

CHILD LABOUR ASSESSMENT REPORT

MAY 2024

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

WVSR	World Vision Syria Response
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
TurkStat	Turkish Statistical Institute
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
KII	Key Informant Interview
UN-CRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
ILO	International Labour Organization
CBO	Community Based Organization
TPMM	Türkiye Presidency of Migration Management
CPHA	Child Protection in Humanitarian Context
ADAPT	Analysis, Design and Planning Tool

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Child labor remains a significant concern among Syrian refugees in southeastern Türkiye, particularly in the provinces of Urfa, Gaziantep, Kilis, and Hatay. It is crucial to understand the underlying factors driving this issue in order to develop effective solutions and support networks.

World Vision Syria Response office conducted Child Labour Assessment in southeast Türkiye to understand the current state of child Labour among Syrian refugees in the country, its root causes, and the effectiveness of existing policies and programs. This executive summary provides an overview of the purpose, goals, and geographical focus of a comprehensive needs assessment aimed at eradicating child labor in the region. This executive summary outlines the purpose, objectives, and geographical scope of a comprehensive needs assessment aimed at addressing child labor in the region.

The primary objective of this assessment is to gain a comprehensive understanding of child labor dynamics among Syrian refugees, across various sectors such as agriculture, industry, and services. The objective of assessment is to explore the child labour and the worst form child labour and their underlying contributing factors. Furthermore, to assess the effectiveness of existing policies and interventions aimed at addressing harmful child labor as well as to propose recommendations for improvement.

The assessment study objectives were to:

- Analyze forms of child labour and worst forms of child labor across sectors in southeastern Türkiye. Explore the underlying factors contributing to child labor among Syrian refugees, including the aftermath of the earthquake, socio-economic conditions, cultural influences, and institutional factors.
- Focus on addressing the most severe and egregious forms of child labor.
- Evaluate the efficacy of current legal frameworks, policies, and programs in tackling child labor.
- Provide actionable recommendations to enhance policies, interventions, and strategies aimed at eradicating child labor effectively.
- Increase awareness and understanding of child labor issues among stakeholders, fostering a collaborative approach to combatting this challenge.

The assessment study employed a mixed method approach by using quantitative and qualitative research data collection tools to answer the research questions. This mixed-method approach helped in gaining a deeper understanding of the context of child Labour in line with the assessment questions. A comprehensive desk review of literature was conducted and included reports from various projects, donor agencies and government departments focusing on Child Rights, as well as research papers, articles, and other relevant sources. This review provided in-depth insight into the nature, extent, and primary driving factors of child Labour in Türkiye.

With a targeted geographical scope encompassing temporary refugee centers and rented accommodations in Southeast Türkiye. The assessment aims to enlighten the specific challenges faced by Syrian refugees in these provinces. The assessment findings highlight the dominant issue of child labor among Syrian refugees in Southeast Turkey, specifically in the provinces of Gaziantep, Hatay, Kilis, and Şanlıurfa. Key observations include:

- **Prevalence and Distribution:** The assessment findings reveal that child Labour is prevalent across various sectors among respondents of all genders and age groups (10 to 14 and 15 to 17). These labor activities span across sectors such as the service industry, manufacturing, domestic work, street vending, construction, car repair, agriculture, and informal sectors. Street vending or begging is more common among younger respondents, constituting 22% of those aged 10 to 14, while employment in the service industry is prominent among older respondents, comprising 51%. Manufacturing, service industry, and informal sector work dominate in provinces like Gaziantep, Kilis,

Hatay, and Şanlıurfa. Notably, Şanlıurfa exhibits a higher prevalence of child Labour in street vending or begging and the informal sector, constituting 12%, compared to Gaziantep and Kilis, where it stands at 6% and 3% respectively.

- **Gender role and Sector Involvement:** Gender roles significantly influence the types of jobs undertaken by boys and girls in Syrian refugee communities in Turkey, resulting in distinct challenges. Girls typically engage in agricultural, restaurant, cleaning, or sewing jobs until age 13, after which they transition to household tasks in preparation for child marriage. They face barriers like exclusion from sectors like construction, discrimination, low pay, and pressure for early marriage. On the other hand, boys are expected to be breadwinners and often take on outdoor jobs like construction, but they encounter challenges such as work pressure, verbal abuse, and wage non-payment. These gender dynamics underscore the need for targeted interventions to protect children's well-being amidst the complexities of child Labour.
- **Working Conditions and Compensation:** The majority of Syrian refugee children in Turkey are involved in extensive work commitments, with 63% working more than 8 hours per day, indicating prolonged labor engagement. This extended work negatively affects various aspects of their lives, including rest, nutrition, mental health, and educational opportunities, potentially contributing to increased school dropout rates. Additionally, prolonged labor exposes children to heightened risks such as exploitation and physical exhaustion. Among different age groups, there is variation in labor work engagement. Notably, 20% of children aged 10 to 14 are engaged in labor for durations ranging from 4 to 6 hours and 6 to 8 hours. Particularly in Kilis, child laborers aged 10 to 14 are more active, with 27% working between 4 to 6 hours and 41% between 6 to 8 hours, compared to aged group 15 to 17. The distribution of working hours varies across provinces. Şanlıurfa has the highest percentage of child laborers working over 8 hours 82%, followed by Gaziantep 57%, Hatay 62%, and Kilis 21%.

The majority of child laborers 93% receive monetary compensation for their work, while a smaller portion 5% receive non-monetary compensation such as food or shelter, and only 2% receive no compensation at all. Among individuals aged 10 to 14, 11% receive non-monetary compensation, potentially indicating exploitation or discrimination due to their vulnerable status. Compensation frequency varies among respondents, with 55% receiving payment weekly and 31% receiving it daily. Among individuals aged 10 to 14, 42% receive daily compensation, indicating a prevalence of daily wage labor in this age group. Compensation frequency also varies across provinces, with Hatay having the highest proportion of daily compensation at 44% of child laborers.

Total compensation varies significantly across provinces, with Hatay having the highest total compensation at 4763 Turkish Lira, followed by Gaziantep 4740, Kilis 2090, and Şanlıurfa 2807. Male respondents receive a higher total compensation 4,068 Turkish Lira compared to girls 3,560 Turkish Lira, and those aged 15 to 17 receive higher wages 4,338 Turkish Lira compared to those aged 10 to 14 2,311 Turkish Lira. While 90% of child laborers receive the promised wages, a significant 79% express that these earnings are not sufficient to cover household expenses. Notably, in Kilis, only 35% of respondents report this concern, suggesting that wages meet household needs more effectively compared to other provinces.

Regarding alternative compensation, 10% receive clothing, with Gaziantep having the highest percentage 25%. Additionally, 45% receive food and shelter, particularly high in Gaziantep and Kilis at 75% and 100% respectively. Similarly, in Şanlıurfa, 90% of child laborers receive shelter as compensation. These findings underscore the diverse forms of compensation and their implications for the well-being and economic security of child laborers.

- **Drivers of Child Labor:** Economic factors are the primary drivers of child labor within Syrian families, with 38% of respondents citing the need to support family income as a significant factor. Additionally, 24% of respondents reports financial necessity to meet household needs as another major factor.

Focus group discussions underscored the negative impacts of child labor on children's safety, health, and educational advancement. Economic necessity 33%, displacement due to conflict 21%, and family dynamics 13% were highlighted as significant factors influencing child labor engagement. Key informant interviews also identified poverty and economic hardship as fundamental forces propelling families, particularly those with limited income and job prospects, to rely on child labor for financial survival. Additional factors included lack of awareness, limited educational opportunities, and cultural norms.

A significant portion 51% of respondents indicate wide acceptance and normalization of child labor within their families, while 37% somewhat accepted it with reservations. Higher acceptance was observed among the 10 to 14 age group across all provinces.

Cultural factors, including community norms and traditions, were found to play a significant role in influencing child labor practices and prevalence. These factors included societal attitudes towards education and economic circumstances.

Boys and girls are engaged in different types of labor performed, with boys often engaged in outdoor labor and girls in indoor or agricultural labor. Additionally, age was identified as a factor influencing the type of labor children are engaged in.

Additionally, Lack of proper documentation and language barriers were highlighted as critical factors contributing to the prevalence of child labor. These barriers hinder children's access to education and expose them to exploitation in the labor market.

Cultural, socioeconomic, and institutional factors intertwine to fuel the prevalence of child labor, presenting challenges for effective interventions. These challenges include community and parental unawareness, economic pressures, weak enforcement of laws, and resistance to changing cultural norms.

- **Vulnerabilities and Work Hazards:** Child labor exposes children to hazards such as long working hours, physical and ergonomic risks, exploitation, and abuse. The survey findings uncovered a multitude of risks and hazards faced by child laborers during their work. Notably, 29% endured long hours and exhaustion, 22% lacked access to education, and 14% faced physical hazards. Gaziantep reveals the highest percentage of hazards among child laborers at 55%. Among age groups, those aged 15 to 17 faced the highest overall hazard rate of 68%, with 22% affected by long hours and exhaustion. In comparison, the 10 to 14 age group experienced a slightly lower overall hazard rate of 32%, with 8% impacted by lack of education and another 8% by long hours and exhaustion.

Furthermore, 18% of respondents reports experiencing the worst forms of labor. Hatay shows a significant portion, 38%, engaged in hazardous work, while Şanlıurfa highlighted a notable 17% involved in forced labor. Equipment usage was prevalent among 46% of child laborers overall, with variations by gender and province. Additionally, nearly half of child laborers lacked protection against severe weather conditions, with notable differences between genders and age groups. The majority, 61% of Child labors worked between 7 and 10 hours during the day. Many child laborers encountered situations involving lifting heavy objects or handling heavy machinery comprising 17% of child laborer. Work-related injuries affected 18% of respondents overall and 37% of respondents reports potential deductions from their pay, with occasional deductions being more prevalent among girls.

- **Impact on Well-Being:** Engaging in harmful labor practices significantly compromises the health and well-being of Syrian refugee children, leading to physical and psychological effects, poor nutrition, and concerns about disability due to work-related hazards. The assessment findings highlighted impact of child labor on the health and well-being of those involved. A significant proportion, comprising 53% of respondents, expressed concerns about their work negatively

affecting their health. In Şanlıurfa, a notable 69% of respondents reports negative effects on their mental well-being, followed by Hatay at 58%.

The survey also highlighted prevalent stress and anxiety among child laborers, with 30% reporting continuous feelings and 53% reporting occasional occurrences. Notably, girls experienced continuous stress or anxiety at a higher rate 36% compared to boys 24%. Similarly, provincial differences exist, with Hatay showing the highest percentage 69% of respondents reporting occasional stress or anxiety, particularly notable among those aged 10 to 14 at 42%. Conversations from focus group discussions (FGDs) delved into the multifaceted impacts of child labor, emphasizing its toll on health, education, mental well-being, and economic stability. Participants noted how child labor often leads to fatigue, prolonged illness recovery, and heightened vulnerability to diseases and injuries, especially in hazardous sectors like agriculture.

- **Nutrition and Physical Child Development Challenges:** The assessment results reveal range of negative health consequences linked to child labor, including stunted growth, malnutrition, heightened vulnerability to illnesses, and mental health issues. A significant proportion, comprising 35% of respondents, expressed concerns about the impact of work on their physical growth, with girls reporting a higher percentage at 43% compared to boys at 28%. Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa emerged with the highest percentages, at 41% and 36% respectively reports effects on their physical growth. Notably, among respondents aged 10 to 14, 47% believed their physical growth was affected by work, whereas among those aged 15 to 17, the percentage was lower at 31%.
- **Educational Impact:** Child labor results in widespread absenteeism from school, academic decline, and denial of the right to education, exacerbating social isolation and continuing cycles of poverty. The survey findings reveal significant challenges regarding education for child laborers, with 76% reporting school absences due to work. The provincial breakdown highlights varying patterns, with Hatay comprising the highest percentage of school absences due to work 94%, while Kilis with low percentage at 62%. Among respondents aged 10 to 14, 85% reports school absences, while among those aged 15 to 17, the percentage was 73%. Moreover, a notable majority 64% of respondents' reports losing their right to education, with girls experiencing a higher percentage 70% compared to boys 58%.
- **Concentration Challenges and Work-related Fears & Injuries:** The survey findings reveals that 57% of respondents experience feelings of fear or danger during their work activities, with boys reporting a higher percentage 59% than girls 55%. In Şanlıurfa, a substantial 78% of respondent's reports experiencing such feelings. Among respondents aged 10 to 14, 72% reports these feelings, while among those aged 15 to 17, the percentage was lower at 51%.
- **Sacrifices in Family Time:** The survey findings indicates that a significant majority, comprising 83% of respondents, believe that their job significantly impacted their ability to spend time with their family. Şanlıurfa had the highest percentage of respondents reporting no family time due to work, with 92%. A significant majority, comprising 67% of all respondents, reports that their work affects their relationships with peers. Specifically, 69% of girls and 66% of boys indicate that their work has an impact on their relationships with peers.
- **Community Perspectives on Child Labor:** The survey findings highlighted a significant concern among respondents regarding the effects of children working instead of attending school on their community. 92% of the total respondents expressed that such employment negatively impacts the community. Şanlıurfa with the highest percentage at 97%. Additionally, the survey data indicate that 47% of respondents believe child labor contributes to community poverty. Conversely, 53% do not believe child labor supports community poverty.

- **Challenges faced by groups:**

Vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied minors, refugee girls, and disabled children face heightened risks and barriers to accessing education and protection from labor abuses. Tailored interventions, including access to basic needs, education, vocational training, and psychosocial support, are essential to address these challenges effectively.

- **Policy Evaluation:**

Current policies and interventions face significant gaps and challenges, including weak enforcement mechanisms, limited awareness among stakeholders, and obstacles in accessing services for vulnerable populations. Strengthening collaboration, legislative enforcement, and addressing socio-economic factors are essential to combat child labor effectively.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Child Labour is a prominent problem of today's world. Despite numerous legally binding instruments that prohibit Child Labor, there is still a long and winding road before it is completely eradicated. 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 Labor" 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 problem of Child Labor becomes especially poignant in developing and least developed countries, mostly due to economic factors, and in specific sectors where unqualified human force is used.

Child Labor is a deeply entrenched global issue intricately tied to cultural and socio-economic factors. Studies over the past two decades have shed light on its complexity, attributing its prevalence primarily to poverty alongside other factors like traditional family practices, lack of educational opportunities, and employer demand for cheap labor, despite international agreements like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), ratified by Türkiye, Child Labor persists, with children often engaged in work to alleviate family financial burdens or break the cycle of poverty.¹

Despite the legal ban on Child Labor, the last outdated official TÜİK statistics from TÜİK 2013 showed that the number of children who are working is about 900,000; when domestic Labour is included, the number is over eight million.² Türkiye, like many developing countries, grapples with the challenge of accurately assessing the extent of Child Labor due to gaps in registration and enforcement of regulations. Sectors such as agriculture, where registration is lacking, tend to have more child workers than official statistics suggest. Additionally, shortcomings in regulation enforcement often led to Child Labor being masked as "children helping their families" in government records, further hampering efforts to deal with this problem effectively. Despite efforts to combat Child Labor, its eradication remains a significant challenge, requiring comprehensive strategies that address its root causes and ensure enforcement of protective measures for children's rights.

Child Labour in Türkiye

Children consist of one-third of the total population of Türkiye, approximately 23 million. Türkiye also has the second highest level of child poverty among the OECD countries with a ratio of 28.4%.³ According to the results of 2019 of the Child Labor survey of Türkiye Statistical Institute (TUIK), the number of working children in the 5–17 age group in Türkiye was 720,000 4.4% of all children.⁴ While the employment rate of children in the 5–17 age group working in economic activity among children in the same age group was 4.4% of which 30.8% of them were working in agriculture, 23.7% of them in industry, and 45.5% of them in the service sector.⁵

The common reasons for children working were "helping the economic activity and income of the household" 59.1%, followed by "learning jobs, having a profession" 34.4%. Overall, 6.4% of the children work to "meet their own needs", 66.1% of working children work in regular workplaces, 30.4% in fields and gardens, 3% in mobile unstable workplaces or street markets, and 0.5% at home.⁶

The Turkish Statistical Institute's Child Labor Force Survey and Household Labor Force Survey of 2020 revealed concerning figures regarding child labor across different age groups. Among boys aged 5-11, 24 thousand 0.5% out of 4 million 626 thousand were working, while for girls in the same age range, the number stood at 8 thousand (0.2%) out of 4 million 386 thousand.⁷ In the 12-14 age group, 77 thousand boys 4.0% out of 1 million 948 thousand and 37 thousand girls 2.0% out of 1 million 848 thousand were engaged in labor activities.⁸ Moreover, a significant portion of boys aged 15-17, totaling 407 thousand 21.7% out of 1 million 876 thousand, and girls, amounting to 167 thousand 9.4% out of 1 million 773 thousand, were actively working.⁹

The statistics show a wider picture of the issue when considering the overall child workforce. Out of a total of 9 million 12 thousand children aged 5-11, 32 thousand 0.4% were part of the workforce.¹⁰ For children aged 12-14, the number increased to 114 thousand 3.0% out of 3 million 796 thousand, and for those aged 15-17, a significant proportion of 574 thousand 15.7% out of 3 million 649 thousand were involved in labor activities.¹¹ These figures highlight the widespread nature of child labor in Türkiye and emphasize the need for targeted interventions to address this concerning phenomenon.¹² In Türkiye, the number of children aged 5-17 is estimated to be 16 million 457 thousand, accounting for 20.3 percent of the non-institutional population.¹³ The number of children in the 5-11 age group is estimated to be 9 million 12 thousand, the number of children in the 12-14 age group is 3 million 796 thousand and the number of children in the 15-17 age group is 3 million 649 thousand.¹⁴

Türkiye Provinces with Syrians refugees' population

According to the General Directorate of Migration Management Türkiye, there is no city in Türkiye where there are no Syrians. Due to the migration of Syrian refugees, a significant demographic impact is observed in eight southern provinces collectively hosting approximately 57% of the Syrian refugee population in Türkiye.¹⁵

As of August 17, 2023, the number of Syrians under temporary protection registered in Türkiye decreased by 21.634 people compared to the previous month, making a total of 3 million 307 thousand and 882 people. The number of Syrians has decreased by 205 thousand and 894 people since the beginning of the year.

The Number of Syrians Living in Camps: (Temporary Refugee Center) As of August 17, 2023, the number of Syrians staying in temporary housing centers was announced as 73.854 people. This number was 65 thousand 8 people last month (July 13, 2023), 47 thousand 603 people at the beginning of 2023, 51 thousand 435 people at the beginning of 2022, 58 thousand 752 people at the beginning of 2021, 63 thousand 247 people at the beginning of 2020, 143 thousand 558 people at the beginning of 2019, and 228 thousand 251 people at the beginning of 2018. Only 1.4% of Syrians live in camps.

The Number of Syrians Living in Cities: As of August 17, 2023, the number of Syrians living in cities was announced as 3 million 234 thousand 28 people. The number of Syrians living in cities decreased by 30.480 people compared to last month. 97,77% of Syrians live in cities. Foreigner density exceeds 20% compared to the Turkish population a total of 1.169 neighborhoods in Ankara, Antalya, Aydın, Bursa, Çanakkale, Düzce, Edirne, Hatay, İstanbul, İzmir, Kırklareli, Kocaeli, Muğla, Sakarya, Tekirdağ and Yalova and other cities where foreigners live intensely are closed to the applications of all foreigners of any status. foreigners of any nationality are not accepted in these places.

On 17 August 2023 the General Directorate of Migration Management Türkiye issued a list of provinces with Syrian population. Istanbul hosts 531 thousand 996 and followed by Gaziantep with 434 thousand 45 people, and Şanlıurfa with 317 thousand 716 people.

The Cities with the Highest Concentration of Syrians: The cities where Syrians are most concentrated compared to the local population is Kilis with 33,9%. There are 147 thousand 919 Turkish citizens and 75 thousand 971 Syrians registered in Kilis. Kilis is followed by Gaziantep with 16,85%, with 2 million and 69 thousand Turkish citizens and 434 thousand and 45 Syrian registered in Gaziantep.

The Cities with the Least Population of Syrians: The cities with the lowest number of Syrians are Tunceli with 88 thousand 198 Turkish citizens and 434 thousand and 39 Syrian. Bayburt is followed by Tunceli with 48 thousand and 36 Turkish citizens and 45 Syrian. Hakkari is the province with the lowest density of Syrians compared to the Turkish population with a rate of 0.02%, where 218 thousand and 470 Turkish citizens and 46 Syrian registered.

The ratio of Syrians to the Turkish Population: The proportion of registered Syrians under temporary protection to the Turkish population is 3,73% nationwide. The population of Türkiye was last announced as 85 million 279 thousand 553 by the TÜİK. (As of December 31, 2022).

SYRIAN REFUGEE POPULATION IN TURKEY'S SOUTH-EASTERN REGION

According to the General Directorate of Migration Management Türkiye, after Istanbul, the southeastern provinces such as Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa have the highest number of Syrian refugee residents, primarily due to kinship and cultural ties with border communities, among other contributing factors. Table 1 shows the number of Syrian residents in Southeast provinces.

No.	Province	Syrian Population ¹⁶
1	*Gaziantep ¹⁷	434,045
2	Şanlıurfa	317,716
3	Mardin	84,252
4	*Kilis	75,971
5	Diyarbakır	21,764
6	Adıyaman	21,607
7	Batman	12,303
8	Siirt	4,048
9	Şırnak	2,122
10	Hatay	29,883

Table 1: Child Labour assessment sample details

CHILD LABOR AND ROOT CAUSES IN TÜRKIYE

Child Labor is influenced by a multitude of factors, varying across different countries and regions. Poverty, lack of social protection, limited access to education, population growth, and migration all contribute to its prevalence. During economic recessions, Child Labor rates tend to spike, as it is seen as a cheap and compliant workforce. This is significant given the severity of Turkey's current economic crisis.¹⁸ The scarcity of formal job opportunities leads to a rise in irregular employment, where workers are excluded from social security benefits and legal protections. This situation disproportionately affects migrant children, who are particularly vulnerable to exploitation in irregular employment settings.¹⁹

Poverty perpetuates Child Labor, a pervasive issue in Türkiye affecting a large population estimated at around 75 million. This cycle of poverty has persisted for generations, exacerbating the prevalence of child labor across the country.²⁰ Poverty stands as a significant driver behind child labor, with statistics from TURKSTAT revealing a striking 35.9% of 13-year-olds engaged in it.²¹ The economic necessity for families, particularly in low-income brackets, propels children into the workforce, with 13% of households surveyed indicating child laborers. Shockingly, in 6% of these households, children are the sole breadwinners, emphasizing many families' dire financial circumstances.²²

In Türkiye, Child Labor takes on added significance for seasonal migrant workers, among the most economically marginalized groups. For these families, the labor of every member, including children, is essential for survival.²³ Recognizing this, efforts to combat Child Labor must address economic factors and consider the socio-economic realities that push children into the workforce.²⁴ By addressing poverty and advocating for the rights and well-being of children, comprehensive solutions can be developed to break the cycle of Child Labor and uplift vulnerable communities.

Statistics from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) reveals gender and age-based discrepancies in education access within households. It shows that each additional year of education results in an 11.7% increase in future wages for girls, compared to 9.6% for boys. However, there are 16 million girls aged 6 to 11 who will never have the opportunity to start school, a number twice as high as that of boys. Consequently, these girls often rely on seasonal agricultural work.

The economic status of parents directly influences children's participation in the workforce. When adults in the family are unemployed, children often join the workforce to contribute to the family income. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in urban centers like Istanbul, Izmir, and Bursa, where crowded families struggle to make ends meet.

Child labor serves as a coping mechanism for families facing financial hardship, with children working to cover essential expenses such as rent, food, healthcare, and education. Girls, in particular, often bear a disproportionate burden, balancing household chores with work responsibilities, which impedes their access to education and affects their physical well-being, emotional and will be vulnerable to child marriage and gender-based violence. Additionally, parental education levels play a significant role, with children from families where the head has completed secondary school being less likely to be employed in paid jobs compared to those from less-educated households.

The lack of decent job prospects exacerbates the problem, pushing more children into the labor market. In many cases, these children are forced to work in hazardous conditions and at high risk of hazardous work for little pay, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and exploitation.²⁵ Addressing Child Labor requires comprehensive measures that tackle its root causes, including poverty alleviation, improved access to education, and the creation of formal job opportunities.²⁶

Additionally, efforts to strengthen social protection systems and enforce labor laws are crucial to prevent the exploitation of vulnerable children. By addressing these underlying factors, societies can work towards eradicating Child Labor and ensuring the protection of children safety, well-being and rights of all children.²⁷

Family dynamics play a significant role in Child Labor, particularly in seasonal agricultural work prevalent in various regions of Türkiye.²⁸ Factors such as household structure, parental education levels, the presence of working parents, and the health status of family members significantly impact whether children are engaged in labor activities.²⁹ Many children employed in seasonal agriculture come from crowded households with parents who have low educational attainment.³⁰

Families engaged in seasonal migration for agricultural work often travel with their children, as they lack secure places to leave them behind.³¹ This practice exposes children to the labor force, where they frequently accompany their families to the fields and contribute to tasks such as harvesting and receiving payment either on a daily wage basis or based on the quantity of harvested products.³² The economic motivation for families to involve their children in agricultural labor is evident, as they receive additional income for their children's work, further perpetuating the cycle of Child Labor.³³

Research conducted in 2010 revealed alarming statistics regarding the impact of seasonal agricultural work on children's education. Approximately 20.0% of children did not complete primary education due to their involvement in agricultural labor, with 47.2% being illiterate.³⁴ This data underscores the detrimental effects of seasonal agricultural work on children's access to education, highlighting the urgent need for interventions to address this issue and break the cycle of poverty-driven Child Labor in Türkiye's agricultural sector.³⁵

Migration significantly contributes to the rise of Child Labor in Türkiye, particularly evident among Syrian families seeking refuge. Economic pressure forces many Syrians into the lowest-paid and most precarious sectors of the workforce outside refugee camps, with 98% residing in urban areas and relying on waged labor.³⁶ Notably, 44.9% of Turkey's 3.8 million registered Syrians are below 18 years old, highlighting the vulnerability of Syrian children to exploitation in various industries, including textiles, construction, and seasonal agriculture.³⁷

The influx of migrant laborers, both Syrian refugees and local migrants from rural to urban areas, exacerbates the prevalence of Child Labor. Syrian children, alongside their families, often engage in unskilled work as "low-cost labor," subjecting them to abuse and exploitation.³⁸ This trend is particularly pronounced in sectors such as textiles, construction, and seasonal agriculture, where labor is cheap and job security is minimal.³⁹

The migration of local populations from rural to urban settings further fuels the demand for migrant labor in seasonal agricultural work. This trend not only drives down labor costs but also exposes migrant workers, including children, to precarious and insecure working conditions. The intersection of migration, economic necessity, and exploitation underscores the urgent need for comprehensive interventions to protect vulnerable children from the cycle of Child Labor and ensure their rights and well-being are upheld.

Access to education plays a crucial role in addressing Child Labor, yet several challenges persist within Turkey's education system. Critics argue that the current system inadvertently facilitates Child Labor by only mandating education until a certain age, leaving children vulnerable to exploitation once they complete their mandatory schooling under the 4+4+4 system.⁴⁰ Moreover, the shift to distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated barriers to education for disadvantaged groups, potentially pushing more children into the labor force.⁴¹

A significant gap exists in the education system's ability to cater to migrant and refugee children, leading to discrimination and isolation within schools. This exclusionary environment often drives these children towards abandoning their education in favor of entering the workforce. Despite the potential of vocational schools to offer pathways to employment in accordance with labor laws, research highlights a lack of compliance among employers with legislation related to vocational education. Consequently, students enrolled in vocational programs may face exploitation in the labor market, undermining the intended benefits of such educational pathways.⁴²

Addressing the intersection of education and Child Labor requires comprehensive reforms to ensure inclusive access to quality education for all children, regardless of their background or status. Efforts must focus on closing gaps in the education system that perpetuate inequality and exploitation, particularly for vulnerable migrant and refugee children. Stronger enforcement of labor laws and regulations governing vocational education is essential to protect students from labor exploitation and ensure their educational and occupational rights are secured.⁴³

PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOUR

Most studies on child labor in Türkiye, claim that agriculture and urban informal sectors, are the two areas where this issue is the most visible. In agriculture, the use of child labour concentrates in production of cash crops, such as cotton, tobacco, tea where the manual labour is vital while children who work on the streets in urban areas collect waste material that can be re-cycled from garbage bins.

a) Agriculture

Child labor is especially prevalent within the agricultural sector, with 70% of children working in agriculture according to the statistics of ILO & UNICEF in 2020.⁴⁴ This translates to over 98 million children worldwide, with the majority, about 67.5%, working as unpaid family members. Shockingly, some children enter the workforce as early as 5 to 7 years old, often facing hazardous conditions and long hours of labor. Agriculture ranks among the most perilous sectors for child laborers, with approximately 59% of children engaged in dangerous work found within this industry.⁴⁵ The dangers encompass various aspects, including work-related fatalities, non-fatal accidents, and exposure to harmful substances.

The utilization of child labor in agriculture manifests differently across countries, ranging from unpaid family work to paid labor on commercial farms. Children may juggle responsibilities between their family farms and commercial ones, adjusting their work according to the agricultural calendar. However, regardless of the specific arrangement, children in agriculture are exposed to a multitude of risks, including biological, physical, chemical, ergonomic, hygienic, and psychological hazards.⁴⁶ These dangers not only jeopardize their well-being but also pose long-term health implications, with exhaustion, illness, and even death or disabling injuries being expected outcomes. Because of this addressing child labor in the agricultural sector requires comprehensive measures to safeguard children's rights and ensure their protection from exploitation and harm.

As in other developing and recently industrialized countries, the number of children in the labor force in Türkiye is one of the areas of the economy that remains most opaque, and the reliability of information on this issue is questionable.⁴⁷ In this way, it is known that the number of child workers in such sectors as agriculture where lack of registration is widespread is much greater than that shown by national statistics. In addition to this lack of registration, deficiencies in the application of regulations and inspection are reflected in the part of the child labor force being recorded in government statistics as "children helping their families." It has been claimed that in Türkiye, it is not clear, especially in the agriculture sector, exactly how many children are working, for what reasons, at what kinds of work, and under what conditions. In agriculture, in particular, the existence of a working child labor force is condoned. Under such conditions, it is difficult for decision-makers to assess the accurate dimensions of the child labor problem.⁴⁸

According to data from a 2015 Turkstat report, a large proportion of Child Labor is employed in rural areas, more specifically in the agricultural sector; 44.7 % (399,000 persons) of total employed children were engaged in the agricultural sector. Conversely, 24.3 % (217,000 persons) of children were engaged in industry, and 31 % (277,000 persons) were engaged in services.⁴⁹ Employment in agriculture increased by 8.1 percentage points, industry decreased by 6.6, and services decreased by 1.5 percentage points, respectively, when comparing the results of the 2006 and 2013 TURKSTAT report.⁵⁰ About 53 % (470,000 persons) of total employed children worked as regular or casual employees, and 46.2 % (413,000 persons) of total employed children worked as unpaid family workers.⁵¹

In rural Türkiye, both girls and boys work in the agricultural sector for their families without pay, but in other cases, they work for pay, especially in areas with little or no farmland and low-income levels.⁵² According to data from a 2013 Turkish Statistics Institute on Child Labor in 2012, 893,000 children were employed; 399,000 were in the agricultural sector, 217,000 in industry, and 277,000 in services.⁵³

An examination of the status of child workers working in economic activities shows that a large proportion 53% worked for pay or day wages.⁵⁴ Working over a long period is a factor that increases the risk of work accidents and work-related illnesses. Working for long hours in a work environment can cause work accidents because of fatigue and the physical and mental load, which increases the risk of contracting work-related illnesses and injuries. In Türkiye, 96.2 % of children working in agriculture worked in places employing between one and nine workers in an informal, unregistered capacity, and 39.3 % worked from 1 to 15 hours.⁵⁵ The proportion of children working in agriculture for 40 hours a week or more was determined by a 2013 TURKSTAT report to be 27.9 %.⁵⁶

Child labor in agriculture poses significant risks to children's health and well-being due to exposure to hazardous conditions such as handling inorganic fertilizers and pesticides, enduring physically demanding tasks for prolonged periods, and using dangerous tools, often in extreme temperatures. This form of Child Labor is incredibly challenging to address as it predominantly occurs in rural areas, making it difficult to reach and regulate. Given the prevalence of Child Labor in agriculture, efforts to eliminate it prioritize this sector. Cotton production, particularly, is known to be high-risk due to its partially mechanized processes. While cotton harvesting has seen some mechanization in Türkiye, certain farms still rely on manual labor, including children, for tasks like hand-picking, especially in regions dominated by small to medium-sized farms.

Despite advancements in mechanization, factors such as the terrain of cotton fields and the need for manual weeding continue to necessitate the use of labor, including Child Labor, in some instances. This reliance on manual labor is often due to the high cost of harvesting machines, particularly for smaller farms. Consequently, children working in cotton harvesting are exposed to various hazards, including excessive sun exposure, pesticide handling, heavy lifting, and pest bites. Efforts to mitigate Child Labor in cotton production must address these underlying factors while promoting mechanization where feasible and ensuring adequate enforcement of labor regulations to protect children from exploitation and harm. The garment industry is significant in the Turkish economy and contributes substantially to its export sector. With a share of 11.5% of the country's total exports, Türkiye ranks as the world's seventh-largest garment exporter and the third-largest supplier to Europe.⁵⁷ Critical destinations for Turkish garment exports include Germany, Spain, the UK, the Netherlands, and France. This underscores the industry's pivotal role in both domestic and international markets.⁵⁸

Data from May 2022 provided by the SSI reveals that Türkiye boasts 19,923 textile manufacturing workplaces. These establishments collectively employ a sizable workforce of 504,249 registered and insured workers.⁵⁹ However, as of November 2022, information regarding the extent of unregistered employment in the textile sector remains unavailable from TURKSTAT and SSI sources.⁶⁰ Despite this gap in data, the figures highlight the substantial employment opportunities generated by the textile industry, further emphasizing its economic significance within Türkiye.

b) Child Labor Urban Streets

Children working on the streets in Turkish urban areas face dire conditions, with limited scholarly attention dedicated to understanding their lives. Commonly found engaging in activities such as begging, selling bread, shining shoes, and vending small items like tissues or gum, these children endure circumstances akin to slavery. Despite being a multi-generational issue, accurate estimates of their numbers remain elusive, with governmental figures significantly lower than non-governmental estimates, which suggest around 250,000 children by the late 1990s.

Research identifies various factors driving children into street work, including poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, extended family structures, poor family function, and migration. These children often experience exploitation and violence, with their work consuming their time for leisure and rest, leading to physical and psychological health issues. Additionally, street work isolates them from their peers and local social networks, exacerbating their vulnerability and marginalization.

Much research on this topic highlights the link between familial struggles and children working on the streets. Families facing hardships in integrating into new urban environments often rely on their children

to contribute financially, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and exploitation. The absence of comprehensive studies to estimate the actual numbers of street-working children hampers efforts to address the issue effectively. Furthermore, the discrepancy between governmental and non-governmental estimates underscores the challenges in accurately assessing the extent of the problem.

Efforts to combat the exploitation of street-working children must address the root causes identified in the research, including poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to education. Providing social support systems and economic opportunities for families could reduce the need for children to work on the streets. Additionally, targeted interventions aimed at protecting these children from exploitation and violence are essential. Until comprehensive studies are conducted to assess the scope of this issue, addressing the widespread exploitation and suffering of these children will remain challenging.

c) Garbage Collection and Recycling

In many cities in Türkiye, a significant number of children are engaged in collecting and sorting recyclable waste material from garbage bins, this is a common site for those inhabiting cities like Istanbul. This form of labor has become increasingly challenging over the past two decades. These children often navigate the streets, visiting numerous garbage bins throughout the day and hauling loads of recyclables in large bags attached to metal carts.⁶¹ This work is physically demanding, especially when carts are fully loaded, making it back-breaking labor exacerbated by weather conditions and navigating through traffic.⁶²

Estimates made in the late 2000s suggested that at that time there were approximately 200,000 recyclable waste collectors in Türkiye, encompassing both adults and children, with about 10,000 of them working in Ankara alone.⁶³ Various studies have shed light on the harsh working conditions faced by these collectors, highlighting the difficulties experienced by children involved in this labor. These studies also underscore the complex factors contributing to the large-scale participation of adults and children in recyclable waste collection.

Namely eastern and south-eastern parts witnessed the migration of a large population to bigger cities. Migrating people wanted to find better life opportunities, more opportunities to work, and more money. Since city centers did not have enough resources to provide the needed accommodation, education, health services, and job opportunities, this period of migration brought a lot of trouble. Throughout the 1990s, during the height of the Kurdish Conflict, many people moved to large cities in western Türkiye, like Istanbul, due to the armed conflict in the south-eastern part of the country.⁶⁴ The conflict in Syria in 2011 has also resulted in an influx of people moving to larger cities to escape the war in their home country and in such higher salaries. Having been forced to migrate to the city centers, people found no integration policies or facilities. One major problem children garbage collector encounter when they first get into waste picking is debt. The waste collection organizers, who are known as “junk dealers,” give credit to children.⁶⁵ The debts are reduced when children bring back waste materials. Therefore, the children become dependent on the waste material industry and factories.⁶⁶

From the 1950s, the massive population shift from villages to cities prepared a base for new social, economic, and demographic changes. For almost 40 years, people continued to settle down in urban centers, and in 1985, the urban population reached 51% percent of the total population. These migrations were mostly because of social and economic deficiencies and the internal conflict in south-eastern Türkiye. Hence, many families migrated to big cities like Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Adana, Antalya, Diyarbakır and Gaziantep without any preparation.

One notable trend revealed by research is the link between poverty and internal displacement due to forced migration from South-eastern Türkiye to major cities across the country. This process, which researchers have long overlooked, plays a significant role in driving individuals, including children, into the collection of recyclable waste as a means of survival. The studies conducted on this subject not only highlight the harsh realities faced by recyclable waste collectors but also emphasize the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to address the root causes of this phenomenon, including poverty and displacement.

ASSESSMENT SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

World Vision Syria Response office aimed to conduct Child Labour Assessment in southeast Türkiye to understand the current state of child Labour among Syrian refugees in the country, its root causes, and the effectiveness of existing policies and programs. This comprehensive child Labour assessment will contribute to the efforts of the Turkish government and its partners in eradicating child labor and promoting a safe and prosperous future for all children in the country.

IMPACT OF WORST FORM OF CHILD LABOUR

Child labor was found to be associated with a number of adverse health outcomes, including but not limited to poor growth, malnutrition, higher incidence of infectious and system-specific diseases, behavioral and emotional disorders, and decreased coping efficacy. Quality of included studies was rated as fair to good.⁶⁷

Refugee populations are at high risk of experiencing trauma and developing negative mental health outcomes. The resilience of Syrian refugee children is not well established as far as modifying the association between trauma and mental illness. A total of 339 Syrian refugee children aged 10 to 17 were surveyed to assess resilience, depression and history of trauma. All children report exposure to at least one traumatic event, 48.6% reports exposure to highly salient traumatic events such as being held hostage, kidnapping or imprisonment. High rates of suicidal ideation and depression symptomatology were found. Resilience was strongly inversely related to depression.

a) Effects on mental health

A study conducted in Jordan reports a significant difference in the level of coping efficacy and psychosocial health between working non-schooled children, working school children and non-working school children. Non-working school children had a better performance on the behavioral assessment tool known as Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). Coping efficacy of working non-schooled children was lower than that of the other groups.

A study conducted in Pakistan reports that the prevalence of behavioral problems among working children was 9.8%. Peer problems were most prevalent, followed by problems of conduct.³⁰ A study from Ethiopia³¹ reports that emotional and behavioral disorders are more common among working children. However, another study in Ethiopia²⁸ reports a lower prevalence of mental/behavioral disorders in child laborers compared to non-working children. The stark difference between these two studies could be due to the explanation provided by Alem *et al.*, i.e. that their findings could have been tampered by selection bias or healthy worker effect.⁶⁸

It has been long understood that the refugee experience has a strong psychological effect on children. Throughout multiple contexts, history of adverse childhood events is a well-established risk factor for developing mental health disorders. Exposure to violence in particular has been shown to predispose children to developing mental illness such as depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), all of which are likely to persist throughout adulthood. Based on a study of Syrian refugee children living in Islahiye camp in Turkey, 79% had experienced a death in the family, 60% had seen someone being physically assaulted and 30% had themselves been physically hurt. The Bahçeşehir study of Syrian refugee children found that

almost half displayed symptoms of PTSD in addition to 44% reporting symptoms of depression. Given this impact, it is crucial to better understand the factors that are correlated with negative and positive mental health outcomes in refugee children and the literature in this regard is limited. Refugee population studies often focus on maladaptive behaviors and factors that lead to higher prevalence and severity of depression and anxiety, but far fewer have examined the protective factors that may have shielded refugee children from developing more severe mental health outcomes.⁶⁹

b) Impact on Nutrition and Physical Development

Child labor was found to be associated with a number of adverse health outcomes, including but not limited to poor growth, malnutrition, higher incidence of infectious and system-specific diseases, behavioral and emotional disorders, and decreased coping efficacy.

A study conducted in Pakistan, reports that child labor is associated with wasting, stunting and chronic malnutrition. A similar study conducted in India compared physical growth and genital development between working and non-working children and reports that child labor is associated with lower BMI, shorter stature and delayed genital development in working boys, while no significant differences were found among girls.⁷⁰

c) Impact on Child educational

Children work for very long hours; nearly three quarters of children in 2012 worked over 15 hours per week, with nearly half working for 40 or more hours per week. Naturally, such long hours make it very difficult for children to combine work with schooling with the result that only half of working children in 2012 were enrolled in school. Note that apprentices, who work under a formal engagement and typically for 4 or 5 days a week and who attend school only one day a week, are considered 'students'. Children who are neither in school nor in employment or training, the NEET group, constituted 5.6 percent of 15-17-year-olds in 2012. This group is mostly composed of girls (64.4 percent) because the NEET definition ignores household chores. When household chores are also taken into account, the 'inactive' children reduce to 2.1 percent of all children, with girls having a lower rate of inactivity than boys.⁷¹

d) Work-related Injuries

A study conducted in Bangladesh reports that there is a statistically significant positive association between child labor and the probability to report any injury or illness, tiredness/exhaustion, body injury and other health problems. Number of hours worked and the probability of reporting injury and illness were positively correlated. Younger children were more likely to suffer from backaches and other health problems (infection, burns and lung diseases), while probability of reporting tiredness/exhaustion was greater in the oldest age group. Furthermore, the frequency of reporting any injury or illness increases with the number of hours worked, with significant variation across employment sectors.⁷²

Overall, this assessment aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Analyze the prevalence and nature of child labor, particularly harmful forms, across different sectors in southeastern Turkey.
- Identify the main drivers of child labor, considering the effects of the earthquake, socio-economic circumstances, cultural influences, and institutional factors.
- Focus on the worst forms of child Labour.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of current legal frameworks, policies, and programs aimed at preventing and eradicating child labor.
- Provide recommendations for policy improvements, interventions, and strategies to address child Labour effectively.
- Raise awareness and understanding of child labor issues among stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, private businesses, and the general public.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This assessment study was planned to answer the following questions:

1. What is the prevalence and distribution of child labor among Syrian refugees in southeast Turkey, focusing on harmful forms across sectors?
2. What are the underlying and core contributing factors driving child labor among Syrian refugees in southeast Turkey including economic, societal, and awareness-related aspects?
3. Which vulnerable groups among Syrian refugees in southeast Turkey are most affected by child labor, and what specific challenges do they face engaging in harmful child labor activities?
4. What are the impacts of harmful child labor on the physical, psychological well-being, educational opportunities, and overall developmental trajectories of Syrian refugee children in southeast Turkey?
5. How effective are current policies, programs, and interventions in addressing harmful child labor among Syrian refugees in southeast Turkey, highlighting existing gaps for improvement?

GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS

The assessment covered the 4 provinces in the Southeastern Türkiye' by using both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Kilis, and Hatay.

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The Child Labour Assessment conducted in March 2024, including tasks such as developing data collection tools, creating a data collection plan, capacity building of field team, and data analysis. Data collection was conducted from March 16 to March 20, 2024. The assessment process comprised three types of data-gathering activities: a survey, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The sequence of activities began with the survey, followed by FGDs, and concluded with KIIs.

The assessment employed a mixed method approach by using quantitative and qualitative research data collection tools to answer the research questions. This mixed-method approach helped in gaining a deeper understanding of the context of child Labour in line with the assessment questions.

A comprehensive desk review of literature was conducted and included reports from various projects, donor agencies and government departments focusing on Child Rights, as well as research papers, articles, and other relevant sources. This review provided in-depth insight into the nature, extent, and primary driving factors of child Labour in Türkiye.

SAMPLING STRATEGY

a) Quantitative sampling:

ARFADA team employed the approach of calculating the sample by first determining the total Syrian refugee population in each province and then determining the proportion of the population to be sampled. The research team conducted snowball sampling in the field to select children, with the assistance of local resources such as Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) throughout the process.

The selection criteria for respondents (Children) in quantitative data collection will include the following:

- Age: Children under the legal working age. In Türkiye, the minimum legal age for employment is typically 16, exceptions may apply for specific types of work and conditions.
- Gender: Both (boys and girls) depend upon nature of child labour, locality and Community norms.
- Children with vulnerability: Children Such as those living in poverty, facing discrimination, or lacking access to education are at increased risk of child labour.

The quantitative sampling was calculated at 95% confidence interval and 5% margin of error. Thus, ensuring that results are statistically significant, reliable and accurate. Therefore, the planned sample size was (n=389) surveys, (n=196) were from Gaziantep, (n=143) from Şanlıurfa, (n=34) from Kilis and (n=16) from Hatay. On the other hand, the actual sample size based on the data collection is (n=389) divided among the 4 provinces as oriented in Table 2.

Data collection tools	Gaziantep			Şanlıurfa			Kilis			Hatay			Grand Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Quantitative Survey	99	99	196	71	72	143	16	18	34	9	7	16	389

Table 2: Child Labour assessment sample details

b) Qualitative sampling:

The **target population** for qualitative data collection included:

1. **Caregivers of Syrian Children (Father and Mother):** The caregivers whose children are engaged in engaged in child labour work.
2. **Government Officials and Service Providers Working on Child Rights and protection:** Included labour inspectors, social workers with social and family affairs and community leaders such Mokhtar.
3. **Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) Representatives:** representative of NGOs working on child protection services, informal education, and health services.
4. **Private sector, employers' union or representatives,**
5. **Education sector officials**

The criteria for selecting targeted participants in the qualitative data collection are well-defined and thoughtful like the following:

1. **Geographical Location (Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, Kilis, and Hatay Provinces):**
2. **Willingness to Participate and Availability:**

DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

Household surveys, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were used in the assessment. A total of (n=21) enumerators, (n=9) boys and (n=12) girls, were engaged in the data collection process. The enumerators were selected based on their familiarity with the context and location of residence. Prior to the actual data collection process, all field staff received introductory training in data collection principles and methods, including ethics, data quality, safety, security, protection, and child safeguarding.

Quantitative Survey

Quantitative survey with (n=389) across targeted locations conducted from March 16 to March 20, 2024. The survey included children living or working as child laborer in the targeted area of operation. This also included children with vulnerability and compelled to different type of child Labour such as those living in poverty, facing discrimination, or lacking access to education. Engaging a total of 389 participants (n=389). Specifically, (n=196) were from Gaziantep, (n=143) were from Şanlıurfa, (n=34) were from Kilis, and (n=16) were from Hatay.

Out of the (n=389) participants 195 (n=195) were boys and 194 (n=194) girls who participated in quantitative survey. The data collection involved collection of data from all working children who were able to reach and accepted the participation in the assessment. The data collection started after obtaining their parents' consent and was conducted separately from them under adult supervision. Qualified facilitators and note-takers led the sessions. The field manager conducted the participant selection process for qualitative and quantitative data collection tools, considering the following guidance for each tool.

Key Informant Interviews (KII)

A total of (n=16) KIIs were conducted from March 16 to March 18, 2024, as part of this assessment. Interviews (=8) with female and (n=8) with boys were conducted. All the key informants were selected based on their backgrounds. As such the assessment team were able to meet with 8 officials from education and private sectors, and 8 KIIs were conducted with non-governmental organization providing child protection, informal education, and health services in the 4 provinces.⁷³

Focus group Discussions (FGD)

A total of (n=8) FGDs were conducted from March 16 to March 18, 2024, with parents and community leaders divided between girls (n=1) and boys (n=2) and mixed group (n=5) across Şanlıurfa (n=2) Hatay (n=2) and Kilis (n=2).⁷⁴

Limitations and Mitigation Strategies

Limitations	Mitigation Strategies
Recruitment Strategy for Survey Respondents Across Governorates (Limitation in findings working children in the targeted locations due to the sensitivity of child labor as prohibited practice)	The assessment team contacted the local service providers and approached the snowball sample, as well as the outreach targeting, doing so enabled them to reach the target group of children under this assessment.
Contingency Plan: Substituting Surveys with Focus Group Discussions in province with Recruitment Challenges	Coordination with local service providers and ARFADA's partner to recruit and conduct the FGDs
Due to the type of target group from this assessment, which needs outreach practice to be reached, the total planned sample was achieved but it was different from the planned sample when comparing between the total sample per province.	To achieve the planned sample, the assessment team replace the gap in number of children working in one province with additional number of children working in other provinces that were targeted by this assessment.

Table 3: Limitations and mitigation strategies

ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

Demographic Characteristics

This section outlines the demographic characteristics of survey sample. In total, interviews were conducted with (n=389) children, evenly distributed between boys (n=195, 50%) and girls (194, 50%). All children who participate in this assessment are working children. The sample was further divided across four provinces based on their perspective population size of Syrian refugees in each province. Hence, (n=196, 50%) were from Gaziantep, (n=16, 4%) from Hatay, (n=34, 9%) from Kilis, and (n=143, 37%) from Şanlıurfa. Table 4.

Gender	Gaziantep		Hatay		Kilis		Şanlıurfa		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Male	99	25%	9	2%	16	4%	71	18%	195	50%
Female	97	25%	7	2%	18	5%	72	19%	194	50%
Total	196	50%	16	4%	34	9%	143	37%	389	100%

Table 4: Survey respondents' distribution by gender and provinces

As for the respondents' age parameters, according to the findings, the 28% of respondents were aged between 10 to 14 years old, with 21% girls and 35% were boys and 72% of the survey respondents' age parameters ranged between 15-17 years old, with 79% girls and 65% boys.

All respondents interviewed were residing in Temporary refugees Camp, host community⁷⁵, and Orphanage centers across provinces. 95% of the totals were residing in host communities with 49.9% being girls, and 50.1% boys.

The assessment results reveal that there is no notable difference based on location, as the majority of survey respondents from the four provinces were living in host communities.

The Syrian family household size vary across provinces. The majority 59%, consist 3 to 6 members. with a slightly higher percentage of girls 61% and 57% boys. Furthermore, no significant variation based on location, except Şanlıurfa where 75% of the household comprise 3-6 family members.

Similarly, a significant number of households consist more than 6 members., comprising 40% of the total, with a higher percentage of boys 42% compared to girls 38% of total. This finding reveals that the respondents belong to large family sizes which can be one factor behind child labour, due to the need for sufficient and sustainable HHs income to secure the large family member different needs. Families decide how many children to have and how much to invest in each child.⁷⁶

Also, it is worthy to note the overall family size in Syria is 5.65 which is close to the respondents' family size. These findings suggested that Syria population continue have the same family size in the hosting countries.⁷⁷

Also, the results in Table 5 reveals that there is association between the family size and child labour as the p-value is .000, this meant respondents who belonged to large family size are more exposed to child labour risk compared with respondents who belonged to small family size.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.829 ^a	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	27.953	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.249	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	389		

Table 5: Chi- square Test results (Family size and child labour)

The survey findings shows that only 16% of respondents reports attending school during the data collection period, comprising a higher percentage of boys 22% than girls 10%. As per survey results there is no significant variation in school attendance among survey respondents based on location. These findings shows that child Labour negatively affected children's school attendance. This is confirmed in the results in table 6 which reveals a positive association between attending school and child Labour at significant level .000. This meant that child labour is a key factor in school dropout. Table 6.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.316 ^a	1	.000
Continuity Correction	13.180	1	.000
Likelihood Ratio	13.229	1	.000
Fisher's Exact Test			
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.280	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	389		

Table 6: Chi- square Test results (Attending schools and child labour)

80% of respondents have attended school before, with 82% girls and 79% boys. Alternatively, 19% have not attended school, comprising 18% girls and 21% boys. In Gaziantep, 7% of respondents have not attended school, while in Hatay, this percentage is 13%. In Kilis, it is 24%, and in Şanlıurfa, it is 37%. Table 7.

Reason for not attending school	Gaziantep		Hatay		Kilis		Şanlıurfa		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Barrier of language	6	4%	0	0%	0	0%	2	2%	6	4%
Cannot afford schooling	21	14%	3	21%	8	31%	8	6%	21	14%
Child marriage	7	5%	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%	7	5%
No documentation	4	3%	2	14%	0	0%	9	7%	4	3%
The child is working	77	50%	3	21%	12	46%	101	77%	77	50%
The child or their caregivers perceive no advantage or value in education	31	20%	5	36%	4	15%	10	8%	31	20%
The school is far and difficult to access	9	6%	1	7%	1	4%	1	1%	9	6%
Total	155	100%	14	100%	26	100%	131	100%	155	100%

Table 7 Reason for not attending school by provinces.

Across provinces, there is no significant variation, except for Kilis and Şanlıurfa, where the percentage of children attending school is slightly lower, comprises 76% and 63% of the total, respectively.

Moreover, the percent of respondents who attended school in the past is notably higher in Gaziantep across all locations. Specifically, the data reveals that 20% of respondents attended school last year. Table 7.

Past school enrollment	Gaziantep		Hatay		Kilis		Şanlıurfa		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Four years ago	41	13%	3	1%	4	1%	22	7%	70	22%
One year ago	63	20%	6	2%	7	2%	20	6%	96	31%
Three years ago	43	14%	0	0%	8	3%	26	8%	77	25%
Two years ago	36	12%	5	2%	7	2%	22	7%	70	22%
Total	183	58%	14	4%	26	8%	90	29%	313	100%

Table 8: Past school enrollment analysis by province

a) Factors behind not attendance school

The survey data reveals the reasons behind the non-attendance of 83% of Syrian children in schools. The most prominent factor among the cited reasons is child labor, representing 59%. This indicates that a significant number of children are not attending schools due to their engagement in work activities.

Results indicate consistency across provinces, with the exception of Kilis, where the inability to afford schooling emerges as the second most factor contributing to non-enrollment in school, comprising 31% of the total and Hatay where 36% of Child caregivers perceive no value in education.

Furthermore, it is worthy to note that the assessment findings shows that respondents' age is negatively impacted child labour at (.001) significant level, as the elder children belong to age groups (15-17) are more exposure to child labour compared with younger children, as 72% of children aged between (10-14) ensured they are not attending schools during the data collection phase, while 88% of children aged between (15-17) reported they are not attending school during the data collection. Also, respondents in the 14-17 age group had [2.842 odds ratio value] times higher odds of being engaged in child labor compared to respondents in the 10-13 age group, holding other variables constant. Table 9.

Variables in the Equation						
	B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	1.045	.283	13.582	1	.000	2.842
	.968	.214	20.384	1	.000	2.633
a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: G101.						

Table 9: Regression test, attending school and child labour.

The Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) - [ratifications]: This fundamental convention sets the general minimum age for admission to employment or work at 15 years (13 for light work) and the minimum age for hazardous work at 18 (16 under certain strict conditions). It provides for the possibility of initially setting the general minimum age at 14 (12 for light work) where the economy and educational facilities are insufficiently developed.⁷⁸

Furthermore, 19.5% of respondents comprising, 21% of male respondents, and 13% of female respondents reports they never attend schools. These findings suggested the need to establishing informal education model that target those children who dropped out of school such as remedial classes to bridge the education gap between those children and their peers in school, and then adopt the integration approach to engage all children together in school education phase.

In conclusion, these findings suggested that adolescent children starting from early adolescence age are more exposure to engage with child labour compared with younger children. Age group-specific interventions and policies are crucial for addressing child labor effectively, particularly targeting the older age groups. Therefore, it is important to target children with prevention interventions such as raising awareness and other interactive and innovation activities to improve their motivation to school enrolment compared with accessing labour market.

b) Enrollment in skill training courses outside of school

The survey data indicates that 89% of all respondents report they never attended a skill training course outside of school.

Only 11% of respondents attended a skill and training course outside school. Among these 11% respondents, the findings vary across provinces, sewing emerges as a prominent skill learned, with 54% respondents overall, comprising highest 100%, 69% and 59% in Hatay, Şanlıurfa, and Gaziantep, respectively. Similarly, barbering stand out at second most learned skills, comprising 24% of respondents reports learning these skills. These findings suggest the need for equipping the children with vocational skills that can enable them to better access the labour market after completing their education, thus, having these skills will increase their opportunity in findings job opportunity to secure their family's needs, which may encourage these families to avoid sending their young children for working. In addition to the need for raising the children's awareness of the expected risks that may be exposed to while working in early ages and build their skills in how to protect themselves and from these risks as well as how to report against their risks is very critical in combating child labour at prevention and treatment levels.

EDUCATION, LIVELIHOOD AND WORK STATUS OF FAMILY MEMBER

Primary education is the most common educational level among parents with a higher percentage of girls compared to boys constituting 39% of the total respondents. Followed by High school education with 26% of parents, comprising 31% boys and 21% girls.

A considerable portion of parents are reports as illiterate, constituting 28% of the total respondents with a slightly larger proportion of illiteracy observed among girls 30% compared to boys 26%. This suggests a correlation between parental illiteracy levels and household sizes across the four provinces.

- **In Gaziantep**, where 35% of parents are illiterate, a significant portion of households, 51%, have a moderate size of 3 to 6 members.
- **In Hatay**, where the illiteracy rate among parents is lower at 13%, a majority of households, 56%, are larger, with more than 6 members.
- **In Kilis**, where 26% of parents are illiterate, households are equally distributed between 3 to 6 members and more than 6 members, each comprising 50%.
- **In Şanlıurfa**, where 21% of parents are illiterate, the majority of households, 75%, are of moderate size, with 3 to 6 members.

The parents' level of education plays an important role in reducing or increasing child labour; thus, establishing the linkage between social and human capital outcomes in the family is vital in combating child labour.

The consistency of results varies across province, in Şanlıurfa 37% and in Gaziantep 21% of parents completed high schools' education, as compared to 12% reports at Kilis and Hatay.

Furthermore, according to the result in Table 9, there is a significant relationship between the highest level of education attained by the respondents' caregivers or guardians, and the provinces at (.001). These findings reveals that the education level of the respondents' parents or caregivers plays a critical role in children's willingness to enroll to their education as well as committed to their high school. These findings suggested the need for raising the awareness of parents and caregivers of the importance of children's rights to education, and their critical role in create an enabling environment for their children to facilitate their access and commitment to their schools.

What is the highest level of education attained by your caregivers or guardians?	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	27.793 ^a	8	.001
Likelihood Ratio	27.550	8	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.706	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	347		

Table 10: Square Tests of the relationship between the provinces and the respondents' caregiver's educational level.

Source of household income and family members work status

A majority of Syrian refugee’s family member including parents and other family members including brothers and sister work to meet their financial needs in order to support livelihoods of family. A higher percentage 83% reports working, constituting 82% girls and 84% boys respectively.

The breakdown by province demonstrates a consistent trend across all provinces, except for Şanlıurfa. where a unique pattern emerges as all household members father, mother, elder brother, and sister are working at nearly equal percentages. This can be attributed to the fact that 75% of Syrian families in Şanlıurfa consist of 3 to 6 family members.

As per the survey findings, family members are involved in various forms of employment to sustain their household income. These include occupations such as daily wage laborers, full-time positions, and home-based projects.

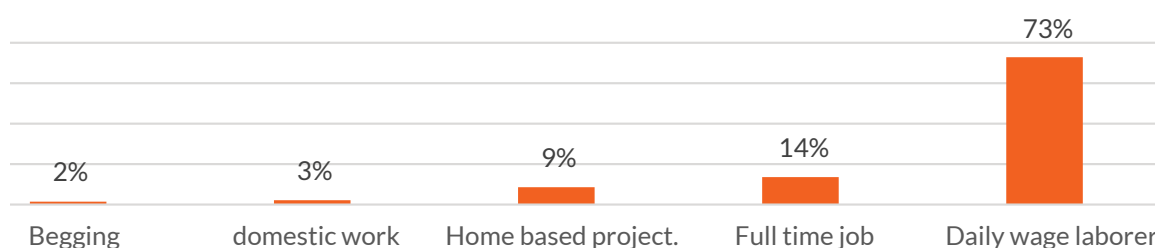


Figure 1 Work type of household members

The analysis of provincial breakdown reveals a consistent pattern, with the exception of Şanlıurfa, where begging and selling tissue are prevalent. This phenomenon is likely linked to the observation that 75% of Syrian families in Şanlıurfa typically comprise 3 to 6 family members. As a result, family members frequently turn to begging and selling tissue, along with other jobs, to fulfill their household requirements.

Additionally, most people in the households work for wages, and there’s no genders difference in the kinds of jobs they do. These jobs often include construction and agriculture work. However, given the challenging economic circumstances of the respondents’ families, characterized by unstable household income sources and the devaluation of the Turkish Lira, restrictions on Syrians accessing the labor market without official permission, these findings confirmed that the economic conditions within the respondents’ families may contribute to the prevalence of child labor. Taken together, these factors create a context where families may feel compelled to resort to child labor as a negative coping mechanism to navigate through these precarious living conditions.

The data indicates that majority of Syrian household family members are working in private sectors 73%, followed by personal employment 11%, civil society organization 9% and only 1% are working in Government sector. The analysis of provincial breakdown reveals a consistent trend across all location.

The data indicate that approximately 17% of respondents depend on family members working in the humanitarian sector within government or international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) for financial support. The majority 67% of respondents are engaged in work in different sector to provide support for their families. Additionally, 16% of respondents reports having no source of income.

Prevalence and distribution of child labor among Syrian refugees in southeast Türkiye

According to TURKSTAT, there are 720,000 Turkish children, or 4.4% of all children aged 5-17, engage in child labour in the service, agriculture, and industrial manufacturing sectors. This number does not include refugee children, who are largely involved in child labour, mainly due to poverty.⁷⁹ In Turkey, children can be seen working in almost every industry. Children work in industry, commerce, and services in cities and work intensively in agriculture in rural areas. Working children are exposed to many risks arising from working conditions and workplace environments, such as dangerous machines, insufficient thermal comfort conditions (working in cold and hot environments), long working hours, exposure to dust, paint, varnish, etc. chemicals, carrying heavy loads, working in noisy environments, staying up while working for long hours, hazardous equipment and operations.⁸⁰ Working in mobile and temporary agricultural labour is identified as one of the worst forms of child labour by the National Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (2017-2023) due to the nature of seasonal agricultural work which exposes families to all types of risks to which children are most vulnerable.

Current and previous type of child work

As per assessment findings, all 100% of respondents, regardless of gender and age (10 to 14 and 15 to 17), are involved in various forms of child labor. These labor activities span across sectors such as the service industry, manufacturing, domestic work, street vending, construction, car repair, agriculture, and informal sectors.

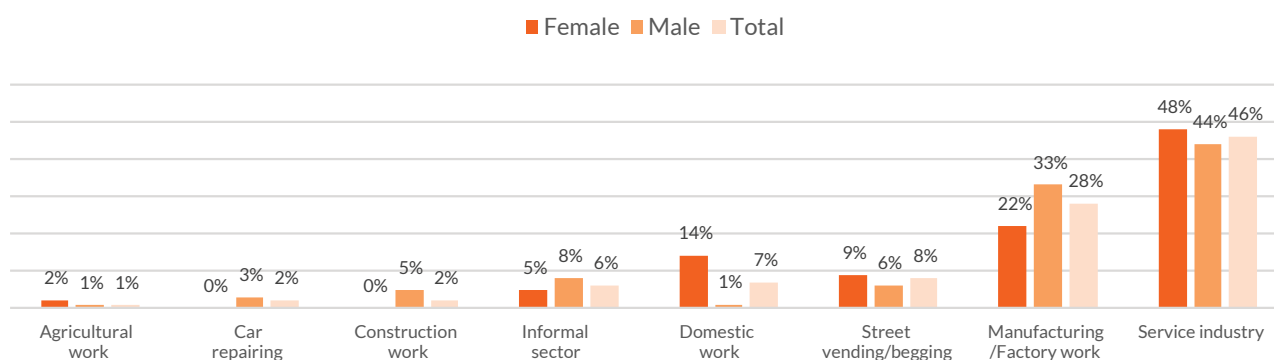


Figure 2 Prevalence of Child Labor by genders

Among respondents aged (10 to 14) and (15 to 17) years old, findings indicates that there is higher prevalence of street vending or begging being among younger respondents constituting 22% of respondents, while employment in the service industry becoming more prominent among older respondents with 51% of respondents.

According to breakdown by provinces, manufacturing, service industry, and informal sector work are dominant in Gaziantep, Kilis, Hatay and Şanlıurfa. In Şanlıurfa the prevalence of Street vending or begging and informal sector is 12% of child laborers, which is higher compared to Gaziantep and Kilis, where it stands at 6% and 3% respectively.

Few participants stated that the child age will play a factor on the type of labor that child will be engaged with, the younger children are employed for work that needs the less physical strength or skill, these group are exposed into a higher risk for of exploitation due to their lack of awareness of their rights and their ability to obtain them. While older children can be employed for different labor types that need more physical strength and stamina. Some of the FGD participants stated that the type of child labor differs between boys and girls, boys employed in outdoor labor such as construction, factories, and hard labor because they have

the capability to perform this kind of work, while girls are mostly engaged with indoor labor such as house cleaning or family services and in some cases, they are employed in a certain agriculture labor.

“As for the gender of the children, it can have a big impact on the work they are assigned. For example, in some cases it may be preferable to use boys for heavy construction work while girls for domestic work or personal services.”. [2]anliurfa – Mixed FGD group

Gender roles in Syrian refugee communities in Turkey heavily shaped the jobs boys and girls take on, leading to distinct challenges with child labor. Girls typically work until age 13, after which they’re expected to focus on household tasks for child marriage preparation. They often do agricultural, restaurant, cleaning, or sewing jobs, but face barriers like exclusion from sectors like construction, discrimination, low pay, and pressure for early marriage.

“In child labor, girls often face greater challenges than boys. They may endure exploitation or harassment, both verbal and physical. Some girls, particularly those without families, are compelled to work to provide for themselves and their younger siblings. Their situation is tougher compared to boys.” - Kilis - Kilis Merkez – Female FGD

Boys in Syrian refugee communities in Turkey are expected to be breadwinners, often taking on outdoor jobs like construction. However, they also encounter difficulties such as work pressure, verbal abuse, wage non-payment, and the risk of violence for mistakes. These gender dynamics emphasize the complexities of child labor and call for targeted interventions to protect children’s well-being.

Number of working hours

Overall, the results reveal that more than half respondents 63% comprising 58% girls and 68% boys, reports working more than 8 hours per day indicating engagement in prolonged or extended work schedule. Followed by 24% who of respondents who reports working between (6-8) hours.

These findings suggest respondents are working long shifts with extended working hours which increases the negative impact on their life including but not limited to their opportunity to rest and sleep in sufficient time, their nutrition and mental health, in addition to the negative impact on their opportunity to enroll to their schools or to execute their homework after school which may lead to school dropout. Furthermore, working for long hours may increase the protection risks may face by them in the street for examples and the work place by the employers, their peers and other strangers considering their young age and vulnerability. Working long hours also takes a greater physical toll on children. Tired children may be at greater risk of contracting disease and have less strength to combat them.⁸¹

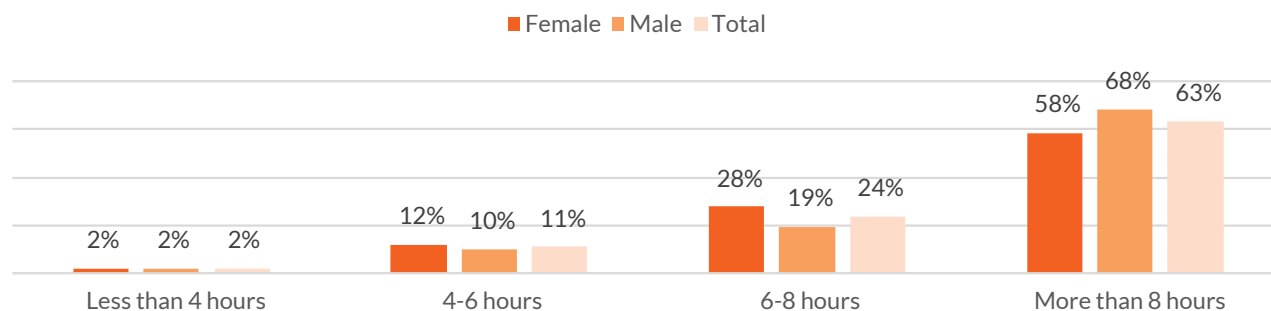


Figure 3 Minimum and maximum work hours during work

The survey results show inconsistency across age groups, except for the finding that 20% of individuals aged (10 to 14) are more involved in working (4 to 6) hours compared to other age group.

While there is inconsistency in labor engagement across age groups, a notable finding was that 20% of children aged (10 to 14) were engaged in labor for durations ranging between (4 to 6) hours and (6 to 8) hours, Particularly in Kilis, child laborers aged 10 to 14 were notably more active, with 27% working between 4 to 6 hours and 41% between 6 to 8 hours, compared to other age groups. This may be due to the age sensitivity as the younger children are in need for protection from adult compared with the elder children.

As for the variation between the number of working hours and the provinces, the results in Table 12 shows that there is a significant association between the number of working hours per day and the provinces, as Şanlıurfa was the highest 82%, followed by Gaziantep 57%, Hatay 62% and Kilis 21% of child laborers who reports working for more than 8 hours.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	52.232 ^a	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	51.169	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	13.410	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	389		

Table 11: Chi-square test results (number of working hours per days and provinces)

Payment and compensation

A majority of respondents 93% of respondents report receiving monetary compensation for their work. A smaller proportion of respondents, 5% reports receiving non-monetary compensation such as food or shelter in exchange for their work. Additionally, only a small portion, 2% of respondents, report receiving no compensation.

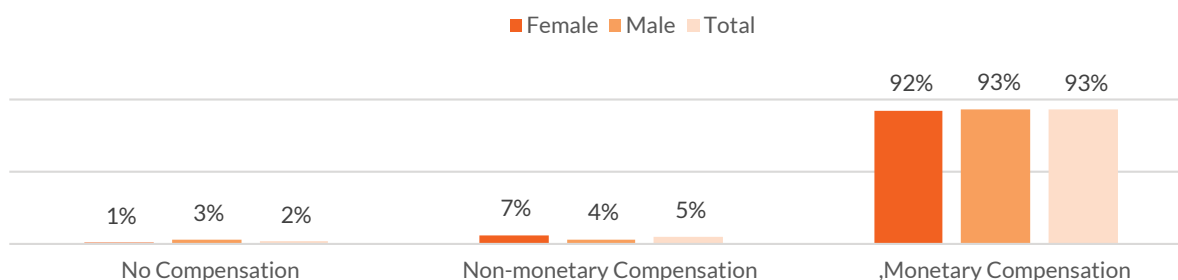


Figure 4: Payment frequency by gender.

The survey findings reveal that 11% of individuals aged 10 to 14 reports receiving non-monetary compensation for their work, constituting 7% in Şanlıurfa, 6% in Kilis and 4% in Gaziantep suggesting potential instances of discrimination or exploitation,

Socio-cultural factors shape child labor prevalence and acceptance in Syrian refugee communities. Focus groups reveals varied views, advocates for child labor citing poverty and economic necessity, particularly in refugee camps. Cultural norms valuing work and contribution to households often lead to child labor being perceived as societal expectation rather than exploitation.

“The difficult financial situation we live in, and the economic conditions have made child labor a normal matter so that we can continue to live.” Kilis – Merkez – Female FGD

Conversely, participants who deemed child labor unacceptable acknowledged its necessity in dire circumstances, such as inflation, poor living conditions, displacement, refugee status, and the aftermath of war and natural disasters like earthquakes. Despite recognizing its undesirability, they conceded to its inevitability given the prevailing socio-economic challenges. This juxtaposition highlights the complex interplay between socio-cultural norms, economic pressures, and external circumstances shaping attitudes towards child labor within Syrian refugee communities.

As for the frequency of compensation, the majority of respondents, comprising 55% reports receiving payment on a weekly basis. Similarly, 31% reports receiving payment on a daily basis. In contrast, a smaller proportion of respondents, 14%, report receiving payment on a monthly basis.

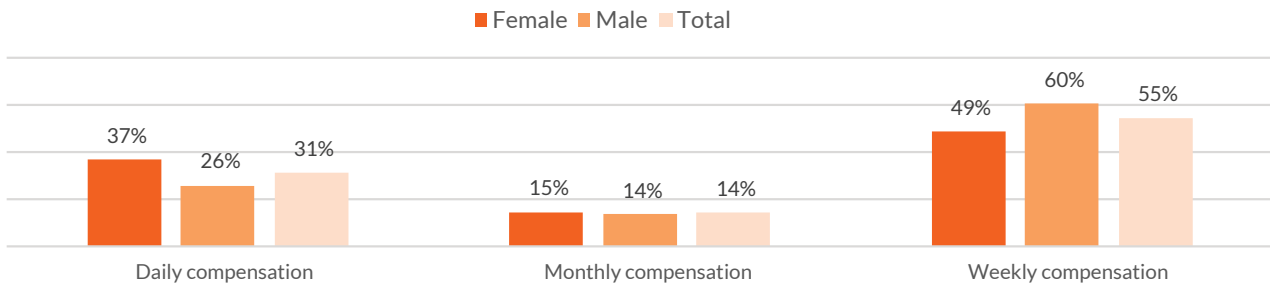


Figure 5: Frequency of payment for work by gender.

The survey results show that 42% of individuals aged 10 to 14 receive compensation for their work on a daily basis.

Regarding compensation frequency across provinces, there’s a diverse trend. In Hatay, 44% receive daily compensation, while 38% receive it on monthly basis. Conversely, in Gaziantep, only 9% receive monthly compensation, slightly higher compared to other locations.

Amount of compensation and sufficiency

The mean compensation/wage amounts, whether daily, weekly, or monthly, showed variation across different provinces. Hatay had the highest 4763, followed by Gaziantep with 4740 Kilis with 2090, and Şanlıurfa with 2807 Turkish Lira. In terms of gender, boys received total compensation of 4,068 and girls received 3,560 Turkish Lira.

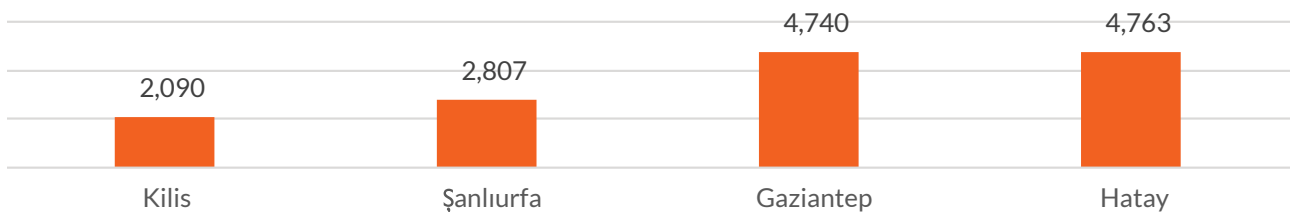


Figure 6 Compensation amount by provinces

According to the breakdown by age group, those aged (10 to 14) received on average 2,311 Turkish Lira per month, while those aged (15 to 17) received on average 4,338 Turkish Lira as wages on monthly basis.

What amount you paid on daily/ weekly/monthly basis as wage in Turkish Lira	Total	Female	Male	Gaziantep	Hatay	Kilis	Sanliurfa	Aged 10-14	Aged 15-17
Daily	346	388	287	413	400	310	258	455	289
Weekly	4210	4241	4185	5885	800	1550	2232	2848	4601
Monthly	9984	9335	10660	11938	11833	4671	9750	7190	10666
Total	3816	3560	4068	4740	4763	2090	2807	2311	4338

As for the difference between male and female respondents for regarding the payments, overall female respondents are paid less than male respondents, which may be due to the type of work, relationship between the respondents and their employers along with gender-based violence issues. As such the results in Table 13 reveals that 40.8% of female respondents received less than 1000 TL, followed by 17.3% who received between 2000-4999. On the other hand, the 33% of male respondents received less than 1000 TL, followed by 22.5% who received between 2000-4999 TL and 18.1% who received Between 5000 to 10000. These results reveal that although both male and female respondents are engaging with child labour, female respondents are still faced gender-based violence issues including their daily wages compared with their peer of male respondents.

Amount of payment		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Less than 1000	count	60	73	133
	%	33.0	40.8	36.8
Between 2000 to 4999	count	41	31	72
	%	22.5	17.3	19.9
Between 1000 to 1999	count	26	30	56
	%	14.3	16.8	15.5
Between 5000 to 10000	count	33	22	55
	%	18.1	12.3	15.2
More than 10000	count	22	23	45
	%	12.1	12.8	12.5
Total	count	182	179	361
	%	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 12: Amount of payment and gender

Across all provinces, 90% of child laborers received promised wages, but 79% reports insufficient to meet household needs. In Kilis, only 35% expressed this concern.

Form of payment

In some cases, child laborers receive alternative compensation. Specifically, 10% received clothing, comprising 25% only from Gaziantep. Additionally, 45% received food and shelter. In Gaziantep and Kilis, this was particularly high, at 75% and 100% respectively. Similarly, in Şanlıurfa, 90% of child laborers received shelter as compensation.

Factors Contributing to Child Labour Among Syrian Refugees

According to the results of 2019 of the child labor survey of Turkey Statistical Institute (TUIK), the number of working children in the 5–17 age group in Turkey was 720,000 (4.4% of all children). While the employment rate of children in the 5–17 age group working in economic activity among children in the same age group was 4.4% of which 30.8% of them were working in agriculture, 23.7% of them in industry, and 45.5% of them in the service sector. The common reasons for children working were “helping the economic activity and income of the household” (59.1%), followed by “learning jobs, having a profession” (34.4%). Overall, 6.4% of the children work to “meet their own needs”, 66.1% of working children work in regular workplaces, 30.4% in fields and gardens, 3% in mobile unstable workplaces or street markets, and 0.5% at home.⁸²

It is important to note that Child labour is the combined product of many factors, such as poverty, social norms condoning it, lack of decent work opportunities for adults and adolescents, traditional perspectives and social exclusion, lack of inspection, informality and demand for cheap labour. Also, migration, conflict, and emergencies. There are many interlinked explanations for child labour.

At that context, the quantitative and qualitative findings of this assessment demonstrate different factors behind child labour, these factors are varied between internal at household and family levels and external factors such as cultural contexts and social norms, economic deterioration, low economic and livelihood conditions as well lack of social support and protection system of marginalized and refugees’ children. In addition to the earthquake and the negative short- and long-term impact on families who continue facing hazardous economic, social and well-being challenges.

Economic conditions and unemployment rates compelling children to enter the labor force to alleviate familial financial strains. Weak enforcement of child labor laws allows employers to exploit children for cheap labor, exacerbating the problem. Displacement and migration, whether due to conflict or other reasons, disrupt livelihoods and may push individuals, including children, into exploitative labor practices. The death of breadwinners within families leaves children with no choice but to engage in labor to meet basic needs. Moreover, the lack of official documentation among refugees presents a barrier to accessing education, further perpetuating the cycle of child labor. The shortage of adult labor opportunities also plays a role, as limited job prospects for parents force them to send their children to work.

In conclusion, no single factor can fully explain its persistence and, in some cases, growth. The way in which different causes, at different levels, interact with each other ultimately determines whether or not an individual child becomes a child labourer. As such, the assessment team tried to assess the most significant factors that may lead to child which presented like the following:

Role of Family

Survey findings indicates that economic factors within Syrian families primarily drive children into the labor force, with social and cultural factors playing a lesser role. The majority of respondents indicate economic necessity, such as the need to support family income, comprising 38% of responses, financial necessity to meet the household’s financial needs is also a significant factor, reports by 24% of respondent.

The prevalence of child labor reasons varies within the age groups, (15 to 17) showing higher percentages across all reasons of child labor compared to the age groups (10 to 14) in all provinces.

The provincial breakdown reveals a consistent pattern, majority respondent reports economic necessity such as requirement of food, shelter, and clothing, and financial necessity, such as the need for money or other financial resources to meet these economic needs, emerged as predominant factor of driving child labor, FGD participants have shared a similar understanding of child labor, as most of the participants agreed that

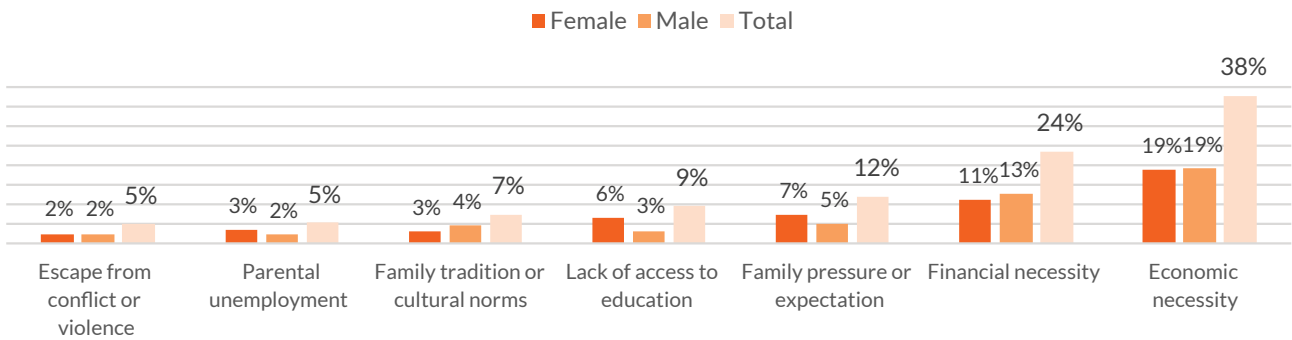


Figure 7: Socio-economic factors influencing child Labour.

child labor is employing children Under age -18 years old (forcibly or by choice) into livelihood activities that are not suitable to their age and capabilities and could have a negative impact on their safety, health, and the development of their personal, cultural and education advancement in exchange for money.

Economic necessity, such as poverty or lack of household income, ranked as the topmost factor, comprising 33% of child laborers’ perspectives. Another factor ranked as second most significant was displacement and loss of livelihoods due to conflict and displacement, comprising to 21% of child laborer’ perspectives. A smaller portion comprising 13% of respondents highlighted family dynamics and the pressure to contribute to household income as a significant factor influencing their engagement in labor.

The analysis of provinces consistently shows that economic necessity and displacement, leading to loss of livelihoods, are major contributing factors to child labor across all locations. Figure 8 illustrates the most and least significant Socio-economic factors influencing child Labour.

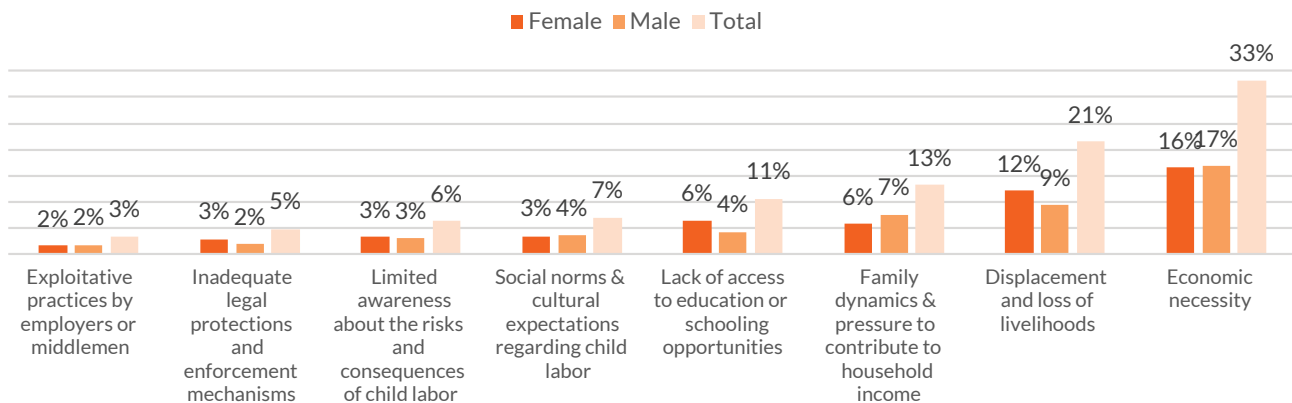


Figure 8 Top most and least significant factors contributing to child labor

The qualitative findings (KIIs and FGDs) are consistent with the quantitative findings. As such, all FGDs participants agreed that poverty is the primary cause of child labor. They highlighted how households struggle to meet basic needs like rent and bills, and the insufficient main income prompts the need for additional sources, leading to child labor to improve financial conditions.

“Poverty is one of the most important reasons that push families to send their children to work, as these families need more than one source of income to meet their basic needs. (For example, I have 5 children. I work 12 hours and I get a minimum wage salary, but it is not enough for me. That’s why I had to let my eldest son leave school and work with me. So that I can spend money on the house and pay bills and rent)” Gaziantep FGD (Mixed group)

Parents and Caregivers' Health Conditions

Besides poverty the disability /death of head of household is also one of the most common reasons that FGD respondents stated for child labor as it creates obstacles for children to continue their educational journey after losing their main source of financial support therefore children cover the absence of this role within the household.

"I lost my husband in an accident several years ago, and I have four children. I used to work in a sewing workshop to support them, but due to difficult economic circumstances, my eldest son - 15 years old - was forced to leave school and help with living expenses.

Kilis – Female FGD

Role of Earthquake and Asylum

In addition to the poverty and hazardous livelihood situation of the respondents' families which were identified by the majority of FGD participants as the primary factor leading children to engage in child labor. Other contributing factors included earthquake, orphanhood, family disintegration, loss of parental authority, increased violence among children, inadequate living environments, irresponsible parenting, and social marginalization, especially among refugee children or marginalized communities especially for refugee children or children living in warfare's areas), household impacted by earthquake directly.

The earthquakes have also increased the likelihood of child exploitation and abuse. Separated children living in crowded and unsafe conditions are particularly vulnerable.

The effects of the earthquake on children's schooling are an additional worry. Children in the impacted communities no longer have access to education as a result of compulsory school closures. Due to the fact that education is a crucial element of long-term success, this not only has an impact on their current learning but also on their future development.

Finally, the earthquake has increased the chance that kids may be exploited and abused. allegations been allegations of child trafficking and child labor in the aftermath of the tragedy, and children who are separated from their families or who are living in crowded and unsafe situations are particularly vulnerable to exploitation.⁸³

"We were affected by the recent earthquake, and when we came to the city of Kilis after losing our home and everything we owned, we were forced to send the children to work. For example, my son is 16 years old and works in a household appliances store in order to help us cover living expenses, which have become very difficult, especially with the presence of inflation."

anliurfa – Mixed FGD group

According to the FGDs' participants the families are lacking employer accountability, particularly for unaccompanied children who are lacking familial support and legal protection. Additionally, due to the earthquake, severe child labor was attributed to factors such as limited educational opportunities, exploitation of children with disabilities, and neglect by NGOs and INGOs. Furthermore, children who have lost primary breadwinners, despite extended family support, are vulnerable to exploitation, leading them to join the workforce prematurely.

"Those who are separated from their families need to work for financial sums, even if they are small. For these people, there is also no one to follow up on their work. In the event of any injury at work, the employer will not be held accountable and will not be forced to pay compensation."

Hatay – ANTAKYA – Male FGD Group

All the respondents are Syrian refugees who are facing different challenges and barriers due to their families' residency status, according to the child labor survey conducted by the Turkish Statistical Institute in 2019, there were 720'000 children aged 5–17 who were engaged in economic activities in Turkey. With an estimated total of 16 million 457 thousand children, this accounts for an employment rate of more than 4%. However, this number has been criticized for severely underestimating the issue for several reasons, but mostly because Syrian children working in Turkey were excluded from the survey. More than 1.8 million Syrian children have come to the country since 2011, of which many are believed to be working.

Regarding the working hours of the Syrian children, the biggest share of the children included in the sample (41 percent) work 9–12 h per day. Also, 5 percent work more than 12 h daily. This means that around half of the Syrian child laborers work more than the legal limit of 7 h per day. In contrast, only every fifth Syrian child works 5–8 h, and every twentieth works <4 h a day. These high working hours can be observed among all age groups. “9–12 h per day” constitutes the most common working hours in every age segment, including those as young as 5–12 years old.⁸⁴

The root causes and drivers of child labor in southeast Turkey, particularly within vulnerable communities and marginalized groups, as identified through key informant interviews (KIIs), encompass a multitude of interconnected factors. Primarily, poverty and economic hardship emerge as fundamental forces propelling families, particularly those with limited income and job prospects, to rely on child labor as a means of financial survival. Additionally, the lack of awareness and education among marginalized groups regarding children's rights renders them susceptible to exploitation in the labor market. Cultural norms and traditions further perpetuate this cycle, as some societies normalize child labor for social or economic purposes. Limited educational opportunities, stemming from poor infrastructure and discrimination, divert children from schooling towards employment.

Cultural Attitudes and Perceptions toward Child labour

How a society defines childhood affects child labor practices (Hendrickson, 2009). Until recently, parents in Turkey prioritized children's economic value (e.g., their contribution to household economy and household chores) (Kağıtçıbaşı, 1998). However, the values that Turkish society attached to children have changed in the last decades (Kağıtçıbaşı and Ataca, 2005). Compared to their data from 1975, Kağıtçıbaşı and Ataca noted that in 2005, families emphasized the psychological benefits of having children (e.g., joy, fun, companionship) more than on children's socio-economic value. Nonetheless, rural and less affluent urban groups still attached greater value to children's actual contribution to the family economy compared to better-off urban groups.⁸⁵

Many of these Syrian refugees' children are either involved in child labor or vulnerable to becoming minor workers (Lordoglu and Aslan, 2019). In order to understand the risk of them engaging in child labor, one first needs to address the broader context in Turkey, especially the conditions of the labor market and the education system. Turkey features one of the highest informal economy rates among the OECD countries (Yalçın, 2016, p. 92) and ranks the seventh place among the OECD countries with the highest child poverty rates. Child labor is deeply rooted in Turkish society and results from a variety of societal and economic factors. These include poverty, a distorted income distribution, limited employment opportunities in the formal labor market, a lack of social protection mechanisms, population growth, urban migration, and low levels of education.

Against this background, scholars see the informal and insecure nature of the labor market as a fertile ground for child labor, also among Syrian refugees. In addition, factors that specifically apply to the refugee population include difficulties in acquiring employment permits and obstacles in obtaining an education. For instance, many Syrian refugees face obstacles when enrolling their children in the public school system. These arise mainly due to lacking regulatory procedures, language barriers, or insufficient infrastructure. Consequently, many Syrian children in Turkey do not go to school, which increases their chances of becoming minor.⁸⁶

Assessment findings reveals that cultural factors including Community norms and traditions played a significant role in influencing child labor practices and prevalence. These cultural factors included expectations regarding family roles, societal attitudes towards education, and economic circumstances.

Half 51% of respondents indicate that child labour is widely accepted and considered normal within their families, followed by a segment, somewhat accepts child labour but with reservations, comprising 37% of respondents, includes 47% females and 27% males. Female shows higher level of acceptance toward child labour compared with male, this may be due to the fact that female refugees may experience greater economic pressures or limited job opportunities compared to boys, leading to a more pragmatic acceptance of child labour as a way to survive financially. Girls may perceive child labour as a means of keeping children safe from other risks or dangers, such as exposure to violence or exploitation outside of work settings.

Figure 11 provides an overview of summary of cultural factors influencing child Labor.

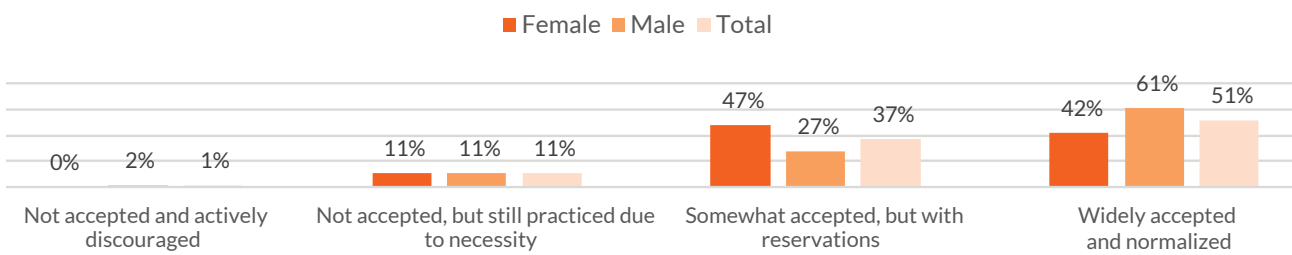


Figure 9 Cultural Factor influencing Child Labor

In terms of age groups, a slight decline is observed in the acceptance of child labor as age increases, highest acceptance observed among the (10 to 14) age group across all provinces.

According to breakdown by province, the survey results show diverse cultural trends and practices towards child labor. In Hatay, a prominent 62% of families widely accept and normalize child labor, whereas in Gaziantep, this percentage is slightly lower at 42%. Moreover, the assessment findings confirmed the statistical association between child labour and the respondents’ thoughts toward child labour at (.000).

According to the assessment findings, all KIIs confirmed the critical role of cultural norms, perceptions and attitudes have critical role in child labour issues, as some families believes that children should work and support their families. This applies for both Syrian and other nationalities in the targeted locations. Also, social isolation, poverty, weak infrastructure along with weak interventions and polices. All these factors relate to norms and traditions.

‘Refugees faced different issues with social cohesion and integration with the Turkish communities in Turkey, they felt isolated and ignored, the earthquake and the high prices and inflation increase the Syrian refugees’ vulnerability and led to child labour’. KIIs with CSO lead in Hatay.

Cultural, socioeconomic, and institutional factors intertwine to fuel the prevalence of child labor in southeast Turkey, presenting specific challenges for implementing effective interventions, as highlighted by KIIs. Culturally, some communities perceive early work as more beneficial than education, perpetuating the cycle of child labor. Social norms and traditions may further endorse child labor as a means of contributing to family financial stability. Socioeconomic factors exacerbate this phenomenon, with poverty and social marginalization compelling families, particularly those headed by women or affected by natural disasters, to rely on child labor for income generation.

Overall, FGD and KIIs participants highlighted additional factors contributing to the prevalence of child labor, cultural beliefs also played a significant role, with some viewing child labor as essential for developing life skills, particularly for boys, amid uncertainty about sustainable livelihoods in Turkey and the possibility of further migration. Furthermore, cultural norms normalized child labor as a societal practice. Additionally, concerns arose about the lack of certainty regarding the future of refugee children within the education system, exacerbated by instances of racism and discrimination they may face. These factors collectively underscored the complex challenges and attitudes shaping the phenomenon of child labor among refugee communities in Turkey.

Access to Education and Childcare Services

As mentioned in the above sections that 83% of respondents from both genders are not attending schools during the data collection period. And 59% of respondents confirmed that the child labour is the main reason for being not enrolled to their schools. These findings suggested the negative and the short- and long-term impact of child labour on children ability to enjoy their right to education, this negative impact can include but not limited to the following:

Child labor significantly hinders children's rights to education in several ways:

1. Time and Energy: Children engaged in labor often do not have the time or energy to attend school or focus on studies.
2. School Attendance: Child labor can lead to irregular attendance at school or cause children to drop out entirely.
3. Learning Outcomes: Even when child laborers attend school, they may struggle academically due to exhaustion or stress.
4. Cycle of Poverty: By compromising education, child labor perpetuates cycles of poverty, as less education leads to lower future earnings.
5. Legal and Social Barriers: Child labor can also reflect and reinforce legal and social barriers that prevent access to education, particularly for marginalized groups.⁸⁷

Furthermore, lack access to education can be other factors that lead to child labour in addition to other factors that may contribute to child labour such as low quality of educational services, discrimination and language barriers in Schools that may be face by Syrian children. In addition to the lack of documentation. All these factors together contributed to child labour.

Few FGD participants mentioned that children drop from schools and engage in child labor to obtain the essential needs like transportation, stationary due to poverty which makes education less priority. Also, weak educational system was considered as reason leads to child labor as alternative.

The FGDs highlighted the significance of lack of documentation and language barriers as critical factors contributing to the prevalence of child labor. Regarding documentation, participants emphasized several key points: first, without proper documentation, children face obstacles in enrolling in schools or accessing essential health services. Second, the absence of documentation often drives children towards informal and inappropriate job sectors. Third, instances such as losing documentation during natural disasters like earthquakes, coupled with the inability to secure alternatives, can push children into labor. Fourth, refugees lacking documentation are particularly vulnerable to exploitation by employers. Regarding language barriers, participants underscored their detrimental effects: firstly, language barriers often force children to prioritize work over education.

“Regarding the obstacles, the most important obstacle and the biggest barrier for us is the language, as it reduced job opportunities for us adults, and for children as well, it reduced their job opportunities because, for example, many restaurants refuse to employ children because of the language.”
Şanlıurfa – Bamyasuyu – Mixed group

Secondly, the inability to communicate effectively in the local language exposes children to exploitation in hazardous and unsuitable work environments. Lastly, the inability to speak the language hinders children’s ability to find suitable job opportunities, often resulting in their engagement in factory work or other exploitative labor sectors.

High adult unemployment rates amplify this reliance on child labor. Weak enforcement of laws against child labor and limited social and educational programs contribute to its persistence institutionally. Challenges for effective interventions include community and parental unawareness of the harmful effects of child labor, economic pressures favoring child employment, and resistance to changing cultural norms. To address these challenges, interventions must focus on raising awareness, strengthening legislative frameworks, providing economic support to vulnerable families, improving access to education, and fostering collaboration between local communities and international organizations to protect marginalized children from exploitation.

Access to basic necessities like food, water, and shelter is one of the most important challenges affecting kids in the following of the earthquake. Families who have been evacuated and whose homes have been damaged by the earthquake are currently trying to satisfy their basic requirements, and children are frequently the most at risk. Several kids report now sleeping outside or living in improvised camps, which exposes them to the harsh weather conditions and makes them more prone to illness and injury.

The assessment findings indicate that children have access to various services. Among the respondents, 39% reports having access to healthcare, followed by social services 30%, education services, 15%, Childcare services were accessed by only 2% of respondents.

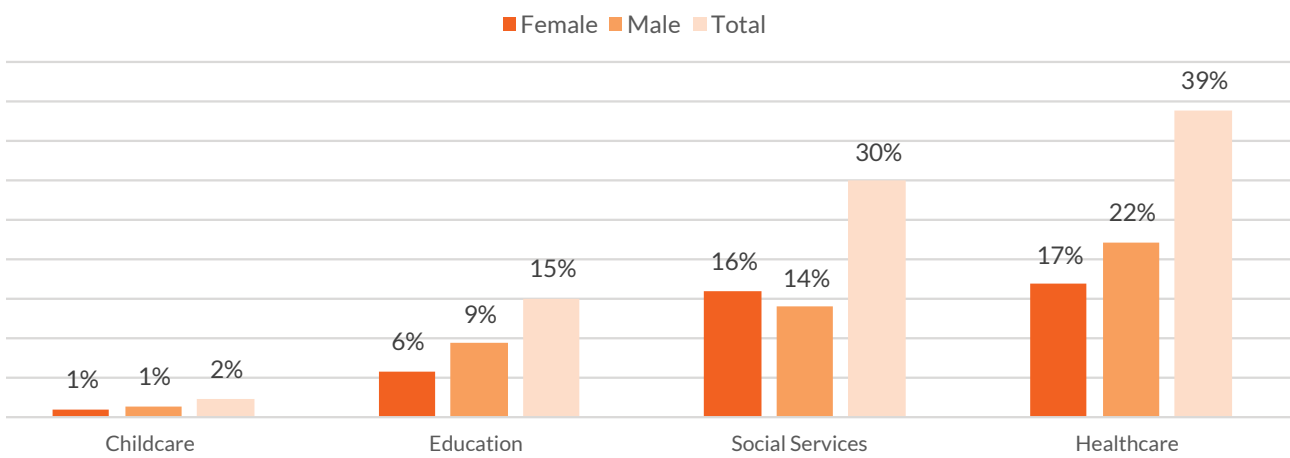


Figure 10: Respondents access to services by gender

The analysis of provincial breakdown reveals a varying trend, in Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa, 18% and 15% of children reports having access to healthcare services. Similarly, in Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa, children report access to social services with 8% and 18% of children, respectively. Overall, both Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa shows relatively higher access to various services compared to Hatay and Kilis.

As for the reasons for not accessing these services, according to the assessment findings 65% and 51% of children aged between (10-14) and (15-17) years old respectively reports they can’t access these services due to their engagement in work to support their families. followed by 15% of respondents from both age groups who reports their parents didn’t encourage them to access this service. These findings reveals that there is need for increasing the accessible and safe childcare services and improve the community awareness on the importance of accessing these services for the benefit of their children.

FOCUS ON WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Child maltreatment, including sexual, physical or emotional abuse and neglect, negatively impacts the physical, mental, spiritual and interpersonal wellbeing of those experiencing and surviving it, in both the short term and the long term.

Child maltreatment is a widespread phenomenon affecting millions of children, adults and communities around the globe. Child maltreatment includes sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect and emotional abuse. It is a major social issue that has a negative impact on the physical, mental, spiritual, educational and interpersonal wellbeing of those experiencing and surviving it—both in the short term and in the form of long-term consequences that reduce the quality of life into adulthood (Fang & Corso, 2007; Fang et al., 2012; Felitti et al., 1998; Jaffee et al., 2018; Lueger-Schuster et al., 2018; Maniglio, 2009; Moore et al., 2015; Teicher & Samson, 2016).⁸⁸

Working children are exposed to many risks arising from working conditions and workplace environments, such as dangerous machines, insufficient thermal comfort conditions (working in cold and hot environments), long working hours, exposure to dust, paint, varnish, etc. chemicals, carrying heavy loads, working in noisy environments, staying up while working for long hours, hazardous equipment and operations.⁸⁹

a) Hazards encountered by the Child Laborers

The survey findings reveal that child laborers were exposed to a variety of risk and dangers during work, with 29% enduring long hours and exhaustion, 22% experienced lacking education, 14% experienced physical hazards. Figure 15 provides a summary of various hazards experienced by child laborers.

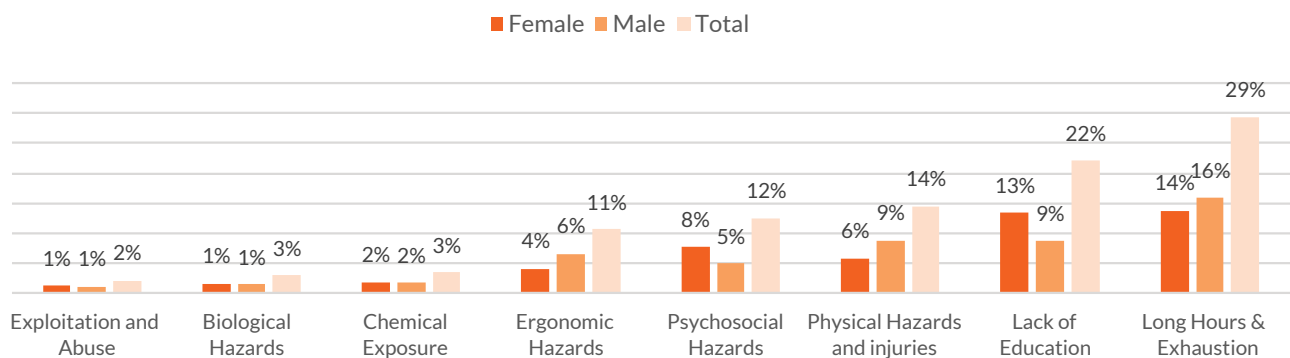


Figure 11 Work hazards encountered by the Child Laborers

In terms of provincial breakdown, Gaziantep has the highest percentage of hazards among child laborers, at 55%, while Hatay reports lower percentage at 7%.

Among age groups, those aged 15 to 17 face the highest overall hazard rate of 68%, with long hours and exhaustion affecting 22% of them. Similarly, the 10 to 14 age group experiences a slightly lower overall hazard rate of 32%, with lack of education impacting 8% of child laborers, followed by long hours and exhaustion, affecting another 8%.

b) Experience with Worst Forms of Child Labor

The survey findings indicate that 18% reports experienced worst form of Labour including child trafficking and forced labor, comprising 15 % of girls and 20% boys. Among the age groups, in the 10 to 14 age group, no cases of child trafficking were reports, but 16% were involved in forced labor. In the 15 to 17 age group, 10% were engaged in hazardous work.

According to breakdown by provinces, In Hatay, a prominent 38% are engaged in hazardous work, while in Şanlıurfa, a significant 17% of child laborers are engaged in forced labor under threat or without consent. Figure below provides the overview of worst Forms of Child Labor experience by province.

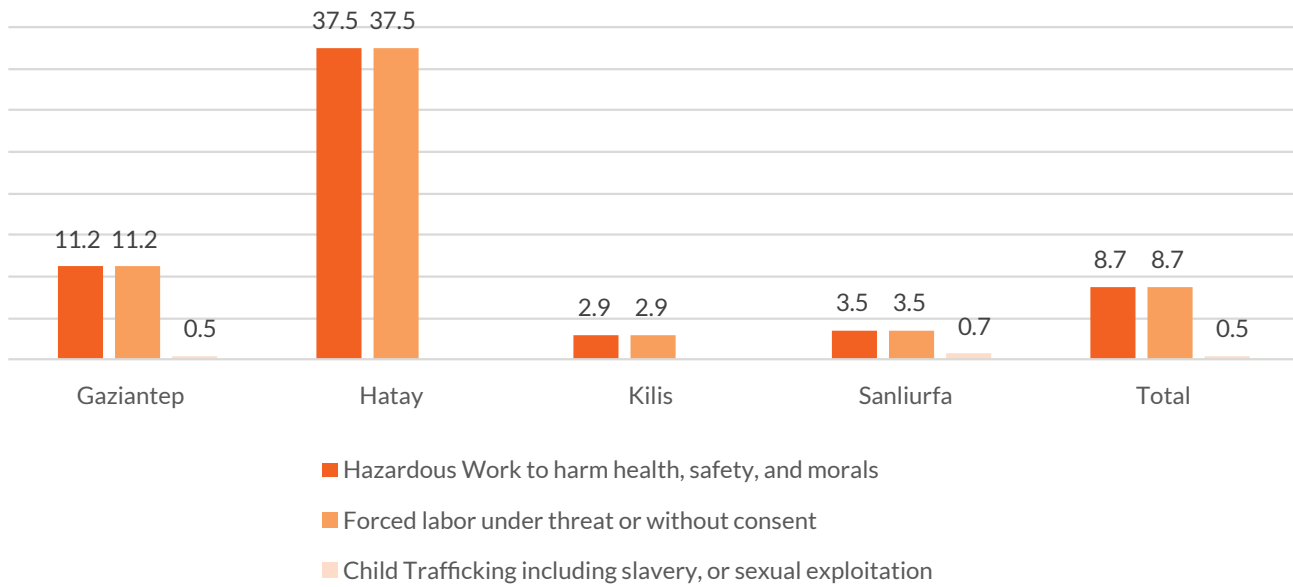


Figure 12 Experience with Worst Forms of Child Labor

c) Experience with use of Equipment or Tools

Overall, 46% of child laborers use equipment or tools. Among girls, this percentage was 39%, while among boys, it was higher at 53%. Hatay having the highest percentage at 56% and Şanlıurfa having the lowest at 42% using equipment or tools.

In the age group 10 to 14, reports use rate of 37%, whereas, those aged 15 to 17 reports a higher use, comprising 50% of child labors.



Figure 13: Use of equipment or tools by child laborer

d) Protection against severe weather conditions

Overall, 48% of child laborers do not have protection against severe weather conditions. 39% of girls and 56% of boys reports not having such protection. Among age group, 61% of respondents aged 15 to 17 and 42% of those aged 10 to 14 reports lacking protections against these hazards.

In terms of provincial breakdown, Child laborer in Hatay and Gaziantep have the highest percentage of child laborer who reports no protection against hazards. These findings suggested the need for investing more effective, and holistic efforts by different entities including national and international entities, government and private to combat child labour as well as to ensure that children are provided with the sufficient and relevant protection services. Considering the negative impact of child labour on children in general and the negative impact of hazardous forms of child labour on children’s life, mental and physical health and their overall well-being. A need for an immediate collective action is vital for the benefit of children.

e) Total working hours

The majority, 61% of respondents, report working between 7 and 10 hours. Among girls, this percentage is notably higher at 73%, compared to 49% among boys. Figure 13 presents a summary of the working hours by among child laborer.

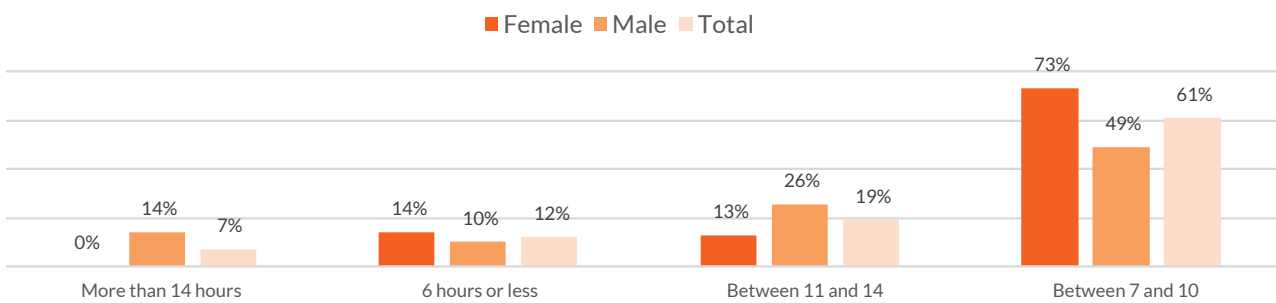


Figure 14 Total working hours by gender

According to breakdown by provinces, Gaziantep has the overall highest percentage of respondents working more than 14 hours, with 14% for the age group 10 to 14 and 15 to 17. Similarly, Hatay has the overall highest percentage of respondents working between 11 and 14 hours with 38% for the age group 15 to 17. Kilis has the highest percentage of respondents working between 7 and 10 hours, with 74% for the age group 10 to 14 and 15 to 17.

f) Working shifts

Overall, the majority, 70% of respondents, reports working only during the day. among girls, this percentage is slightly higher at 76%, compared to 65% among boys. Figure 14 presents a summary of the working shifts by gender among child laborer.

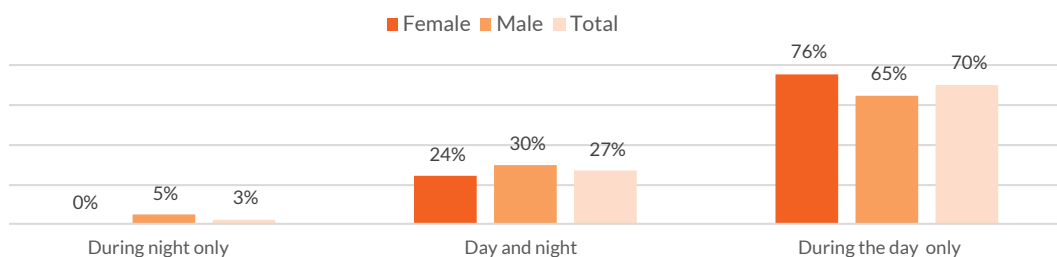


Figure 15 Working shifts by gender

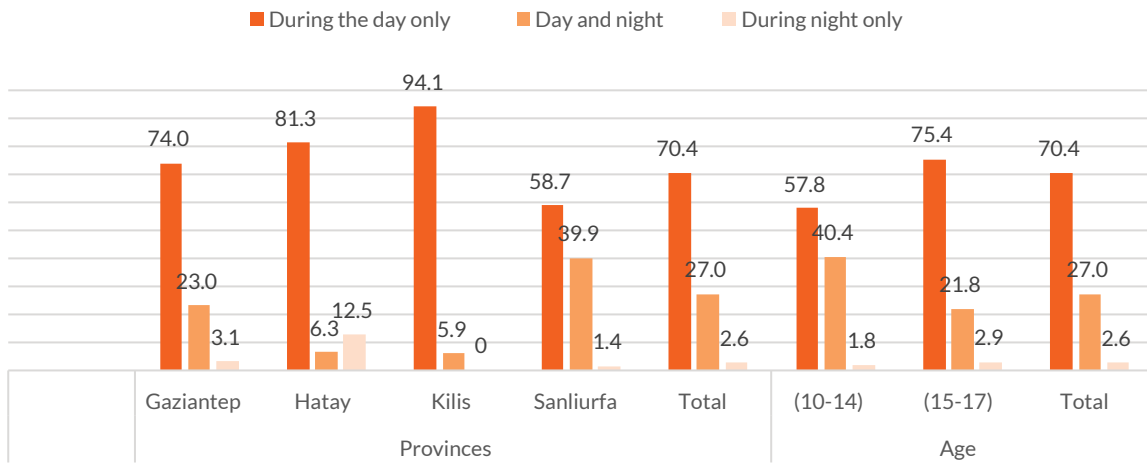


Figure 16 Working shifts by age and province

g) Involvement in lifting heavy objects at work or handling heavy machinery.

The assessment findings shows that child laborers have encountered situations where they lift heavy objects or handle heavy machinery at work, with some child laborer reporting this happening consistently with 17% of laborer, while others experienced it occasionally with 44% of child laborer.

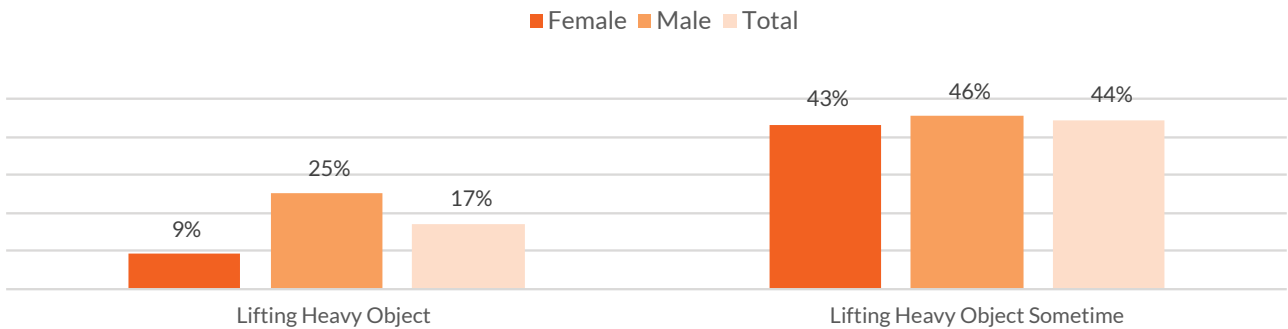


Figure 17 Lifting heavy objects at work

According to breakdown by provinces, Gaziantep has the lowest percentage of respondents 17% who reports lifting heavy objects at work or handling heavy machinery, whereas, Hatay has the highest percentage at 69%. Kilis and Şanlıurfa fall in between at 21% and 10%, respectively.

Among the age group 15 to 17, has the highest percentage of respondents engaging in lifting heavy objects or handling heavy machinery at 18%.

Similarly, the respondents who reports lifting heavy objects sometime, in Şanlıurfa, the percentage is higher at 56%, followed by Gaziantep, 42% of respondents, Among the age group 15 to 17, this percentage is at 45%, whereas for the age group 10 to 14, it's at 42%.

According to breakdown by gender, among boys, 25% consistently lifted heavy objects or operated heavy machinery at work, while 46% did so occasionally. Among girls, 9% consistently engaged in these activities, while 43% did so occasionally.

Lifting heavy objects at work	Gaziantep		Hatay		Kilis		Şanlıurfa		Age group			
									10 to 14		15 to 17	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
No	79	40%	3	19%	19	56%	48	34%	47	43%	102	36%
Sometime	83	42%	2	13%	8	24%	80	56%	46	42%	127	45%
Yes	34	17%	11	69%	7	21%	15	10%	16	15%	51	18%
Total	196	100%	16	100%	34	100%	143	100%	109	100%	280	100%

Table 13 lifting heavy objects at work by age and province

h) Experience of work-related Injuries

Overall, 18% of respondents report encountering work-related injuries, while 43% respondents indicate occasional incidents. Among those who report experiencing work-related injuries, the percentage was notably higher among boys at 23%, compared with a lower percent of girls 12%. Additionally, 43% of respondents reports occasional occurrences of injuries during work, the proportion was 46% for girls and 39% for boys.

According to a breakdown by province and age group the finding varies, in Hatay, 50% of respondents report work-related injuries, with 22% of those aged 10 to 14 reporting the same. Şanlıurfa had the highest percentage of occasional work-related injuries 50%. While among those aged 10 to 14, 38% reports occasional injuries, while among those aged 15 to 17, it is 45%.

Experience of work-related Injuries	Gaziantep		Hatay		Kilis		Şanlıurfa		Age group			
									10 to 14		15 to 17	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
No	77	39%	7	44%	20	59%	50	35%	44	40%	110	39%
Sometime	86	44%	1	6%	7	21%	72	50%	41	38%	125	45%
Yes	33	17%	8	50%	7	21%	21	15%	24	22%	45	16%
Total	196	100%	16	100%	34	100%	143	100%	109	100%	280	100%

Table 14 Work-related Injuries by age and province

i) Deductions from pay based on meeting conditions

Overall, 37% of respondents report potential deduction from their pay if certain conditions are unmet, this trend is more prevalent among boys (49%) compared to girls (25%). However, 46% of respondents report occasional deductions from their pay, with a higher percentage among girls (57%) than boys (35%).

The findings by province reveals a varied trend in reporting on deductions from pay. In Hatay, this percentage is highest (69%). Among respondents aged 15 to 17, it is 38%.

Similarly, among respondents who report occasional deductions from their pay, Şanlıurfa had the highest percentage at 68%. Among those aged 15 to 17, it's 48%.

Deductions from pay	Gender			Gaziantep	Hatay	Kilis	Şanlıurfa	Age group	
	Female	Male	Total					10 to 14	15 to 17
	%	%	%					%	%
No	18%	16%	17%	16%	25%	26%	15%	23%	15%
Sometime	57%	35%	46%	35%	6%	35%	68%	42%	48%
Yes	25%	49%	37%	49%	69%	38%	17%	35%	38%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 15 Deductions from pay by age and province

j) Experience of fair treatment and instances of verbal abuse or discrimination

According to the findings, 20% of respondents report regular mistreatment, verbal abuse, or discrimination, with 18% among girls and slightly higher at among boys (22%). Additionally, 55% indicate occasional encounters with mistreatment, with girls (58%) experiencing this more than boys (51%), highlighting a higher proportion of girls perceiving occasional mistreatment.

The findings by province shows variation, In Kilis, the highest percentage of respondents reporting regularly experiencing mistreatment or discrimination (76%), followed by Hatay (56%). Among respondents aged 10 to 14, 20% report experiencing mistreatment regularly, while for respondents aged 15 to 17, the percentage is 19%.

Şanlıurfa stands out with the highest percentage at reporting occasional mistreatment or discrimination (76 %). Among respondents aged 10 to 14, 53% report experiencing mistreatment sometimes, while for respondents aged 15 to 17, this percentage, is 55%.

Treatment at work	Gaziantep		Hatay		Kilis		Şanlıurfa		Age group			
									10 to 14		15 to 17	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
No	73	37%	3	19%	2	6%	22	15%	29	27%	71	25%
Sometime	95	48%	4	25%	6	18%	108	76%	58	53%	155	55%
Yes	28	14%	9	56%	26	76%	13	9%	22	20%	54	19%
Total	196	100%	16	100%	34	100%	143	100%	109	100%	280	100%

Table 16 Experience of verbal abuse or discrimination by age and province

IMPACT OF WORST FORM OF CHILD LABOUR ON CHILDREN'S PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

a) Effects on children's health

As per assessment findings, a significant number of child laborer believe that their work affects their health, with slightly more girls reporting such an impact compared to boys. It includes 53% of respondents. Among girls, this percentage is higher at 56%, while among boys, it's lower at 49%.

According to breakdown by provinces, in Şanlıurfa, a higher percentage, 69%, of respondents reports that their work affects their mental health negatively, followed by, Hatay, comprising 58% of total.

Impact of work on child laborer Health	Gaziantep	Hatay	Kilis	Şanlıurfa	Gender		Total
	%	%	%	%	Female	Male	
Affected my mental health negatively	31%	58%	50%	69%	40%	54%	47%
Low wight	25%	17%	38%	18%	28%	16%	22%
Bad nutrition	20%	8%	0%	9%	15%	15%	15%
Can't concentrate.	23%	0%	0%	3%	15%	13%	14%
Cause disability.	1%	17%	13%	1%	2%	3%	2%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 17 Impact of work on child laborer Health by province

The survey findings also indicate both continuous and occasional stress or anxiety are common among child laborers, with slightly higher rates among girls. Overall, 30% of all child laborers report feeling continuously stressed or anxious due to their work, with girls experiencing this at a higher rate 36% compared to boys 24%. Additionally, a majority 53% report feeling stressed or anxious sometimes due to work, with a slightly higher percentage among boys 54% compared to girls 52%.

The provincial breakdown shows a diverse pattern, with Hatay having the highest percentage, where 69% of respondents report feeling stressed or anxious. Among respondents aged 10 to 14, the percentage is 42%, representing the highest proportion.

Similarly, in Şanlıurfa had the highest percentage 57% of child laborers reporting occasional feelings of stress or anxiety, among those aged 15 to 17, the percentage is 56%.

Effects of work on stress and anxiety	Gaziantep		Hatay		Kilis		Şanlıurfa		Age group			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	10 to 14		15 to 17	
									#	%	#	%
No	49	25%	2	13%	11	32%	6	4%	16	15%	52	19%
Sometimes	106	54%	3	19%	15	44%	81	57%	47	43%	158	56%
Yes	41	21%	11	69%	8	24%	56	39%	46	42%	70	25%
Total	196	100%	16	100%	34	100%	143	100%	109	100%	280	100%

Table 18 Effects of work on stress and anxiety by age and province

FGD participants discussed the impacts of child labor on children's lives, focusing on health, education, mental well-being, and economic conditions. They highlighted that child labor often causes fatigue and prolonged illness and recovery times, especially due to pesticide exposure in agriculture, increasing the risk of poisoning. Children in labor are also more vulnerable to diseases and injuries at a younger age, negatively affecting their overall health. These observations stress the urgent need for interventions to protect children's health and safety from the harmful effects of child labor.

"Children may be exposed to health problems if the work they do is difficult, such as construction and transportation." Kilis – Merkez – Female FGD

FGD participants emphasized the psychological effect of child labour on child, noting increased depression from missing out on childhood experiences, exposure to violence, misconduct, and exploitation at work, leading to stress and loneliness. Long hours worsen psychological strain. Overall, participants agreed that child labor profoundly harms children's mental health, urging urgent interventions to address these challenges and protect vulnerable children.

"Child labor also affects the mental health of children. I mean, when they see other children playing and studying while they spend their whole day at work, they become depressed and have a psychological complex that is difficult to resolve". Gaziantep – AH/NBEY – Mixed group

b) Nutrition and Physical Child Development Challenges

As per the assessment findings, a notable proportion (35%) of respondents believe that working negatively impacts their physical growth. Among girls, this percentage is higher at 43%, while among boys, it's lower at 28%. According to the breakdown by provinces, Gaziantep has the highest percentage with 41% of respondents believing that working affects their physical growth, followed by, Şanlıurfa at 36%. Among respondents aged 10 to 14, 47% believe that working affects their physical growth. Among those aged 15 to 17, the percentage is 31%.

FGD participants identified numerous risks children face during work. The most common risk is work-related injuries or occupational diseases, often due to improper tool usage or exposure to sharp heavy machinery in factories. Additionally, working under adverse conditions like prolonged sun exposure or contact with chemicals poses direct harm. Other risks include girls' vulnerability to sexual abuse, hindering marriage prospects, and financial exploitation by employers. Hard labor can also impede growth, while exposure to unhealthy habits like smoking adds further risks to their well-being.

"They can suffer from occupational diseases, such as psychological stress or diseases caused by inhaling harmful substances" Şanlıurfa – Bamyasuyu - Males and Females FGD

c) Educational Barriers

According to the survey results, 76% of respondents indicate that they have been absent from school because of their work. Among girls, this percentage is slightly lower at 72%, compared with boys at 81%. These results indicate the need for a treatment program to lessen the detrimental effects of child labor on children's education. This program would set up pertinent educational opportunities during school hours or after school to allow working children to enroll in their education. This is necessary because missing school can put a child in a dangerous situation because school dropouts typically begin one to three days later and end up dropping out completely for the duration of the semester.

The provincial breakdown shows a diverse pattern, Hatay has the highest percentage, with 94% of respondents reporting school absences because of work, and Kilis has the lowest (62%). Among respondents aged 10 to 14, 85% report school absences due to work. Among those aged 15 to 17, the percentage is 73%.

Impact of work on School attendance	Gaziantep		Hatay		Kilis		Şanlıurfa		Age group			
									10 to 14		15 to 17	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
No	49	25%	1	6%	13	38%	29	20%	16	15%	76	27%
Yes	147	75%	15	94%	21	62%	114	80%	93	85%	204	73%
Total	196	100%	16	100%	34	100%	143	100%	109	100%	280	100%

Table 19 Impact of work on school attendance by age and province

A notable majority of respondents report losing their right to education (64%). Among girls, this percentage is higher at 70%, compared with boys at 58%.

The impact of work on education is evident across provinces, with a significant percentage of respondents who report losing their right to education due to their work commitments. In Şanlıurfa, 71% of respondents report losing their right to education. Among respondents aged 15 to 17, this percentage is 71%. Table 21.

Impact of work on education	Gaziantep		Hatay		Kilis		Şanlıurfa		Age group			
									10 to 14		15 to 17	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Don't affect	5	3%	0	0%	1	3%	1	1%	1	1%	6	2%
I don't have enough time to study	5	3%	0	0%	2	6%	1	1%	2	2%	6	2%
I lost my right to education.	120	61%	10	63%	17	50%	101	71%	50	46%	198	71%
I re-enrolled to my class	15	8%	2	13%	5	15%	7	5%	10	9%	19	7%
I can't read or write.	23	12%	4	25%	3	9%	20	14%	32	29%	18	6%
My academic level has slightly declined.	28	14%	0	0%	6	18%	13	9%	14	13%	33	12%
Total	196	100%	16	100%	34	100%	143	100%	109	100%	280	100%

Table 20 Impact of work on education by age and province

Participants offered perspectives on how child labor impacts various facets of children's lives, including their health, education, mental well-being, and economic conditions. Regarding education, they highlighted the profound negative effects of child labor, such as illiteracy, as children often lack the opportunity to learn to read or write in either Arabic or Turkish. Furthermore, participants expressed concerns about the lack of education leading to a bleak future for these children, anticipating disappointment and unfair treatment due to their lack of education. Additionally, they emphasized that the skills necessary for future success would be weaker without access to education. These insights underscore the critical importance of addressing child labor to ensure children have access to education and opportunities for a better future.

“Not receiving adequate education can cause problems for them when they grow up and feel that they have been treated unfairly due to the circumstances.”. Kilis Merkez – Female FGD

d) Concentration Challenges and Work-related Fears & Injuries

The survey findings reveal that a significant percentage of respondents, experience feelings of fear or danger during their work activities (57%). Among boys, this percentage is higher at 59%, compared with a slightly lower percentage of girls at 55%.

As per provincial breakdown, the findings indicate significant differences in the prevalence of feelings of fear or danger while working across different regions and age groups, with particularly notable percentages in Şanlıurfa. A substantial 78% of respondents report experiencing feelings of fear or danger while working in Şanlıurfa. Among respondents aged 10 to 14, this percentage is 72% and among those aged 15 to 17 it is 51%.

e) Sacrifices in Family Time

The survey findings indicate that a majority of respondents believe that their job significantly impacts their ability to spend time with their family 83%, with a slightly higher percentage among boys at 87% compared to girls at 80%.

According to breakdown by provinces, Şanlıurfa had the highest percentage of respondents reporting no family time due to work, with 92%. Table 22

No family time due to work	Gaziantep		Hatay		Kilis		Şanlıurfa		Age group			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	10 to 14		15 to 17	
									#	%	#	%
No	36	18%	4	25%	13	38%	12	8%	22	20%	43	15%
Yes	160	82%	12	75%	21	62%	131	92%	87	80%	237	85%
Total	196	100%	16	100%	34	100%	143	100%	109	100%	280	100%

Table 21 Scarifies of family time due to work by age and province

A significant majority, comprising 67% of all respondents report that their work affects their relationships with peers. Specifically, 69% of girls and 66% of boys indicate that their work has an impact on their relationships with peers.

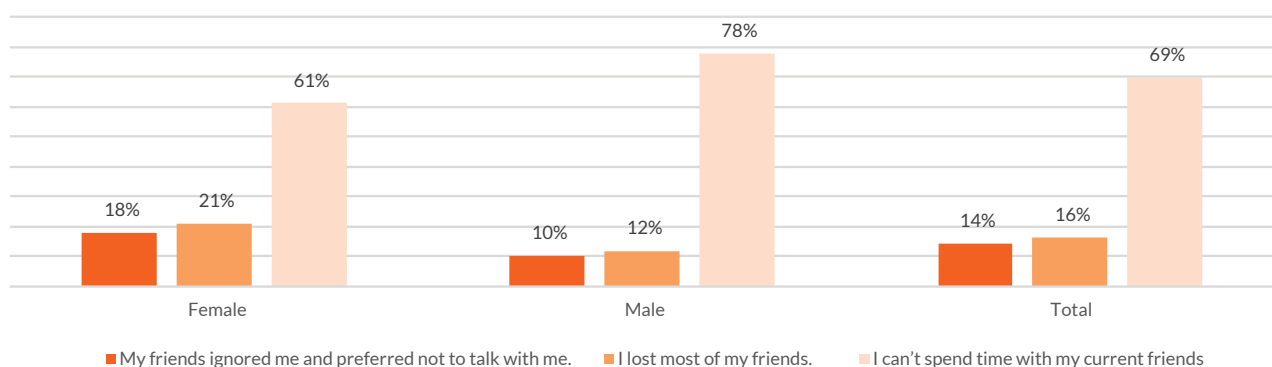


Figure 18 Work affects their relationships with peers by gender

As per provincial breakdown, In Gaziantep, 71% of respondents report that their work impacts their relationships with peers. Among respondents aged 10 to 14, the percentage of respondents reports that their work impacts their relationships with peers, comprises 75%, however, among aged 15 to 17, the percentage of respondents is 64%.

Impact of work on peer relationships	Gaziantep		Hatay		Kilis		Şanlıurfa		Age group			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	10 to 14		15 to 17	
									#	%	#	%
I can't spend time with my current friends	99	71%	8	80%	8	57%	67	68%	47	57%	135	75%
I lost most of my friends.	26	19%	1	10%	3	21%	13	13%	16	20%	27	15%
My friends ignored me and preferred not to talk with me	14	10%	1	10%	3	21%	19	19%	19	23%	18	10%
Total	139	100%	10	100%	14	100%	99	100%	82	100%	180	100%

Table 22 Impact of work on peer relationships by age and province

f) Community Perspectives on Child Labor

The survey findings highlighted a significant concern among respondents regarding the effects of children working instead of attending school on their community. 92% of the total respondents expressed that such employment negatively impacts the community. This response was consistent across both genders, with 91% of girls and 93% of boys.

According to breakdown by provinces, Şanlıurfa with the highest percentage at 97% of the total respondents expressed that such employment negatively impacts the community. These findings indicate a perception among respondents regarding the adverse consequences of children working instead of attending school within their respective communities. Among respondents aged 10 to 14, a significant majority, 90%, believe that children's employment negatively affects the community. Similarly, among those aged 15 to 17, an even higher percentage, 93% have same perspective.

Children's employment impact on community	Gaziantep		Hatay		Kilis		Şanlıurfa		Age group			
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	10 to 14		15 to 17	
									#	%	#	%
No	15	8%	5	31%	7	21%	5	3%	11	10%	21	8%
Yes	181	92%	11	69%	27	79%	138	97%	98	90%	259	93%
Total	196	100%	16	100%	34	100%	143	100%	109	100%	280	100%

Table 23 Children's employment impact on community

The survey data indicate that 47% of respondents believe child labor contributes to community poverty, with similar proportions among genders (48% girls, 45% boys). Conversely, 53% do not believe child labor supports community poverty, with slightly more boys 55% holding this belief compared to girls 52%.

According to breakdown by provinces, the findings suggest a diversity of perspectives across different provinces. In Gaziantep, Hatay and Żanlıurfa, the majority of respondents, constituting 58%, 56% and 53% respectively, believe that child labor does not contribute to community poverty. Alternatively, in Kilis a significant proportion of respondents (71%), believe that child labor contributes to community poverty.

Positive initiatives and coping mechanisms within communities to address child labor issues were noted by participants in various forms. A notable government initiative involves monitoring children who have dropped out of school and holding households accountable by temporarily disabling their IDs until the child returns to school, which some participants view positively. However, others highlight negative impacts on vulnerable households without breadwinners, reliant on child labor for income.

“We are facing a problem, which is fining the parents if the child does not go to school, and we may be exposed to deportation. On the other hand, we need help if my son stops working.” Kilis – Merkez – Female group

Additional initiatives include awareness-raising sessions and seminars conducted by organizations, assessments of child labor, and sponsorship programs where affluent families support children from poor backgrounds. Furthermore, financial support provided to families by organizations like “Concern” enables children to return to school. These initiatives reflect efforts within the community to combat child labor through education, support, and accountability measures, demonstrating a multifaceted approach to address this complex issue.

Child labor has profound and enduring impacts on children, households, and the community, as elucidated by various factors. For children, long-term consequences include potential injuries without compensation, loss of communication skills, social isolation, illiteracy, and increased propensity for violence due to harsh working environments. Furthermore, child labor perpetuates a cycle of poverty and deprives children of a promising future due to educational limitations and premature aging.

“Many are affected by the work of children, meaning the family and society. Let us say that if all the children worked, no one would study. This means that there will be a decline in the level of culture in the level of education in this generation, especially since this generation is the generation of war.”. Kilis- Merkez – Male

Such conditions instill fear of poverty and material attachment, increasing susceptibility to negative life paths. At the household level, child labor disrupts familial dynamics, affecting relationships within the family and potentially influencing future familial interactions. At the societal level, the ramifications are equally profound, contributing to increased crime rates, diminished educational attainment, hindered societal development due to the loss of untapped talent, heightened poverty levels, and compromised social sustainability, ultimately impeding the community’s sustainable development trajectory.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the assessment findings and key drivers of child labor among Syrian refugees in southeast Turkey, the following recommendations are proposed:

- **Tailored Interventions for Vulnerable Groups:** Develop and implement targeted interventions for vulnerable subgroups such as working children, unaccompanied children, girls, disabled children, and orphans among Syrian refugee populations. Given that certain groups are disproportionately affected by severe forms of child labor, as highlighted by focus group discussion participants, these interventions should prioritize access to education, vocational training, psychosocial support, and protection from exploitation. Unaccompanied minors, living without family support, are particularly vulnerable to homelessness and exploitation, making them one of the most impacted categories. Children in informal settlements also face heightened risks due to limited work opportunities and precarious living conditions. Other vulnerable groups identified include refugee girls, undocumented children, those without household breadwinners, orphans, and disabled children, all susceptible to exploitation and barriers in accessing education and protection from labor abuses. Focus group discussions highlighted the neglect of vulnerable groups by NGOs and INGOs, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions. Similarly, children with disabilities require a conducive work environment, suitable education, vocational training, and psychosocial support for integration and acceptance within society. These groups face significant challenges in accessing education and protection from labor abuses due to their vulnerable status. Addressing these challenges requires concerted efforts to ensure the well-being and rights of all Syrian refugee children.
- **Awareness Campaigns and Community Engagement:** Comprehensive and sustainable awareness campaigns are vital to educate parents, children, employers, and communities about the risks and consequences associated with child labor. The assessment findings highlighted the urgent need for such initiatives, with significant percentages of child laborers reporting exposure to hazardous work conditions. Heavy lifting or handling of machinery was reported consistently by 17% of laborers and occasionally by 44%. Work-related injuries were indicated by 43% of respondents, with higher rates among boys 23% compared to girls 12%. Mistreatment and discrimination were distressingly common, with 17% of girls and 21% of boys reporting regular mistreatment, and 55% encountering mistreatment occasionally. Health impacts were significant, with 53% of respondents affected, particularly girls 56% compared to boys 49%. Feelings of fear or danger during work activities were prevalent among 57% of respondents, with slightly higher rates among boys 59% than girls 55%. In addition to awareness campaigns, fostering community engagement through local organizations and institutions is crucial to introduce a culture that prioritizes education and safeguards children from exploitation. These efforts are essential to address the complex challenges faced by child laborers and create a safer and more supportive environment for their well-being.
- **Access to Basic Needs and Social Protection Services:** To address the underlying economic pressures that drive child labor, it is essential to enhance access to fundamental necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare for refugee families. Strengthening social protection services and eliminating barriers to access these basic necessities of life are crucial steps. Additionally, based on the assessment findings, where child laborers are provided with alternative forms of compensation, such as clothing, food, and shelter, targeted interventions can be developed to provide support to vulnerable families. Specifically, 10% of child laborers received clothing, with 25% of them belonging to Gaziantep. Moreover, 45% received food and shelter, with particularly high percentages observed in Gaziantep and Kilis, reaching 75% and 100% respectively. Similarly, in Şanlıurfa, 90% of child laborers received shelter as compensation. By addressing these immediate needs and providing support, Collaborative

among Government NGOs and INGOs are essential to mitigate the economic pressures that lead to child labor and improving the overall well-being of refugee families.

- **Prioritizing the Health and Well-being of Child Laborers:** Prioritize the health and well-being of child laborers by addressing the impact of work on their physical and mental health. Develop interventions to support those experiencing stress, anxiety, and health-related issues, particularly focusing on the slightly higher rates observed among girls, as indicated by the assessment findings where significant proportions report feeling continuously stressed or anxious due to their work (30%) and experiencing feelings of fear or danger during work activities (57%).
- **Economic Empowerment Initiatives:** Economic empowerment initiatives are vital for addressing the root causes of child labor among Syrian refugee families. Survey findings highlight the major role of economic factors driving children into the labor force, with 38% citing economic necessity and 23% mentioning financial needs. Additionally, displacement due to conflict emerged as a significant factor, indicating the multifaceted challenges faced by refugee families. Street vending, begging, and informal sector work are prevalent among younger respondents, while older ones are more engaged in the service industry. Provincial breakdowns reveal varying patterns, with Gaziantep, Kilis, Hatay, and Adana showing dominance in manufacturing, the service industry, and the informal sector. In Adana, all household members, including parents and siblings, are engaged in work at nearly equal rates, possibly due to family size and structure. While some respondents rely on family members working in the humanitarian sector, the majority are engaged in other sectors to support their families, underscoring the need for comprehensive economic support programs. Addressing these economic challenges through vocational training and financial assistance is essential for reducing reliance on child labor and promoting the well-being of Syrian refugee children.
- **Policy Implementation and Enforcement** are crucial for combating harmful child labor among Syrian refugees in southeast Turkey. Strengthening enforcement mechanisms and enhancing coordination between government agencies, law enforcement, and NGOs are essential steps to ensure compliance with existing laws prohibiting child labor. Increasing penalties for employers who exploit child labor and providing incentives for businesses to comply with regulations. The assessment reveals significant gaps and challenges in current policies and interventions. While laws prohibit child labor, weak implementation and limited awareness among stakeholders hinder progress.

Exploitation of emotional appeals to support refugee families perpetuates child labor, exacerbating challenges faced by vulnerable groups. Poverty and limited awareness of child labor risks are primary obstacles. Proposed interventions include financial assistance, vocational training, and awareness campaigns to reduce reliance on child labor and promote education. Despite efforts by the Turkish government, challenges persist in accessing services and coordinating interventions, particularly for vulnerable populations. NGOs face registration hurdles, limiting their support reach, while interventions primarily target children within Syria, neglecting Syrian refugees in Turkey.

Strengthening collaboration, enhancing legislative enforcement, and addressing socio-economic factors are essential to combat child labor effectively and ensure the well-being of Syrian refugee children in southeast Turkey. Additionally, raising awareness, leveraging educational institutions, and utilizing media platforms play crucial roles in addressing misconceptions and driving community engagement towards combating child labor. Efforts must focus on coordination, advocacy, and innovation to create sustainable solutions and protect vulnerable children from exploitation.

- **Cross-Sector Collaboration and Partnerships:** Increase collaboration among government agencies, NGOs, educational institutions, businesses, and community leaders is vital to combat child labor effectively. By combining resources, expertise, and networks, stakeholders can address the root causes

of child labor and create sustainable change. Effective interventions should include diverse services, specialized training for professionals, awareness campaigns, and strengthened partnerships with local organizations to address the specific needs of each group and combat child labor effectively.

- **Inclusive Education Initiatives:** Promoting initiatives for free and inclusive education is vital to ensure that all children, regardless of their socio-economic background or refugee status, have equal access to quality schooling. According to the assessment data, 80% of respondents have previous school attendance, with a slightly higher attendance rate among girls at 82% compared to boys at 79%. Financial constraints pose a significant barrier, cited by 12% of respondents, with a notably higher percentage among girls at 17% compared to boys at 7%. Other obstacles include language barriers, lack of documentation, child marriage, and distance to school. These findings highlight the necessity of providing support for refugee children to enroll and stay in school. This support should include transportation assistance, language support, and psychosocial counseling to overcome educational barriers and foster inclusive learning environments.

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