



ILO's PROGRAMME ON THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD LABOUR IN TURKEY (2021-2025)

Child labour may be defined as engaging children in work that prevents them enjoying their childhood, diminishes their potential and dignity, and harms their physical and mental development. On a broader term, “child labour” refers to engaging children in work that is mentally, physically, spiritually, socially or morally hazardous and harmful to children; in work that interferes with compulsory schooling through disrupting regular attendance or causing early dropout; and in heavy work and long hours while enrolled in school.

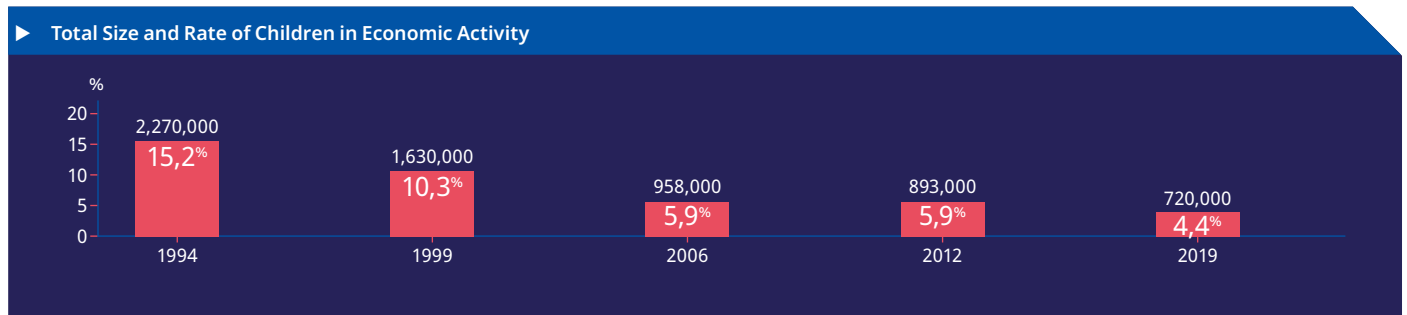
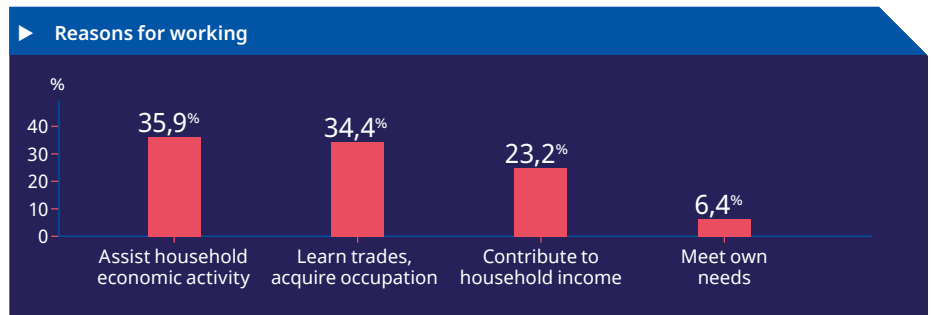
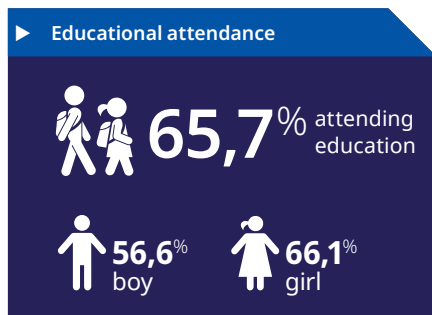
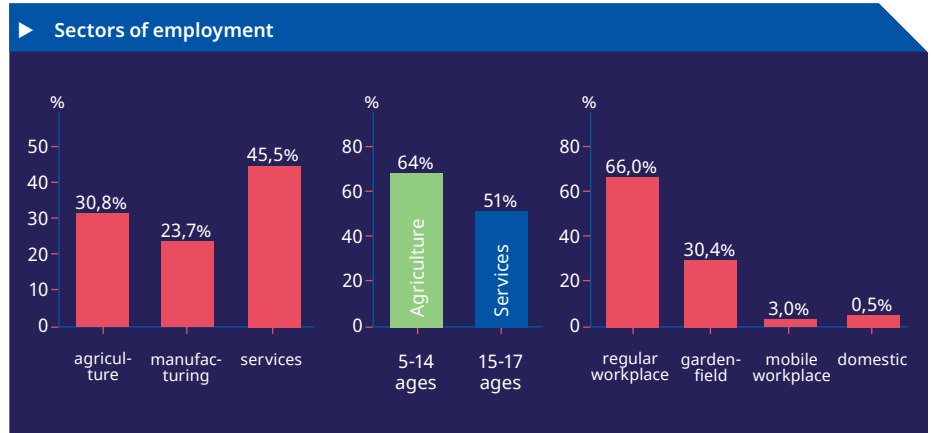
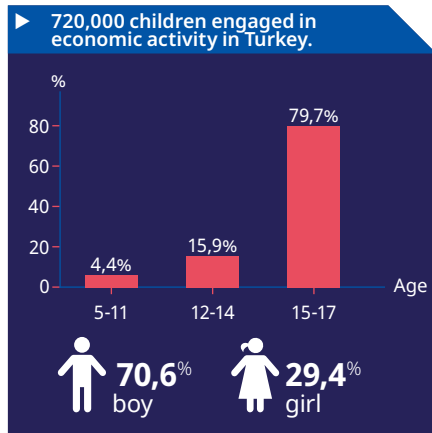
The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a “child” as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger. The Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) and Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) set detailed standards for working age in line with CRC. The Minimum Age Convention establishes a clear link between the minimum age for work and that of completion of compulsory schooling, and sets 18 as the minimum age for hazardous work.

Major causes of child labour include poverty, lack of access to free and quality education, migration, unemployment of adult family members, traditional perspectives and social exclusion, lack of inspection, informality and demand for cheap labour.



Current Situation in Turkey

(by TURKSTAT data)



WHAT HAS BEEN DONE TO DATE?

The Government of the Republic of Turkey and ILO signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 1992 and Turkey became one of the six countries which joined the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC). Significant progress was achieved against child labour over the years. Turkey ratified ILO's Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) in 2001 and Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) in 1998. To transform political commitment into action, the National Time-Bound Policy and Programme Framework for Worst Forms of Child Labour (2005-2015) was created. Completed in 2015, the said framework was updated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS) into the National Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (2017-2023). In that context, forms of work that required immediate response were defined, and a new, multi-dimensional, multi-lateral approach to combating child labour was developed that would consider the children along with their social environment. The year 2018 was declared the Year for the Elimination of Child Labour in Turkey.



WHAT ILO AIMS TO ACHIEVE THROUGH THE PROGRAMME?

Combating child labour has always been a priority for ILO since its foundation in 1919. The ILO Office for Turkey formulated an updated programme covering 2021-2025 to advance its work in and experience derived from combating child labour since 1992 in cooperation with national stakeholders. The ILO's Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour in Turkey, prepared in line with the priorities of the National Employment Strategy (2014-2023) and National Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (2017-2023), plans to engage in comprehensive work to eliminate child labour in Turkey. It is not possible to achieve the future of work with decent work and sustainable income for all without eliminating child labour. Through the Programme of 2021-2025, the ILO Office for Turkey will focus on quality education as the key strategy to eliminate child labour including primarily the worst forms in Turkey, and continue to support the national partners by effective enforcement of legislation, expanding social protection and social dialogue support.

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development including particularly Sustainable Development Goal SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, and specifically Target 8.7, calls for immediate measures to secure the elimination of child labour in all its forms by 2025. Emphasizing that the goal could be reached through leaving no one behind, the United Nations declared the year 2021 as the "International Year for the Elimination of Child Labour" and initiated global action. The programme developed by the ILO Office for Turkey aims to support the said global action at local level, and ensure that the national work would set a model internationally.

Under the Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, the ILO Office for Turkey is currently implementing three projects in cooperation with MoLSS General Directorate of Labour, with funding from various development partners, focusing on combating child labour in seasonal agriculture. The three projects undertaken in 21 provinces of migration origin and destination will be implemented by 2024 with funding from the European Union, FERRERO and CAOBISSCO (Association of Chocolate, Biscuit and Confectionary Industries). All projects will be implemented in partnership with MoLSS and in close cooperation with relevant organizations and institutions including Ministries of National Education, Interior, Agriculture and Forestry, Youth and Sports, workers' and employers' organizations, Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), municipalities, universities, private sector and NGOs.

WHY CHILD LABOUR IN SEASONAL AGRICULTURE?

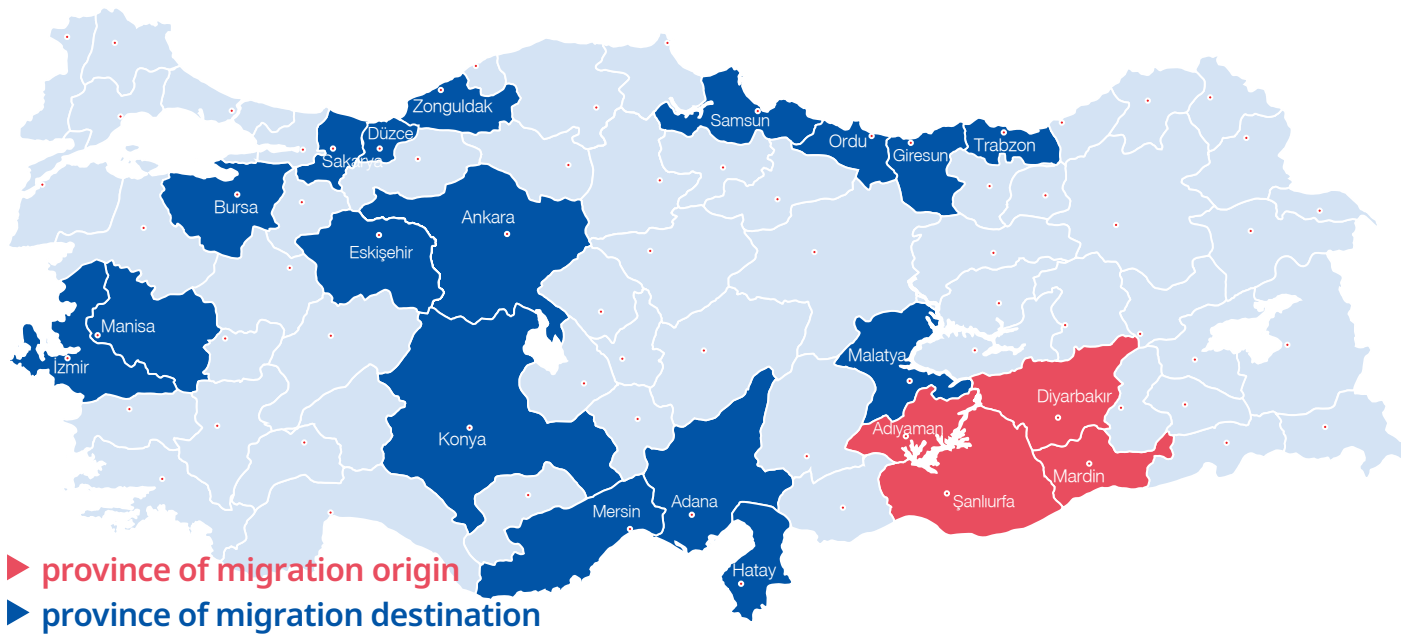
While child labour has declined considerably in Turkey, it is still a problem in seasonal agricultural production. In the agriculture, except for family holdings, mobile and seasonal agricultural labour is recognized as one of the worst forms of child labour in the National Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (2017-2023) as it exposes families to all forms of risks to which children are excessively vulnerable. Children engaged in seasonal agricultural labour represent one of the most disadvantaged groups in terms of working and living conditions associated with problems of environment, education and health.

The children of seasonal agricultural workers accompany their parents who travel from place to place for 4 to 7 months for economic and social reasons, and engage in work that is unsuitable for their age in order to contribute to the subsistence of their families. Families live in temporary settlement areas that mostly lack basic infrastructure and in living conditions that are below minimum standards, and their children do not attend school regularly, fall behind in their classes and face the risk of dropping out. Risks such as the hazards of machinery and equipment used in agriculture, exposure to pesticides, long working hours, exposure to climate conditions (hot and cold), heavy load lifting/transport, physical strain, working in isolated environments coupled with adverse accommodation may lead to chronic health problems throughout life.

Through the comprehensive intervention model in the projects of eliminating child labour in seasonal agriculture, ILO aims to withdraw a total of 18,300 children by the end of 2023 from work and/or prevent starting work.



Programme Provinces



TARGETED
NUMBER OF
CHILDREN TO
OUTREACH*

18,300



18,300

children to be
provided training
materials, hygiene
kits, clothes, shoes,
nutritional support



16,100

children to be
provided training
on hygiene, health
and safety



7,825

children to be
provided transport
service



4,800

children to benefit from
social, cultural, sports
and art activities

* Children who will be withdrawn from and/or prevented from starting seasonal agricultural work through protective, preventive services and education

FAMILIES



3,500

families to be
supported

200

family members to be provided
vocational training

AGRICULTURAL
INTERMEDIARIES



380

agricultural intermediaries to be
provided capacity-building and
awareness-raising trainings

140

agricultural intermediaries
to be provided İŞKUR
certificates

GARDEN
OWNERS



1,600

garden/field owners to be
provided capacity-building
and awareness-raising trainings

1,200

garden/field owners to be
provided personal protective
equipment

► Capacity-building
and awareness-
raising trainings



1,950

teachers
and school
administrators



1,500

public
officials



1,800

NGO staff



180

private sector
representatives

► Support decent
working and living
conditions in all
project provinces

