

# Morocco

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

The Moroccan Statistics Directorate estimated that 11.1 percent of children ages 7 to 14 years in Morocco were working in 2000.<sup>2731</sup> The majority of working children can be found in rural areas in the agricultural sector.<sup>2732</sup> Children in rural areas are reportedly six times more likely to be working than those in urban areas.<sup>2733</sup> Children also work in informal textile, carpet, and other manufacturing.<sup>2734</sup> An estimated 36,000 children work as junior artisans in the handicraft industry, many of them working as apprentices before they reach 12 years of age and under substandard health and safety conditions.<sup>2735</sup>

A 2001 study found that street children in Morocco engage in diverse forms of work including selling cigarettes, begging, shining shoes, and other miscellaneous occupations.<sup>2736</sup> In urban areas, girls can be found working as domestic servants, often in situations of unregulated “adoptive servitude.”<sup>2737</sup> In these situations, girls from rural areas are trafficked, “sold” by their parents, and “adopted” by wealthy urban families to work in their homes.<sup>2738</sup> Girls and boys working as domestic servants and street vendors are

---

<sup>2731</sup> See Understanding Children's Work (UCW), *Understanding Children's Work in Morocco*, prepared by World Bank, pursuant to Report prepared for the UCW Project, a research co-operation initiative of the, March 2003, 18; available from [http://www.ucw-project.org/pdf/publications/report\\_morocco\\_draft.pdf](http://www.ucw-project.org/pdf/publications/report_morocco_draft.pdf).

<sup>2732</sup> Bureau of Statistics Government of Morocco, *Emploi et Chomage- 2002*, Casablanca, 2002. A Ministry of Finance and Planning labor force study by the Statistics Directorate concluded that nearly 9 out of 10 child workers are found in rural areas, and 84 percent of these are engaged in farm work. See U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*, October 2002. See also U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0884*, August 25, 2004.

<sup>2733</sup> U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0884*.

<sup>2734</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Morocco*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27934.htm>. UNICEF estimates that 5,000 to 10,000 children work in the artisan carpet industry, and it is estimated that up to 3,000 are producing carpets for export. A Ministry of Employment and ILO-IPEC investigation found that 98 percent of children in this sector are under the age of 13. See also U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*.

<sup>2735</sup> U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0884*. See also U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Morocco*, Section 6d.

<sup>2736</sup> Kingdom of Morocco, Ministry in Charge of the Condition of Women, the Protection of the Family, Childhood, and the Integration of the Handicapped, *Synthèse d'une étude préliminaire sur les enfants de la rue*, Rabat, October 2001.

<sup>2737</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Morocco*, Section 5. There are an estimated 36,000 child maids in Morocco, close to 23,000 of whom are in Casablanca, and 59 percent of whom are under age 15. See U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0884*.

<sup>2738</sup> U.S. Consulate- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*, October 2001. U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report - 2004: Morocco*, Washington, D.C., June 14, 2004; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2004/33195.htm>. UNICEF estimates the average age of all child maids was less than 11 years old and the Morocco Statistics Directorate estimates that child maids work on average 67 hours per week. See U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*. Of the estimated 36,000 child maids in Morocco, 22,940 are estimated to be working in Casablanca, 80 percent are estimated to be illiterate and 59 percent are under 15 years old. See U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0884*. A 2002 NGO report also indicates that close to one third of a sample of single mothers in Casablanca were child maids under the age of 15. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Morocco*, Section 5.

increasingly targets of child sex tourism, particularly in the cities of Marrakech and Casablanca.<sup>2739</sup> Use of minors as prostitutes for sex tourists from Europe and the Gulf region has occurred in the village of El Hajeb near Meknes.<sup>2740</sup> Children are also “rented” out by their parents to other adults to beg.<sup>2741</sup>

As a result of a school attendance act adopted in January 2000, education is free and compulsory for children ages 6 to 15 years.<sup>2742</sup> In 2001, the gross primary enrollment rate was 107.0 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 88.4 percent.<sup>2743</sup> 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 Morocco. A recent government study indicated, however, that 800,000 children under the age of 14 did not attend school.<sup>2744</sup> Morocco has high dropout rates, particularly for rural girls who often do not complete primary school.<sup>2745</sup> In 2004, the government began to take steps to enforce the 2000 school attendance law.<sup>2746</sup>

### **Child Labor Laws and Enforcement**

Morocco has recently updated legislation relating to child labor. A new labor code was published in the Official Bulletin on December 8, 2003 and went into effect on June 7, 2004.<sup>2747</sup> The new Labor Code raises the minimum age for employment from 12 to 15 years.<sup>2748</sup> The minimum age restriction applies to the industrial, commercial, and agricultural sectors and also extends to children working in apprenticeships and family enterprises.<sup>2749</sup> According to the Labor Code, children under the age of 16 are prohibited from working more than 10 hours per day, including at least a 1 hour break.<sup>2750</sup> Children under the age of 18 are

---

<sup>2739</sup> The prostitution of boys is reportedly a growing problem in Morocco. See UNICEF, *Profiting from Abuse: An investigation into the sexual exploitation of our children*, New York, November 2001, 11; available from [http://www.unicef.org/publications/pub\\_profiting\\_en.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/pub_profiting_en.pdf). See also Dr. Najat M'jid, "Rapport sur la situation de l'exploitation sexuelle des enfants dans la région MENA" (paper presented at the Arab-African Forum against Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Rabat, Morocco, October 26, 2001); available from [http://www.unicef.org/events/yokohama/background8.html#\\_edn1](http://www.unicef.org/events/yokohama/background8.html#_edn1). See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Morocco*, Section, 6f.

<sup>2740</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Morocco*, Section 6f.

<sup>2741</sup> U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0950*, September 15, 2004. Children are reportedly rented out for as little as USD 5.55 per week.

<sup>2742</sup> U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0884*. See also U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1257*, August 3, 2003.

<sup>2743</sup> 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.

<sup>2744</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Morocco*, Section 5.

<sup>2745</sup> U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0884*.

<sup>2746</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2747</sup> *Law No. 65-99 relative to the Labor Code*, (December 8, 2003), as cited in the Bulletin Officiel. See also Management Systems International, *Technical Progress Report. Project Adros. Combatting Child Labor Through Education in Morocco*, Rabat, March 31, 2004, 3. See also U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0884*.

<sup>2748</sup> *Labor Code*, Article 143. See also U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0884*.

<sup>2749</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Morocco*, Section 6d.

<sup>2750</sup> U.S. Consulate- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*.

not permitted to work in hazardous occupations or at night between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. in non-agricultural work.<sup>2751</sup> The Labor Code also prohibits children under 18 from working in stone quarries and mines<sup>2752</sup> and from performing activities that pose an extreme danger to them, exceed their capacities, or result in the breach of public morals.<sup>2753</sup>

The Labor Code prohibits forced or compulsory labor including by children, but these provisions have been difficult to enforce in the informal sector and private homes where most of this labor occurs.<sup>2754</sup> A 1993 law provides protection for abandoned children in Morocco. According to this law, persons younger than 18 and unable to support themselves economically are identified as abandoned if their parents are unknown, unable to be located, or incompetent of assuming a parental role.<sup>2755</sup> These children are then considered eligible for adoption, and adoptive parents are entitled to a stipend from the government. There has been some concern that girls are being fostered at higher rates than boys, and that some girls are being adopted into circumstances equivalent to forced domestic servitude.<sup>2756</sup> The new Family Code, which was published and took effect in February 2004, will protect and give rights to illegitimate and abandoned children who have often found themselves in desperate situations leading to child labor.<sup>2757</sup>

The prostitution of children, corruption of minors, and involvement of children in pornography are prohibited under the Criminal Code.<sup>2758</sup> Soliciting for the purposes of prostitution, as well as aiding, protecting, or profiting from the prostitution of others, are also banned by the Criminal Code.<sup>2759</sup> In December 2003, Parliament changed the Code to make child sexual abuse a crime and to increase penalties against those who hire children under age 18 for purposes of sexual exploitation.<sup>2760</sup>

---

<sup>2751</sup> Hazardous work includes work that involves operating heavy machinery and exposure to toxic materials or emissions. *Ibid.* Children are also prohibited from performing night work in agriculture between 8:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m. See *Labor Code*, Article 172.

<sup>2752</sup> *Labor Code*, Article 179.

<sup>2753</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 180.

<sup>2754</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Morocco*. Under the new Labor Code, Ministry of Labor inspectors are now able to charge individuals who recruit children under age 15 for work in the informal sector or domestic service, and courts can take action once two witnesses file a complaint. But few employers of child maids have been prosecuted. See U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0884*.

<sup>2755</sup> Under this “*kafala*” system, foster parents assume the same entitlements as birth parents; however, foster children do not have the same rights as legitimate children. See UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties: Morocco, Concluding observations*, CRC/C/15/Add.211, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, July 2003, paras. 18-19.

<sup>2756</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Summary Record of the 882nd Meeting, Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties (continued): Second Periodic Report of Morocco (continued)*, CRC/C/SR/.882, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, July 16, 2003, para. 43; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/8e3b9ac683d8dd0ac1256d7a004a2b52/\\$FILE/G0342258.pdf](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/8e3b9ac683d8dd0ac1256d7a004a2b52/$FILE/G0342258.pdf).

<sup>2757</sup> Management Systems International, *Project Adros, Technical Progress Report March 2004*, 3-4.

<sup>2758</sup> *Criminal Code of Morocco*, as cited in The Protection Project Legal Library, [database online] [cited October 19, 2004], Articles 497-504; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/MOROCCO.pdf>.

<sup>2759</sup> The Protection Project, “Morocco,” 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://209.190.246.239/ver2/cr/Morocco.pdf>.

In 2003, the Immigration and Emigration Act came into effect, prohibiting trafficking of persons through the levying of strict fines and prison sentences against individuals involved in or failing to prevent trafficking in persons, including government officials.<sup>2761</sup> There are several statutes under which traffickers can be prosecuted, including laws on kidnapping, forced prostitution, and coercion.<sup>2762</sup> Law enforcement agencies actively investigate, prosecute, and convict traffickers.<sup>2763</sup> In November 2003, King Mohammed VI instructed the Ministry of Interior to form a new anti-smuggling/human trafficking agency to prevent trafficking in persons.<sup>2764</sup> In December 2003, Morocco signed an agreement with Spain for the repatriation of Moroccan minors living on Spanish soil.<sup>2765</sup>

The Ministry of Employment, Social Affairs, and Solidarity is responsible for implementing and enforcing child labor laws and regulations.<sup>2766</sup> The Labor Code provides for legal sanctions against employers who recruit children under the age of 15.<sup>2767</sup> Legal remedies to enforce child labor laws include criminal penalties, civil fines, and withdrawal or suspension of one or more civil, national, or family rights, including denial of residence for a period of 5 to 10 years.<sup>2768</sup> The new labor Code and amendments allow inspectors and the police to bring charges against employers of children under age 15.<sup>2769</sup> To carry out these new responsibilities, the Ministry of Employment announced in June 2004 that it would hire and train an

---

<sup>2760</sup> U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0884*. The Criminal Code revisions approved by Parliament in January 2004 raised penalties against those involved in child abuse, child pornography, child sex tourism and abusive child labor. Under Criminal Code Article 497 (revised), anyone who incites a minor under age 18 to commit a vice or who contributes to the corruption of a minor is subject to a prison sentence of 2 to 10 years, and a fine of up to 200,000 dirhams (USD 21,739). The same penalties apply in cases where an attempt was made to commit such offenses or when part of the offense was committed outside Morocco. See U.S. Consulate-Casablanca, electronic communication to USDOL official, March 25, 2004.

<sup>2761</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report-2003: Morocco*, Washington, D.C., June 11, 2003; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2003/21273.htm>. This law went into effect on November 20, 2003 as Law 02-03. See U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0066*, December 30, 2003. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Morocco*, Section 6f.

<sup>2762</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2003: Morocco*. According to Articles 472-478 of the Penal Code, any person who uses violence, threats, or fraud to abduct (or attempt to abduct) a minor under 18 years of age, or facilitate the abduction of a minor may be imprisoned for up to 5 to 10 years. If the minor is under the age of 12, the sentence is doubled, from 10 to 20 years. See UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties: Morocco, Second periodic reports of States parties due in 2000*, CRC/C/93/Add.3, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, February 12, 2003, para. 665.

<sup>2763</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2003: Morocco*.

<sup>2764</sup> See U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0347*, March 30, 2004.

<sup>2765</sup> U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0014*, January 6, 2004.

<sup>2766</sup> U.S. Consulate- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*.

<sup>2767</sup> Employers who hire children under age 15 may be punished with a fine of 25,000 to 30,000 dirhams (USD 2,759 to 3,311). See *Labor Code*, Article 151. In the past, legal penalties were only applied in cases in which child workers had lodged a complaint of abuse or maltreatment against an employer. See ILO, UNICEF, and World Bank, *Understanding Children's Work in Morocco*, prepared by Inter-Agency Research Cooperation Initiative, March 2003, 38; available from [http://www.ucw-project.org/pdf/publications/report\\_morocco\\_draft.pdf](http://www.ucw-project.org/pdf/publications/report_morocco_draft.pdf).

<sup>2768</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports: Morocco*, para. 647.

<sup>2769</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Morocco*, Section 6d.

additional 100 inspectors by January 1, 2005.<sup>2770</sup> Labor inspectors can now take action against abusive employers of child maids under 15, and courts can take action once two witnesses file a complaint, but few employers of child maids have been prosecuted.<sup>2771</sup>

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

The Government of Morocco has established national and sectoral action plans to combat child labor, especially its worst forms.<sup>2772</sup> The focus of the national plan includes improving implementation and raising awareness of child labor laws, and improving basic education.<sup>2773</sup> Sectoral plans target children in agriculture and herding, the industrial sector (carpets and stitching), metal and auto work, construction, the hospitality industry, and food production, as well as children working in the informal sector.

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138	1/06/2000	✓
Ratified Convention 182	1/26/2001	✓
ILO-IPEC Member		✓
National Plan for Children		
National Child Labor Action Plan		✓
Sector Action Plan (agriculture and herding, industry [carpets and stitching], metal and auto work, construction, the hospitality industry, food production, and the informal sector)		✓

In 2004, with the adoption of the new Labor Code, the Ministry of Handicrafts and Social Economy announced its intention to enforce prohibitions against hiring apprentices under the age of 15, and to work with the Ministry of National Education, ILO-IPEC and UNICEF to provide work-study programs for older working adolescents interested in returning to school.<sup>2774</sup> In regard to human trafficking, the government's policy involves investigating and dismantling human smuggling rings, funneling economic development assistance to regions of Morocco where persons are recruited, and raising alerts to the dangers of illegal migration.<sup>2775</sup> In 2004, with the sponsorship of Princess Lalla Meryem, the National Observatory of Children's Rights began a national awareness raising campaign regarding the sexual exploitation of children.<sup>2776</sup> The government also provides in-kind support to NGOs offering services to victims of trafficking.<sup>2777</sup>

The Government of Morocco is participating in two USDOL-funded projects to eliminate child labor and provide educational opportunities for working children. The first USDOL-funded project includes a USD 3 million ADROS project executed by Management Systems International that aims to eliminate the practice of selling and hiring child domestic workers and to create educational opportunities for child laborers and

<sup>2770</sup> U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0884*.

<sup>2771</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2772</sup> U.S. Consulate- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*. See also Kingdom of Morocco, *Plans national et sectoriels d'action de la lutte contre le travail des enfants au Maroc*, October 1999.

<sup>2773</sup> Kingdom of Morocco, *Plans national et sectoriels d'action*, 5-6.

<sup>2774</sup> U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0884*. The work study programs are being implemented in Fez. Out of an estimated 36,000 junior artisans, 6,700 adolescents have been enrolled.

<sup>2775</sup> U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0363*, April 5, 2004. Areas of high recruitment include Beni Mellal, Settat, Khouribga, Kelaat des Sraghna, and Taounate.

<sup>2776</sup> Management Systems International, *Project Adros, Technical Progress Report March 2004*, 7.

<sup>2777</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Morocco*, Section 6f.

those vulnerable to child labor.<sup>2778</sup> The second USDOL-funded project in the amount of USD 2 million is an ILO-IPEC child labor project in Morocco, which aims to strengthen national efforts against the worst forms of child labor in Morocco and to remove and prevent children from work in rural areas of the country.<sup>2779</sup>

The government has taken steps to improve the quality of primary education by reforming the curriculum, training and hiring more teachers, and assigning teachers to their hometowns to reduce absenteeism.<sup>2780</sup> The Ministry of National Education and Youth (MNEY) also implements programs for out-of-school children under its Non-Formal Education Program.<sup>2781</sup> In February 2004, the Directorate of Non-Formal Education launched its new strategy that aims to progressively increase access to education programs for children who have either dropped out or never attended school.<sup>2782</sup> The MNEY's Non-formal Education Program is working in close collaboration with USDOL's ADROS Child Labor Education Initiative Project to combat the illegal employment of girls under age 15 as domestics, to provide them with remedial educational and vocational training, and to reinsert girls ages 7 to 11 into regular school.<sup>2783</sup>

In June 2003, MNEY announced that the government was increasing the number of schools and classrooms.<sup>2784</sup> In September 2003, the government initiated coursework in the Berber language in 317 primary schools serving primarily a Berber population, with plans to expand the program throughout the country by 2008 should it result in reduced drop-out rates among such children.<sup>2785</sup> The Government of Morocco continues to work with international organizations and local partners to increase school attendance. MNEY is implementing a World Bank-funded program to strengthen institutional capacity, improve teaching quality, and build or rehabilitate rural schools.<sup>2786</sup> In March 2004, the Directorate of

---

<sup>2778</sup> USDOL, *Letter of Agreement between the U.S. Department of Labor, the Moroccan Ministry of National Education, and the Moroccan Ministry of Employment, Vocational Training, Social Development and Solidarity Regarding the U.S. Department of Labor Child Labor Education Initiative*, Washington, D.C., January 2003.

<sup>2779</sup> The project works in the World Bank, *Documents and Reports: Morocco - Education Reform Support Project*, project information document, PID10151, Rabat, March 6, 2001; available from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDS\\_IBank\\_Servlet?pcont=details&eid=000094946\\_01041102152241](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDS_IBank_Servlet?pcont=details&eid=000094946_01041102152241). The Gharb region near Rabat and the Massa-Sousa-Daraa region in the environs of Agadir. See U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0884*.

<sup>2780</sup> U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*. The teacher-student ratio is still high with 52.5 students per class in urban schools and 38.2 in rural schools. See U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*.

<sup>2781</sup> Since its inception in 1997, the Ministry's non-formal education program has given remedial instruction to 164,076 children and is working to adapt the curriculum to make it more relevant to the needs of older students. See U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1257*.

<sup>2782</sup> The Directorate aims to reach 152,000 children in the 2004/05 academic year, and to progressively increase the number to 200,000 per year between 2007 and 2010. See Management Systems International, *Project Adros, Technical Progress Report March 2004*, 7. By June 2004, the Directorate had enrolled 128,331 children in remedial and formal education programs. See U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0884*.

<sup>2783</sup> U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 0331*, March 26, 2004.

<sup>2784</sup> U.S. Embassy Morocco official, Electronic communication to USDOL official, June 12, 2003. In 2003 the Ministry of Education planned to open 32 new primary schools and 50 junior highs. Another 380 schools are being built in poor neighborhoods. See U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1257*.

<sup>2785</sup> U.S. Consulate - Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1257*.

<sup>2786</sup> World Bank, *Morocco - Education Reform Support Project*, project information document, [cited October 22, 2004].

Literacy of the State Secretariat in Charge of Literacy and Non-Formal Education held a forum on literacy with UNESCO to review actions and discuss future strategy to eradicate illiteracy by 2015.<sup>2787</sup>

---

<sup>2787</sup> Management Systems International, *Project Adros, Technical Progress Report March 2004*, 6. Budget allocations for combating illiteracy have been increased by 100 percent since 1999.