

In 2013, Jordan made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government created a National Steering Committee to coordinate efforts to implement the National Framework to Combat Child Labor and formed a technical committee to coordinate the country's strategy to address the increase in child labor due to the influx of Syrian refugees. In addition, the Government increased the number of labor inspectors from 120 to 190. However, children in Jordan continue to engage in child labor in agriculture and the worst forms of child labor in domestic service as a result of human trafficking. The Government lacks a mechanism to monitor child labor in informal work such as work done by children with family businesses and non-formal work in the agricultural sector.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Jordan are engaged in child labor in agriculture and in the worst forms of child labor in domestic service as a result of human trafficking. (1-3) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Jordan.

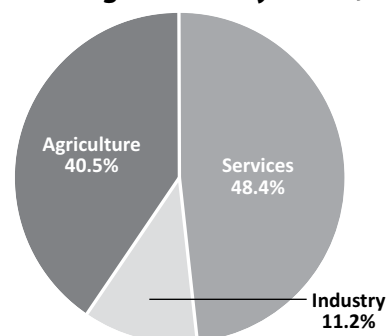
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

| Children | Age | Percent |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Working (% and population) | 5-14 yrs. | 0.8 (11,255) |
| Attending School (%) | 5-14 yrs. | 94.9 |
| Combining Work and School (%) | 7-14 yrs. | 0.7 |
| Primary Completion Rate (%) | | 92.8 |

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.(4)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2013.(5)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



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 | Planting, irrigating, harvesting,* weeding† (3, 6, 7) |
| | Mining* (1, 8-10) |
| | Painting (7) |
| Industry | Construction, activities unknown* (7, 11, 12) |
| | Manufacturing, activities unknown (11, 13, 14) |
| | Carpentry* (7, 15) |
| | Blacksmithing* (7) |
| | Rock quarrying* (15) |
| | Electrical repair* (1, 7-10) |
| | Auto mechanic repair* (3) |
| Services | Guiding tours (16-18) |
| | Street vending* (16-18) |
| | Street work, including vending* and scrap metal scavenging*† (7, 12, 16-22) |
| | Domestic work (1, 2, 7) |

Table 2. Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity (cont)

| Sector/Industry | Activity |
|---|--|
| Services | Food service* (7, 11, 13) |
| | Hotel services (7) |
| | Hairdressing (15) |
| | Retail (14) |
| Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡ | Begging as a result of human trafficking (1, 2, 9, 23, 24) |
| | Domestic service as a result of human trafficking (1, 2, 20, 23) |
| | Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2, 23, 25-27) |

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

† 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.

Children work in Jordan’s tourist areas, such as Petra.(16-18) Children often work alongside their family members, especially in agriculture for no pay.(6) Anecdotal evidence also suggests that some children may be trafficked for the purpose of forced begging.(1, 9, 20, 23, 24, 28)

The latest census, conducted in 2007, estimates that the number of working school-aged children in Jordan is approximately 33,000 out of a total labor force of 1.2 million. Other estimates suggest the real number exceeds 50,000.(29) However, the most recent statistics on child labor do not include Syrian refugee children, many of whom are engaged in the worst forms of child labor.(3, 7)

In places where the refugee population is steadily increasing, such as in the northern regions and in Amman, primary schools are not able to meet the increasing demand and lack sufficient space and teaching staff.(30) Although all Syrian children living in host communities are granted access to Jordanian public schools, up to one-third of Syrian refugee children do not attend school.(20, 31-35)

Some Syrian refugee children in Jordan serve as the sole breadwinners of their family and directly compete with Jordanian adults for work.(3, 36, 37) Additionally, some Syrian children work in agriculture and some girls work in domestic service.(37) UNICEF found that approximately half of all school-aged Syrian refugees in the Jordan Valley were working.(37) NGOs and government officials report that an increasing number of undocumented Syrian refugees, particularly women and children, are working illegally in the Jordanian economy, making them vulnerable to trafficking. Reports also suggest that Syrian refugee children peddle goods inside and outside the Za’atari refugee camp; there are also increasing numbers of Syrian refugee children begging in Jordanian cities.(3)

There is evidence of child marriages and commercial sexual exploitation of Syrian refugee girls residing in the Za’atari refugee camp and in Jordan’s urban areas.(2, 24) Relief agencies estimate that some 500 Syrian girls under age 18 have been legally married in recent years.(25, 38) Limited evidence suggests that sometimes these girls are abandoned, making them vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation. In other cases, girls may be sold into “temporary marriages,” primarily for the purpose of sexual exploitation.(25-27, 39)







There are reports that as many as 15 percent of all sexual abuse cases involving children under age 18 are connected with the sexual exploitation of boys who work or girls forced into commercial sexual exploitation.(29)

Jordanian NGOs and third-country embassies of sending-country workers (e.g., Indonesia) identified underage female third-country domestic workers who had fled from abusive employers to their embassy’s shelter. These girls had traveled on forged passports to work as domestic workers.(1-3) Additionally, there have been reports of Jordanian girls being forced to drop out of school to perform domestic service in their own homes under conditions of forced labor.(2, 8, 20, 40, 41)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Jordan 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 (10, 42) |
| Minimum Age for Hazardous Work | Yes | 18 | Ministerial Order of 2011 (43) |
| List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children | Yes | | Order on dangerous, tiring or health endangering tasks for young persons of 1997, amended in 2004, 2011 (43, 44) |
| Prohibition of Forced Labor | Yes | | Article 13 of the Constitution of Jordan (45) |
| Prohibition of Child Trafficking | Yes | | Human Trafficking Law (40, 46, 47) |
| Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children | Yes | | Article 310 of the Penal Code; Human Trafficking Law (48-50) |
| Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities | Yes | | Penal Code; Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act No. 11 of 1988 (50, 51) |
| Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment | | 18 | Article 5 of the Military Service Law (3, 52) |
| Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service | Yes | 16 | Article 5 of the Military Service Law (3) |
| Compulsory Education Age | Yes | 16 | Article 20 of the Constitution of Jordan (45, 53) |
| Free Public Education | Yes | | Article 20 of the Constitution of Jordan (45, 53) |

Children in the informal sector do not benefit from the minimum age requirements that protect children working in the formal sector.(22) The Government lacks a mechanism to monitor child labor in informal work such as work done by children with family businesses and non-formal work in the agricultural sector.(54)

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 (MOL) Child Labor Unit (CLU) | Coordinate the Government's child labor programs. Incorporate child labor concerns into policy initiatives; propose and draft new legislation on child labor; monitor its scope and prevalence; direct child labor inspections; and ensure the enforcement of child labor laws.(1, 18, 55, 56) |
| MOL's Directorate of Labor Affairs and Inspection | Carry out labor inspections, including child labor violations.(1, 57) Identify cases of child labor through work site visits and refer to relevant officials for service. Register cases into a National Child Labor Database, which allows ministries to monitor and track children as they are identified and referred to services.(58) |

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

| Organization/Agency | Role |
|---|--|
| Minister of Justice's (MOJ) Public Security Directorate's (PSD) Criminal Investigation Unit (CID) | Investigate and prosecute trafficking crimes and violations of Jordan's Penal Code, including allegations of child prostitution.(2, 3, 59) |
| MOJ's National Screening Team | Identify victims of human trafficking.(40) |
| MOL's The Family Protection Department | Enforce laws regarding domestic violence, abuse, and exploitation of children committed by family members.(3) |
| The National Committee for the Prevention of Human Trafficking, Chaired by the Minister of Justice. Headed by the PSD CID | Coordinate the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking.(3, 59, 60) |

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

Labor Law Enforcement

During the reporting period, the Jordanian Parliament added 70 labor inspectors to the existing 120. The Ministry of Labor (MOL) reportedly issued nearly twice as many warnings and more than four times as many violations for child labor infractions as it did in the previous year.(3) The Child Labor Unit reported identifying 753 child laborers at 600 institutions and issuing 265 warnings and 200 violations.(7) In particular, the Inspectorate increased its focus on enforcing adherence to the minimum age for work.(61, 62)

The ILO administered a training-of-trainers workshop for labor inspectors from the MOL and the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority. Participants learned how to undertake labor inspections in accordance with international standards, including those on child labor.(63)

The ILO and Save the Children collaborated with Government officials to develop standard operating procedures for the referral of Syrian refugees to various services.(30)

Employers who violate laws governing child labor can be fined between \$425–\$566 (300–500 Jordanian Dinars). Observers note that monetary penalties are insufficient to deter future infractions, especially given the limited ability of the labor inspectorate to regularly inspect all workplaces and to follow up on cases with known violators.(3)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2013, the MOL and the Public Security Directorate (PSD) established a joint unit of labor inspectors and Criminal Investigation Division police officers to investigate criminal violations against workers, including children. However, the Government did not provide data on investigations or prosecutions of the worst forms child labor during the reporting period.(3)

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

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including in its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

| Coordinating Body | Role & Description |
|---|---|
| The National Committee on Child Labor, led by the MOL | Form new policy and oversee the implementation of current child labor policy, including the National Framework to Combat Child Labor. Coordinate inter-agency responses to child labor for enforcement and referral services.(1, 64) Coordinate responses to cases of child labor among Syrian refugees.(3, 10, 65) |
| The National Center for Family Affairs | Coordinate policy issues involving abused or exploited children.(3) |

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor (cont)

| Coordinating Body | Role & Description |
|---|---|
| Technical Committee on Syrian Refugees under the MOL CLU | Coordinate the country's strategy to address the issue of many Syrian refugee children being vulnerable to work. Established during the reporting period.(3, 56, 66) |
| The National Framework to Combat Child Labor Referral Mechanism | Coordinate referrals between stakeholder agencies which identify child laborers, withdraw them from work, provide them with education and services, and monitor their progress.(61, 67, 68) |

NGOs and other agencies noted the lack of social services and referral capacity by the Ministry of Social Development and by other government agencies to address adequately the extent of child labor in Jordan.(3)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Jordan has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

| Policy | Description |
|--|---|
| National Framework to Combat Child Labor (NFCL)† | Outlines the roles and responsibilities of the key government agencies (MOL, Ministry of Education (MOE), Ministry of Social Development (MOSD), NGOs, and other stakeholders) involved in responding to cases of child labor at the national, governorate, and community levels.(61, 67, 68) Steering committee met three to four times a month during 2013.(69) Is supported by ILO-IPEC who piloted the Framework in Amman, Aqaba, Deir Alla, Irbid, Mafraq, and Rusayfa.(3) |
| Syrian Regional Response Plan* | Facilitates the country's response to the needs of incoming Syrian refugees, a combined effort by the Government and UN.(32) Led by Jordan's MOL, MOE, and MOSD.(56, 66) |
| The National Agenda* | Provides a comprehensive reform framework for political, economic, and social policies, including the restructuring of Jordan's social safety net system.(70) |
| The National Aid Fund* | Provides social protection services to poor families through cash aid, the creation of jobs, and vocational training; also conducts research. Directed by the Ministry of Social Development.(71) |

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

† Policy was launched during the reporting period.

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

In 2013, the Government of Jordan 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 |
|---|--|
| Non-formal education center in the Umm Sayhoun community | Joint MOE and UNESCO program that operates a non-formal education center and provides services to children at risk of child labor in the local tourism industry in the Umm Sayhoun community and in Petra.(16, 56, 72) |
| Moving Towards a Child-Labor Free Jordan | \$2 million USDOL-funded, 4-year project implemented by ILO-IPEC to facilitate the Government of Jordan's implementation of the National Framework to Combat Child Labor.(66) Is developing online case management database for key government and nongovernment stakeholders to document cases of child labor and refer victims to services.(7, 68) In 2013, the project, in collaboration with the Jordan Tourism Development Project and UNICEF, finalized a plan of action to eliminate child labor in Petra's tourism industry.(58, 73) |
| Promising Futures: Reducing Child Labor in Jordan through education and Sustainable Livelihoods | \$4 million USDOL-funded, 4-year project implemented by Save the Children to reduce the number of children subjected to child labor in construction, manufacturing, informal services and storage industries, as well as domestic service.(30) Serves beneficiaries in poverty-stricken areas with high numbers of child refugees, including East Amman, Mafraq, and Zarqa.(3, 74) |
| Jordan Social Protection Enhancement Project* | World Bank-funded, 5-year government program that provides financial and technical assistance to the National Action Fund to assist vulnerable populations.(75) |
| Counter-Trafficking: Awareness and Capacity Building* | USDOS-funded 3-year program (2010–2013) implemented by the IOM that builds the capacity of the MOJ, MOL and the Public Security Directorate to raise awareness and provide direct assistance to victims of human trafficking.(76) |

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

| Program | Description |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Child Begging Assistance campaign‡ | Ministry of Social Development program that implements an identification and services referral system for child beggars. Links children with shelter and education services. Returns children to their parents who must pledge in writing that their children will not return to the street.(62) |
| Child Labor Hotline†† | MOL program that operates a toll-free phone number to receives complaints and tips about the involvement of underage children in labor.(35) |
| Non-Formal Educational Alternatives‡* | MOE program that provides educational alternatives to students who have dropped out of school and a follow-up mechanism for those who want to return to schools. Requires parents to provide a written commitment to maintain their children in school.(30, 62) |

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

† Program was launched during the reporting period.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Jordan.

Although Jordan has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs does not address the extent of the problem including in begging, commercial sexual exploitation, and street work. In addition, while the Government of Jordan has implemented education programs for Syrians, research did not uncover evidence of programs specifically responding to incidences of the forced marriage and commercial sexual exploitation of Syrian girls.-

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 Jordan (Table 9).

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

| Area | Suggested Action | Year(s) Suggested |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Laws | Ensure that relevant child labor laws and regulations apply equally to children working in the formal and informal sector. | 2013 |
| Enforcement | Increase monetary penalties for businesses that violate child labor laws to deter repeat infractions. | 2013 |
| | Create a labor inspection strategy that targets child labor in the informal sector, including work in agriculture and family businesses. | 2013 |
| Government Policies | Universally enforce a child's right to a free education. | 2013 |
| Social Programs | Assess the impact that existing education and social protection programs may have on addressing child labor. | 2010 – 2013 |
| | Institute programs to address the worst form of child labor in domestic service as a result of human trafficking. | 2013 |
| | Institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor in begging, commercial sexual exploitation, and street work. | 2013 |
| | Conduct research and develop interventions on forced marriage and commercial sexual exploitation of Syrian girls. | 2012 – 2013 |
| | Conduct a National Child Labor Survey that includes data on the Syrian refugee population and on children's activities in manufacturing and construction. | 2013 |

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