

In 2012, Oman made no advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Oman continues to delay publishing a list of hazardous occupations prohibited for children. In addition, education is not compulsory in Oman, which puts children at risk of the worst forms of child labor. Although the problem does not appear to be widespread, there are limited reports that some children in Oman are engaged in 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		107.0

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, 2013.(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 dangerous activities in agriculture and fishing.(3-5) Children working in agriculture may use dangerous tools, carry heavy loads, and apply harmful pesticides.(5) Children engaged in fishing may work long hours, perform physically demanding tasks, and face dangers such as drowning.(6)

Information on the worst forms of child labor in Oman is lacking. Research has found limited evidence of child trafficking in Oman.(7, 8)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The minimum age for employment in Oman is 15.(9) Children between ages 15 and 18 are barred from working between 6 p.m. and 6 a.m., and for more than six hours a day.(9) Oman's Labor Law further restricts children between ages 15 and 18 from working on weekends and holidays or from working overtime.(9) Pursuant to a government decree passed in 2005, children under 18 are prohibited from working as camel jockeys 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.(11, 12)

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	15
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	No
	Free Public Education	Yes

Oman

Under the Labor Law, inspectors have jurisdiction to inspect private sector entities for labor law noncompliance.(13)

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.(14) Research did not identify whether other activities associated with prostitution, such as soliciting a child for prostitution, are also prohibited. The Anti-Trafficking Law criminalizes trafficking in persons and imposes a stiffer sentence for trafficking of a child.(15) The Law also makes it a crime for a person to produce, keep, distribute, or expose pornographic letters or pictures.(16)

Oman has no laws prohibiting the use of children for illicit activities.(17)

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 (approximately age 18), but it is not compulsory.(3, 17) 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.

The Government is considering enacting a draft Children's Law in 2013 to further protect children.(17) It is also considering raising the minimum age for work to 16.(12)

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.(17)

The Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and Royal Oman Police (ROP) are responsible for monitoring and enforcing child labor laws.(17) 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.(19) The Department employs 180 inspectors.(17) Research found no information on funding levels for the labor inspectorate. Labor inspectors are trained by the ILO on international labor standards including those regarding the worst forms of child labor.(17)

The MOM and ROP share information on labor cases in which criminal penalties are sought.(17) There were no child labor violations and therefore no prosecutions.(17)

The Public Prosecution is responsible for prosecuting trafficking cases in court with the assistance of the ROP.(17, 20)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking is mandated to oversee the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking that outlines the Government's human trafficking prevention plan.(20) The Plan also lays out the roles and responsibilities of governmental organizations that are involved in combating trafficking.(20) Research found no evidence of a plan to address other worst forms of child labor, including agriculture and fishing.

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.(4) Recent reports by the ILO Committee of Experts, UNESCO, and the Overseas Development Institute found that available government data were weak, especially on 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 ensure that adequate protection mechanisms are in place for vulnerable children.(8, 11, 21, 22) The lack of data available on the incidence, nature, and the types of child labor impedes the Government's and civil society's ability to measure the extent of the worst forms of child labor in the country in order to systematically inform policies and programs.

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.(23)

The Government has implemented an education model that aims to equip all children in Oman with the knowledge, tools, attitudes, and values that enable lifelong learning.(24) Research found no evidence of the impact this policy 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.(19)

The Government invests in Oman's youth through the Fund for Development of Youth, or *Sharakah* that Sultan Qaboos began in 1998.(25) The Fund provides youth (ages 15-24) with equity and loan support for existing and proposed small and medium enterprises, and provides guidance and technical assistance needed to start a new business.(25-27) In addition, the Ministry of Social Development provides microfinance opportunities to unemployed youth to start their own

businesses.(22) 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.(20) The Government operates a 24-hour hotline for reporting suspected cases of trafficking.(7) The Government continued to operate a shelter for victims of trafficking that can accommodate up to 50 men, women, and children. However, given strict entry policies and requirements regarding who may stay in the shelter and when the shelter is underutilized.(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, 2012
	Establish a compulsory education age of 15.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Establish a law prohibiting the use of children for illicit activities.	2012
Coordination and Enforcement	Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
Policies	Conduct in-depth research and measure the prevalence of child labor, especially in agriculture, fishing, and child trafficking, and develop a plan to address the worst forms of child labor in those industries in which it is prevalent.	2010, 2011, 2012
	Develop formal mechanisms and procedures to proactively identify victims of trafficking or other worst forms of child labor.	2011, 2012
	Ensure that migrant worker children are afforded protection from exploitation through access to social services.	2011, 2012
Social Programs	Assess the impact that existing policies may have on addressing child labor, especially in agriculture, fishing, and child trafficking.	2012
	Review policies regarding residents of the government shelter to ensure children in need may be admitted.	2012

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2. UCW. *Analysis of Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Statistics from National Household or Child Labor Surveys*. February 5, 2013. Reliable statistical data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics on children’s work in general are reported in this chart, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used, the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the “Children’s Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions” section of this report.
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