

In 2011, Djibouti made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. With donor support, Djibouti established a trafficking center to combat trafficking and began developing programs. In April 2011, the Government ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography as well as the Optional Protocol to the CRC on Armed Conflict. It has not, however, established programs to help children engaged in the other worst forms of child labor. The Government lacks laws to protect children from exploitation in hazardous work and has not established a coordinating mechanism to address child labor. Children in Djibouti continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, including domestic service and street work.

### 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		35.6

#### 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 of statistics from MICS3 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 domestic service and street work.(3, 4) Children's work in these sectors 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 and takes place in private homes where the children are susceptible to physical and sexual abuse.(6)

Street children, including migrant children from neighboring countries, commonly engage in vending, shining shoes, begging and washing and guarding cars.(3, 7) Some children are also involved in prostitution and drug dealing. Some drug dealing involves sniffing glue and a legal drug, called *khat*, but children also deal illicit substances such as marijuana.(3, 4, 8) Children working on the streets may be exposed to many dangers, including severe weather, traffic accidents and crime.(9)



Limited evidence suggests that rural children in Djibouti care for and herd livestock, which may expose them to injury or disease from contact with animals.(3)

A small number of girls from poor Djiboutian families, refugees and Ethiopian and Somali migrants passing through Djibouti are trafficked into prostitution in Djibouti City and along trucking routes on the Ethiopia-Djibouti corridor.(3, 8) Reportedly, this trafficking is sometimes carried out by older children.(8) Girls may also be trafficked for domestic service.(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, 10) The 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.(10) The Labor Code also prohibits children under age 18 from working in certain sectors, including domestic service, hotels and bars.(3, 10) 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, 10) Djiboutian law proscribes the procurement of minors for prostitution or pornography and the use of minors in the transportation and sale of drugs.(3) In April 2011, the Government ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, as well as the

Optional Protocol to the CRC on Armed Conflict.(3) Law 210, regarding the Fight Against Human Trafficking, prohibits all internal and transnational trafficking of persons under age 18.(3, 11)

	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.(12)

The Djiboutian Education System Act of 2000 establishes compulsory basic education for children between ages 6 and 16.(13)

## 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.(14) Labor inspectors can sanction 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 controllers received specialized training, additional training and professional development is necessary. According to government reports, no inspections were conducted in 2011.(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; they

can prohibit young people from being employed in other types of work deemed beyond their capabilities.(10)

The Ministry of Justice and the Police Vice Squad are responsible for investigating criminal offenses related to child labor, including forced labor, commercial sexual exploitation and prostitution. The Police Vice Squad also works with the Ministry of Health to refer victims of child prostitution to service providers.(14) Lack of sufficient training and resources may hinder the Police from identifying victims and investigating cases.(3) Research found 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 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.(15) Further, it mandates the provision of legal and social safety nets for street children.(15)

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, 15) 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

In early 2011, with funding from the Government of Japan, a Migration Response Center opened in Northern Djibouti to raise awareness about irregular migration, including human trafficking, and develop programs, including those to aid victims of trafficking and unaccompanied minors.(16) 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) The Government is also participating in a 20-month, \$280,000 program funded by the USDOJ to expand and strengthen the enforcement of anti-trafficking laws.(17) Though the Government of Djibouti has participated in programs to combat trafficking, research uncovered no evidence of programs to assist children engaged in other worst forms of child labor such as domestic labor, street work, prostitution 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 over 80 percent of the country's population is concentrated, including the majority

of child workers.(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
Coordination and Enforcement	Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Provide additional training and professional development to labor inspectors.	2011
	Conduct inspections to enforce child labor laws.	2011
	Publicly report on inspections, prosecutions and convictions related to child labor.	2010, 2011
Policies	Explore ways to fully and effectively implement free public education policy.	2010, 2011
Social Programs	Institute programs to assist children in domestic labor, street work, prostitution and illicit activities.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Assess the impact of the Urban Poverty Reduction Project and UNICEF programs may have on child labor.	2010, 2011

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