

Bahrain

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 years in Bahrain are unavailable.³⁰⁸ Children reportedly work in family businesses and in small numbers doing odd jobs in the Manama Central Market.³⁰⁹

The Constitution guarantees free and compulsory primary education. Education for citizens is free until age 15.³¹⁰ In 2001, the gross primary enrollment rate was 98.0 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 91.0 percent.³¹¹ 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. The net primary attendance rate from 1999-2002 was 85 percent for boys and 84.0 percent for girls.³¹² In 2000, 102.1 percent of children in primary school reached grade five.³¹³

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Law of 1976 sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years.³¹⁴ Under the Labor Law, juveniles ages 14 to 16 years may not be employed in hazardous conditions, at night, or for more than 6 hours per day.³¹⁵ The Ministry of Labor has inspectors to enforce legislation in the industrial sector, and the U.S. Department of State reported that such inspections are effective.³¹⁶ Labor laws do not apply to child

³⁰⁸ LABORSTAT, 1A- Total and economically active population, by age group (Thousands) [Database], Geneva, 2004; available from <http://laborsta.ilo.org>.

³⁰⁹ U.S. Embassy- Manama Official, email communication to USDOL Official, May 17, 2004. See also U.S. Embassy- Manama Official, electronic communication to USDOL official, June 12, 2005.

³¹⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Bahrain*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27925.htm>. Article 7 of the Constitution reads that the early stages of education are free and compulsory as specified and provided by law. Early stages are, therefore, not defined. See *Constitution of the State of Bahrain*, (February 14, 2002); available from http://www.oefre.unibe.ch/law/icl/ba00000_.html.

³¹¹ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2003. For an explanation of gross primary enrollment and/or attendance rates that are greater than 100 percent, please see the definitions of gross primary enrollment rate and gross primary attendance rate in the glossary of this report.

³¹² *At a glance: Bahrain*, UNICEF, [online] 2003 [cited May 18, 2004]; available from http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/bahrain_statistics.html.

³¹³ World Bank, *World Development Indications 2003*.

³¹⁴ *The Labour Law for the Private Sector, 1976: The Employment of Juveniles*; available from <http://www.bahmolsa.com/english/chap8.htm>.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.* Provisions of this law do not apply to children employed in family businesses. See also U.S. Embassy- Manama, *unclassified telegram no. 3448*, October 2001.

³¹⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Bahrain*, Section 6d. See also Ambassador to the U.S. Khalifa Ali Al-Khalifa, Response to Information Request, USDOL official, August 26, 2003. While these inspections are considered sufficient for the child labor problem in this sector, the informal sector is not governed by inspections or enforcement mechanisms of any kind. See U.S. Embassy- Manama Official, email communication, May 17, 2004. See also American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations, *Labor Rights and Child Labor Rights in Bahrain*, December 18, 2003. The Ministry of Social Affairs' Woman and Family Section is also responsible for the application of conventions related to women and children. See *Social Development:*

domestic workers.³¹⁷ Forced or compulsory labor is prohibited by the Constitution.³¹⁸ Prostitution is illegal under the Penal Code, and the forced prostitution of a child younger than 18 years of age is punishable by up to 10 years imprisonment.³¹⁹ While there is no compulsory military service in Bahrain, juveniles can be recruited into the Bahraini Defense Force from the age of 17 years.³²⁰ According to the Constitution, the government is responsible for protection of children from exploitation and neglect, as well as assisting their physical, moral, and intellectual growth.³²¹

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

The government provides vocational training programs for preparatory schools (grades 7-9),³²² and funds the Child Care Home for children whose parents can no longer provide for them.³²³

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138		
Ratified Convention 182	3/23/2001	✓
ILO-IPEC Member		
National Plan for Children		
National Child Labor Action Plan		
Sector Action Plan		

The Woman and Family Section, Ministry of Social Affairs, [online] 2004 [cited May 17, 2004]; available from <http://www.bah-molsa.com/english/prog2a3.htm>.

³¹⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Bahrain*, Section 6c. Foreigners make up two-thirds of the workforce. There have been reports of illegal underage domestic workers, who have entered the country with false documents indicating they were adults. Because domestic labor falls outside the jurisdiction of the inspection mechanisms currently in place to enforce labor laws that were designed to protect Bahraini citizens, inspectors do not monitor or control working conditions of foreign child domestic workers. See U.S. Embassy- Manama Official, email communication, May 17, 2004.

³¹⁸ *Constitution of Bahrain*, Article 13(c).

³¹⁹ See Penal Code of Bahrain, Articles 324-329, as cited in Protection Project, "Bahrain," in *Human Rights Report on Trafficking of Persons, Especially Women and Children* Washington, D.C., March 2002; available from <http://209.190.246.239/ver2/cr/Bahrain.pdf>. See also ECPAT International, *Bahrain*, [database online] 2004 [cited May 21, 2004]; available from http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/index.asp.

³²⁰ Cadets of 15 years of age can be recruited for positions of non-commissioned officers, technicians, and specialized personnel. See UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of State Parties Due in 1994*, CRC/C/11/Add.24, prepared by Government of Bahrain, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, July 23, 2001, para. 302; available from http://www.bayefsky.com/reports/bahrain_crc_c_11_add.24_2000.pdf.

³²¹ *Constitution of Bahrain*, Article 5a.

³²² UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties: Bahrain*, paragraph 263.

³²³ *Child Care Home*, Ministry of Social Affairs, [online] 2004 [cited May 18, 2004]; available from <http://www.bah-molsa.com/english/prog2b-2.htm>.