

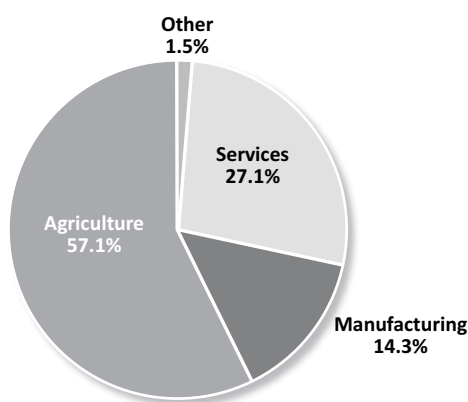
In 2011, Turkey made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. In early 2012, the Government passed a law that raised the age of compulsory education to 17, minimizing the risk of labor exploitation. Although the Government supports a number of programs to combat poverty and address child labor, particularly in agriculture, there are no programs to combat child labor in industrial work or heavy and dangerous work in small and medium-sized enterprises. Children continue to be involved in worst forms of child labor in dangerous activities in agriculture and the urban informal sector.



### Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	2.6 (320,254)
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	92.4
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	1.6
Primary Completion Rate		99.2

### Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



#### Sources:

**Primary completion rate:** Data from 2009, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)

**All other data:** Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from ENCOVI Survey, 2006.(2)

### Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In Turkey, children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, particularly in dangerous activities in agriculture and the urban informal sector. Children are involved in producing cotton, hazelnuts and sugar beets.(3-8) Children also reportedly work in the production of tobacco, onions,

tea and dried sliced tomatoes.(3) Children in agriculture often work long hours and perform activities such as using potentially dangerous machinery and tools, carrying heavy loads and applying harmful pesticides.(8) With the exception of the hazelnut harvest, which occurs during school vacation, children in agriculture often migrate with their families for much of the year and may have limited access to health care and education.(4, 9-11)

Children are also exploited in street work.(3, 12) The Government reports on the incidence of children working in the streets in Turkey. In December 2009, the Government reported 8,298 children were found to be working on the streets.(3) Some of these children may be forced by their parents to shine shoes, sell tissues and food, and beg.(13) Children working on the streets are vulnerable to severe weather, traffic accidents and crime.(14)

Children also work in small and medium--sized enterprises in carpentry, auto and shoe repair, food processing and the production of furniture and machines.(3, 13) In the furniture and shoe repair industry, children are exposed to dangerous chemicals and machinery.(9, 10) The majority of child laborers are employed in small enterprises that have between one and nine workers.(9) Children reportedly also work in the worst forms of child labor in work with livestock and the production of bricks. In addition, children reportedly process mussels; produce textiles, leather goods and footwear; and cultivate citrus fruits, cumin, peanuts, and pulses, which may involve dangerous activities.(3, 15)

Girls are trafficked into Turkey from the former Soviet states.(16, 17) Children are exploited by criminals in the drug trade and prostitution.(13, 17) There are reports that children are recruited by Kurdish militant groups.(18, 19)

Although education is free and compulsory, access to education is still limited for some populations. Girls are often kept out of school because of the belief that education will ruin their marriage chances.(13) Many out-of-school girls work in the handicraft sector.(20) Children who migrate for agricultural work also have limited access to education.(9) Roma children often lack personal identification documents and, as a result, are excluded from public services including education, which may increase their risk of working in the worst forms of child labor.(16)

## Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Labor Law No. 4857 establishes the minimum age for work at 15.(21) Children under age 16 are prohibited from employment in arduous or dangerous work.(21) The Regulation on Heavy and Dangerous Works lists the specific jobs prohibited for children in this age group.(12) The Decree, the Methods and Principles for Employment of Children and Young Workers, published in Gazette No. 25425 (April 2004) lays out a separate list of hazardous occupations prohibited to all children under age 18.(22, 23) The same Decree lays out the list of light work acceptable for children age 14, including selling newspapers, magazines and flowers.(23)

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	15
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	17
	Free Public Education	Yes

A number of sectors are not covered by the labor laws, including agricultural enterprises employing 50 or fewer workers, small shops employing up to three persons and domestic service.(13, 20) Article 4 of the Labor Law of Turkey

specifically exempts activities and employment relationships in those sectors from the provisions of the Labor Law. Many children work in these sectors.(13, 21) These gaps in the Labor Law leave children vulnerable to dangerous labor conditions without legal protection.

Turkey prohibits forced or compulsory labor including by children.(13) The New Turkish Penal Code also prohibits prostitution for persons under age 21 and the sexual exploitation of children in the production of pornography.(24) The Turkish Penal Code outlaws trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labor.(25) The age for military recruitment is age 19.(26)

On March 30, 2012, Turkey passed a law that increased the period of compulsory education from 8 to 12 years. Under the new law, children must start primary education before they reach age 6, and complete their cycle at age 17.(10)

## Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The Disadvantaged Groups Department (DGD) of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MOLSS) is the primary agency coordinating the child labor efforts of the Ministry of Education, the Child Services Directorate General in the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (MFSP), the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice and NGOs. The DGD acts as the secretariat of the National Guidance Committee, which monitors child labor and the activities of the Government to combat the problem.(3, 27) In 2011, the Government created the Child Services Directorate General within the MFSP to coordinate services for children living and working on the streets.(5)

Within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an ambassadorial-level official serves as coordinator of the Government's Task Force on Human Trafficking. This task force includes officials from six ministries as well as representatives from NGOs, the IOM and municipalities.(28)

The MOLSS conducts labor enforcement in workplaces that are covered by the Labor Law, including medium- and large-scale industrial and service sector enterprises.(13) MOLSS inspectors are responsible for enforcing the child labor laws and are instructed to prioritize complaints alleging child labor.(29) There are 900 labor inspectors authorized to conduct inspections on child and adult labor.(5, 30) According to the International Trade Union Confederation, the number of inspectors and resources is inadequate for the scope of the problem.(31) Labor inspectors are provided training on child labor issues, and the ILO handbook on child labor prevention

is included in the inspectors' training materials.(5, 30)  
The Government has not published the number of labor inspections, child labor law violations and children assisted in 2011.(5)

In 2011, 17 government ministries and institutions signed a protocol committing them to inform Governors and National Education Directorates if their inspectors or officials discover the employment of any children under age 15.(5)

Complaints about child labor can be made by phone to a hotline operated by the Directorate General of Child Services within the MFSP or through the Prime Minister's Office Communications Center Web site.(3, 10)

The Turkish National Police (TNP) employs 3,500 officers tasked with addressing children's issues.(29) These officers handle all issues related to the treatment and protection of children, but do not have a specific unit focused on child labor exploitation.(29) The TNP also investigates cases of human trafficking.(25) The Ministry of Justice, the TNP and MOLSS provide anti-trafficking training to their employees.(25) There is no information on the total number of criminal investigations, victims, court cases or convictions for violations of human trafficking laws in 2011.(5)

### **Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor**

The Government of Turkey developed a National Timebound Policy and Program Framework in 2004, which aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by 2015. In 2011, the National Guidance Committee started a review of the Framework, with the intent of establishing new guidelines in 2012. The Policy Framework prioritizes reducing poverty, improving the quality and accessibility of education and increasing social awareness and sensitivity to the problem.(3) It focuses on the worst forms of child labor in Turkey including street work, industrial work, heavy and dangerous work in small and medium-sized enterprises and mobile and seasonal agricultural work, except in family businesses.(5) The policy articulates objectives, indicators, outputs, target groups, activities and responsibilities for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.(5)

The Rural Development Plan (2010-2013), prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, addresses child labor in agriculture and focuses specifically on seasonal migrant labor.(30)

The Ninth Development Program, the National Program to Harmonize with the EU Acquis for membership and the 2007

Erdogan Government Program briefly mention child labor.(3, 32) However, the question of whether these policies have an impact on the reduction of child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

### **Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor**

The Directorate General of Child Services, which replaced the Social Services and Child Protection Agency, operates 36 Child and Youth Centers and six homes to provide rehabilitation services to children working on the streets. At the centers, children are enrolled in education programs and have access to social, cultural, artistic and sports activities.(5, 9, 30) Children can also receive health screenings, occupational training, and psychosocial support. Additionally, families can receive financial support to help with the child's education.(30) In 2011 8,424 children were assisted through the Child and Youth Centers.(5)

The MOLSS operates a three-year program to improve the working conditions of seasonal agricultural workers, including those working in hazelnut cultivation.(4, 5) The program aims to ensure that workers are not trafficked or exploited and that they have appropriate housing and working conditions.(5) This program also focuses on providing educational opportunities to the children of migrant laborers and supplying them with school supplies and uniforms.(4, 5, 30) The MOLSS allocated \$17.8 million for this project in 2011, and expanded the program from 2 provinces to 28.(5) Although the project is scheduled to end in 2013, the Government is exploring ways to incorporate the program into provincial social services to ensure long term sustainability and expansion to all 81 provinces.(5) Over the reporting period, the Ministry of Education continued to implement a mobile classroom program for children who migrate for agricultural work.(10)

Although the Government implements programs targeting children in street work and migrant children working in agriculture, sectors targeted by the Timebound Policy and Program, it does not have programs to address other targeted sectors such as industrial work or heavy and dangerous work in small and medium sized enterprises.(5)

In an effort to reduce poverty, the Government continued to operate its Conditional Education and Health Care Assistance Program, which included cash transfers.(5) One of the conditions for families to participate in the program is for children between ages 6 and 15 to regularly attend primary school.(3) Priority is given to the poorest 6 percent of families, many of whom work in seasonal agriculture.(12) This program

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may influence parents to take children out of work and send them to school. However, the question of whether these poverty reduction programs have an impact on the reduction of child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

The Ministry of National Education runs training centers for children legally employed in small businesses. Children working in registered businesses are required to attend training at these centers and the centers are required to inspect the children's workplaces.(28) There are 311 centers providing training in over one hundred occupations.(28) In 2011, the

MOLSS Labor Inspection Board began offering training to enterprises at risk of hiring children in an effort to prevent them from violating child labor laws.(5)

To assist victims of human trafficking, the Ministry of Justice provides free legal services to foreign victims who choose to remain in Turkey to testify against traffickers.(28) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also supports shelters for trafficking victims in Ankara and Istanbul, However, they continue to rely on external donor funding.(17, 33) The facility for a third anti-trafficking shelter in Antalya was donated by the municipality.(33, 34)

## Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Turkey:

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Revise the Labor Law to expand protections against hazardous work for children working as domestic workers and in agriculture and small businesses.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Amend laws to provide protections for children working on the street.	2010, 2011
Coordination and Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors and the resources allocated for inspections.	2011
	Publish data on the number of labor inspections, child labor violations, criminal cases of the worst forms of child labor, and child victims assisted.	2011
Policies	Assess the impact that existing policies have on child labor.	2010, 2011
	Raise public awareness on the importance of education for all children.	2011
	Create mechanism to assist Roma and other populations without birth registration to enroll in school.	2011
Programs	Develop and implement programs targeting child labor in industrial work and heavy and dangerous work in small and medium-sized enterprises as outlined in the National Timebound Policy and Program.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Assess the impact that existing programs have on child labor.	2011
	Provide adequate funding to shelters for human trafficking victims.	2009, 2010, 2011

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