

In 2014, Oman made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government adopted the Child Law, which prohibits the use of children in illicit activities and raises the minimum age for work and compulsory education to 16. The Government also established a Child Protection Committee to receive complaints related to violations of children's rights, including the worst forms of child labor. Although the problem does not appear to be widespread, children are engaged in child labor, including in the agricultural sector in Oman. The Government lacks a policy to address all worst forms of child labor, and information on the enforcement of child labor laws is not publicly available.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although the problem does not appear to be widespread, children are engaged in child labor, including in the agricultural sector in Oman.⁽¹⁾ 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.⁽²⁾
Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2014.⁽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	Farming,* activities unknown (1, 4)
	Fishing,* activities unknown (1, 4)
Services	Working in small businesses* (1)




* 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 child labor, including its worst forms.⁽⁵⁻⁷⁾ 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.⁽⁶⁾

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Oman has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor, including its worst forms (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 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	Article 46 of the Child Law (8)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 76 of the Labor Law (9); Article 45 of the Child Law (8)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 1, 2, and 9 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking (10); Article 3bis of the Labor Law (9)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 1, 2, and 9 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking (10)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 1, 2, and 9 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking (10); Articles 220, 221, and 224 of the Penal Code (11)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 99 and 229 of the Penal Code (11); Article 58 of the Child Law (8)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	16	Article 55 of the Child Law (8)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 36 of the Child Law (8)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 13 of the Basic Law (12)

* No conscription (13)

The Government has been developing a list of hazardous occupations prohibited for children younger than age 18; however, the Government has not yet enacted the list into law.(6)

In 2014, the Government adopted the Child Law, which raises the minimum age for work to 16 and establishes additional protection against the use of children in illicit activities. It prohibits the use of children in places of production and marketing of drugs. It also establishes compulsory education until the end of basic education, which is typically age 16.(4, 14)

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	Monitor and enforce child labor laws; conduct labor inspections; share information with the Royal Oman Police on labor and criminal law violations when penalties are pursued.(7)
Royal Oman Police	Monitor and enforce the Child Law, including its provisions related to child labor; refer cases to the Public Prosecution.(7, 15)

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (cont)

Organization/Agency	Role
Public Prosecution	Prosecute trafficking and sexual exploitation cases in court with assistance from the Royal Oman Police.(7, 16)
Child Protection Committee	Protect the child from violence, exploitation and abuse, and to receive complaints and reports of violations of child rights, including the worst forms of child labor. Established in 2014, in accordance with the Child Law, the Committee was not active in 2014, as by-laws to implement provisions of the Child Law were in development.(8)

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

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2014, the Ministry of Manpower employed 200 labor inspectors, who carry out regular workplace inspections and receive training in conformity with international standards on child labor issues.(4) Inspectors are allowed to make unannounced visits, and they inspect all sectors covered by law.(17) However, based on available information, inspections are generally carried out in large industries and construction sites, and rarely in small farms and fishing boats where children typically work.(15) Research did not find information on the number and type of inspections carried out, or the number of violations found or citations or penalties imposed. There is no referral mechanism between labor enforcement and social welfare services.(4)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2014, the Royal Oman Police and Public Prosecution received no training on identifying victims of human trafficking or the worst forms of child labor.(4) There was no evidence of child trafficking in the reporting period.(18) No information was found on the number of criminal investigators, the number of investigations regarding cases other than human trafficking, prosecutions, and convictions, or imposition of penalties. Research found no evidence of formal mechanisms or procedures to proactively identify children engaged in the worst forms of child labor.(7)

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

Although the Government has established the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking, research found no evidence of mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address 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 Royal Oman Police; the Public Prosecution; the Ministries of Information, Education, Manpower, Health, Social Development, Justice, Foreign Affairs, and Legal Affairs; and the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry.(16)
National Committee on Implementing the UNCRC	Led by the Ministry of Social Development, members include representatives from the Ministries of Health and Education, as well as the Royal Oman Police. Subcommittees have been established in each of Oman's 11 governorates.(4)

In 2014, the National Committee on Implementing the UN CRC met three times. Members of the subcommittees received training from UNICEF on the content of the UNCRC as well as on UNCRC obligations to report child rights violations and intervene in suspected cases of child rights violations, including child labor.(4)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Oman has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (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 Law to Combat Human Trafficking.(16)

There is no comprehensive policy that addresses all forms of child labor, including in farming and fishing.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, 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
Microfinance Program*‡	Ministry of Social Development program that provides microfinance opportunities to unemployed youth to start their own businesses.(19)
Programs of the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking‡	Government programs under the 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 human trafficking developments.(16)
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.(20, 21)

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

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Oman.

There is a Government-run shelter for victims of human trafficking, including children engaged in the worst forms of child labor.(22) 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.(23)

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
Legal Framework	Enact the list of hazardous occupations prohibited for children under age 18 into law.	2010 – 2014
Enforcement	Collect and make data on child labor law enforcement publicly available, including number and type of inspections, the number of violations, citations, and penalties, as well as the number of criminal investigators, the number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions, and imposition of penalties.	2013 – 2014
	Establish a referral mechanism between law enforcement and social services.	2014
	Develop formal mechanisms and procedures to proactively identify victims of all worst forms of child labor.	2011 – 2014
Coordination	Establish a coordinating mechanism to combat child labor, including in all its worst forms.	2009 – 2014
Government Policies	Develop a national policy to address all worst forms of child labor.	2013 – 2014
Social Programs	Conduct in-depth research and measure the prevalence of child labor, especially in agriculture and human trafficking.	2010 – 2014
	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on child labor.	2012 – 2014
	Ensure that migrant workers' children are afforded protection from exploitation through access to social services.	2011 – 2014

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