



# Attaining Lasting Change for Better Enforcement of Labor and Criminal Law to Address Child Labor, Forced Labor and Human Trafficking (ATLAS) Project

LIBERIA

## OVERVIEW

Winrock and partners implement the five-year, U.S. Department of Labor-funded [ATLAS](#) project in Argentina, Liberia, Paraguay and Thailand. The project works to strengthen government capacity in the four countries to address child labor, forced labor and human trafficking. In Liberia, ATLAS has worked to:

- Strengthen labor and criminal legal frameworks concerning child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking; and

- Improve enforcement of Liberia's labor and criminal legal frameworks, specifically related to child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking.

To support Liberia's government, ATLAS identified key gaps in legislation and enforcement efforts to combat child labor (CL), forced labor (FL), and human trafficking (HT). To address these gaps, ATLAS implemented an adaptive strategy



known as the Differentiated Model of Practice (DMOP), an evidence-based approach that tailors technical assistance to country-specific priorities. ATLAS developed intervention models and then piloted, evaluated, refined, implemented, and institutionalized them across key government agencies and departments to strengthen Liberia's existing legislation and enforcement system.

## ACTIVITIES

### STRENGTHENING CHILD LABOR AND TRAFFICKING LAWS

ATLAS worked with a Legislative Reform Committee comprising local stakeholders to advocate for stronger laws and policies to prevent and prosecute CL, FL, and HT. ATLAS conducted an assessment to identify legislative stakeholders, compared Liberian laws and regulations to relevant international conventions, and identified legislative and regulatory gaps or barriers that impede proper prosecution and sentencing of labor and criminal cases. ATLAS then worked with the committee to develop and advocate for reforms and improvements to CL and HT laws.



As a direct result of ATLAS contributions, Liberia passed a new human trafficking law in 2021. The government also developed and approved new [Hazardous and Light Work Lists](#) to better regulate CL and hazardous labor. ATLAS also provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Labor for drafting a new proposed law on CL. These changes bring the country's laws more into line with international standards, as outlined in the 2021 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor Report. It is hoped that effective enforcement of these pieces of legislation will contribute to a reduction in the occurrence of CL in Liberia.

## ENFORCEMENT TRAINING PROGRAM

To improve enforcement of current laws, ATLAS developed an Enforcement Training Program (ETP) for front line workers, such as labor inspectors, police, prosecutors, and judges. The program comprises five modules and 31 presentations covering identification, investigation, referrals, prosecution, and sentencing of CL, FL, and HT cases.

In Liberia, ATLAS adapted the program to the country's context and piloted the training, reaching 59 police officers, prosecutors, judges, and other law enforcement and justice-sector officials. ATLAS will refine the program based on stakeholder feedback. Modules will be incorporated into judicial training schools, ensuring their continued use.

## GRASSROOTS TRAINING OF TRAINERS

To help the Liberian government enforce CL, FL, and HT laws, ATLAS developed a grassroots training-of-trainers program aimed at local actors outside of the capital (Monrovia), including town and village chiefs, religious leaders, youth groups, women's groups, and civil society organizations. The goal is to train stakeholders on how to address crimes and increase reporting to law enforcement. Participants learn what CL, FL, and HT are and how to identify it; the social and personal problems they create; the Liberian framework for combatting these crimes; and how to respond appropriately to a suspected labor or trafficking crime. The course includes several hours of training on facilitation and replication, enabling participants to pass on knowledge gained by teaching the course themselves, in their own communities. So far, ATLAS has trained 54 people through the program, and worked with the ministries of Internal Affairs and Labor to plan and implement this activity. These two ministries will assume management of this training curricula after the project ends.

## CHILD LABOR MONITORING SYSTEM STANDARDS OF PRACTICE

ATLAS collaborates with the Ministry of Labor and other relevant stakeholders to develop standard operating procedures for a Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS) in Liberia. These standards outline procedures, pathways, and formats for escalating identified cases of child labor to the national agencies that prosecute these crimes and which provide services to victims. They outline and standardize how the system functions at both the input stage (community-level reporting via the CLMS) and the output stage (national-level response to reported cases of child labor). To accomplish this, ATLAS worked with the Labor Ministry's Child Labor and Human Trafficking Division, and the Children



Protection Division of the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection. After the standards were developed, ATLAS conducted trainings in three target areas outside Monrovia, during which trainees piloted the new guidelines in the field. ATLAS will refine the standards based on feedback and in coordination with the Ministry of Labor and its National Commission on Child Labor, and will support their use in other districts and counties, as well.





## KEY RESULTS



**Passage of a new human trafficking law with ATLAS input.**



**Approval of a Light Work List and Hazardous Work List developed by Winrock and partner [Lawyers Without Borders](#).**



**Ratification of International Labour Organization Convention No. 138 on the minimum age to work.**



**A new, proposed child labor law was drafted with ATLAS technical assistance and support.**



**Training of 59 law enforcement and justice-sector officials in CL, FL, and HT.**



**Training of 54 grassroots leaders in CL, FL, and HT.**

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