

In 2012, Djibouti made no advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. With donor support, Djibouti continues to combat trafficking through limited programs, trainings, and the operation of a migration center. The Government lacks laws to protect children from exploitation in hazardous work and has not established a coordinating mechanism to address child labor. It also lacks programs to help children engaged in dangerous work. Children in Djibouti continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in domestic service.

Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	12.3 (23,693)
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	67.4
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	10.2
Primary Completion Rate		45.8

Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2011, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from MIC3 Survey, 2006.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Djibouti are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in domestic service.(3, 4) Children's work in this sector occurs predominantly in urban areas, where the majority of the Djiboutian population is concentrated.(3, 5) Child domestic labor may involve long hours of work performing strenuous tasks without sufficient food or shelter. These children may be isolated in private homes and are susceptible to physical and sexual abuse.(6, 7)

Limited evidence suggests that rural children in Djibouti care for and herd livestock.(3) Children herding livestock may suffer injuries such as being bitten, butted, gored, or trampled by animals.(9, 10)

Children are also involved in commercial sexual exploitation.(3, 4, 11) A small number of refugees, Ethiopian and Somali migrants, and girls from poor Djiboutian families are trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation in Djibouti City and along trucking routes on the Ethiopia-Djibouti



corridor.(3, 11) Reportedly, younger children are sometimes exploited into commercial sex by older children.(11) Girls may also be trafficked for domestic service.(3, 11)

There are reports of children working on the streets, but specific information on hazards is unknown.(3, 8)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment in Djibouti at age 16, and the minimum age for night work at age 18.(3, 12) The Labor Code limits the number of consecutive hours children under age 18 can work, mandating 12 consecutive hours of rest between shifts. However, the National Council of Work, Labor and Vocational Training is authorized to exempt a young person from the rest requirement or restrictions of night work.(12) The Labor Code also prohibits children under age 18 from working in certain sectors, including domestic service, hotels, and bars.(3, 12) However, Djiboutian law does not define hazardous work or clearly establish a minimum age for it. Additionally, the Government has not developed a list of hazardous occupations prohibited to children.

The Labor Code prohibits forced and bonded labor.(3, 12) Djiboutian law proscribes the procurement of minors for prostitution or pornography and the use of minors in the transportation and sale of drugs.(3) Research uncovered no evidence that the law prohibits the distribution and purchase of child pornography. Law 210, regarding the Fight Against Human Trafficking, prohibits all internal and transnational trafficking of persons under age 18.(3, 13)

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International Conventions and Selected Laws on Child Labor and Education

	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	16
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No
	Compulsory Education Age	16
	Free Public Education	Yes

Djibouti has no compulsory military service, and the minimum age for voluntary recruitment is 18.(14, 15)

The Djiboutian Education System Act of 2000 establishes compulsory basic education for children between ages 6 and 16.(16, 17)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

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

The Labor Inspectorate, under the Ministry of Labor, is primarily responsible for enforcing child labor laws and regulations.(3) Additionally, the Ministries of Health and Labor can require medical exams, as appropriate, to determine if work is beyond a young person's capabilities.(12) Labor inspectors can fine businesses that employ children illegally, but inspections are not conducted regularly.(3) Based on the most recent data available, the Labor Inspectorate employs one labor inspector and nine controllers.(3) Although some inspectors received labor inspection training, further training and professional development is still needed. According to government reports, no child labor inspections were conducted in 2012.(3)

The Ministry of Justice and the Police Vice Squad are responsible for investigating criminal offenses related to child labor, including forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. The Police Vice Squad also works with the Ministry of Health to refer victims of child commercial sexual exploitation to service providers.(18) Lack of sufficient training and resources may hinder the police from identifying victims and investigating cases.(3) Research uncovered no evidence that the Government makes information on investigations, prosecutions, or convictions related to the worst forms of child labor publicly available.

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Djibouti's Poverty Reduction Strategy, known as the National Initiative for Social Development (INDS) for 2008-2012, prioritizes vulnerable children, including those living in poverty and on the streets. It aims to raise parents' livelihoods, thereby allowing children to allocate time to education rather than work.(19, 20) Further, it mandates the provision of legal and social safety nets for street children.(19) The most recent progress report states that the scope of the street children problem is yet unknown and that no protection strategy exists for this group. It notes, however, that some children are being provided assistance by welfare associations.(20) Within the INDS, a policy for orphans and vulnerable children was also developed. No evidence was available about its implementation.(20)

The Government of Djibouti maintains a policy of offering free public education and devotes a quarter of its national budget to the education sector.(3) Associated expenses are often prohibitively high for poor families, however, contributing to low primary school attendance rates.(4, 19) The Government has asked international donors for assistance in addressing these costs.(3)

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

The Government of Djibouti continues to work with the IOM on billboard, radio, and television campaigns to raise awareness of the risks of irregular migration, such as falling victim to trafficking.(3, 21) In addition, the IOM funded anti-trafficking in persons related trainings to border policy, customs and airport officials, and the Coast Guard.(22) A Migration Response Center, funded by the Government of Japan, operates in northern Djibouti.(23, 24) It aims to raise

awareness about the risks of irregular migration—including human trafficking—and develop programs that will aid victims of trafficking and unaccompanied minors. The Center provides referral services and direct humanitarian assistance.(23, 24) Research uncovered no evidence of programs to specifically assist children engaged in the other worst forms of child labor such as domestic labor, commercial sexual exploitation, or illicit activity.

The Government also participates in the Urban Poverty Reduction Project, funded by the African Development Bank. The program aims to promote socioeconomic development in Djibouti's towns and cities, where the majority of child workers live.(5) The Government continues to work with UNICEF in assisting orphans and vulnerable children who may be at risk of entering the worst forms of child labor.(3) The question of whether these programs have an impact on child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

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

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Establish a minimum age for hazardous work, and develop and publish a list of hazardous occupations prohibited to children.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Ensure the law provides penalties for the distribution and purchase of child pornography.	2012
Coordination and Enforcement	Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Provide additional training and professional development to labor inspectors.	2011, 2012
	Conduct inspections to enforce child labor laws.	2011, 2012
	Publicly report on inspections, prosecutions, and convictions related to the worst forms of child labor.	2010, 2011, 2012
Policies	Effectively implement the free public education policy.	2010, 2011, 2012
Social Programs	Institute programs to assist children in domestic labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and illicit activities.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Assess the impact that the Urban Poverty Reduction Project and UNICEF programs may have on child labor.	2010, 2011, 2012

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