

# Plight of Iran's working children

## Understanding challenges, finding solutions



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Staff writer

**EXCLUSIVE**

The issue of child labor has always been a contentious one, with governments and organizations worldwide striving to eradicate it. In Iran, authorities have taken steps to address the problem of working and street children. However, despite the efforts made, the problem persists, and thousands of children are identified as part of the workforce.

### Empowerment frameworks

The Iranian government has allocated a special fund to the Welfare Organization, which is responsible for addressing the concerns of working and street children. However, the fund is not enough to fulfill the needs of the 14,500 working children that are identified in the country.

Mohammad Reza Heidarhaei, the head of the Victims Office of the Welfare Organization, insists that developing empowerment frameworks and educating families are the best solutions. He notes that child labor stems from cultural problems or poverty within the family. As such, empowering the family and providing education can

help prevent children from resorting to the streets. The Iranian government has also acquired iris identification devices to identify children through the iris of their eyes. However, Heidarhaei points out that many working children were not included in the census of insured workshops in order to evade paying insurance premiums. Additionally, 85% of the working and street children identified in Iran are foreigners. The Welfare Organization is doing its best to address these issues, with 62 centers actively identifying working and street children in Tehran and other areas.



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### Support centers established

The Welfare Organization has set up educational, child, and family support centers to assist in their efforts. These centers aim to provide education and support to families, empower them, and prevent

children from becoming part of the workforce. Heidarhaei stresses the importance of incorporating families into these programs, citing examples of mothers acting as breadwinners or fathers being unavailable to fulfill their responsibilities. "In our empowerment models, we send drug-addicted fathers to rehab centers and try to empower the mother in single-mother families so that there is no need for the child to be on the street," says Heidarhaei. The highest number of street children has been observed in provinces like Tehran, Khuzestan, and

Isfahan which have bigger cities. Heidarhaei believes that it is futile to round up working children and remove them from the streets and contends that the principal solution is to incorporate the support and empowerment of these children's families



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into the programs. He stresses that the child does not wind up on the streets by themselves, adding that it must stem from a cultural problem or poverty within the family. "If the objective is to solve the child's problem, we must first resolve the issue of the family and provide them with empowerment."

**Lack of implementation**  
Despite the government's efforts to address the issue of child labor, Ahmad Ahmadi Sadr, the CEO of

Tehran Municipality's Welfare, Social Services, and Social Engagement Organization, noted that one of the problems they face is a lack of knowledge of who is responsible for implementing their vocational training and talent scouting model. This lack of clarity could hinder efforts to address the problem of working and street children.

Iran's government has taken steps to address the problem of working and street children, but more needs to be done.

The Welfare Organization is doing its utmost to empower families and prevent children from resorting to the streets, but it is clear that funds and resources are limited. Since thousands of working and street children have been identified in Iran, it is crucial that the government and relevant organizations work together to address the issue and ensure that every child is given the opportunity to receive an education and a childhood free from the burden of labor.

# A 'Dream' left behind



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Social Desk  
**EXCLUSIVE**

Late January, 2023, a female Siberian Crane was flown from the breeding center at the Cracid Breeding and Conservation Center (CBCC) in Zutendaal, Belgium, to Iran, hoping that she would join Omid, the last survivor of its species' western population.

For 15 years, a solitary male Siberian Crane named Omid, meaning "Hope" in Farsi, has spent his winters in northern Iran. As the last surviving member of his species' western population, Omid has become a beloved figure among nature enthusiasts around the world. Since 2006, Omid has made the long journey from his breeding grounds in Siberia to his wintering grounds in Iran without a mate. The fate of his species now rests solely on his shoulders.

Then enters Roya, whose name means "Dream" in Farsi. She was transported to Tehran on January 25 with great care. The Iranian Department of the Environment collaborated with CBCC to secure

the necessary permits for international transportation of an endangered species. Roya was then taken to Omid's winter home in Fereydoonkenar Marsh. Despite a lengthy 24-hour journey, she was acclimated to her new surroundings in a specialized aviary over the course of three days.

At the time, it was stated that "The bonding of these two birds represents the last hope for the western population of this Critically Endangered species", according to the International Crane Foundation. The Siberian Crane, also known as the White Crane, is a majestic bird that has captured the attention of people all over the world. With its snow-white feathers and regal bearing, this migratory bird spends its summers in the wetlands and marshes of northern Russia and Siberia, and during the winter months, it travels thousands of miles to wintering grounds in warmer places of Asia. Historically, there were three

migration routes of the Siberian Crane in Asia, according to data made available by the International Crane Foundation. The central population, which wintered in India, has been extinct since 2002. The eastern population, wintering in China, now has around 5,000 birds, but their habitat is threatened by dam construction, loss and degradation of wetland habitat, and climate change. And then there is the western population, of which Omid is the last survivor. Previously the CBCC has had success with reintroducing endangered birds in South America. When the news broke out that they are engaged with a similar program for Siberian Cranes, hope sparked among Siberian Crane enthusiasts. "Through a United Nations Environmental Program Convention on Migratory Species program, we became involved in a project to save the Siberian Crane," says Geer Sheres, who since 1994 has run the CBCC in the forests of Zu-

tendaal with Luud Gerrlings. Zutendaal is home to dozens of cranes of different species who live there in large aviaries. "A large portion of the captive population of Siberian Cranes kept in a protected environment is here," says Sheres. So if a proper mate for Omid was anywhere to be found, it was in Zutendaal. Everything was going according to the plans. The birds seemed destined for each other, and they together embarked on the long journey back on March 5, 2023. Yet, after only six days, Roya could not continue and was grounded in Abbasabad in Mazandaran Province. A specialized team from the Department of the Environment captured the bird alive and after examinations, declared her to be healthy. Since then, Roya has been living in captivity in a center in Ojakaleh in Mazandaran, perhaps counting the days until Omid's next solo return to Iran.

**Tender notice for the purchase of walnut harvesting and gathering machines**  
**Second Announcement**

Dasht e Khorram Darreh Agri-Industrial, Animal Husbandry, and Aviculture Complex Company (Public Stock) intend to purchase walnut harvesting and gathering machines through public tenders. Receiving the tender participation form:

- 1- Company headquarters: Above the ring road - End of shabrak e Qods - Dasht e Khorram Darreh Company headquarter - Khorram Darreh city - Zanjan - Iran.
- 2- Company Site: <https://agri-khorramdarreh.ir>

**Tender time:**  
Wednesday, 2023/05/26, at 11:00 am at the Company headquarters.

**Time to register offers:** The offers must be uploaded to the company site (<https://agri-khorramdarreh.ir>), or offer envelopes must be delivered to the administrative or commercial affairs of the company by the end of the working day, dated 2023/05/25

Note: No price offer envelopes will be received after this time.

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First Publish date: Thursday, 2023/04/15  
Second Publish date: Saturday, 2023/04/18