

In 2013, Oman made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. During the reporting period, the Government continued to partially implement the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking, provided training to its police force on identifying victims of human trafficking, and continued a number of social programs to raise awareness about human trafficking and promote decent jobs for youth. Although the problem does not appear to be widespread, there are limited reports that children in Oman continue to engage in child labor in agriculture. Key gaps persist in the country's legal framework on the worst forms of child labor, and the Government lacks comprehensive coordination mechanisms and policies on this issue.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Oman are engaged in child labor in agriculture, although there is no evidence to suggest that this problem is widespread.(1, 2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Oman. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		103.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(3)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2014.(4)

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	Farming, activities unknown* (1, 2)
	Fishing, activities unknown* (1, 2)







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

There is no evidence that the Government of Oman has conducted or participated in research to determine the extent to which children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor. Available government data are weak, especially on the prevalence of child labor and human trafficking, the impact of programs targeting working children, and the link between research findings and policymaking. The ILO Committee of Experts, UNESCO, and the Overseas Development Institute have all commented on this weak data, and the ILO has consistently requested that the Government assess its child labor and human trafficking situation in order to ensure that adequate protection mechanisms are in place for vulnerable children.(5-9)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Oman 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	15	Article 75 of the Labor Law (10)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 76 and 79 of the Labor Law (10)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Royal Decree 126/2008 (9, 11)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Anti-Trafficking Law; Royal Decree 126/2008 (9, 12)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Penal Code; Basic Law (9, 13)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Unclear		
Compulsory Education Age	No		
Free Public Education	Yes		Basic Law (1, 9, 14)

* No conscription or no standing military.

The Government has reportedly been developing a list of 43 hazardous occupations prohibited for children younger than 18; however, the Government has yet to enact the list into law.(9, 15, 16). Oman has no laws prohibiting the use of children for illicit activities.(9) The minimum age for voluntary military enlistment is unclear. Oman has reported minimum ages of both 15 and 18 to the UN.(9, 14, 17) There is no compulsory education age.(1, 9) 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.

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 Manpower (MOM)	Monitor and enforce child labor laws; conduct labor inspections; share information with the Royal Oman Police (ROP) on labor and criminal law violations when penalties are pursued.(9, 18, 19)
ROP	Monitor and enforce child labor laws; refer cases to the Public Prosecution (PP).(9, 14, 18)
PPs	Prosecute trafficking and sexual exploitation cases in court with assistance from the ROP.(9, 14, 20)

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

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2013, MOM employed 200 labor inspectors. No child labor violations were found in the reporting period.⁽⁹⁾ Research did not reveal information on number of inspections conducted or funding levels of MOM.

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2013, the ROP and PP received training on identifying victims of human trafficking.^(9, 19) Research found no evidence of formal mechanisms or procedures to proactively identify victims of other worst forms of child labor.^(9, 21) The PP prosecuted five cases of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation in 2013, but none of those cases involved children.⁽¹⁹⁾ No information was found on the number of criminal investigators employed, total number of cases investigated, citations issued, or prosecutions made.

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

Although the Government has established the National Committee on Combating Human Trafficking, research found no evidence of coordinating mechanisms to combat other forms of child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking	Oversee the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking; includes the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Education, ROP, PP, MOM, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Legal Affairs, and the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry. ⁽²⁰⁾

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Although the Government has established the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking, research found no evidence of policies to specifically address other forms child labor, including its worst forms. However, the Government has funded another policy that may have an impact on child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking	Lays out the roles and responsibilities of governmental organizations involved in combating trafficking and describes procedures for applying the Anti-Trafficking Law. ⁽²⁰⁾
Education Model*	Aims to equip all children in Oman with the knowledge, tools, attitudes, and values that enable lifelong learning. ⁽²²⁾

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

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

In 2013, the Government of Oman funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Decent Work Country Program (2010–2013)*	ILO-implemented program that strives to strengthen the employability of Oman's young workforce through vocational education and training programs. ⁽²³⁾
Fund for Development of Youth (Sharakah)*‡	Government program that 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. ^(24–26)
Microfinance Program*‡	Ministry of Social Development program that provides microfinance opportunities to unemployed youth to start their own businesses. ⁽⁶⁾

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)

Program	Description
Programs of the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking*‡	Government programs under that National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking. Includes implementation of awareness-raising activities on human trafficking in schools and among the general population, provision of social services for trafficking victims, and coordination with international organizations on trafficking developments.(20)
Trafficking Victims' Shelter*‡	Government-run shelter that provides accommodations and social, psychological, legal, and medical services for up to 50 women and children who are victims of trafficking.(19, 21)

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

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Oman.

During the reporting period, the Government partially implemented programs of the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking. Members of PP participated in UN and Arab League anti-trafficking conferences, and the Trafficking Victims Shelter served nine victims, although none were children.(19) This facility is underutilized.(21) In addition, the exclusion of migrant workers and their children from public social, health, education, and housing benefits available to citizens may increase their vulnerability to forced labor and the worst forms of child labor.(27)

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 Oman (Table 9).

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Finalize and make publicly available a list of hazardous occupations prohibited for children under age 18.	2010 – 2013
	Clarify the minimum age for voluntary military enlistment.	2013
	Establish a compulsory education age of 15.	2009 – 2013
	Establish a law prohibiting the use of children for illicit activities.	2012 – 2013
Enforcement	Make data on child labor law enforcement publicly available, including number and type of inspections, violations, and penalties, as well as number and type of criminal investigators, cases investigated, citations issued, and prosecutions.	2013
	Develop formal mechanisms and procedures to proactively identify victims of all worst forms of child labor.	2011 – 2013
Coordination	Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat child labor, including in all its worst forms.	2009 – 2013
Government Policies	Develop a national policy to address all worst forms of child labor.	2013
	Assess the impact that the Education Model may have on addressing child labor, especially in agriculture and fishing.	2013
Social Programs	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on addressing child labor, especially in agriculture and fishing.	2012 – 2013
	Review policies regarding the use of the government shelter to ensure that the facility is fully utilized.	2012 – 2013
	Ensure that migrant worker children are afforded protection from exploitation through access to social services.	2011 – 2013
	Conduct in-depth research and measure the prevalence of child labor, especially in agriculture, fishing, and human trafficking.	2010 – 2013

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