

Lebanon

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

UNICEF estimated that 45.3 percent of children ages 6 to 14 years in Lebanon were working in 2000.²³⁶⁸ Children are employed in metal works, handicraft and artisan establishments, automobile repair, carpentry, domestic service, commerce, and construction work.²³⁶⁹ According to UNICEF, more than half of all children ages 6 to 14 who work are girls.²³⁷⁰ Working children are more prevalent in poor, rural areas.²³⁷¹ The majority of working children ages 6 to 14 years are found in North and South Lebanon and in the Beqaa region.²³⁷²

Approximately 11 percent of working children are employed in agriculture.²³⁷³ In 2000, a government assessment estimated that 25,000 children ages 7 to 14 were working in tobacco cultivation.²³⁷⁴ The majority of children working in tobacco cultivation are unpaid. Children ages 10-15 years are involved in tobacco drying, harvesting, and planting; children 5 to 10 years work in seedling transplant and leaf drying; and those under 5 years assist with leaf drying.²³⁷⁵ Palestinian refugee children are often forced to leave school at an early age to go to work.²³⁷⁶ It is common for children to earn family income by working in the fields or

²³⁶⁸ UNICEF's estimate derives from a broad definition of children's work represented as the proportion of children 6 to 14 years of age who are currently working (paid or unpaid; inside or outside the home). Illegal and undocumented child labor overlap and are excluded from official government figures. Consequently, the MICS2 survey used a broader scope in order to incorporate these sectors. Child labor below the legal age limit is, for instance, included in the MICS2 survey, but not in official figures. See UNICEF, *Preliminary Report on the Multiple Cluster Survey On the Situation of Children in Lebanon*, prepared by Government of Lebanon: Central Bureau of Statistics, February 2001, 11, 33; available from <http://childinfo.org/MICS2/newreports/lebanon/lebanon.pdf>. For more information on the definition of working children, please see the section in the front of the report entitled Statistical Definitions of Working Children.

²³⁶⁹ Partners for Development- Civil Group, *Gender, Education and Child Labour in Lebanon*, ILO, Geneva, 2004, 4, 8, 9, 16, 82; available from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/publ/download/gender_edu_lebanon_2004_en.pdf. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Lebanon*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27932.htm>. ECPAT International, *Lebanon*, in ECPAT International, [database online] [cited May 27, 2004]; available from http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/index.asp. See also ILO-IPEC, *Lebanon: Child Labour on Tobacco Plantations: A Rapid Assessment*, Geneva, May 2002, 9; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simpoc/lebanon/ra/tobacco.pdf>.

²³⁷⁰ UNICEF, *Preliminary Report on the Multiple Cluster Survey*, Table 17.

²³⁷¹ ILO-IPEC, *Child Labour on Tobacco Plantations: A Rapid Assessment*, 8.

²³⁷² UNICEF, *Preliminary Report on the Multiple Cluster Survey*, Table 17. According to a report conducted by UNICEF entitled "State of the Children in Lebanon 2000," child labor is most prevalent in North Lebanon for children ages 10 to 18 years. See Partners for Development, *Gender, Education & Child Labor in Lebanon: A Concept Paper*, Draft 4, submitted to ILO, Beirut, November 28, 2003, 13.

²³⁷³ ILO-IPEC, *Child Labour on Tobacco Plantations: A Rapid Assessment*, 9.

²³⁷⁴ The survey was conducted by the Consultation and Research Institute in Lebanon with the support of the ILO between July and September 2000. See *Ibid.*, viii, 7-8.

²³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, viii.

²³⁷⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Lebanon*, Section 5.

begging in the streets.²³⁷⁷ Non-Lebanese children constitute 10 to 20 percent of children working in the formal sector, but make up a larger share of children working on the street.²³⁷⁸ There have been reported cases of child prostitution and other situations that amount to forced labor.²³⁷⁹ Although Lebanon is a destination country for women trafficked from Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union for the purposes of involuntary domestic servitude and prostitution, there are no official government reports of child trafficking in the country.²³⁸⁰

Education is free and compulsory through the age of 12.²³⁸¹ Despite this legislation, in practice, education is not free.²³⁸² In the 2003-2004 school year, public school students were not exempted from paying registration fees as they had been the year before.²³⁸³ In addition, public schools reportedly lack proper facilities, equipment, and trained teachers.²³⁸⁴ Refugees are often unable to afford the tuition costs, and are compelled to withdraw their children from school and send them to work.²³⁸⁵ In 2001, the gross primary enrollment rate was 102.8 percent, (104.6 percent for boys and 100.9 percent for girls), and the net primary enrollment rate was 89.8 percent (90.1 percent for boys and 89.4 percent for girls).²³⁸⁶ Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. Recent primary school attendance statistics are not available for Lebanon. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.²³⁸⁷ Although the majority of the children working in tobacco cultivation enroll in elementary school, work-related absenteeism negatively affects these

²³⁷⁷ Ibid.

²³⁷⁸ Partners for Development, *Gender, Education & Child Labor in Lebanon*, 22. Many street children are Syrian nationals and Palestinian refugees. According to UN estimates, approximately 18 percent of street children in Lebanon are Palestinian. The phenomenon of street children is centered primarily in Mount Lebanon and Beirut. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports-2003: Lebanon*, Section 5. See also U.S. Embassy- Beirut official, personal communication, to USDOL official, March 29, 2004.

²³⁷⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Lebanon*, Sections 5 and 6c. See also The Protection Project, "Lebanon," in *Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children: A Country-by-Country Report on a Contemporary Form of Slavery* Washington, D.C., 2002; available from http://www.protectionproject.org/human_rights/countryreport/lebanon.htm. cases of street children as young as 12 being forced into prostitution. Street prostitution is most apparent in Maameltein, Jounieh, Dora, and Corniche al-Manara. See ECPAT International, *Lebanon*, Child Prostitution.

²³⁸⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Lebanon*, Washington, D.C., June 14, 2004; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2004/33195.htm>.

²³⁸¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Lebanon*, Section 5.

²³⁸² Ibid. Lebanon has a unique education system made up of government and private institutions, to which the government pays partial fees. Primary school is considered free in official State schools or State-funded private institutions. However, in these "free" schools students are responsible for registration and other fees. For a more detailed discussion, see UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Second Periodic Reports of States Parties due in 1998*, CRC/C/70/Add.8, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Addendum: Lebanon, Geneva, September 2000, Section 5.2.

²³⁸³ U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *unclassified telegram no. 3922*, August 24, 2004.

²³⁸⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Lebanon*, Section 5.

²³⁸⁵ Lebanese NGO Forum, *Problems Encountered by Refugees*, [online] [cited May 27, 2004]; available from <http://www.lnf.org.lb/migrationnetwork/ngo2.html>. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Lebanon*, Section 5.

²³⁸⁶ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2004. Gross enrollment rates greater than 100 percent indicate discrepancies between the estimates of school-age population and reported enrollment data.

²³⁸⁷ For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

children's education and contributes to high dropout rates, preventing many from reaching the secondary level.²³⁸⁸

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Code of 1996 sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years.²³⁸⁹ The Labor Code makes a distinction between children ages 13 and younger, and children ages 14 to 17. In the first group, children are prohibited from engaging in any kind of work. In the second group, children may be employed under special conditions relating to matters such as working hours and conditions, and type of work.²³⁹⁰ In addition, it is illegal to employ a child under the age of 15 in industrial enterprises that are harmful or detrimental to their health, or to hire youth below the age of 16 in dangerous environments that threaten their life, health or morals.²³⁹¹

There are no laws specifically prohibiting trafficking; however, abduction of a person under the age of 18 for purposes of exploitation is prohibited and punishable by up to 3 years imprisonment and a fine.²³⁹² The law allows for the establishment of licensed brothels in certain areas, providing that women working in such establishments are at least 21 years old and undergo regular medical examinations.²³⁹³ The Ministry of Labor (MOL) is responsible for the enforcement of child labor laws, but the Ministry lacks adequate resources to be effective.²³⁹⁴ However, the MOL currently has 80 labor inspectors nationwide, an increase from 75 in the previous year.²³⁹⁵ In 2004, the government caught and broke up three child prostitution rings and the perpetrators were prosecuted.²³⁹⁶

²³⁸⁸ ILO-IPEC, *Child Labour on Tobacco Plantations: A Rapid Assessment*, viii.

²³⁸⁹ Government of Lebanon, *Code du Travail- Travail des enfants*, Loi no 536, (July 24, 1996); available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/txt/F93LBN01.htm#t1c2>.

²³⁹⁰ A 1999 amendment to the Labor Code forbids the employment of children under the age of 18 for more than 6 hours per day. The amendment also requires a 13-hour period of rest between workdays. In addition, youths under the age of 18 must be given an hour break after a 4-hour period of labor. An employer may not employ these youths between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Adolescents ages 14 to 18 must pass a medical examination to ensure that they can undertake the work for which they are to be engaged, and the prospective employer must request the child's identity card to verify his or her age. See Government of Lebanon, *Modifiant les dispositions des articles 23 et 25 du Code du travail*, (June 14, 1999); available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/scripts/natlexcgi.exe?lang=E>.

²³⁹¹ *Code du Travail*. These types of work include underground mines and quarries, manufacturing of alcohol, chemicals, explosives, asphalt, work in tanneries or with machinery.

²³⁹² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Lebanon*, Section 6f. See also ECPAT International, *Lebanon*, Protection.

²³⁹³ In practice, most prostitution is illegal. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Lebanon*, Section 5.

²³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Section 6d. See also U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *unclassified telegram no. 3065*, August 11, 2003.

²³⁹⁵ U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *unclassified telegram no. 3922*.

²³⁹⁶ See U.S. Embassy- Beirut official, personal communication, to USDOL official, May 27, 2005.

Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Lebanon has taken steps to improve child labor inspection and monitoring mechanisms. For the first time since its establishment in 2001, the Unit for Combating Child Labor began addressing child labor complaints this year and referring them to the appropriate agencies for action. The

MOL also worked with the ILO to hold a training seminar for labor inspectors on child labor.²³⁹⁷ In 2004, the government began participating in a new USD 3 million ILO-IPEC project funded by USDOL to help support a Timebound program to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.²³⁹⁸ The MOL continues its collaboration with ILO-IPEC on child labor projects in Nabatiyah, Tripoli, Sin el Fil, Bourj Hammud, and Ain el-Hilweh (the largest Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon). These programs are aimed at the prevention, rehabilitation, and withdrawal of children from the worst forms of child labor.²³⁹⁹ In 2004, the government began participating in a new USD 8 million sub-regional project funded by USDOL to combat child labor through education in Lebanon and Yemen.²⁴⁰⁰

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138	6/10/2003	✓
Ratified Convention 182	9/11/2001	✓
ILO-IPEC Member		✓
National Plan for Children		✓
National Child Labor Action Plan		
Sector Action Plan		

Recently, the Government has taken steps to counter trafficking in persons, including requiring employers to provide higher-value insurance to cover the repatriation expenses of trafficking victims and publishing booklets and brochures explaining the regulations governing migrant workers, their rights and recourses.²⁴⁰¹ The Surete Generale (a combination immigration and security services agency) also signed a memorandum of understanding with the CARITAS Migrants' Center and the International Catholic Migration Commission to cooperate on a USD 660,000 U.S. Government-funded safe house project for the protection of trafficking victims, and immediately began referring cases to CARITAS. In January 2004, in an effort to combat the trafficking of women into situations of forced domestic labor, the government placed a prohibition on advertisements for foreign domestic workers.²⁴⁰² In March 2004, the Government began a two-year training program to sensitize judges to the issue of trafficking and the implementation of related laws.²⁴⁰³

The World Bank is supporting a USD 56.6 million project designed to enhance the capacity of the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sport, intended to benefit 150,000 primary and secondary students and

²³⁹⁷ U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *unclassified telegram no. 3922*.

²³⁹⁸ U.S. Department of Labor, *United States Provides over \$110 Million in Grants to Fight Exploitive Child Labor Around the World*, press release, Washington, DC, October 1, 2004.

²³⁹⁹ U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *unclassified telegram no. 3065, 4*.

²⁴⁰⁰ U.S. Department of Labor, *United States Provides over \$110 Million in Grants*.

²⁴⁰¹ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Lebanon*.

²⁴⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁴⁰³ The training was provided with financial and technical assistance from the U.S. Department of State. See U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *unclassified telegram no. 1342*, March 26, 2004.

20,000 teachers.²⁴⁰⁴ During the year, the Ministry of Interior continued its efforts aimed at raising awareness on the issue of working street children. Ongoing activities include training police on approaching working street children; preparing for a study on the extent of the problem; and airing a public television ad campaign on the issue.²⁴⁰⁵

²⁴⁰⁴ This 5-year program, which aims to benefit 20,000 primary and secondary students through school construction, and 130,000 secondary students through the introduction of new technology, and in-service teacher training, began in 2000 and is set close at the end of 2005. See World Bank, *World Bank Approves Loan to Lebanon for General Education*, press release, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2000; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20017568~menuPK:34466~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>. See also World Bank, *General Education Project*, in Projects Database, [online] [cited May 27, 2004]; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=104231&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P045174>.

²⁴⁰⁵ U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *unclassified telegram no. 3065*, 3. Relevant police authorities worked with a British trainer on how to approach street children. The ad campaign is aimed at preparing the public on how to deal with street children. See U.S. Embassy- Beirut official, personal communication to USDOL official, March 29, 2004. See also U.S. Embassy- Beirut, *unclassified telegram no. 3922*.