year.	Annually	February 2022-December 2025	MHDFIPA (Women and Family Support and Department) and Ministry of Economic Development, Petroleum, Investment, Trade and Commerce. (Beltraide/ IADB)			This Output will specifically build on: (i) the SME programme within Women and Family Support Division; and (ii) the Beltraide MSME Program ("Belize Enterprise Revolving Fund" (BERF) Project - focusing on women, indigenous people and 'at-risk' youth.)



Photo by Anastasia Shuraeva, Pexels.com



# Monitoring and evaluation framework for the Policy

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Oversight of the monitoring of the National Child Labour Policy and Strategy 2022-2025 will be the responsibility of the National Child Labour Committee, and where necessary, the Committee will coordinate activities that support the Policy monitoring processes. At least quarterly meetings on the status of Policy implementation will be organized under the umbrella of the Committee with detailed output and outcome-based reports to be issued at the end of each meeting. Upon the first quarterly meeting, baseline measures for each indicator included in the Policy will be submitted and subsequently utilized to track progress.

Monitoring progress toward the achievement of Outcome 1 will be the responsibility of the Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour, and Local Government. The lead agency identified for each of the Outcome 1 Outputs will be responsible for tracking and reporting on the associated output monitoring indicators.

The Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs will be responsible for monitoring the fulfilment of Outcome 2. The lead agency identified for each Outcome 2 Outputs will be responsible for tracking and reporting on the associated output monitoring indicators.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, E-Governance will retain overall responsibility for monitoring progress toward the achievement of Outcome 3. The lead agency identified for each Outcome 3 Output will be responsible for tracking and reporting on the associated Output monitoring indicators.

The Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous People's Affairs will be responsible for monitoring the fulfilment of Outcome 4. The lead agency identified for each Outcome 4 Output will be responsible for tracking and reporting on the associated Output monitoring indicators.

If necessary and feasible, a mid-term evaluation of the Policy will be scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2023 and a final evaluation for the fourth quarter of 2025.



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# Appendix 1: Hazardous work list

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Sector and/or subsector	Task	Mitigate (16 - 17 years)	Mitigation requirements
Agriculture	Mixing or applying chemicals	No	-
	Use of heavy equipment and machinery	Yes	Licensed authorization
	Carrying heavy loads	Yes	Weight limitations on chart must be followed
	Collecting of thrash manually	Yes	Weight limitations on chart must be followed
	Burning cane or thrash	No	-
	Using dangerous tools	Yes, in some cases	Weed cutters: protective gear including glasses, boots, gloves Shears: use of gloves
	Interaction with an animal likely to be dangerous	No	-
	Use and handling of fertilizers including spraying of herbicides	No	-
	Burning fields/slash and burn	No	-
	Ploughing (industrial)	No	-
	Manual clearing of land	Yes	Child participation limited to non-hazardous stages – i.e. clearing underbrush but not felling trees
	Felling trees	No	-
	Clearing of land with machine	No	-
	Manual loading	Yes	Weight limitations on chart must be followed

Sector and/or subsector	Task	Mitigate (16 - 17 years)	Mitigation requirements
Agriculture ( <i>continued</i> )	Piling off truck	Yes	Weight limitations on chart must be followed
	Mechanical loading	No	-
	Transportation of seeds, cane, etc. on a truck	No	-
	Alignment of rows manually	Yes	Must have protective gear
	Alignment of rows with tractor	No	-
	Open fire path	No	-
	Milling and mill process activities	No	-
	Processing	No	-
	Traveling to and from farms in tractor trailers	No	-
	Consumption of alcohol	No	-
	Manual weeding	Yes	Must have protective gear
	Use of ladders	Yes	Limiting to a certain height
	Budding knives citrus sector is being removed because budding knives are used in other sectors such as the sugar sector.	Yes	With supervision and protective gear
	Shears citrus sector is being removed because shears are used in other sectors.	Yes	With supervision and protective gear
	Cutting of cane (Sugar)	Yes	Must have vocational training
	Cutting of seed (Sugar)	Yes	Must have vocational training
	Use of de-leafing knife (Banana)	No	-
	Use of cacao knife (Cacao)	No	-

Sector and/or subsector	Task	Mitigate (16 - 17 years)	Mitigation requirements
Fishing	Sorting, unloading and transporting catches	Yes	Weight limitations on chart must be followed
	Diving for various aquatic species or to free snagged net	No	-
	Actively fishing; pulling fish onto boat	Yes	Cannot pull nets onto boat
	Cleaning fish or shellfish	Yes	Must have protective gear
	Repairing nets	Yes	Must have protective gear
	Building or repairing of vessels	Yes	Must have vocational training
	Tending to aquaculture farms	Yes	Cannot use chemicals
Services	Carrying heavy loads	Yes	Weight limitations on chart must be followed
	Use of fire	No	-
	Use of dangerous tools	No	-
	Use of chemicals	No	-
	Exposure to alcohol and other illegal drugs	No	-
	Potential exposure to sexual harassment or abuse	No	-
	Consumption of alcohol	No	-
Vending	Street selling	Yes	Not between the traffic
	Vending on moving vehicles	No	-
Tourism	Exposure to illegal activities such as prostitution or employment in adult entertainment including but not limited to bars, strip clubs, casinos, brothels	No	-

Sector and/or subsector	Task	Mitigate (16 - 17 years)	Mitigation requirements
Tourism ( <i>continued</i> )	Fishing tours	Yes	Use of life jacket, gloves, no use of sharp tools
	Snorkelling	Yes	Use of lifejacket, goggles, proper snorkelling equipment
	Scuba diving	Yes	Must be certified, use of proper equipment
	Caving	Yes	Life jacket, protective gear including helmet and flashlight
	Provocative marketing	No	-
	Zip lining	No	-
Family-owned business	Serving in restaurant	No	-
	Cleaning workspace	Yes	For cleaning products that do not contain dangerous chemicals: use of gloves, face mask, ventilated area, three hours per day maximum
	Working in dive shops	Yes	With supervision
	Driving golf carts	Yes	Licensed authorization
	Driving jet skis	No	-
Domestic work	Use of chemicals and cleaning products	Yes, in some instances	For cleaning products that do not contain dangerous chemicals: use of gloves, face mask, ventilated area, three hours per day maximum
	Use of dangerous tools	No	-
	Exposure to constant excessive dust	No	-
	Babysitting	No	-
Transportation	Conductors	Yes	No standing at the door, doors must be closed while the bus is moving
Office work	Carrying heavy loads	Yes	Weight limitations on chart must be followed

Sector and/or subsector	Task	Mitigate (16 - 17 years)	Mitigation requirements
Shop work	Selling items that can only be used by adults	No	-
	Carrying heavy loads	Yes	Weight limitations on chart must be followed
	Use of ladders	Yes	May not use ladders over a specified height
	Packing of bags and shelves in store/shop	Yes	With supervision
	Packing of shelves in warehouse	Yes	Weight limitations on chart must be followed and limiting use of ladders to a certain height
Auto repair	Mechanical	Yes	Must have vocational training
	Body works	Yes	Must have protective gear
Sewing	Cutting fabric	Yes	With supervision and must have protective gear
	Sewing using a sewing machine	Yes	Must have vocational training
Industries	Work at dangerous heights	No	-
	Alcohol production	No	-
	Chemical manufacturing	No	-
	Production that creates irritants/contaminants	No	-
	Sale/distribution of harmful products	No	-
	Operations/maintenance of machines	No	-
	Bottling	Yes	With supervision, training, and personal protective equipment

Sector and/or subsector	Task	Mitigate (16 - 17 years)	Mitigation requirements
Construction	Welding	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Vocational training</li> <li>▶ Observing and assisting, with use of protective gear</li> </ul>
	Carpentry	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Vocational training</li> <li>▶ Observing and assisting, with use of protective gear</li> </ul>
	Electrical	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Vocational training</li> <li>▶ License requirement</li> <li>▶ Observing and assisting, with use of protective gear</li> </ul>
	Plumbing	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Vocational training</li> <li>▶ Observing and assisting, with use of protective gear</li> </ul>
	Masonry	No	-
	Roofing	No	-
	Carrying heavy loads	Yes	Weight limitations on chart must be followed
	Road construction	Yes	With supervision, specialised training related to the field and use of protective gear
	Wheel configuration	No	-

## Appendix 2: Light work list

Sector and/or subsector	Task
Agriculture	Harvesting of crops including grain, vegetables, and fruit when the harvesting is done on the ground without the use of dangerous tools or machinery
	Manual deseeding or sorting of fruits, vegetables, and grains without the use of dangerous tools or machinery
	Preparing a garden or greenhouse without the use of pesticides, chemicals, fertilizers, or dangerous tools, or machinery
	Basketwork and other handicrafts without the use of dangerous tools or machinery
	Caring for small and barnyard animals that would not pose a danger to children ages 13-15
Services	Vending in a market
	Vending in a stand
	Selling products in shops (except for products only meant for adult consumption)
	Arrange light goods in store aisles (except for dangerous goods)
	Waitressing (except for products only meant for adult consumption)
	Clean tables (except for products only meant for adult consumption)
	Wash dishes, tables, napkins
	Office work
Banana Industry	Take out banana from tank
	Filling of trays with bananas
	Washing of bananas
	Place empty containers on conveyor
	Office work

Sector and/or subsector	Task
Domestic Work	Hang and fold clothes
	Wash dishes
	Sweep
	Garbage collection
	Rake the yard
	Manual weeding
	Wash cars
	Gardening without dangerous tools
	Make beds
Citrus Industry 13 – 15 years	Land preparation
	► Gathering of burnt sticks
	Planting/preparation of the ground
	► Digging of hole – 1 foot deep
	► Covering of holes
	► Spotting of nursery plants
	Harvesting
	► Hand pick harvesting
	► Bagging of fruits
	Administrative
	► Inventory/stock taking
	► Office work

# Appendix 3: Stakeholders consulted

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The following stakeholders engaged in the participatory process undertaken for the drafting of the National Child Labour Policy and Strategy 2022-2025. Their time, expertise, inputs and insights are recognized and valued.

In alphabetical order:

Last Name	First name	Position	Organization
Aikman	Kim	BCCI Rep; CEO	Labour Advisory Board; BCCI
Alonzo	Oscar	Chief Executive Officer	Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association
Arthurs	Curwen	Statistician I  Member	Census, Surveys, and Administrative Statistics Department, Statistical Institute of Belize;  Child Labour Committee
Augustine	Franisha	Executive Director	NCFC
Barnes	Malenie	Spotlight Programme Officer	UNICEF
Benavides	Wendy	Statistician	Census, Surveys and Administrative Statistics Department, Statistical Institute of Belize
Boland	Cedric	Member	Labour Advisory Board
Broaster	Nemencia	Education Officer;  Member	Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology;  Child Labour Committee
Burke	Beverly	Member;  PRO	BCCI;  Santander Sugar Group
Cacho	Ion	Member;  Member	NTUCB;  Child Labour Committee
Cadle	Kevin	Acting Director	Department of Youth Services, Ministry of Youth, Sports and e-governance

Last Name	First name	Position	Organization
Cal	Gicely	Labour Officer	Department of Labour, Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government
Canche	Zune	Senior Accountant and Child Protection Focal Point	Belize Sugar Cane Farmers Association
Cardona	Marcel	Chair	Labour Advisory Board, Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government
Castillo	Susana	Project Assistant	Belize Sugar Industries Limited
Castillo-Trejo	Diana	Acting Director General	Statistical Institute of Belize
Cattouse	Yorshabell	BCCI Rep Member	Labour Advisory Board BCCI
Clarke	Julia	Director Sugar Ethics	ASR Group
Cruz	Lesley	Statistician II	Data Dissemination Department, Statistical Institute of Belize
Daniels Moody	Stephanie	Communications Officer	UNICEF
Dominguez	Rissela	Senior Labour Officer	Department of Labour, Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government
Dyck	Jacob	Chair of Community Representatives	Spanish Lookout Mennonite Community
Elters	Claudette	BCCI Rep Administrative Director	Labour Advisory Board Maheias United
Foreman	Elroy	President	Banana Growers Association
Frazer	Sharon	NTUCB Rep Chief Magistrate	Labour Advisory Board
Galvez	Wilfredo	Member	Labour Advisory Board

Last Name	First name	Position	Organization
Gillett	Sylvia	Local Government (Northern districts)  Member	Department of Local Government, Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government  Child Labour Committee
Hender	Paula	Crown Counsel	Attorney General's Ministry
Irving	Eccleseon	President	Citrus Growers Association
King	Clifford	Director	Department of Local Government, Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government
Kulkarni	Aniruddha	Child Protection Specialist	UNICEF
Lamb	Claire	Senior Labour Officer	Labour Department, Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government
Letkeman	Harry	Community Representative	Spanish Lookout Mennonite Community
Lick	Chris	Law Enforcement Advisor	Human Trafficking Institute
Linares	Jessica	Compliance Dept	Fyffes
MacLachlan	Mac	VP international relations	ASR Group Belize Sugar Industries
Mariano	Beatrice	Vice President/Acting President,	National Garifuna Council
Martin	Erica	International Labour Standards and Labour Law Specialist	ILO Office for the Caribbean
Martinez	Luke	President  NTUCB Rep	National Trade Union Council of Belize  Labour Advisory Board
Mas	Adriano	Community Leader, Past President of Alcalde Association	Maya Leaders Alliance and Toledo Maya Association

Last Name	First name	Position	Organization
Members of the Child focus group reached via the UNICEF Belize "NEXUS" platform (approx. 15)			UNICEF Belize
Mis	Pablo	Programme Director	Maya Leaders Alliance and the Alcaldes Association
Montejo	Marleni	Inspector; Member	Belize Police Department; Child Labour Committee
Mora	Marvin	NTUCB	Labour Advisory Board
Murrillo	Jaunna	Trafficking in Persons Council Focal Point	Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples Affairs
Nicasio	Fayne	Economist	Ministry of Finance, Economic Development & Investment
Ochaeta	Jefté	Economic Statistician	Economic Statistics Department, Statistical Institute of Belize
Perez	Judy	Compliance Manager	Banana Growers Association
Perez	Zulmi	Assistant Compliance Manager	Banana Growers Association
Reyes	Aida	Senior Labour Officer	Department of Labour, Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government
Roberts	Rafael	Int. Youth Officer	Department of Youth Services, Ministry of Transport, Youth and Sports
Ruiz	Esther	Regional Protection Specialist	UNICEF
Sanchez	Orvin	Labour Officer	Department of Labour, Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government
Shal	Valentino	CEO	Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government

Last Name	First name	Position	Organization
Shaw	Diana	CEO;	Child Development Foundation;
		Member	Child Labour Committee
Sheth	Anita	Senior Advisor Social Compliance and Development (informal sectors)	Fairtrade International
Smith	Ganesha	Human Development Coordinator	Department of Human Services, Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples Affairs
Teigrob	Justina	Office Administrator	Blue Creek Mennonite Community
Thompson	Anne Marie	Labour Commissioner;	Ministry of Rural Transformation, Community Development, Labour and Local Government;
		Chair	Child Labour Committee
Urbina	Rose Luz	Immigration Officer;	Department of Border Management and Immigration Services, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration;
		Member	Child Labour Committee
Urbina	Leidi	Country Programme Coordinator	Human Trafficking Institute
Vargas	Shawn	Director	Department of Human Services, Ministry of Human Development, Families and Indigenous Peoples Affairs
Williams	Diane	Human Resources Manager	Citrus Growers Association



Photo: Belize national children's parliament camp, [pressoffice.gov.bz](http://pressoffice.gov.bz)

# Appendix 4: Policy development and technical team

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Last Name	First name	Position	Organization
Hender	Owen	Lead Consultant	
Rei	Diego	Chief Technical Advisor	ILO Office for the Caribbean
Melville	Resel	Technical Advisor	ILO Office for the Caribbean
Murad Ismael	Sherin	Technical Advisor	UNICEF Belize
Joseph	Suzanne	Editor/Layout Artist	ILO Office for the Caribbean