

In 2011, Oman made no advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Although the problem does not appear to be widespread, some children in Oman are engaged in the worst forms of child labor. However, the extent of the problem is unknown due to the dearth of research conducted. Oman lacks a comprehensive list of hazardous work prohibited to children. In addition, education is not compulsory in Oman, which puts children at risk of the worst forms of child labor.

Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate		100.9

Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2009, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Some children in Oman are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, although there is no evidence to suggest that the problem is widespread. Children reportedly work in the informal economy, particularly in dangerous activities in agriculture and fishing.(3-6) Children's work in agriculture commonly involves unsafe activities, such as using dangerous machinery and tools, carrying heavy loads, and applying harmful pesticides.(6) Working in fishing may expose children to risks such as drowning.(6)

Research on the worst forms of child labor in Oman is lacking. In addition, research has found little evidence of child trafficking in Oman.(7, 8)

Oman has a high youth (ages 15 to 24) literacy rate of 97.3 percent, among the highest in the region according to UNDP's 2009 Arab Human Development Report.(3, 9) Nonetheless, recent trends indicate that between 1999 and 2006 the number of children enrolled in school decreased, while the number of out-of-school children increased.(10-12)



Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The minimum age for employment in Oman is 15.(13) Children under 18 are barred from working between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., and for more than six hours a day.(13) Oman's Labor Law further restricts children between ages 15 and 18 from working on weekends and holidays or from working overtime.(13) Per a government decree passed in 2005, all camel jockeys must be at least 18 to participate in races.(3, 10) In 2010, the ILO Committee of Experts reported that the Government was developing a list of 43 hazardous occupations prohibited for children younger than 18; however, the Government has yet to publish the list.(5)

Under the Labor Law, inspectors have jurisdiction to inspect private sector entities for labor law noncompliance.(14) Research found no evidence of laws that provide protection to children working in Oman's informal sector.

The Penal Code prohibits inciting a child under the age of 18 to prostitution; anyone found guilty of such incitement will receive a 5-year minimum prison sentence.(15) The Anti-Trafficking Law criminalizes trafficking in persons, imposing a stiffer sentence for trafficking of a child.(16) The Law also makes it a crime for a person to produce, keep, distribute, or expose pornographic letters or pictures.(17)

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	15
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	No
	Free Public Education	Yes

The law prohibits forced or compulsory labor, including work by children.(4) Military service is voluntary; the minimum age to join is 18.(18)

Education in Oman is free for all citizens through secondary school, but it is not compulsory.(3) The lack of compulsory education may make children under the age of 15 more susceptible to the worst forms of child labor, as they cannot legally work, but are not required to be in school.

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

Research found no evidence that the Government of Oman has established a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor.

Oman's human trafficking law established the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking (NCCHT), which is chaired by the Inspector General of the Royal Oman Police (ROP). NCCHT raises awareness on human trafficking through public fora, training programs, media campaigns and interviews.(16, 19)

The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and ROP are responsible for monitoring and enforcing child labor laws.(20) The Inspection Department of the MOM conducts regular visits to private sector establishments to ensure their implementation of laws and the protection of workers' rights.(21) The Department employs 160 inspectors.(19)

The MOM and ROP share information on labor cases in which criminal penalties are sought.(22) No information was available on the number of child labor or child trafficking violations found, nor what further action took place when violations occurred.

The Public Prosecution is responsible for prosecuting trafficking cases in court with the assistance of the ROP.(19, 23)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Overseen by NCCHT, the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking outlines the Government's human trafficking prevention plan.(23) The Plan also lays out the roles and responsibilities of governmental organizations that are involved in combating trafficking.(23)

In 2010, the ILO Committee of Experts expressed concern over the lack of national research on the prevalence of child trafficking.(3) Likewise, research found no evidence of formal mechanisms or procedures to proactively identify victims of trafficking or other worst forms of child labor.(7)

The Government also lacks information on the prevalence and conditions of child labor in the informal sectors, such as in agriculture and fishing. Recent reports by the ILO Committee of Experts, UNESCO, and the Overseas Development Institute found that available government data were weak, especially; child labor and trafficking, the impact of programming for employed children, and the link between research findings and policy making. The ILO has consistently requested that the Government assess their child labor and trafficking situation in order to assure that adequate protection mechanisms are in place for vulnerable children.(8, 24, 25) The dearth of data and analysis available on the incidence, nature, and the types of child labor impedes the Government's and civil society's ability to document the extent of the worst forms of child labor in the country.

In addition, the UN Human Rights Council is concerned that the exclusion of migrant workers and their children from public social, health, education, and housing benefits available to citizens increases their vulnerability to forced labor and the worst forms of child labor.(11)

While data from 2006 indicates that enrolment rates are decreasing, the Government has implemented an innovative and modern education model that aims to equip all children in Oman with the knowledge, tools, attitudes, and values that

enable lifelong learning.(5, 26) Research found no evidence of the impact this program has had on reducing child labor.

Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government collaborates with the ILO on a Decent Work Country Program (DWCP) (2010-2013) that strives to strengthen the employability of Oman's young workforce through vocational education and training programs.(21)

Sultan Qaboos invests in Oman's youth through the Fund for Development of Youth, or *Sharaka*, which he began in 1998.(27) The Fund provides youth (ages 15-24) with equity and loan support for existing and proposed small and medium enterprises, and provides guidance through the mentoring and

technical assistance needed to start a new business.(27-29) In addition, the Ministry of Social Development provides microfinance opportunities to unemployed youth to start their own businesses.(25) Evidence of the impact that these initiatives have on child labor is unavailable.

The National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking's efforts include the implementation of awareness-raising activities on human trafficking in schools and among the general population; also included are the provision of social services for trafficking victims and the coordination with international organizations on trafficking developments.(23) Over the reporting period, the Government continued to operate a shelter for victims of trafficking which can accommodate up to 50 men, women and children.(7)

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

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Finalize and make publicly available the list of all hazardous occupations and jobs prohibited for children under age 18.	2010, 2011
	Establish laws that protect children working outside the formal labor market.	2011
	Establish a compulsory age for school that is consistent with the minimum age for employment.	2009, 2010, 2011
Coordination and Enforcement	Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
Policies	Conduct in-depth research on child labor in agriculture and the fishing industry, and on the prevalence of child trafficking.	2010, 2011
	Conduct research to determine the reasons for decreased enrollment rates of children in schools.	2011
	Develop mechanisms and procedures to accurately identify victims of trafficking and child laborers among vulnerable populations.	2011
Social Programs	Assess the impact that the existing DWCP and the Fund for Development of Youth may have on child labor.	2010, 2011
	Ensure that migrant worker children are afforded protection from exploitation.	2011

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