

In 2017, Oman made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking created a referral mechanism for the victims of human trafficking and exploitation; launched the first public awareness campaign on human trafficking and labor practices susceptible to abuse; and held several trainings on human trafficking and victim protection for 429 participants, including judges and assistant prosecutors. Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Oman engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Labor inspectors lacked the authority to assess penalties for labor violations, and the government lacks a reciprocal referral mechanism between the Labor Inspectorate and social services.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Oman engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. (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 to 14	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		104

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2016, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (2)

Source for all other data: Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2018. (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; 5)
	Fishing, activities unknown (1; 4; 5; 6)
Services	Selling food items in kiosks, including fish [†] and grilled meat [†] (4; 5)
	Begging [‡] (1; 7)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor [‡]	Commercial sexual exploitation (1; 8)

[†] Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

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




The Ministry of Social Development released the country's major national study on child labor in 2016. Although a public copy of this study is unavailable, reports indicate that an estimated 330 children, mostly boys, were working, primarily on farms or in subsistence fishing. (1; 4; 5) The majority of these children were ages 16 or 17, with 24 percent between ages 10 and 15. (5)

Limited evidence suggests that children with disabilities may face barriers to accessing education, since some school buses are not wheelchair accessible and there is a lack of resources to provide equal educational services to intellectually disabled students. School enrollment fees may at times be a barrier to education for the children of migrant workers. (8; 9)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR 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's laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 46 of the Child Law (10)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 76 of the Labor Law; Article 45 of the Child Law (10; 11)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 76 of the Labor Law; Ministry of Manpower Order 217/2016 (11; 12)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 1–2 and 9 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking; Article 3bis of the Labor Law (11; 13)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 1–2 and 9 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking (13)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 1–2 and 9 of the Law to Combat Human Trafficking; Articles 220–221 and 224 of the Penal Code (13; 14)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 229 of the Penal Code; Articles 58 and 74 of the Child Law (10; 14)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	Yes*		Article 55 of the Child Law (10)
State Voluntary	Yes	16	Article 55 of the Child Law (10)
Non-state	Yes	18	Articles 1(f) and 55 of the Child Law (10)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16‡	Article 36 of the Child Law (10)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 13 of the Basic Law; Article 36 of the Child Law (10; 15)

* No conscription (16)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (16)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Manpower that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Manpower	Monitor and enforce child labor laws, conduct labor inspections, and share information with the Royal Oman Police on labor and criminal law violations when penalties are pursued. (1)
Ministry of Social Development	Enforce the Child Law, including by receiving complaints and referring cases to the Royal Oman Police and the Office of Public Prosecutor. (1)
Royal Oman Police	Monitor and enforce the Child Law, including its provisions related to child labor; refer cases to the Office of Public Prosecutor. (1)
Office of Public Prosecutor	Prosecute human trafficking and sexual exploitation cases in court with assistance from the Royal Oman Police. (1; 17)

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

Organization/Agency	Role
Child Protection Committee	Protect children from exploitation, receive complaints and reports of child labor, and investigate reported cases to determine whether children are engaged in prohibited activities or whether working has negative effects on their health or education. (1; 4)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2017, labor law enforcement agencies in Oman took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Manpower that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including penalty assessment authorization.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (1)	Unknown* (16)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown (1)	354 (16)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown (1)	No (18)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown (1)	Unknown (16)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown (1)	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (1)	Yes (16)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown (1)	8,890 (16)
Number Conducted at Worksites	Unknown (1)	Unknown (16)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (1)	0 (16)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	Unknown (1)	N/A
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that were Collected	Unknown (1)	N/A
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown (1)	Yes (16)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown (1)	Unknown (16)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (1)	Yes (18)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (1)	Yes (16)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (1)	Yes (16)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	No (1)	No (19)

* The government does not publish this information.

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in Oman took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including investigations into commercial sexual exploitation of children.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown (1)	Unknown (16)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (1)	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (1)	Yes (20)
Number of Investigations	Unknown* (1)	0 (9)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown* (1)	0 (9)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown* (1)	0 (9)
Number of Convictions	Unknown* (1)	0 (9)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Unknown (1)	Yes (16; 19)

* The Government does not publish this information.

Oman

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2017, the Royal Oman Police initiated 9 new investigations of human trafficking, and 12 individuals were convicted of human trafficking. (20) However, none of these cases involved child victims. (9) Research found no evidence of criminal investigations into commercial sexual exploitation of children.

The National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking provided support for 8 training sessions for 429 participants, including prosecutors and judges, on topics of human trafficking, victim protection, and capacity building for the enforcement of the law to combat human trafficking. Likewise, the Office of the Public Prosecutor supported a training on human trafficking prosecution for 51 participants. (20) The Ministry of Justice added three courses on human trafficking to its curriculum on human trafficking and held a training for judges and assistant prosecutors. (20) During the reporting period, the National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking created a referral mechanism for the victims of human trafficking and exploitation. The Ministry of Manpower, the Ministry of Social Development, and the Royal Oman Police cooperate and share information about cases of human trafficking to provide services to victims and refer cases to the police. (16; 19)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8). However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including the omission of the Ministry of Manpower from the National Committee on Implementing the UN CRC.

Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
National Committee on Implementing the UN CRC	Led by the Ministry of Social Development to oversee implementation of the UN CRC, including its provisions related to child labor and its worst forms. There are subcommittees in all 11 governorates. (1) Other members include three other state agencies. The Ministry of Manpower is not represented. (1) Research was unable to determine whether the National Committee on Implementing the UN CRC was active during the reporting period.
National Committee for Combating Human Trafficking	Oversees the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking. Includes the Royal Oman Police and 10 other state agencies. (1) In October 2017, the Committee launched <i>Ehsan</i> , the first public awareness campaign on human trafficking and labor practices susceptible to abuse, accompanied by a 90-minute television program. The campaign also included a hotline and informational pamphlets in victims' native languages, along with billboards displayed prominently throughout Oman. (20) The Committee also drafted the 2018–2020 National Action Plan in October 2017, which was approved and adopted in March 2018. (20)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including covering all worst forms of child labor.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking	Establishes roles and responsibilities of governmental organizations involved in combating child trafficking and describes procedures for applying the Law to Combat Human Trafficking. (17) In November 2017, the Council of Ministers authorized the establishment of a Rapid Action Taskforce to combat human trafficking. (20)

Although the Government of Oman had adopted the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking, research found no evidence of a policy to address all forms of child labor, including in farming and fishing.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2017, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including implementation.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Social Security Cash Transfer Program†	Provides assistance to children in low-income families, including educational services. (4) Research was unable to determine what steps were taken in 2017 in the implementation of this program.
Programs of the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking†	Implements awareness-raising activities on human trafficking in schools and among the general population, and provides social services for trafficking victims. (17) Research was unable to determine what steps were taken in 2017 in the implementation of this program.

† Program is funded by the Government of Oman.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Oman (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Collect and publish data on Labor Inspectorate funding, initial training for new labor inspectors, the number of inspections conducted at worksites, and whether targeted inspections were conducted.	2013 – 2017
	Authorize the Inspectorate to assess penalties.	2017
	Establish a referral mechanism between labor law enforcement and social services.	2014 – 2017
	Publish data on the types of training for criminal investigators.	2013 – 2017
	Ensure that possible cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children are investigated.	2017
Coordination	Ensure that the National Committee on Implementing the UN CRC is able to carry out its intended mandate and that the Ministry of Manpower participates in the Committee.	2016 – 2017
Government Policies	Develop a national policy to address all worst forms of child labor.	2013 – 2017
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs, including the Ministry of Social Development's 2016 study.	2017
	Ensure that all children have equal access to education, including the children of migrant workers and children with disabilities.	2011 – 2017
	Implement the Social Security Cash Transfer and the National Plan for Combating Human Trafficking programs.	2017

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