

In 2017, Morocco made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government passed two decrees in support of the recent Law on Setting Up Employment Conditions of Domestic Workers, which limits the employment of children between the ages of 16 and 18 for domestic work. The government also provided training to labor law enforcement officials on child labor issues, issued 11 fines for child labor violations, and removed children from hazardous work. In addition, the government operated child protection centers and continued to fund the Tayssir Conditional Cash Transfer Program, providing direct cash transfers to qualifying families whose children meet school attendance criteria. However, some children in Morocco engage in the worst forms of child labor, including forced domestic work. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture. The low number of labor inspectors may hinder adequate labor law enforcement. In addition, the scope of government programs that target child labor is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, laws related to the minimum age for work and the use of children for illicit activities do not meet international standards. In addition, the low number of labor inspectors may hinder enforcement efforts and programs to address child labor are insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.

I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Morocco engage in the worst forms of child labor, including forced domestic work. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture. (1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10) Government statistics from 2017 showed 30,545 children ages 7 to 15 working; however, the government has not yet made the full data set, including microdata, available, leaving the nature and causes of children's involvement in specific forms of child labor unknown. (11; 12) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Morocco.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10 to 14	4.5 (150,178)
Attending School (%)	6 to 14	82.9
Combining Work and School (%)	10 to 14	0.7
Primary Completion Rate (%)		94.8

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2016, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (13)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Enquête sur la Population et la Santé Familiale, 2003–2004. (14)

Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Planting and harvesting argan, grain, olives, vegetables, and fruits (1)
	Herding goats, cattle, and sheep and raising them for the production of fertilizer, and cattle for the production of milk and butter (1; 2)
	Fishing (4; 15; 16)
	Forestry, activities unknown (4; 15; 16)
Industry	Construction, including in carpentry† (5; 17)
	Weaving textiles (2; 18)
	Producing artisanal crafts (4; 5; 17)
	Metallurgy, including welding (2; 5; 17)
Services	Begging (19; 20; 21)
	Domestic work (4; 6; 20; 22; 23)
	Working as salespersons in stores and as tour guides (17)
	Tailoring textiles (17; 18)
	Working as waiters in cafés or restaurants (17)
	Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles (2; 18)
Street vending (2; 17)	

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 20)
	Forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4; 5; 6; 7; 22; 24)
	Begging as a result of human trafficking (5; 6; 7)
	Illegal sand extraction (25)

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

Morocco is a source, destination, and transit country for children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. (8; 9; 10; 20; 26)




According to local union observations, rural Moroccan girls, some as young as age 6, are recruited for domestic work in private urban homes, as are girls from Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, and Senegal. Some of these girls are subjected to physical and verbal abuse, excessive working hours without regular periods of rest or days off, and no access to educational opportunities. (7; 10; 27)

Children face various barriers to accessing education, including distance from schools, inadequate transportation, prohibitive costs associated with attending school, and the lack of security and inclusiveness to accommodate students of diverse backgrounds and abilities. These barriers to education increase vulnerability to child labor, especially in rural areas. (1; 4; 7; 28; 29; 30; 31; 32) Children with disabilities face additional barriers to education. (7; 33; 21) Some migrant children, particularly unaccompanied children from sub-Saharan Africa, and rural children, face additional barriers to accessing education, such as lack of knowledge of the language of instruction. Furthermore, because birth certificates are required to attend school past the fifth grade, many unregistered children remain out of school and vulnerable to child labor. (19; 34; 35; 36)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Morocco has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

Convention	Ratification
 ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
 UN CRC	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
 Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The government has established laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Morocco’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms child labor, including prohibiting use of children in illicit activities.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	15	Article 143 of the Labor Code (37)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 147 of the Labor Code (37)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Hazardous Child Labor List, Decree No. 2-10-183; Article 181 of the Labor Code (37; 38)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (cont)

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 10 of the Labor Code (37)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 448.1, 448.4, and 448.5 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings (39)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 503 of the Penal Code (40)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	N/A*		
State Voluntary	Yes	18	Article 4 of Royal Decree of 9 June 1966 (41)
Non-state	Yes	18	Articles 448.1 and 448.4 of the Law on Trafficking in Human Beings (39)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Article 1 of Law No. 04-00 (42)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 1 of Law No. 04-00 (42)

* No conscription (43)

Following the passage of the Law on Setting Up Employment Conditions of Domestic Workers in 2016, Morocco passed two decrees in 2017 related to the 2016 law that provide protections for child domestic workers. The two decrees together prohibit specific activities in the employment of domestic workers ages 16–18 and provide a work contract model for domestic workers. (44; 45; 46; 47; 48; 49; 50) However, following the passage of the law in 2016, regulations to inform agencies on implementing the law were still not in place. (30)

The Labor Code does not apply to self-employed children, those who work in the traditional artisan or handicraft sectors for businesses with fewer than five employees, or those who work on private farms or in residences. These children are vulnerable to exploitation, which does not conform to international standards that require all children to be protected under the law establishing a minimum age for work. (6; 37; 51; 52; 12) The types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not fully cover sectors in which child labor is known to occur or sectors in which work conditions may harm children's health, safety, and morals. (38) Moroccan law does not provide increased penalties or a separate crime for using, procuring, and offering of children for both the production and trafficking of drugs. (36; 30)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor and Vocational Integration (MOLVI) that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor and Vocational Integration (MOLVI)	Enforce child labor laws and oversee programs on child labor through its child labor task force. (4; 6; 36) Provide occupational health and safety services, administer social security, and organize labor inspections and employment services through nationwide satellite offices. (4) Renamed from the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs, yet maintains the same functions. (46)
Ministry of the Interior	Enforce prohibitions on prostitution and other exploitative crimes involving minors, as established in the Penal Code. (6; 53)
General Prosecutor	Prosecute criminal offenses against children and process cases involving women and children, and conducted within the court system through the Child Labor Units, formerly under the Ministry of Justice and Liberties, but made independent during the reporting period. (46)

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Labor Law Enforcement

In 2017, labor law enforcement agencies in Morocco took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of the MOLVI that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including penalty assessment authorization.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (30)	Unknown (46)
Number of Labor Inspectors	356 (54)	304 (46)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (30)	No (46)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (30)	Yes (46)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (30)	Yes (46)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (30)	Yes (46)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	543 (55)	350‡ (46)
Number Conducted at Worksites	Unknown	Unknown (46)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	314 (54)	1,713 (46)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	N/A (30)	11 (46)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that were Collected	N/A (30)	Unknown (46)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (30)	Yes (46)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (30)	Yes (46)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (30)	Yes (46)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (30)	Yes (46)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (30)	Yes (46)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (30)	Yes (46)

‡ Data are from January 1, 2017 to September 30, 2017. (46)

During the first 9 months of 2017, labor inspectors issued 23 formal notices and 11 fines in the course of 350 child labor inspections. They removed 54 children under age 15 from work, and 111 children ages 15–17 from hazardous work. (46) The sectors most frequently inspected included trade, agriculture, and metal and wood work, with 22 inspectors dedicated to agriculture, and 23 engineers and 18 physicians in charge of health and safety labor inspections. The government also has 54 dedicated child labor inspectors distributed across the country. (36; 54; 46) In early 2017, labor inspectors in the Marrakech-Tensift region participated in three training sessions on the mapping of tasks and analysis of occupational risks; 26 inspectors also received specific training from the IOM in trafficking in persons and labor exploitation. (46)

Inadequate resources, including an insufficient number of inspectors, hamper the Labor Inspectorate's capacity to enforce child labor laws. (6; 30; 56; 57) Although Morocco employs 304 labor inspectors, the number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Morocco's workforce, which includes more than 12 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, Morocco should employ about 800 inspectors. (56; 58; 59) The official procedures involved in processing child labor violations require the participation of several agencies for each case, which places considerable administrative burdens on labor inspectors. (2) Government officials, local stakeholders, and the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations report that the penalties against companies that employ children in hazardous work, set forth in the Labor Code, are inadequate deterrents. (56)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in Morocco took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including publication of criminal law enforcement data.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown (30)	Unknown (46)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (36)	Yes (46)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (30)	Yes (46)
Number of Investigations	7 (36)	Unknown (46)
Number of Violations Found	3 (36)	Unknown (46)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	7 (36; 46)	3 (46)
Number of Convictions	3 (36)	Unknown (46)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (30)	Yes (46)

Criminal authorities refer victims to appropriate social services through coordination with the MOLVI's 54 dedicated child labor inspectors, other government entities, and civil society actors. (30)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8).

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

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
Technical Committee Under the Special Ministerial Commission for Children for the Protection and Improvement of Childhood	Ensure inter-sectoral coordination and monitoring for implementing international conventions on children's issues through a committee of 25 government bodies, chaired by the Head of the Government of Morocco. Establish strategies and mechanisms to implement national policies and plans for child protection and coordinate the management of efforts at the local and regional levels. (36)
MOLVI	Coordinate policies and efforts to combat child labor. Through its Office for the Fight Against Child Labor provide guidance and limited funding to NGOs working against child labor. (2; 4; 60; 46)
Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family, and Social Development (MSWFSD)	Ensure continuity of child protection and child labor elimination efforts and expand children's access to education. (53; 61) Aims to implement the Integrated Public Policy on the Protection of Children. (5; 6) Support 142 Child Reception Centers that provide services to child victims of violence. (36)
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation	Coordinate efforts to reduce migrant vulnerability to child labor through its Delegate Ministry in Charge of Moroccans Living Abroad and Migration Affairs. Promote migrant children's access to public education facilities and other social services and assistance. (4; 55; 46)
Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education, and Scientific Research	Provide education and job training to former child workers, including former child domestic workers and migrant youth. (36; 46)

In 2017, the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs was renamed the MOLVI. (46) The Ministry in Charge of Moroccans Living Abroad and Migration Affairs became a Delegate Ministry under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation. (46) The Ministry of National Educational and Vocational Training was renamed the Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education, and Scientific Research. (46)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including the lack of strategies for eliminating and preventing child labor in the National Migration Strategy.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
MSWFSD's Integrated Public Policy on the Protection of Children in Morocco (PPIPEM)	Promotes an interdisciplinary approach to respond to child exploitation and other issues. (4; 5; 6) In 2017, conducted an informational workshop on program activities and training on social standards for implementing partners; developed terms of reference for technical support to promote good parenting; and developed terms of reference to raise awareness of the 2016 Law on Setting Up Employment Conditions of Domestic Workers, specifically the implications for domestic workers between ages 16 and 18. (54; 62; 46)

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The government has not included child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the National Migration Strategy. (2; 4; 63; 64; 65)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2017, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including the adequacy of efforts to address the problem in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor‡

Program	Description
USDOL-Funded Projects	USDOL projects in Morocco aim to reduce child labor by increasing access to education, providing livelihood and other social services, and improving the evidence base on child labor and forced labor through data collection and research. These projects include Promise Pathways: Reducing Child Labor Through Viable Paths in Education and Decent Work (2014–2017), a \$5 million project implemented by Creative Associates International; Wad3éyati (My Situation: Promoting Gender Equality in the Workplace), a \$1.25 million project implemented by Management Systems International; and Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues, implemented in approximately 40 countries by the ILO. (4; 54; 66; 67) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.
Tayssir Conditional Cash Transfer Program†	MSWFSD program that provides direct cash transfers to qualifying families whose children meet school attendance criteria. Aims to increase school enrollment and reduce dropout rates, particularly in rural areas, with 832,500 recipients in 2015–2016 and 509,475 recipients in 2016–2017. (4; 53; 55; 68; 12) The cash transfer program enabled a significant improvement in school participation and a modest improvement in test scores. (69; 70)
Entraide Nationale†	Aims to prevent child labor by improving school retention rates, particularly for girls in rural areas. Provides social services and manages education and literacy programs in MSWFSD's social protection centers in <i>Dar al Atfal</i> , <i>Dar Talib</i> , and <i>Dar Taliba</i> . Offers two education, training, and integration programs for vulnerable children: Education and Training Centers and Apprenticeship Training Programs. (30; 54) <i>Entraide Nationale</i> manages 22 Child Protection Centers, providing the following services: preventive intervention; personal, social, and educational support; prevention of situations of vulnerability; emergency response; and violence prevention and early intervention. In 2017, recruited 140 child protection advisors for the centers and provided five capacity-building training sessions. (54; 46)
Government-Funded Shelters†	Government-operated shelters. Child Protection Centers operated by the Ministry of Youth and Sport to provide social and educational services to minors referred by the courts and for victims of abuse, child laborers, and street children; and under the National Observatory for Children's Rights, operates 96 Child Reception Centers staffed by nurses and social workers at major hospitals to provide medical services to victims of violence and child trafficking. (56; 71) In 2017, continued activities at shelters focusing on improved coordination and services to victims. (12)
After-School Program for a Second Chance (E2C)†	Provides students with afterschool educational assistance as part of non-formal education program. During the 2016–2017 school year, enrolled 61,889 students and provided an education integration component for 460 migrant children. (5; 46)
USAID-Funded Projects to Address Child Labor	USAID projects in Morocco aim to increase the social and economic inclusion of at-risk youth (ages 10–24) living in the marginalized neighborhoods of Tangier and Tetouan. Includes Favorable Opportunities to Reinforce Self-Advancement for Today's Youth (FORSATY) (2012–2017), a \$12.77 million project implemented by Search for Common Ground. (56)

† Program is funded by the Government of Morocco.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (2; 4; 5; 6; 56; 54; 46)

Although the government has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, including for children engaged in forced domestic work. (4; 30; 72; 46)

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Morocco (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that laws prohibit children from being used, procured, or offered for the production and trafficking of illicit drugs.	2015 – 2017
	Ensure that all children are protected by law, including children who are self-employed, work for artisan and handicraft businesses with fewer than five employees, or work on private farms or in residences.	2009 – 2017
	Ensure that the types of hazardous work prohibited for children under 18 that may be undertaken in conditions that harm children's health, safety, and morals are comprehensive.	2016 – 2017
	Implement regulations related to the Law on Setting Up Employment Conditions of Domestic Workers.	2017
Enforcement	Publish information on the funding of the Labor Inspectorate, the number of inspections conducted at worksites, and the number of child labor penalties imposed and collected.	2015 – 2017
	Increase the number of labor inspectors responsible for enforcing laws related to child labor to meet the ILO technical advice, and ensure adequate Labor Inspectorate resources.	2012 – 2017
	Streamline child labor enforcement procedures among government agencies.	2013 – 2017
	Publish information on the initial training for new criminal law enforcement investigators.	2012 – 2017
	Increase penalties for employers who use children in hazardous work.	2012 – 2017
	Publish information on the number of investigations, violations found, and convictions pertaining to child labor.	2017
Government Policies	Authorize the Labor Inspectorate to assess penalties.	2017
	Continue integration of strategies for eliminating and preventing child labor into National Migration Strategy policy.	2014 – 2017
Social Programs	Take measures to ensure children's safety in schools; remove barriers to education, especially for children with disabilities, rural children, and migrant children; and increase birth registration rates.	2013 – 2017
	Expand existing programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem, including in forced domestic work.	2013 – 2017
	Collect and publish microdata on the extent and nature of child labor so that it can be used to inform policies and programs.	2016 – 2017

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