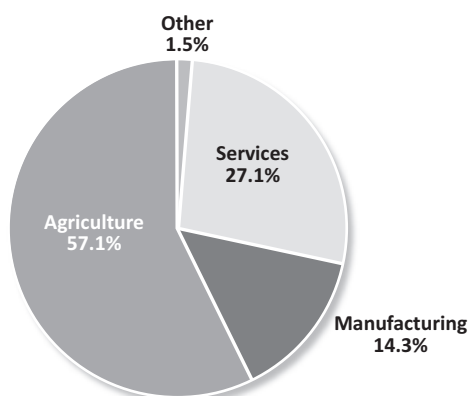


In 2012, Turkey made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government passed a law that raised the age of compulsory education to 17 and conducted a national child labor survey. In addition, the Government increased the number of labor inspectors by 141 and began a new project aimed at building the capacity of local governments to address the issue of child labor. 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 engaged in the worst forms of child labor in dangerous activities in agriculture.

### Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	6-14 yrs.	2.6 (320,254)
Attending School	6-14 yrs.	92.4
Combining Work and School	6-14 yrs.	1.6
Primary Completion Rate		100.4

### Working Children by Sector, Ages 6-14



#### Sources:

**Primary completion rate:** Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.(1)

**All other data:** Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from SIMPOC 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. Children are involved in producing cotton, hazelnuts, citrus fruits, and sugar beets.(3-13) When harvesting hazelnuts,



children do not wear protective gear and are sometimes cut by the dense bushes.(8) Although information is limited, there are reports that children are also found working in the production of legumes and cumin. Children working in agriculture may work long hours, lift heavy loads, and experience malnutrition, chemical exposure, and high levels of stress during periods of migration.(9, 13-16) Children may also face accidents including falling out of trees or under the weight of heavy sacks.(12, 13) 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, 17-19)

Children also work in small- and medium-sized enterprises in carpentry, auto and shoe repair, food processing, and the production of furniture. Although the extent of the problem is unknown, there are reports that children are also found working in the worst forms of child labor in the production of bricks, leather goods, shoes, and textiles.(3, 20) Children working within these sectors may have to endure long working hours and work with dangerous tools, machinery, or chemicals.(3, 20, 21) In the furniture repair industry, children are exposed to dangerous chemicals and machinery.(17) The majority of child laborers are employed in small enterprises that have between one and nine workers.(17)

Both the Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations and the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions have reported that children engage in dangerous work on the streets.(17)

Children are trafficked into Turkey from the former Soviet states for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor.(22-24) Among commercially exploited children, boys are reportedly picked up in tourist areas and train stations.(23) There is also evidence of sexual exploitation of children by criminals. These criminals also reportedly exploit children in the drug trade.(20, 25)

There are reports of children recruited by Kurdish militant groups that have been fighting for equal rights in Turkey for nearly three decades, although a cease fire declared in early 2013 remained in effect as this report went to press.(26-28)

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Education in Turkey is free and compulsory.(21) Children who migrate within Turkey for seasonal agricultural work often have limited access to education.(14, 17, 20) 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.(22)

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

Turkey's Labor Law sets the minimum age for work at 15.(29) The Regulation on the Principles and Procedures Governing the Employment of Children and Young Workers, published in Gazette No. 25425 (April 2004), lays out a list of light work acceptable for children age 14, including selling newspapers, magazines, and flowers.(30) The Labor Law and Regulation on Heavy and Dangerous Work restricts children age 15 and 16 from work considered dangerous. Youth age 17 that have graduated from schools providing technical specialization can be employed in hard and dangerous work appropriate to their profession provided that their health, safety, and morality is guaranteed.(29) These include the production of ceramics, glass, iron bars, plastics, tile, bricks, and pipes.(31, 32) The Regulation on the Principles and Procedures Governing the Employment of Children and Young Workers lays out a separate list of hazardous occupations prohibited to all children under age 18, including those enumerated in the Regulation on Heavy and Dangerous Works.(30, 33)

Labor Laws do not cover agricultural enterprises employing 50 or fewer workers and small shops employing up to three persons, environments in which many children work.(14, 29, 34) These gaps in the Labor Law leave children vulnerable to dangerous labor conditions without legal protection.

Over the reporting period, a Labor, Health, and Safety Law passed, which supersedes protections provided for in the Labor Law, requiring further safety and health standards with which all employers must comply.(21, 35) The new law covers health and safety standards for all workers over age 15 and all sectors (with the exception of domestic work), including agricultural enterprises employing 50 or fewer workers and small shops employing up to three persons. The Health and Safety Law does not address prohibitions on child labor.(21, 35)

Turkey prohibits forced or compulsory labor, including by children.(20) The Turkish Penal Code prohibits prostitution for

persons under age 18 and the sexual exploitation of children in the production of pornography.(23) The Code also outlaws trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and forced labor.(23, 36) The age for military recruitment is 19.(37)

## International Conventions and Selected Laws on Child Labor and Education

	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

The Government lacks protections for children involved in domestic service and street work.

On March 30, 2012, Turkey passed a law that increased the period of compulsory education from 8 to 12 years.(9, 18, 21)

## 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 Government efforts to combat the problem.(3, 38) The Child Services Directorate General within the MFSP coordinates services for children living and working on the streets.(5, 21)

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.(39)

The MOLSS conducts labor enforcement in workplaces that are covered by the Labor Law, including medium- and large-scale industrial and service sector enterprises.(20) MOLSS inspectors are responsible for enforcing child labor laws and are instructed to prioritize complaints alleging child labor.(40) There are 958 labor inspectors authorized to conduct inspections on child and adult labor, and in 2012, 141 additional assistant labor inspectors were selected to start work in 2013. While the number of inspectors is still considered too low to enforce all of Turkey's labor laws, the Government has made a significant effort to meet the demand, nearly doubling the size of the labor inspection force since 2008.(36) Labor inspectors receive training on child labor issues, and the ILO handbook on child labor prevention is included in the inspectors' training materials.(5, 41) In 2012, 37,522 inspections were conducted involving 2,014,931 workers, including 5,958 children. Of those, 67 children were under the legal working age.(21) Child labor penalties were levied on the 67 violations; however, there is no information on the extent to which these fines were collected. Labor inspection data regarding child labor is published in annual reports of the Labor Inspection Board.(21)

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)

The Turkish National Police (TNP), the Ministry of Justice, and the MFSP are responsible for enforcement of criminal laws against forced child labor, trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and using children in illicit activities.(21) The TNP employs 3,500 officers tasked with addressing children's issues.(40) 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.(40) The TNP also investigates cases of human trafficking.(36) The Ministry of Justice, the TNP, and MOLSS provide anti-trafficking training to their employees.(36) These agencies then refer child victims to MFSP services.(21) The Ministry of Justice reported 78 new trafficking investigations during the period of January through September 2012. The government prosecuted 226 defendants under Article 80, which prohibits both sex trafficking and

forced labor, and convicted 47 trafficking offenders.(42) It is unclear how many of these cases involved child victims.

## Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The MOLSS, through the National Steering Committee, is the coordinating institution for Turkey's National Timebound Policy Framework, which aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by 2015.(21, 43) The Policy Framework prioritizes reducing poverty, improving the quality and accessibility of education, and increasing social awareness and sensitivity to child labor.(3, 21) 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, 21)

The Rural Development Plan (2010-2013), prepared by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Livestock aims to enhance the living and working conditions of the rural population through sustainable agricultural development.(44) This policy addresses child labor in agriculture and focuses specifically on seasonal migrant labor.(41)

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

In 2012, the MOLSS launched the program Activation of Local Sources on Preventing Child Labor (2012-2014), which supports the Timebound Framework by aiming to enhance local capacity and build an effective monitoring system.(21)

During the reporting period, Turkey also participated in the USDOL-funded, 4-year Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues Project, which is active in approximately 40 countries. In Turkey, the project aims to improve the evidence base on child labor and forced labor through data collection and research.(45)

Seasonal agricultural workers, including children, are targeted in a MOLSS program to improve working conditions.(4, 5) This program includes workers cultivating hazelnuts and aims to ensure that workers are not trafficked or exploited and that they have appropriate housing and working conditions.(5, 21) This program also focuses on providing educational opportunities, referrals, and transportation to the children of

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migrant laborers and supplying them with school supplies and uniforms.(4, 5, 21, 41) The MOLSS allocated \$12 million for this project in 2012.(21) 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) The Ministry of Education continued to implement a mobile classroom program for children who migrate for agricultural work.(18)

Children working on the streets receive rehabilitation services from the Directorate General of Child Services, which operates 37 Child and Youth Centers and six homes. At the centers, children are enrolled in education programs and have access to social, cultural, artistic, and sports activities.(5, 17, 41) Children can also receive health screenings, occupational training, and psychosocial support. Additionally, families can receive financial support to help with the child's education.(41) In 2011, the last year for which data was available, 8,424 children were assisted through the Child and Youth Centers.(5)

In the last three months of 2012 the Turkey Statistics Institute conducted a child labor workforce survey. The results of this survey will be released in 2013.(21)

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) The Government also provides milk to all primary school children and distributes books free of charge.(21) This program may influence parents to take children out of work and send them to school. However, the question of whether these poverty reduction programs have had an impact on 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.(39) As of 2009, there were 311 centers providing training in over one hundred occupations.(39) The MOLSS Labor Inspection Board offers 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.(39) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also supported shelters for trafficking victims in Ankara and Istanbul. However, two shelters closed during the reporting period due to lack of funding.(25, 28, 46) The facility for a third anti-trafficking shelter in Antalya was donated by the municipality.(46, 47)

## 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 in agriculture and small businesses.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Amend laws to provide protections for children working on the street and as domestic workers.	2010, 2011, 2012
Coordination and Enforcement	Publish data on the number of criminal cases of child trafficking and child victims assisted.	2011, 2012
Policies	Raise public awareness on the importance of education for all children and the benefits of educating girls.	2011, 2012
	Create mechanisms to assist Roma and other populations without birth registration to enroll in school.	2011, 2012



Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Social 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, 2012
	Assess the impact that existing programs have on child labor.	2011, 2012
	Provide adequate funding to shelters for human trafficking victims.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012

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