

# “Elimination of Child Labour in Seasonal Agriculture” – Independent Final Evaluation

## QUICK FACTS

**Country:** Türkiye

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**Evaluation type:** Project

**Evaluation timing:** Final

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*Key Words:* child labour, agriculture, capacity building, awareness raising, education and policy development

## BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

### Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

Child labour is a problem that many countries still cannot fully solve. The problem is more intensive in developing countries but can also be found in many developed countries. According to global estimates around 160 million children worldwide were engaged in child labour at the start of 2020. When the “Elimination of Child Labour in Seasonal Agriculture” project was designed the number of child workers in the world was 152 million. Child labour accounted for approximately 9.6% of the total child population. More than half of these children, about 73 million, were engaged in hazardous work and made up 4.6% of the world's child population.

With the main objective of preventing child labour in Türkiye, the National Program on the Elimination of Child Labour (2017-2023) was developed. This includes comprehensive measures such as eradicating poverty, increasing the quality and accessibility of education, and improving public awareness and sensitivity. In the Action Plan annexed to the National Program, the main policies, strategies and activities to be carried out in 2017-2023 in order to combat child labour were determined.

Within the agriculture sector in Türkiye, the “National Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (2017-2023)” identifies working in mobile and temporary agricultural labour (except for family run farms) as one of the worst forms of child labour. This is because of the nature of seasonal agricultural work, which exposes families to all types of risks to which children are the most vulnerable.

Combating child labour has always been a priority for ILO, ever since its foundation in 1919. The ILO Office for Türkiye has given priority to combatting child labour related activities since 1992 in cooperation with national stakeholders. The ILO’s Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour in Seasonal Agriculture in Türkiye, prepared in line with the priorities of the National Employment Strategy (2014-2023) and National Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (2017-2023), planned to engage in comprehensive work to eliminate child labour in Türkiye. The ILO maintains that it is not possible to achieve the future of work, with decent work and sustainable income for all, without eliminating child labour. The ILO Office for Türkiye uses the Programme of 2021-2025 to focus on quality education as its key strategy to eliminate child labour;

	<p>including, primarily the worst forms, and it continues to support the national partners with effective enforcement of legislation, expanding social protection and social dialogue.</p> <p>The Overall Objective of the Project is described as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to contribute to elimination of the worst forms of child labour in seasonal agriculture.</li> </ul> <p>With the Specific Objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to enhance national and local capacity for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour in seasonal agriculture as well as providing services to children at risk and their families.</li> </ul> <p>For achieving this objective, the Project was built on five Outcomes each with specific expected Outputs:</p> <p>Outcome 1: Working/at-risk children are withdrawn or prevented from work in seasonal agriculture; families, employers, agriculture intermediaries and village heads abstain from or take action to combat child labour.</p> <p>Outcome 2: MoFLSS, workers' and employers' organizations, gendarmerie, NGOs take coordinated action for policy development and implementation to eliminate the WFCL.</p> <p>Outcome 3: illingness among general public and target groups to eliminate child labour in seasonal agriculture is enhanced.</p> <p>Outcome 4: Advocacy for, formulation, planning and implementation of policies to eliminate child labour in seasonal agriculture is enhanced.</p> <p>Outcome 5: Coordination and cooperation between stakeholders in areas of implementation and management of child labour interventions at national and local level is strengthened.</p>
<b>Present situation of the project</b>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic and the devastating earthquake that hit Türkiye in 2023 meant that there were some minor changes in the implementation of some of the activities; however, the intervention logic was maintained as per its original intention and the Project Team made the necessary arrangements to meet the Project's implementation plan. In addition to the changes required by these devastating natural disasters, the Project Management Team (PMT) proposed some minor adaptations, which reflected the need to provide support for disaster-affected people in the target regions. These changes had a minor impact on the achievement of the planned targets.</p>

	<p>The Project adopted a multi-sectoral approach to tackle a multifaceted problem, recognising that child labour in seasonal agriculture is a complex issue that has social, educational, legal and economic dimensions. Geographically, the Project covered a number of cities that hosted and received seasonal migrant workers; namely, Şanlıurfa, Mardin, Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Adana, Mersin, Hatay, Isparta, İzmir, Manisa, Ankara, Eskişehir, Konya, Malatya, Ordu, Bursa and Düzce.</p> <p>The direct implantation was to a large extent executed by two implementing partners. A project advisory committee with participation of the ILO constituents was established.</p> <p>The project ends in early 2025 and no continuation into a new phase is foreseen.</p>
<b>Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation</b>	<p>The evaluation covered the entire duration of the programme, i.e. since its inception in October 2020 to January 2025. It considered the large number of documents that were linked to the Project. These included the Project document, periodic reports, the results of the MTE and implementation of its recommendations, as well as documents that were produced as outputs of the Project (e.g. knowledge products, policy strategies/briefs, and information, education and communication (IEC) materials, etc.).</p> <p>The evaluation covered the Project office in Ankara, as well as a number of other cities that hosted and received seasonal migrant workers; namely Şanlıurfa, Adana, İzmir, Eskişehir and Ordu. The evaluation integrated gender equality, the inclusion of people with disabilities, environmental sustainability, ILS and social dialogue as crosscutting concerns throughout its methodology and deliverables. This is based on EVAL's protocols on cross-cutting issues to ensure stakeholder participation in the evaluation process.</p> <p>The evaluation collected data and information from implementing partners and beneficiaries of the Project, including concerned constituents and relevant CSOs.</p> <p>The evaluation focused not only on what was achieved in terms of results but also specially considered how and why those results were achieved or not.</p> <p>The evaluation covered all of the planned Outputs and Outcomes under the Project to achieve the program goal of the Project. As the Project operated at the national level, with an emphasis on both policy-level engagements and service delivery, due consideration</p>

	<p>was given to national-level deliveries. Further attention was paid to assessing the sustainability of the Project's investments and to the recommendations for its sustainability as it comes to an end.</p>
<b>Methodology of evaluation</b>	<p>This evaluation complied with the UNEG's evaluation norms and standards, and followed ethical safeguards, as specified in the ILO's evaluation guidelines and procedures. The evaluation was conducted in a participatory manner, by engaging the stakeholders at different levels and ensuring that they had a say in the implementation of the Project, and that they could share their views and contribute to the evaluation as well as participate in the dissemination processes.</p> <p>The evaluation's methodology included examining the logical connect between the levels of results and their alignment with the ILO's strategic objectives and external factors/assumptions. Particular attention was paid to the logical connection between the levels of results and their alignment to the ILO's strategic objectives and outcomes, at the global and national levels, as well as that of the national strategic frameworks with the relevant SDGs and related targets, and other relevant external factors.</p> <p>The evaluation applied a mixed-method approach. Both qualitative and quantitative evaluation approaches were considered for this evaluation. First, the evaluators conducted a desk review of appropriate materials, including the Project document, the Logical Framework, progress reports, the minutes from management meetings and other outputs from the Project and relevant materials from secondary sources. Second, the evaluators collected other relevant data for the evaluation. Individual or group interviews and FGDs were conducted with the main stakeholders.</p>
<b>MAIN FINDINGS &amp; CONCLUSIONS</b>	<p>The project's most significant contribution was its long-term and wide-ranging scope of implementation. Additionally, the Project's monitoring activities, which covered both seasonal agricultural work periods and the return to the originating provinces, positively contributed to enrolling thousands of children into education. Children who otherwise would be exposed to the worst forms of child labour.</p> <p>The project managed to develop strong ownership of the Project among government officials and to the fight for elimination of child</p>

labour, in general. The evaluation found a strong commitment among government officials. This commitment gives hope for the continuation of some of the activities that were successfully initiated within the Project. Further, officials expressed that they found a clear footprint from the Project and the ILO in the Presidential Circular 2024/5 which sets out a strong outline for the improvement of working and employment conditions for seasonal agricultural workers and, thereby, also for the elimination of child labour. Additionally, the MoNE issue Circular 2024/52 established, in detail, a framework for ending child labour and ensuring that the children attend education. These two documents will guide the work on elimination of child labour and enrolment of all children into education in the years to come. The evaluation finds that this is a major achievement of the Project, even if it was not explicitly foreseen in the Project document.

Although the agricultural workforce in Turkey is largely unorganised and in informal employment relations, the evaluation finds that ILO's experience, of working with social partners, its outreach and direct involvement with trade unions and various employers' associations and chambers, had the potential to enhance the effectiveness of the Project and establish an ownership among constituents. This can be seen as a missed opportunity for strengthening social dialogue.

The project engaged in some one-off activities, e. g., vocational training. The evaluation found that these initiatives were only partially successful, as there was no evidence of increased employability as a result. The evaluation finds that the vocational training for adults would have benefitted from a stronger needs analysis and selection of participants.

The justification for establishment of accommodation facilities with farmers that only invite seasonal workers for 3-4 weeks per year (and sometimes even less) should be further scrutinised, together with local stakeholders, to find the most efficient solution that justifies the investment.

The project contributed significantly to the establishment of one integrated database – the e-METIP – which was developed to include all the accessible information about seasonal agricultural workers and their children. It is expected to become a flagship in the government's efforts to eliminate child labour; but, at the end

of the Project it was still facing some challenges and not up and running in full.

## RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

### *Recommendation 1*

The ILO and the donor are recommended to consider whether the current project was perhaps too big and would have benefited from being divided thematically and geographically, to ensure a stronger focus. This Recommendation was suggested by the stakeholders and the evaluation finds the recommendation well-placed.

### *Recommendation 2*

The ILO implements many projects, which have elements of construction activities included in them and often, as in the current project, with relatively large investments. However, there is no in-house capacity/expertise to guide these activities. The implementation of the construction activities builds on external expertise, which might not have full insight of ILO principles. It is recommended that the ILO build up its construction expertise to ensure cost efficiency and quality.

### *Recommendation 3*

It is recommended to include an expert in children's rights in all projects involving children. This would ensure that the mechanisms that assure the meaningful participation of children in every action and decision affecting them are made operational and include all children in the Project's activities and while embracing diversity in project planning as well as implementation.

### *Recommendation 4*

The current project had limited visibility, except for at the national level. At the local level the Project was, to a large extent, seen as a project belonging to the implementing partners. The evaluation finds it important that the ILO maintains its relevance and shows its presence in all projects being implemented, as this not only strengthens the authority of the Office but also the normative framework that the ILO stands for.

### *Recommendation 5*

The ILO is recommended to collaborate with local stakeholders when developing activities to be implemented at the local level.

Local stakeholders will have better insight into the needs of beneficiaries and better ways of avoiding potential conflicts between different local groups. Involving local stakeholders, will make it easier to put a “do no harm” approach in place.

*Recommendation 6*

It is generally recognised that the CLU members can play a key role in eliminating child labour, thanks to their outreach to the local communities. The government is recommended to strengthen the capacity and competence of the CLU’s members and to ensure that they are credited for the work they do.

*Recommendation 7*

The evaluation understands that an efficient end to child labour can only be put in place, once a critical mass of key stakeholders and the general public accept there is a need to eliminate child labour. It is therefore recommended that a coordinated awareness-raising campaign be initiated that is targeted specifically at the general public and stakeholders.

*Recommendation 8*

It is understood that transportation from the settlements to school is a problem for many seasonal agricultural worker parents who want to send their children to school. Therefore, the government is recommended to consider moving primary schools and kindergartens out to the worker settlements. Including kindergartens would create a culture of learning amongst the children and thereby make it easier to attract them to school when they come of school age.

*Recommendation 9*

The evaluation understands that amendments to the Labour Code and new regulations for private employment agencies are underway in Türkiye. These amendments would allow agricultural workers to be covered by the Labour Code and the Private Employment Agencies would take over the functions that have been handled by intermediaries until now. The ILO is recommended to offer its full support to both initiatives, which are aimed at eliminating child labour and improving working and employment conditions for seasonal agricultural workers. The ILO has strong capacity in and experience of both issues, so it would be a missed opportunity not to offer full support.

*Recommendation 10*



	<p>The Government should establish an “All-Government” approach to child labour, including when it comes to the funding of child labour activities. This approach would be in line with the Presidential Circular 2024/5. It is expected that municipalities would play a major role in financing the activities, therefore it would also be important that they are included in the “All-Government” approach.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 11</i></p> <p>The ILO CO is recommended to raise funds for capacity building, targeted at the social partners, for their internal discussions and policy development on child labour based on which potential joint training could be developed.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 12</i></p> <p>The current project provided vocational training to a group of adults, but there was no assessment of their increased employability. The ILO CO is recommended to conduct a tracer study, among the VET participants, to learn how to prepare for possible future interventions.</p> <p><i>Recommendation 13</i></p> <p>The current project did not have gender disaggregated data in its design. Consequently, reporting did not have fully gender-disaggregated data either. Gender quotas were also not put in place. The implementing partners were not asked to establish gender aggregated data. The evaluation strongly recommends that in future projects such data are requested from the development of the Project document.</p>
<p><b>Main lessons learned and good practices</b></p>	<p><i>Lessons Learned</i></p> <p>Some of the local institutions/organisations that were interviewed during the evaluation particularly emphasised the importance of localisation and collaborating with local organisations. The stakeholders highlighted that local knowledge is crucial for achieving the goals of projects such as the current one. They also see it as important for strengthening local actors. Additionally, having mechanisms to provide feedback from the field is considered critical.</p> <p>The need for stronger local insight also came to the surface in connection with the VET initiative, undertaken for adult seasonal agriculture workers.</p> <p>Many stakeholders and beneficiaries find it acceptable for children, aged 14-15 and older, to work; this perception can be seen as an</p>

indication of the need for a mindset shift. There was almost no work in the Project specifically targeting this age group.

*Emerging Good Practises*

The Project established strong cooperation with the MoLSS and through this a strong engagement and feeling of ownership among officials from different relevant departments of the Ministry. Field visits are critical as an empowering and capacity-building activity that allows stakeholders to better understand the reality of the issue addressed in the Project.