# Oman

# Minimal Advancement

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.

# 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](#_ENREF_1), [2](#_ENREF_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**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Working children, ages 7 to 14:** | Unavailable |
| **School attendance, ages 5 to 14:** | Unavailable |
| **Children combining work and school, ages 7 to 14:** | Unavailable |
| **Primary completion rate (%):** | 103.7 |

*Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014*.([3](#_ENREF_3))

*Source for all other data: Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis, 2014.*([4](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_1), [2](#_ENREF_2)) |
| Fishing, activities unknown\* ([1](#_ENREF_1), [2](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_5))

# 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](#_ENREF_10)) |
| Minimum Age for Hazardous Work | Yes | 18 | Articles 76 and 79 of the Labor Law ([10](#_ENREF_10)) |
| List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children | No |  |  |
| Prohibition of Forced Labor | Yes |  | Royal Decree 126/2008 ([9](#_ENREF_9), [11](#_ENREF_11)) |
| Prohibition of Child Trafficking | Yes |  | Anti-Trafficking Law; Royal Decree 126/2008 ([9](#_ENREF_9), [12](#_ENREF_12)) |
| Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children | Yes |  | Penal Code; Basic Law ([9](#_ENREF_9), [13](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_1), [9](#_ENREF_9), [14](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_9), [15](#_ENREF_15), [16](#_ENREF_16)). Oman has no laws prohibiting the use of children for illicit activities.([9](#_ENREF_9)) The minimum age for voluntary military enlistment is unclear. Oman has reported minimum ages of both 15 and 18 to the UN.([9](#_ENREF_9), [14](#_ENREF_14), [17](#_ENREF_17)) There is no compulsory education age.([1](#_ENREF_1), [9](#_ENREF_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.

# 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](#_ENREF_9), [18](#_ENREF_18), [19](#_ENREF_19)) |
| ROP | Monitor and enforce child labor laws; refer cases to the Public Prosecution (PP).([9](#_ENREF_9), [14](#_ENREF_14), [18](#_ENREF_18)) |
| PPs | Prosecute trafficking and sexual exploitation cases in court with assistance from the ROP.([9](#_ENREF_9), [14](#_ENREF_14), [20](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_9), [19](#_ENREF_19)) Research found no evidence of formal mechanisms or procedures to proactively identify victims of other worst forms of child labor.([9](#_ENREF_9), [21](#_ENREF_21)) The PP prosecuted five cases of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation in 2013, but none of those cases involved children.([19](#_ENREF_19)) No information was found on the number of criminal investigators employed, total number of cases investigated, citations issued, or prosecutions made.

# 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](#_ENREF_20)) |

# 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](#_ENREF_20)) |
| Education Model\* | Aims to equip all children in Oman with the knowledge, tools, attitudes, and values that enable lifelong learning.([22](#_ENREF_22)) |

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

# 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](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_24)) |
| Microfinance Program\*‡ | Ministry of Social Development program that provides microfinance opportunities to unemployed youth to start their own businesses.([6](#_ENREF_6)) |
| 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](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_19), [21](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_19)) This facility is underutilized.([21](#_ENREF_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](#_ENREF_27))

# 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 |

1. Child Rights Information Network. *Oman: Children's Rights References in the Universal Periodic Review*. London; January 26, 2011. <http://www.crin.org/resources/infoDetail.asp?ID=23906>.

2. Humanium. *Children of Oman: Realizing Children’s Rights in Oman*, [online] August 16, 2012 [cited December 12, 2013]; <http://www.humanium.org/en/oman/>.

3. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. *Gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary. Total*. [accessed February 4, 2013]; <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx?SPSLanguage=EN>. Data provided is the gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary school. This measure is a proxy measure for primary completion. For more information, please see the “Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions” section of this report.

4. UCW. *Analysis of Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Statistics from National Household or Child Labor Surveys*. Analysis received February 13, 2014. 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.

5. UNESCO. *Social Protection Policy and Research in the Arab States: from Shared Challenges to Coordinated Efforts*. Beirut; 2011. <http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/FIELD/Beirut/pdf/SP%20report_sept-final1.pdf>.

6. Rachel Marcus, Paola Pereznieto, Erin Cullen, Nicola Jones. *Children and Social Protection in the Middle East and North Africa*. A Mapping Exercise. London October 2011. <http://www.odi.org.uk/resources/details.asp?id=6038&title=social-protection-children-middle-east-north-africa-unicef>.

7. ILO Committee of Experts. *Individual Observation concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Oman (ratification: 2001) Published: 2012*; accessed January 16, 2014; https://[www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:1:0::NO:::](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:1:0::NO:::).

8. ILO Committee of Experts. *Individual Direct Request concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Oman (ratification: 2001) Published: 2012*; accessed January 16, 2014; https://[www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:1:0::NO:::](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:1:0::NO:::).

9. U.S. Embassy- Muscat. *reporting, January 16, 2014*.

10. Government of Oman. *Labour Law*, 35/2003, enacted April 26, 2003. <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/67540/84139/F1719028671/OMN67540.pdf>.

11. International Trade Union Confederation. *Internationally Recognized Core Labour Standards in the Sultanate of Oman: Report for the WTO General Council Review of Trade Policies of the Sultanate of Oman*. General Council Review of Trade Policies Report. Geneva; June 2008.

12. Government of Oman. *Anti-Trafficking Law*, Royal Decree No. 126, enacted 2008.

13. Government of Oman. *Penal Code*, 7, enacted 1974.

14. U.S. Embassy- Muscat official. E-mail communication to USDOL official. March 16, 2014.

15. ILO Committee of Experts. *Individual Direct Request concerning Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (no. 138) Oman (ratification: 2005) Published: 2012*; accessed January 16, 2014; https://[www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:1:0](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:1:0).

16. ILO Committee of Experts. *Individual Observation concerning Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Oman (ratification: 2001) Published: 2014*; accessed April 16, 2014; https://[www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:1:0::NO:::](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:1:0::NO:::).

17. Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. "Oman," in *Child Soldiers Global Report 2008*. London; 2008; <http://www.child-soldiers.org/global_report_reader.php?id=97>.

18. International Labor Organization. *Labour Inspection Structure and Organization*, ILO, [online] January 10, 2011 [cited August 15, 2012]; <http://www.ilo.org/labadmin/info/WCMS_150276/lang--en/index.htm>.

19. U.S. Embassy- Muscat. *reporting, February 25, 2014*.

20. Sultanate of Oman National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking. *National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking*. Muscat; September 2009.

21. U.S. Department of State. "Oman," in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2012*. Washington, DC; June 19, 2012; <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2012/index.htm>.

22. Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Education. *Oman Education Portal*, Ministry of Education, [online ] October 10, 2011 [cited January 16, 2014]; <http://home.moe.gov.om/english/showpage.php?CatID=11&ID=17>.

23. ILO. *Sultanate of Oman: Decent Work Country Programme 2010- 2013*. Geneva; June 2010. <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/program/dwcp/download/oman.pdf>.

24. His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said. *Government Report*. Government Report Muscat.

25. Nation Master. *Education Stats: Fiji vs. Oman*; accessed April 19, 2013; <http://www.nationmaster.com/compare/Fiji/Oman/Education>.

26. Sharakah. *Supporting the Spirit of Entrepreneurship*. Muscat. <http://www.youthfund.com.om/sharakah/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=wZkxYh%2Bfdag%3D&tabid=36>.

27. United Nations General Assembly. *Human Rights Council Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review 10th Session.* Compilation. Geneva; January 24- February 4, 2011.