

In 2013, Djibouti made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government hired three labor inspectors and developed a national strategy that seeks to protect vulnerable populations and the rights of children. With support from the IOM, Djibouti continues to combat trafficking and hosts a center for assisting migrants. However, children in Djibouti continue to engage in child labor in street work and in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation. Significant gaps remain in the legal framework on child labor, and the Government has not established a coordinating mechanism to address child labor. Neither law enforcement efforts nor programs to assist working children are adequate.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Djibouti are engaged in child labor in street work and in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation. Child labor in Djibouti varies in urban and rural settings; however, in both, it largely takes place in the informal sector.(1) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Djibouti.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	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 (%)		52.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2013, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(2)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from MICS3 Survey, 2006.(3)

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	Herding livestock (1, 4)
	Agriculture, activities unknown* (4)
	Working as domestic servants (1, 4)
Services	Street work, including shining shoes, washing and guarding cars, selling items, cleaning storefronts, sorting merchandise, collecting garbage, and begging (1, 4)
	Working in restaurants and small shops (1, 4)
	Selling the narcotic, khat (1, 4)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1, 5)
	Domestic service as a result of human trafficking (1, 4, 5)
	Forced begging and theft* (4, 5)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

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

Children's work occurs predominantly in urban areas, where the majority of the Djiboutian population is concentrated.(1, 6) 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-

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Djibouti corridor.(1, 5) Limited evidence suggests younger children are sometimes involve younger children in exploited in commercial sexual exploitation by older children.(5)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Djibouti 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 relevant laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Labor Code (7)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No		
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Penal Code (1)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Law 210 Regarding the Fight Against Human Trafficking (8)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Penal Code (1)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Penal Code (1)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Establishment of the National Army Amendment Decree (1, 9)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Law on the Orientation of the Education System (10)
Free Public Education	Yes		Law on the Orientation of the Education System (10)

* No conscription or no standing military.

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.(11)

Research uncovered no evidence that the law prohibits the purchase of child pornography. While education in Djibouti is free, expenses associated with education are often prohibitively high for poor families, which contributes to low primary school attendance rates.(4, 12)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor's Labor Inspectorate	Enforce child labor laws and regulations.(1)
Djibouti National Police and Vice Squad	Enforce criminal laws and investigate criminal offenses related to child labor, including forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation.(1)
Ministry of Justice	Investigate child labor cases.(1)

Law enforcement agencies in Djibouti took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2013, the Ministry of Labor hired three new labor inspectors to the Inspectorate for a total of four labor inspectors.(1) None of the four labor inspectors have received training related to child labor investigations; meanwhile, an overall lack of resources have hampered inspection and enforcement efforts. No child labor inspections were undertaken in 2013 and no violations were issued.(1)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2013, the Vice Squad included four officers, but lacked sufficient training and resources to effectively enforce laws related to child labor, trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, no data on investigations, prosecutions, or convictions on child labor or exploitation were available.(1)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Research found no evidence that the Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Djibouti has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Strategy 2013–2017†	Provide social safety nets for vulnerable populations, protect the rights of children, and develop social programs to address the risks of children.(1)

† Policy was launched during the reporting period.

In 2013, the Government of Djibouti sought to increase the quality of education. It maintained a policy of offering free public education and devotes a quarter of its national budget to the education sector.(1)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

In 2013, the Government of Djibouti participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

Table 7. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description and Objectives
UNICEF Country Program*	UNICEF program with the Government to assist orphans and vulnerable children who may be at risk of entering the worst forms of child labor.(1)
IOM Program*	IOM program in partnership with the Government to address the risks of irregular migration, which operates a service center along the route most often traveled by migrants.(1)
Urban Poverty Reduction Program*	African Development Bank program to promote socioeconomic development in Djibouti's towns and cities, where the majority of child workers live.(6)

*The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

Research uncovered no evidence of programs that specifically assist children engaged in other forms of child labor, such as domestic labor, commercial sexual exploitation, or illicit activity.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Djibouti (Table 8).

Table 8. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Establish a minimum age for hazardous work, and develop and publish a list of hazardous occupations prohibited to children.	2009 – 2013
	Ensure the law provides penalties for the purchase of child pornography.	2012 – 2013
	Effectively implement the free public education policy.	2010 – 2013
Enforcement	Provide additional training and resources to labor inspectors and criminal law enforcement.	2011 – 2013
	Conduct inspections to enforce child labor laws.	2011 – 2013
	Publicly report on inspections, prosecutions, and convictions related to the worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2013
Coordination	Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2009 – 2013
Social Programs	Conduct research to determine the activities carried out by children working in agriculture to inform policies and programs.	2013
	Assess the impact that the Urban Poverty Reduction Program, UNICEF Country Program, and IOM Program may have on child labor.	2010 – 2013
	Institute programs to assist children involved in domestic labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and illicit activities.	2009 – 2013

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