

PROJECT OF IMPROVING THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF CHILDREN OF (SEASONAL MIGRANT) AGRICULTURAL WORKERS IN ADANA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF WELL-BEING

SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS,
POLICY AREAS AND SOLUTION PROPOSALS



**PROJECT OF IMPROVING THE LIVING CONDITIONS
OF CHILDREN OF (SEASONAL MIGRANT) AGRICULTURAL WORKERS
IN ADANA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF WELL-BEING
SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS,
POLICY AREAS AND SOLUTION PROPOSALS**

AUTHORS

PINAR UYAN SEMERCİ, EMRE ERDOĐAN

TRANSLATION

VEYSİ T. KONDU

RESEARCH TEAM

VEYSİ T. KONDU (PROJECT COORDINATOR)

GARİP HANAY (RESEARCHER)

ZÜBEYDE EKMEKÇİ (RESEARCHER)

GİZEM KÜLEKÇİOĐLU (RESEARCH CENTER ASSISTANT)

DESIGN

KADİR ABBAS

ISTANBUL, FEBRUARY 2017





A

summary of the research findings

The Condition in the Region of Çukurova

It is estimated that there are tens of thousands of seasonal agricultural workers in Çukurova region¹, and many of them are in Adana. During harvesting, workers come to the region to work in seasonal agriculture from a number of cities, predominantly from Şanlıurfa. Currently Syrian refugees also work in this region extensively. The sources of migration change in time due to external and internal factors; however, the condition of seasonal agricultural workers and their families persist to be a major problem of the region because, among other things, the “seasonality”² has turned into permanence. The demand for labor in agricultural production continues all year round. Today, unlike in the past, not only industrial cotton, but also soy, peanut, corn, fruits and vegetables are produced. When it comes to improving the conditions of seasonal agricultural workers in Çukurova, the intertwining of problems that have passed from one generation to the next manifests itself as a deadlock and a hopelessness in both the self-expressions of the families working in seasonal agriculture and the expressions of various other actors. Those who live in the tent areas – first and foremost children – encounter problems in accessing basic rights and continue living at risk. In Çukurova, child labor under the age of 18 is widespread in seasonal agriculture. In this report, the research findings and policy areas and proposals are summarized. Each and every sustainable solution developed to improve the living conditions of seasonal agricultural workers, the most fragile group in Turkey in terms of poverty and deprivation, to reinforce their children’s access to health and education and to prevent their children from working is certain to provide an important contribution to the process of developing an exemplary model to solve the problems experienced not only in Çukurova but also in many other parts of Turkey.

Method

İstanbul Bilgi University’s Center for Migration Research conducted a field research in 2016 with the support of the Bernard van Leer Foundation and in cooperation with the Çukurova Development Agency. The goals of the research have been defined as the following:

- ¹ As a geographical region, Çukurova comprises four cities in the south of Turkey, namely Mersin, Adana, Osmaniye, and Hatay. With most of its wide and plain land it is one of the most arable areas in Turkey.
- ² We prefer to put the description “seasonal migrant” into parentheses because in the specific context of Adana agricultural workers are in the fields all year around.

- Assessing the needs of the children of (seasonal migrant) agricultural workers with Turkish citizenship in Adana, with priority given to those in the age group 0 - 8;
- Designing a research model to be reliably employed in needs assessment;
- Developing sustainable proposals for solutions within the framework of the findings.

The target area of the research project has been determined as the village of Kadıköy in the district of Yüreğir and the villages of Karagöçer and Tuzla in the district of Karataş, where seasonal agricultural workers live densely.

In the research, 643 adults and 333 children (age group 12 - 18) of those who live in the area were surveyed. At the end of the research, the demographic data of approximately 4,000 persons and their information on education, labor and health have become accessible.

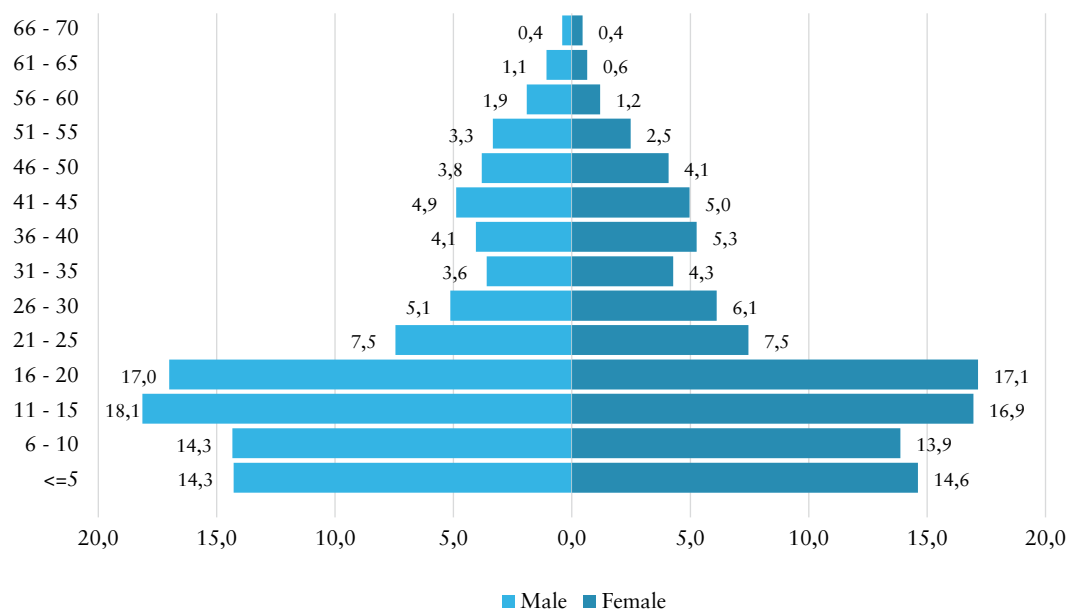
In the qualitative part of the research, in-depth interviews and focus groups were conducted with mothers. Focus groups were conducted with children as well. With the goal of better diagnosing the condition, the mukhtars, agricultural intermediaries/“elci”s, imams, shopkeepers and educational officials in the area were interviewed.

Main Findings

HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE

The average age of the population dwelling in the tent areas is 21. Fourteen percent of the population is five years old or younger. If we add the age group 6 - 10 into this, we can say that one out of three persons dwelling in the tent areas are 10 years old or younger. If we add the age

FIGURE 1. Age Composition in Three Tent Areas



groups 11 - 15 and 16 - 20 into this as well, each 17 percent of the population, we see that 63 percent of the population is 20 years old or younger. The share of the population of the age group 50 and older is only 7 percent. Therefore, the tent areas should be conceived as environments where predominantly children and young people live.

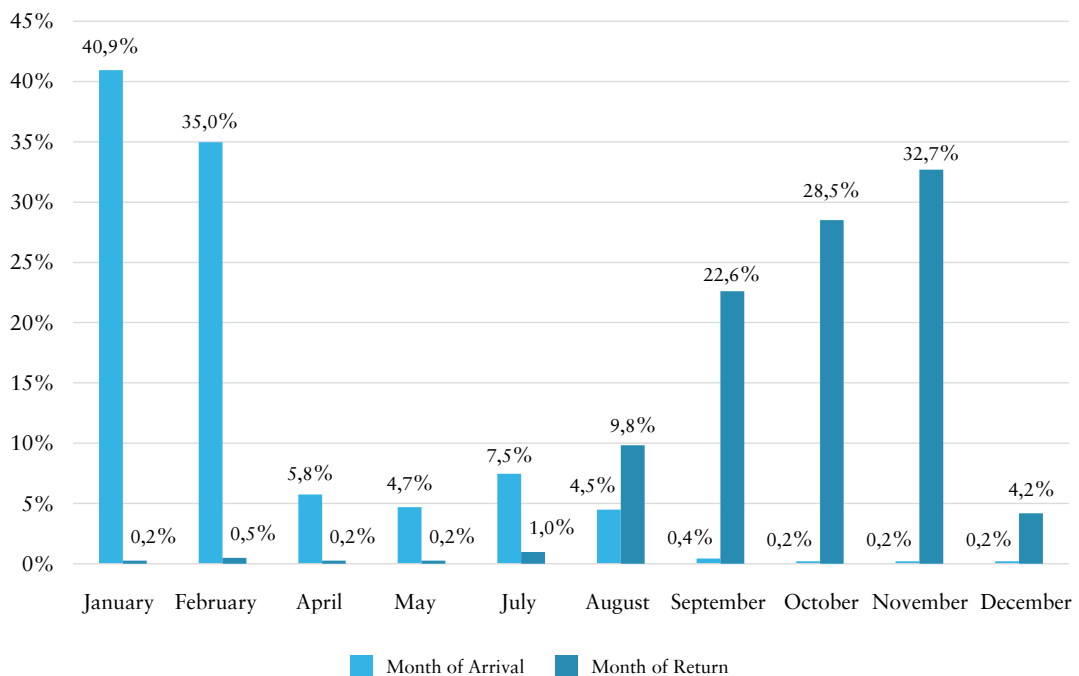
The average size of the households that participated in our survey is seven. Within the households, the parents constitute 30 percent of the population and children 65 percent. The average number of children within each household is four. In some households, the number of children rises to 13.

THE STORY OF SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL WORK

The surveyed households have been doing seasonal agricultural work for 15 years on average. For 25 percent, seasonal agricultural work is an occupation that has been going on for 20 years.

While only 63 percent of those who dwell in tent areas return home within a year, 37 percent stated that they do not return home. On average, they have not returned home in the past 10 years. Some families have not returned home even in the past 20 or 25 years. Of the seasonal agricultural workers who do not return home, 67 percent continue staying in the tents and do not dwell in a house when they are not working. This condition is an indicator of the fact that agricultural work means being migratory as well for a considerable number of surveyed persons (approximately 25 percent).

FIGURE 2. Periods of Arriving in and Leaving the Region of Çukurova



Seasonal agricultural workers come to the region in January and February. Those who come later are less than 25 percent of the population. On the other hand, the families that can leave do so beginning with August, and most of them leave by November. They return to the region in January of the following year. So seasonal agricultural work constitutes an occupation that spreads itself throughout the whole year.

WORKING CONDITIONS

When we asked the surveyed persons how they are paid, almost all of them told us that they earn daily wages. On average, the daily wage is 40 Turkish liras and, as we have learned, there is no difference between men and women or children and adults in terms of the daily wage they earn. “Elci”s, who act as intermediaries, get, from workers themselves, a commission of 4 Turkish liras (10 percent) for each worker they supply. It was indicated that the daily wage had remained low due to the Syrian agricultural workers. In return for this low wage, most of the seasonal agricultural workers (70 percent) work on average more than 11 hours a day, and almost all of them (98 percent) work more than 9 hours. Three-quarters of those surveyed go to the field seven days a week.

FINANCIAL CONDITION

When we asked the interviewees how their financial condition as a household is, 50 percent told us that they do not have enough money even for “such basic needs as food and rent”. Almost 50 percent indicated that they have barely enough money. However, it must be noted that, according to the findings of the qualitative research, this level of “barely enough” is below even the level of satisfying the most basic needs. Half of the seasonal agricultural families owe money to an institution or a person. Debts are more likely to be those that are owed to acquaintances/relatives without interest. Eleven percent of the indebted owe money to “elci”, 10 percent to banks.

SHELTER CONDITIONS

It has been observed that most of the seasonal agricultural workers (82 percent) live in tents made of cloth or nylon. The rest (18 percent) live in huts made of straw. The shelter conditions are one of the basic problems for all family members, first and foremost for babies and children. Jerry-built tents do not provide proper shelter and, since they are built on sand/soil, are open to various risks such as insects, snakes, rain, cold, and dust that come from the ground. Moreover, the lack of safe playgrounds for children who are under the ages of 10 - 11 and do not go to fields, as well as the severe risks that canals and roads create, were pointed out to us by mothers, elder sisters and children a number of times. Planning safe playgrounds for children in tent areas is an urgent need.



Bathroom and Washroom Necessities

Keeping in mind the fact that the average size of a household is seven persons, it must be stated that bathing needs are satisfied by a family's bathroom built next to the tent (97 percent). Three percent of the surveyed use shared bathrooms.

It was observed that toilet necessities are provided by a family toilet next to the tent (93 percent). Only 7 percent of the surveyed use shared toilets. Satisfying bathroom and toilet necessities with jerry-built constructions next to the tent creates very important drawbacks for hygiene.



Drinking Water

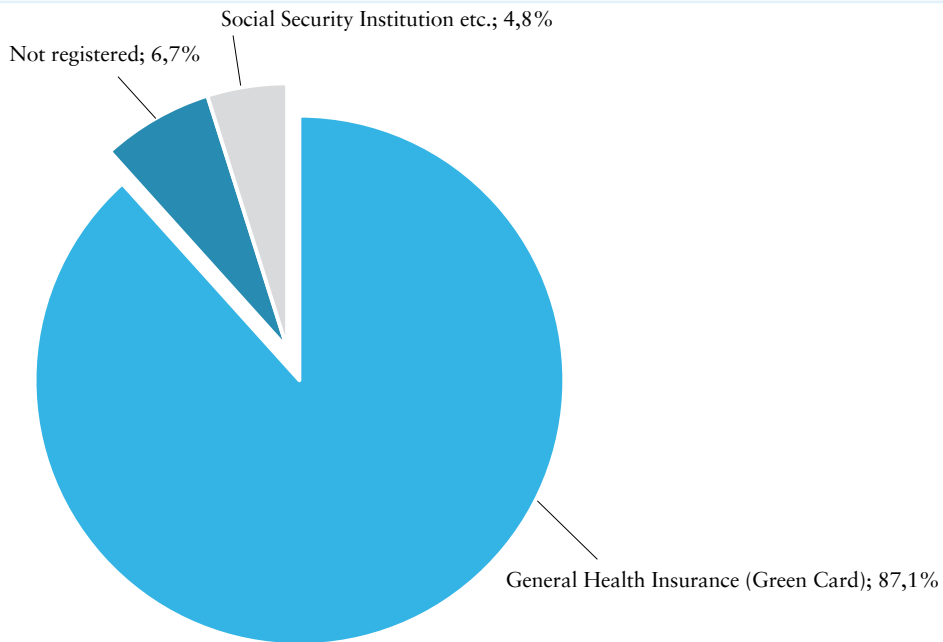
We observed that the primary source for drinking water in the tent areas is a common tap. Of those surveyed, 25 percent use a tap in their own tents. Water brought by tanker truck is also an important source of drinking water, and 16 percent use well water. In the qualitative research, it was observed that among the three tent areas there are differences with respect to the source of water and that there are difficulties concerning the suitability of drinking water.



Electric Usage

According to our research, the most important energy source of seasonal agricultural workers is electricity received from the public power line (86 percent). Eight percent use a generator, and around six percent do not use electricity at all. The qualitative research shows that electricity is brought to the tent areas with a single power line and that payment is made according to the number of bulbs in a tent (each piece of electric equipment that uses electricity is considered one bulb). However, there are such vital risks as electric shock and fire as part of the dangers created by the way cables are installed in tents and the problem of low voltage.

Fourteen percent of the households own a washing machine. It is obvious that families that do not own a washing machine find it difficult to provide their children with hygiene if we take into account the facts that one third of the population is 10 years old or younger and that 14 percent of the population is 5 years old or younger.

FIGURE 3. Social Security

HEALTH AND SOCIAL SECURITY

Of those surveyed, 87 percent meet their health expenditures with the General Health Insurance (Green Card). Those who are registered with the Social Security Institution or a similar government agency is below 5 percent. Seven percent have no social security coverage. This condition indicates not only vulnerability and deprivation that seasonal agricultural workers face but also their high levels of dependency.

Seasonal agricultural workers and their families are not only dependent on the General Health Insurance for social security but they also cannot reach social welfare services delivered by the state and other institutions. Thirteen percent of the surveyed indicated that they receive financial support for education. The main source of this support is state's Foundation(s) of Social Assistance and Solidarity.

Seventy-eight percent of the surveyed receive service from local health care centers and 20 percent from public hospitals. Those surveyed were not happy with the institutions from which they receive health service. Less than 26 percent said they find the service they receive adequate and three-quarters said they are not happy with it. These figures explicitly demonstrate the inadequateness of the health care received.

It is known from the survey results that on average women give birth to their first child at the age of 21. Approximately 8 percent of mothers have given birth to their first child when they were younger than 15, and 15 percent under the age of 18. Twenty-nine percent of the surveyed families had one child who died. That two-thirds of the dead children were under the age of one shows the prevalence of infant mortality. Moreover, as it has been described in detail in the qualitative research, miscarriage is a widespread phenomenon.

FIGURE 4. Information about Pregnancy and Birth (percentages of those who answered "yes")

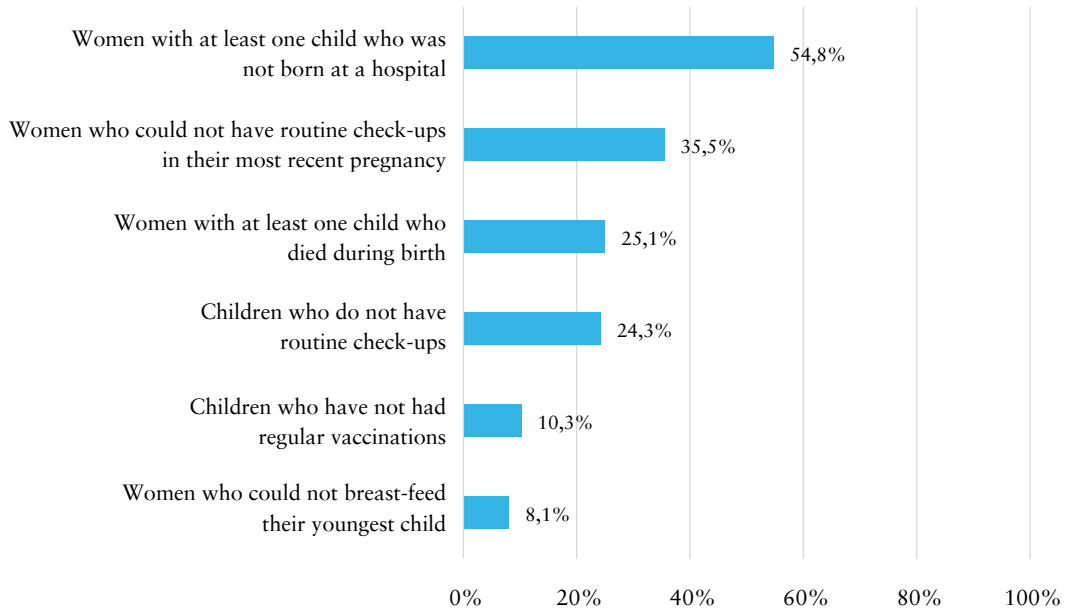
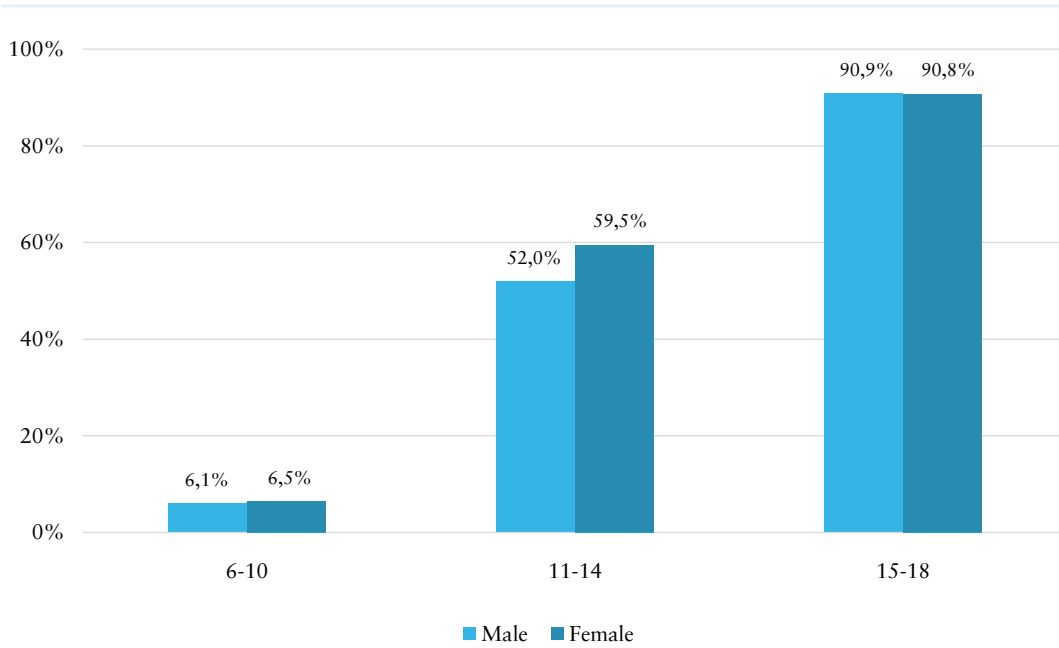


Figure 4 gives us an idea about the pregnancy and post-natal health of women who dwell in tent areas:

- Fifty-five percent have at least one child that is not born at a hospital;
- One-third of women in the surveyed families could not have routine check-ups in their most recent pregnancy;
- One-quarter of families have at least one child who died during birth;
- Children of one-quarter of families do not have routine check-ups;
- Ten percent of families have children who have not had regular vaccinations.

FIGURE 5. Child Labor according to Age Groups (percentage of those who work)

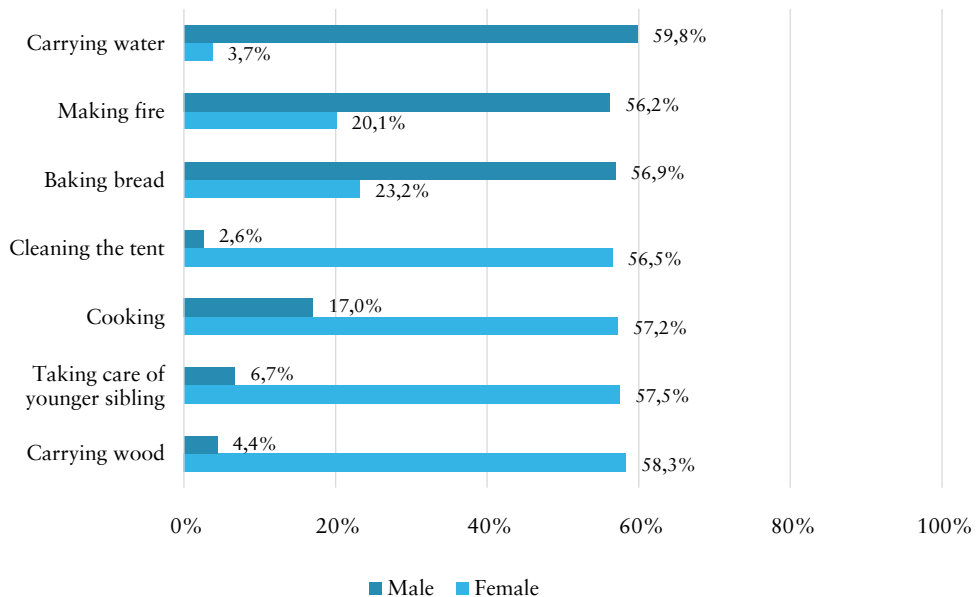
WORKING CONDITIONS OF CHILDREN

Child labor in the surveyed families are shown in Figure 5. There are no children in the age group 0 - 5 working in the fields. While 7 percent of the children in the age group 6 - 10 work in the fields, in the age group 11 - 14 the percentage rises to 52 percent among the boys and 60 percent among the girls. In the 15 - 18 age group, the percentage of those who work in the fields is 91. In other words, nine of every 10 young persons work in the fields.

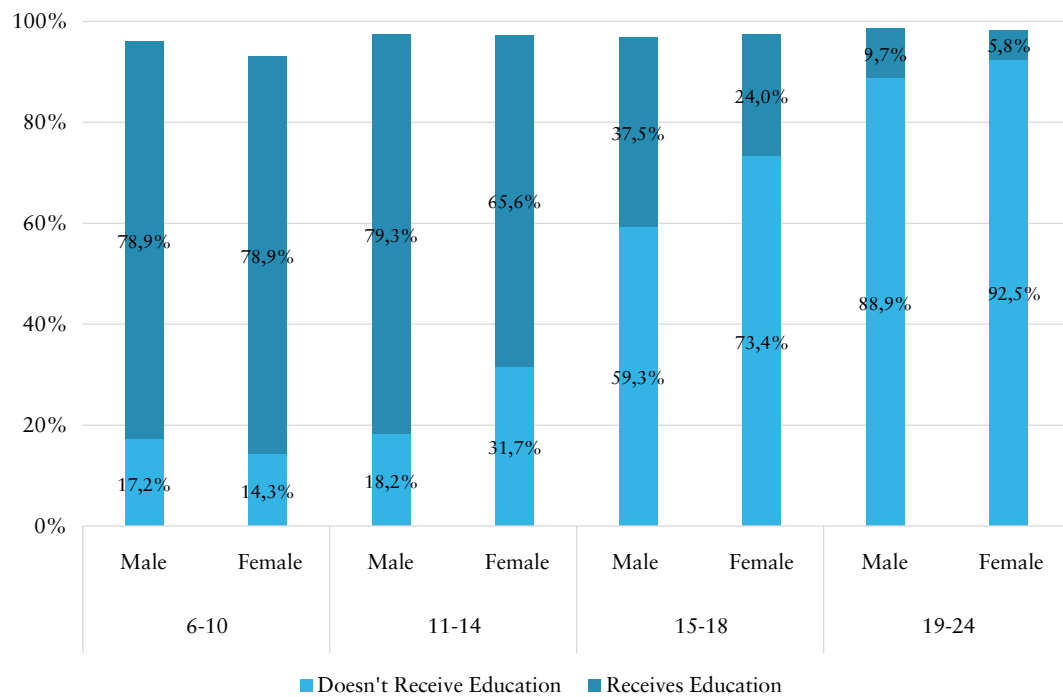
Most of the children who work in the fields work seven days a week and more than nine hours a day. On this point there is no difference between adults and children.

The children we surveyed told us that they receive a daily wage of 40 Turkish liras on average. This figure does not vary between older and younger children or between sexes. When asked to whom the wages are given, those interviewed said the wages of children are generally taken by their fathers. One-fifth of the children in the age group 15 - 18 keep their wages themselves, and among those who are younger than 15 sometimes it was observed that the wages are given to the mothers.

FIGURE 6. Workload of Children in Tent Areas



There is a division of labor based upon gender among the children who dwell in tents. Fifty-eight percent of girls occupy themselves with such activities as collecting wood for fire, taking care of younger siblings, cooking and cleaning the tent. Boys usually help with carrying water, making fires and cooking bread. Among girls, some cook bread and make fires as well.

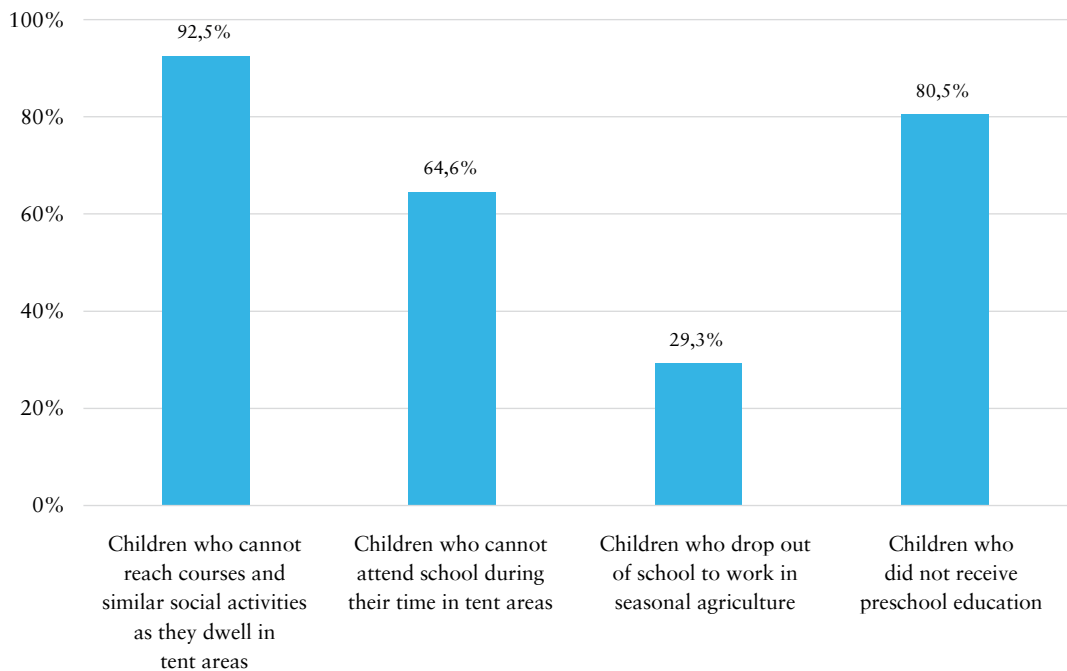
FIGURE 7. Attendance in School and Drop-Out Percentages according to Age Group and Gender

EDUCATION

According to the data we have, while 79 percent of the children in the age group 6 - 10 (the ages for elementary school education) receive education, 15 percent of this age group do not have access to education. In the age group 11 - 14, the percentage of boys who do not go to school rises to 18 and of girls to 32. This age group is the first in which gender inequality is observed. In the age group 15 - 18, 59 percent of boys as well as 73 percent of girls have dropped out of school. A gender gap is observed in this age group as well but it is obvious that the percentages of drop-outs are too high for both sexes. When we come to the age group 19 - 24, it is seen that the share of drop-outs has risen to 90 percent. Continuing to receive education in this age group can be seen as an exception.

The access to education for children living in tent areas is shown in Figure 8. In 80 percent of the surveyed households, children have not had preschool education. It must be stated that there is an important shortcoming in this respect. In one-third of the households, there are children who do not continue their education so that they can work in seasonal agriculture. Children cannot attend school during their time in the tent areas. In two-thirds of the households in tents there is one child who cannot attend school. Finally, children cannot reach courses and similar social activities as they dwell in the tent areas. There is no significant difference in this among the three areas.

FIGURE 8. Access to Education of Children Living in Tent Areas (percentage of households that answered "yes")



The qualitative research indicates the necessity of supporting the schools close to these three tent areas in various ways and the importance of particularly attendance and success at school for keeping students in school even if they are registered. The schools close to these three tent areas appear to be an important institution for improving the conditions of children and breaking with the deprivation that is transferred from one generation to another. Improving the conditions of schools and establishing mechanisms to support teachers and administrators may create results with multiple effects. For all students - not only for those who are resilient and become successful despite all the negative conditions - to continue education and have dreams beyond seasonal agricultural work is a crucial step in solving this radical problem.

FIGURE 9. Relationship between Working in the Fields and Dropping Out (percentage of those who are registered at school)

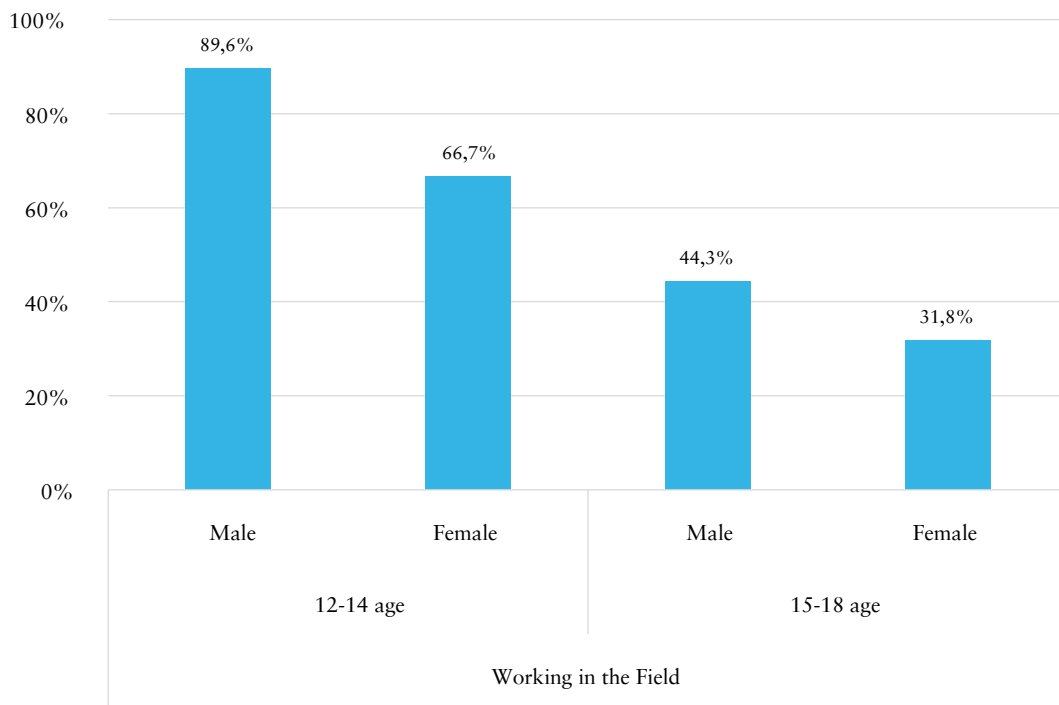


Figure 9 shows how the effect of working in the fields on dropping out of school includes a gender difference.

- In the age group 12 - 14, while 90 percent of boys, who work in the fields, are registered at school, the percentage is 67 among girls.
- In the age group 15 - 18, while 44 percent of boys, who work in the fields, are registered at school, the percentage is 32 among girls.

In summary, while one encounters boys who continue their education although they work in the fields, for girls working in the fields means dropping out.

Conclusion

The findings of the research show us that a sustainable intervention is only possible with the cooperation of the public sector and civil society by recognizing the urgency and multi-dimensionality of the problem and by developing concrete projects in this field. In our current project, in order to make this contribution, in the next stage we aim at generating a package of solutions, supported by stakeholders, by meeting with all relevant parties. With this aim, we present primary policy areas and proposals to think about, work over and develop them together with you.

B

policy areas and solution proposals

In 2016, in Adana (on November 17 at Çukurova Development Agency and the same day at Tuzla Secondary School) and in İstanbul (on December 6 at İstanbul Bilgi University), we organized workshops in which we shared the findings of the research “Improving the Living Conditions of (Seasonal Migrant) Agricultural Workers’ Children in Adana (Kadıköy – Yüreğir; Karagöçer – Karataş; Tuzla – Karataş) from the Perspective of Well-Being”. We developed the following policy proposals by working on the findings of the research, summarized above, and the output of the workshops. By taking into account all the discussions within this framework, fundamental areas that must be prioritized as well as some implementations that can be realized and the ways of administering them will be presented here.

The research findings and the workshops have made a number of policy areas prominent. With the goal of improving the poverty and deprivation conditions in which the children of seasonal agricultural workers live, these policy areas must be developed by prioritizing them.

Health

Our research has shown that the seasonal agricultural workers and their families have considerable health problems. Any activity of improvement to be implemented in the region must absolutely include the field of health. When an individual family member has a health problem, it affects the well-being of the whole family. Since our research focuses on children, first and foremost policy proposals to solve children’s problems in the field of health have been developed.

HEALTH OF PREGNANT WOMEN AND HEALTH OF NEWBORN BABIES - HIGH LEVELS OF MISCARRIAGE

We found in our field research that 55 percent of the mothers have at least one child that was not born at a hospital. One-third of the women in the surveyed families did not have routine check-ups

during their most recent pregnancy. In one-quarter of the families, there is at least one child who died during birth. On average, women give birth for the first time at age 21. Approximately 15 percent have given birth before reaching the age of 18. Twenty-nine percent of the surveyed families had one child who died. The fact that two-thirds of these children have died before they have reached the age of one demonstrates the prevalence of infant mortality in the first twelve months.

Seasonal agricultural workers have migratory qualities. However, in the particular case of Adana, even those who do not migrate are not registered with the family physician, thus it is not possible to monitor pregnant women. Among the interviewed there were women who realized that they had been pregnant only after experiencing miscarriage.

In addition, it was observed that in the first place the women in seasonal agricultural work, even if they are registered with the family physician, have limited knowledge of the health rights they have, and they cannot regularly benefit from the health system.

On the other hand, it was also observed that the interviewed women have very limited knowledge of sexual and reproductive health. Moreover, within the framework of existing gender roles and living conditions and practices, women experience frequent pregnancy, too many miscarriages, and health problems.

Women in seasonal agricultural work have limited knowledge of pregnancy and post-natal care. Women continue to work during pregnancy, do not have the opportunity to consult a doctor and spend the post-natal period without medical supervision. Since women's labor is demanded, women cannot rest properly during the post-natal period and they transfer the care of the baby to the elderly members of the family. This has numerous health risks for both the baby and the mother.

The first precaution for reducing the percentages of miscarriages and preventing death in pregnancy, the post-natal period and infancy in the region is to register the seasonal agricultural workers in the health system and monitor them.

A project can be developed to regularly monitor the health of seasonal agricultural workers and their families and to update their medical records. In particular, monitoring pregnancy regularly may reduce the frequency of miscarriage.

It must be indicated that registering, as we will cover below, is not enough to receive service. Therefore, seasonal agricultural workers, especially women, should be informed about their health rights. The target is to make it possible for women to exercise their rights more effectively following the information sessions. However, this educational activity must be devised by taking into account the arduousness of the working conditions as well as the existing patriarchal family structure. Ministry of Health, Çukurova University, and the civil society organizations experienced in the field of health rights may take responsibility for this educational campaign. This campaign can be conducted during the months when arrivals to the region are heavy.

A campaign can be run to inform seasonal agricultural workers, especially women, about health rights.

It is important to give sexual and reproductive health education to young women, especially by taking into account the prevalence of early pregnancy. Health workers of the region may take the main responsibility for this education, but also the students of the Faculty of Medicine of Çukurova University, the student clubs of the university and the experienced civil society organizations can volunteer to help. These educational activities must absolutely include pregnancy and post-natal advice.

It is necessary to give education that enables young women to be informed about sexual health and reproductive health. It is possible to plan education given by seasonal agricultural workers themselves.

INCOMPLETE VACCINATION OF CHILDREN

According to our research 10 percent of the children have not been vaccinated. This shows that the vaccination target of 100 percent has not been reached when it comes to the children of families in seasonal agriculture. The prominent reason for this incomplete vaccination is, as we will cover in the next section, due to the difficulties in the process of accessing health services. Any activity directed towards alleviating these difficulties will cause an increase in the percentage of children with complete vaccination.

Lack of knowledge of their own health rights on the part of seasonal agricultural workers themselves, too, creates this problem. Moreover, the mothers do not have adequate knowledge when it comes to when their children are to be vaccinated.

As a short-term solution to the problem, it is thought that a widespread health monitoring and a catch-up vaccination campaign would have a positive effect. It is possible to register the children lacking vaccination with a monitoring campaign to be conducted during the months when the arrivals of seasonal workers to the region are heavy. This campaign can be carried out by the Ministry of Health, local administrations, Çukurova University and civil society organizations.

It is necessary that all children living in these three villages are medically screened, that children with incomplete vaccinations are recorded and that children with incomplete vaccination records are vaccinated.

An educational campaign directed especially towards the young women among the seasonal agricultural workers in the region will cause the percentages of those with complete vaccinations to rise and the targeted standards to be realized. This educational activity can be carried out by the Ministry of Health, Çukurova University and civil society organizations. It is recommended that the campaign should be conducted during the periods when the arrivals to the region get intense, during off-work hours and in the tent areas.

It is possible to run a project to inform young women about vaccination.

CONDITION OF CHILDREN WHO NEED REGULAR MEDICAL CARE AND TREATMENT

Twelve percent of the surveyed children have an illness that require regular medical care.³ Only 23 percent of those children can go to a doctor regularly and 72 percent cannot (80 percent among the girls).

Among these children, 20 percent regularly take the medication required by their illness; the rest takes the medication either not at all or irregularly. Therefore, to prevent child death and disability, it is vital that during the vaccination campaign the conditions of children who need regular medical care should be recorded, the necessary care and monitoring should be provided and the necessary information should be supplied to the families.

One of the primary goals must be to deliver services to treat children with ailments who require regular medical care and treatment and to record them so that they can be monitored.

DIFFICULTIES OF REACHING MEDICAL SERVICES

Most of the health problems the families in seasonal agricultural work experience is also related to the fact that their accessibility to health services is limited. Since they are not registered, they receive limited service from the closest health institutions.⁴ Sometimes they go to private facilities by incurring debt to the “elci” for travel expenses, doctor and medicine expenditures. Since their financial conditions require them to provide for these high expenditures by borrowing money, they prefer not to see a doctor unless the health problem becomes something serious. Therefore, health problems get worse and become more difficult to treat.

In order to be able to prevent all health problems in the region from worsening, the seasonal agricultural workers and their families must be included in a system that enables them to receive health care in each and every region they are. It is possible to develop such a system with the co-operation of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Labor and Social Security.

³ Similarly, the household data demonstrate that fifty percent of the population over the age of 50 are in need of regular care and medical treatment and that among those who are older than 50 the percentage increases in direct proportion to age.

⁴ The following is from the *Report of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey Parliamentary Inquiry Commission founded with the Goal of Determining the Precautions that Must Be Taken by Investigating the Problems of Seasonal Agricultural Workers* (March 2015) under the heading of Health: “(...) Seasonal agricultural workers, in cities in which they live, can receive service from their family physicians and, in cities which they migrate to, as guest patients from family physicians there. However, in the family physician system, physician’s fee is determined on the basis of registered patients, and guest patients are not included in calculations. Therefore, there is no financial incentive for a family physician to provide service to a seasonal agricultural worker as a guest patient. A performance penalty in the form of pay deduction has been envisaged when it comes to not proper control and monitoring of the pregnant woman and the baby registered with the family physician. This leads family physicians to prefer not to start diagnosis and monitoring in the name of avoiding the penalty to be incurred because of the impossibility of monitoring once seasonal agricultural workers leave the area. This subject was brought up by Prof. Zeynep Şimşek of Harran University at the Commission meeting on 22.01.2015 and Prof. Seçil Özkan, the Head of Turkey Public Health Institute, on 28.01.2015. Prof. Zeynep Şimşek told that family physicians could avoid monitoring pregnancy in seasonal agricultural workers. Prof. Seçil Özkan told that family physicians received penalty if they did not diagnose pregnancy or diagnosed pregnancy late and, therefore, they tried not to record the data even if they monitored the pregnant woman.”

It is necessary to record and monitor seasonal agricultural workers in such a way that all of them can receive medical services. In order to reach this goal, it is possible to extend the legal framework of family physicians and revise their performance system in areas where there are large numbers of seasonal agricultural workers.

Our research demonstrates that the health institutions that deliver service in the area are inadequate. For example, the Family Health Center in Karataş-Tuzla delivers service with two doctors and two nurses to sixteen villages.

Although mobile health services are suggested for tent areas, in our research we have learned that it is inadequate as well. Therefore, the need to increase the accessibility to health services for families that are permanently or temporarily in seasonal agricultural work is explicit and vital.

It is necessary that the health problems of seasonal agricultural workers are handled from the perspective of public health and that the capacity of the institutions (first and foremost public health centers) that deliver health services is increased in order to prevent existing health problems from getting bigger. Mobile health services can be a solution to the high cost of reaching health care, which we have mentioned above. For this, the Ministry of Health, Çukurova University and civil society organizations can cooperate.

It is necessary to increase the capacity of institutions that deliver medical services in the region by taking into account the increase in population due to seasonal agricultural workers. It is necessary to deliver mobile medical services.

Social Services

Among seasonal agricultural workers, eighty-seven percent meet their health expenditures with the General Health Insurance (Green Card). Those who are registered with the Social Security Institution or a similar government agency is below 5 percent. Seven percent have no social security coverage. This condition indicates not only vulnerability and deprivation that seasonal agricultural workers face but also high levels of their dependency. Tuzla has the highest rate of being non-registered (10 percent).

Relying upon these findings, these families that live in the conditions of poverty and deprivation must be supported by social assistance in such a way that their children are prevented from working in the fields and can attend school. If one takes into account especially the fact that 60 percent of the children in the age group 11 - 15 work illegally in the fields with adults for the same daily wage (approximately 40 Turkish liras), one realizes that the Conditional Education Assistance (Social Assistance nr. 3294) is very limited in amount. Moreover, people receiving this assistance stop getting it if they move to another city or town and have a new dwelling address without informing the foundation they are registered with. They should go to the foundation serving their new address and ask for their registration to be transferred. This also creates an important obstacle for the children of seasonal migrant agricultural workers. The amounts of assistance are not enough for the families in their conditions of poverty: in elementary education, 35 Turkish li-

ras for boys and 40 Turkish liras for girls; in secondary education, 50 Turkish liras for boys and 60 Turkish liras for girls. Still, the teachers have informed us that some families do receive this assistance but also indicated that especially attendance at school should be monitored more often.

It is very important to support the families in accessing social assistance, especially for their children's continuing attendance at school, which we cover below in detail. School must be constructed as an environment of social welfare in which children of seasonal agricultural workers continue their education to have an opportunity for a different future. In this process, the family's access to social assistance directed towards satisfying the basic needs of the family is necessary.

It is necessary to establish mechanisms that will increase the seasonal agricultural workers' access to social welfare services. It is possible to establish temporary/permanent units to inform seasonal agricultural workers and their families about social welfare rights and social welfare services.

Education

The findings of our research have demonstrated the importance of developing policy proposals in the field of education for children of seasonal agricultural workers (namely dropping out and lack of attendance at school, quality of education and early childhood education).

DROPPING OUT AND LACK OF ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

According to the data we have, while 79 percent of the children in the age group 6 - 10 (the ages for elementary school education) receive education, 15 percent of this age group do not have access to education. In the age group 11 - 14, the percentage of boys who do not go to school rises to 18 and of girls to 32. This age group is the first in which gender inequality is observed. In the age group 15 - 18, 59 percent of boys as well as 73 percent of girls have dropped out of school. A gender gap is observed in this age group as well but it is obvious that the percentage of drop-outs is too high for both sexes. When we come to the age group 19 - 24, it is seen that the share of drop-outs has risen to 90 percent. Continuing to receive education in this age group can be seen as an exception.

Moreover, in one-third of the households there are children who cannot go to school because they work in agriculture. Children who are of legal age to attend school cannot do so as they are in the tent areas. In two of each three households in the tent areas, there is at least one child who does not attend school.

a) Dropping Out

When we consider the causes of dropping out and lack of attendance at school, covered in detail below, especially in light of the findings of the qualitative research, the necessity of working because of poverty and the perception that the benefit of working in the fields is greater than at-

tending the school – enforced by the economic condition of the family – can be seen as the two most important factors. Agricultural work increases, especially as children grow older and are perceived as a labor force in the field. On another note, more girls than boys drop out of school due to both working in the fields and gender roles. Moreover, moving from one place to another was also mentioned as a cause of increasing lack of attendance and related lack of success, meaning dropping out. In all tent areas, living conditions and the lack of an environment suitable for study may cause failure at school and, combined with the conditions of poverty, lack of motivation in both families and children. It is in this context that preventing students from dropping out of school has been established as one of the primary fields of intervention.

The steps that primarily need to be taken to prevent dropping out are to make sure that children do not go to the fields to work and to support families by taking into account their needs.

It is possible to consider a mechanism to monitor and audit in order to take children out of the fields, in cooperation with relevant ministries, local administration and civil society organizations. Such a mechanism may be developed based on the model of the “Adana City Council’s Committee to Fight Child Labor and to Monitor Children who Work”.

b) Lack of Attendance at School

First, the fact that most children who do not attend school work in the fields/gardens demonstrates that the problem of dropping out is a part of the big picture. Making sure that children do not work in the fields/gardens will result in reduced lack of attendance at school.

In addition to this macro solution, it has been observed that one of the most important causes of lack of attendance at school is the children’s moving from one place to another with their parents. As schools continue instruction, the children move with their parents to the places where the fields are. This cycle of leaving early and starting late causes lack of motivation for attending school and thus lack of attendance.

Another of the findings of the qualitative research is that not being successful in courses also causes lack of motivation to attend school. Students become reluctant to attend school because of failure, mostly intertwined with the problem of lack of attendance. Not having an environment suitable for study is yet another cause of failure in courses. It is impossible for children to have a desk for studying or a book case when they do not have a room of their own in a tent.

Another problem that can be associated with the lack of attendance is not having a direction regarding future career options if they do attend school. Students do not know what to do in the future even though they attend school and become successful there. This alienation experienced during education, combined with the attraction of working in the fields, turns first into failure, and then lack of attendance and dropping out.

Finally, the teachers have informed us that the parents do not follow their children’s attendance or performance at school. This is a problem that applies to the local parents to a certain extent as well. This causes the parents to be uninformed about their children’s academic standing or attendance record. Naturally, this lack of interest on the part of the parents results in lack of motivation of the student and then entering into the cycle mentioned just above.

In order to solve the problem of lack of attendance, it is necessary that first and foremost CHILDREN SHOULD STOP WORKING IN THE FIELDS. It is possible to make sure that these children have a better attendance record. In this context, primarily the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and the Ministry of Education have roles to play, as do all related ministries' city directorates. It is necessary to establish effective monitoring mechanisms to stop children under the age of 18 from working in the fields and to realize the existing legal regulations as seasonal agricultural work is defined as "the worst form of child labor".

It is ABSOLUTELY necessary to prevent children under the age of 15 from working. It is necessary to develop monitoring mechanisms to prevent children under the age of 18 from working in the fields and to make legal rules function properly and regularly.

One of the precautions to reduce lack of attendance at school is to promote sending children to school. Among the seasonal agricultural workers, there are families that benefit from the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT). Both increasing the amount of CCT and vigilantly monitoring attendance may make important contributions. It is necessary that attendance and registration are monitored more frequently by teachers with the goal of ensuring the attendance of children, particularly those of seasonal agricultural workers. An increase in attendance should be expected with proper functioning of this monitoring system.

One of the solutions that can be implemented by the Ministry of National Education is to provide students with breakfast and lunch at schools. Students who benefit from a specially designed transportation program (taşımalı sistem) are already served lunch. Serving breakfast and lunch to all students at schools in which fragile groups attend can be a factor in ensuring attendance to school.

Students' registration and attendance must be monitored more closely. On the other hand, providing students with breakfast and lunch at school is an act to motivate attendance.

It is necessary to satisfy the lack of an environment suitable for study, which causes students to fail in their courses. For this purpose, a project can be started to use schools after daily instruction is over. Similarly, it is possible to establish a place to study in a limited fashion in the tent areas. For this purpose, it is possible to use the buildings of institutions in the region as the public education centers (Halk Eğitim Merkezi). Most importantly, it is possible to cooperate with the student clubs at Çukurova University and the civil society organizations at the national level in order to make it possible to support children in their courses. However, it is important that the cooperation is not constituted as a one-time temporary project but as a mechanism that is permanent and transformative.

It is proposed to establish study places in tent areas to deliver students guidance with the assistance of local administration and civil society organizations.

We have indicated that students' doubts about the benefits of the education they receive cause decreases in their participation in classes and increases in their lack of attendance. In order to increase the motivation of children of families in seasonal agriculture, it is necessary to turn school into an attractive place for children. Our research has shown that children feel happier at school in spite of all negative conditions. For this purpose, first and foremost it is necessary to improve the physical conditions of schools in the region. Improvement in physical conditions should not be limited to instruments of education; it must ensure that children see school as an environment in which they can spend their time better. Therefore, it is important to increase the extracurricular activities at school. Increasing sports activities that include all and maintaining extracurricular educational/artistic activities will cause students to spend more time at school. For this purpose, it is possible to cooperate with the student clubs of Çukurova University and to benefit from the experiences of civil society organizations. Similarly, in order to provide extracurricular educational and artistic activities, the successful projects of TEGV (Turkey Educational Volunteers Foundation), the Young Life Foundation, the Development Workshop and the Support to Life Association – all experienced in the field of seasonal agriculture – can be activated in the region.

It is necessary, on the one hand, to increase physical capacity of schools and, on the other hand, to increase the number of sports, arts and educational activities to make the school environment attractive for students. These activities must be designed to embrace all students. This will increase cohesion among students.

An important factor that needs to be taken into account when it comes to dropping out, lack of attendance and failure at school is the fact that parents do not follow and monitor their children's education. However, that parents want their children to continue their education is one of the findings of the qualitative research. Therefore, it is possible to expect improvement in attendance if we make it possible for parents to be informed about their children's education.

It is not realistic to expect parents to contact teachers in order to follow their children's education. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to go to the tent areas and to meet with parents to inform them about their children's school performance. It is possible for the Ministry of National Education, Çukurova University and experienced civil society organizations to provide training to counsellors in particular for the latter to take on such a role. In order to achieve this, it is important to increase motivation of teachers, which we will consider now.

It is necessary to contact parents in tent areas to inform them and to monitor attendance. It is necessary to provide counsellors with job training on this subject.

LOW LEVELS OF MOTIVATION AMONG TEACHERS

The low level of school attendance, lack of interest and success in courses, and lack of parental interest have a negative effect on the motivation of teachers, too. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that levels of motivation of teachers working in the region are kept high and to support the teachers in terms of how they can reach children living in the conditions of tent areas.

It is observed that most of the teachers working in the region do not have a place to stay close to the schools and they commute every day. Therefore, solving the problem of accommodation of teachers will have a positive effect on their motivation.

Additionally, it is necessary to create motivational activities directed towards teachers, especially those who are working (or will work) for long periods of time in the region. These activities can be on-the-job training courses that will help teachers to improve themselves professionally. The Ministry of National Education, the related faculties of Çukurova University and the experienced civil society organizations can each play a role in these activities as well. On another note, regularly providing teachers with psychological and social support is a factor that will have a positive impact on teachers' motivation. It is possible to give this support with the cooperation of both the Ministry of National Education and Çukurova University. Both the cohesion of students from different backgrounds in class and keeping the children of seasonal agricultural workers in the education system are possible if the teachers working in these areas are supported and their efforts are made visible. Overcoming the problem of lack of attendance, increasing success and supporting the efforts expended in very difficult conditions will be important contributions to not only children in seasonal agriculture but also all students. The Adana case can be an important example to model support mechanisms that can be employed in all schools in which there are fragile groups.

It is necessary to improve accommodations and working conditions of teachers to increase their levels of motivation. Moreover, delivering on-the-job training, providing teachers with psychological and social support, and establishing material and emotional reward mechanisms to make their endeavors visible are likely to create positive effects.

LOW LEVELS OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

Another topic that we want to be considered in the short-term is making preschool education widespread. The research findings demonstrate that very few children of seasonal agricultural workers receive preschool education. Therefore, making pre-school education widespread will be an intervention that will directly affect both the well-being of children and their prospective academic success.

One of the most important causes of the lack of preschool education in the region is the low number of classes and schools that can deliver this education. Therefore, increasing the physical capacity and the number of day care centers will be in harmony with the 2019 goals of the Ministry of National Education. Moreover, children who are old enough to attend school should be

monitored as well. This is an important role to be played by the Ministry of National Education. On the other hand, as we will consider below, it is possible to experiment with alternative preschool education models in tent areas.

It is necessary to increase the number of institutions that deliver preschool education. It is the task of the Ministry of National Education to monitor children who are at the ages to receive preschool education.

Seasonal agricultural families should be informed about preschool education. Therefore, educational activities targeting especially mothers in the region might have a very positive effect on the children. In such an educational activity it is possible to benefit from the experiences of such civil society organizations as AÇEV (Mother Child Education Foundation) which are experienced in successful programs such as Mother Support Program and Father Support Program. It is possible to offer short-term and middle-term courses with the cooperation of these institutions.

In order to make preschool education widespread, it is necessary to establish programs with the help of civil society organizations to support parents.

TO IMPROVE THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF SCHOOLS

The inadequacy of the physical conditions of schools in the region is one of the most important problems of the education in the region. The lack of most basic educational tools and facilities (such as the Internet, sports fields, etc.) is making it difficult to provide quality education. Therefore, improving the physical condition of all schools constitutes a critical step in solving all other problems. Investment in such improvements are the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education, local administrations and the experienced civil society organizations. It is possible to cooperate with the civil society organizations at the local level for work to be done in this respect.

It is necessary to improve the physical environment of schools and to provide them to overcome their shortcomings.

Problems Related to the Tent Areas

The accommodation conditions of families in seasonal agricultural work is rather unhealthy. As demonstrated in our research, accommodation is in the form of either poor tent conditions or huts made of cane. These tent areas include many risks for babies and children; they are far from being safe accommodations.

IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF THE TENT AREAS

The migratory and temporary nature of seasonal agriculture is emphasized in discussions concerning accommodations. However, our research shows that almost one-third of surveyed families dwell in tents for 12 months. Even those who migrate stay in tents for 8-9 months. The surveyed households do seasonal agricultural work on average for 15 years. For 25 percent, seasonal agriculture is an occupation for 20 years. Twenty-two percent of the surveyed have been doing seasonal agricultural work for 5 years or less. These figures show that working in seasonal agriculture is not a temporary occupation. Tent areas are environments where such infrastructural problems as bathroom and toilet conditions, low voltage and access to clean water are in proportions that threaten babies' and children's lives.

In this context, improving tent areas and, even if tents are to remain, providing such tents as those of AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency) or Kızılay (Turkish Red Cross) that offer protection from the ground and weather conditions will provide a major contribution to the welfare of the entire family – but first and foremost to that of babies and children.

It is an urgent necessity to improve housing conditions through replacing the current tent system with alternative arrangements. In case housing will continue in tents, a relative improvement can be achieved through the provision of more protective tents such as those of Kızılay/AFAD which will contribute to the well-being of babies and children.

THE NEED FOR SAFE PLAYGROUNDS FOR CHILDREN IN TENT AREAS

Ninety-four percent of the households said that there is no playground for their children to play in. Children generally play in the empty fields, tent areas or on roads. In these areas, canals, cables and sun during the summer constitute serious risks for children who stay in tent areas. In the qualitative research, the need for safe playgrounds for children was expressed by both children and their mothers and elder sisters.

As indicated in the section on education, a tent/truck library or safe environments for games/activities are vital, especially for reducing the risks children face in tent areas. Moreover, supporting classes and designing activities for preschool education with the help of the Ministry of National Education and related civil society organizations will contribute to children's school success and motivation and enable students to spend quality time in various activities.

It is possible to design playgrounds and study places for children in tent areas. This will minimize the risks they are exposed to when they play. This will increase children's motivation for education with early childhood programs and programs to support them at school.

Low Level of Awareness of the Subject

One of the problems we encountered during our research is low level of awareness of the subject and lack of hope for taking sustainable and permanent concrete steps to change the conditions in the field. Few people are knowledgeable about the scope and quality of the problem and many times the conditions of seasonal agricultural workers are not seen as a problem. That seasonal agricultural workers dwell in certain areas and are far from the city center creates an illusion in the public with respect to the scope of the problem. In particular, the perception of “seasonality” to mean temporary when it comes to the question of seasonal agriculture turns into an obstacle to take steps oriented towards solving this problem, which is permanent. The low level of public awareness of the topic prevents the political and bureaucratic actors from prioritizing the problem. Success of an action plan oriented towards solving the problem depends on having awareness in the public, in the media, and in national and local public administrations.

For this reason, we propose running an awareness campaign on the problems of seasonal agricultural workers in the region. This campaign should not be limited to local communication channels but must be run with the participation of the universities, civil society organizations and similar institutions in the region. In designing and implementing the campaign, such academic institutions as İstanbul Bilgi University, Harran University and Çukurova University as well as the civil society organizations with past success in this field can join in.

It is necessary to organize a communications campaign in Adana to increase the level of awareness of the public at large with respect to seasonal agricultural work.

We suggest establishing a local platform in order to ensure that activities become permanent and sustainable. This platform is expected to coordinate awareness activities and enable various local partners to produce solutions. Moreover, we suggest that effects of these activities be monitored and measured under the umbrella of this platform. The platform is expected to include the governorship, Çukurova Development Agency, local administrations, academic institutions and national or local civil society organizations.

It is necessary to establish a platform to coordinate activities to increase and improve awareness of the subject in the region.

A group that needs to be targeted in campaigns to inform the public and by the platform consists of institutions that deliver services in the region. The city directorates of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of National Education, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, the relevant directorates of the governorships and district governorships, and the relevant institutions of local administrations should be targeted to be informed and educated in various ways. These educational activities should aim at informing the participants of the causes of the problem in the region, the fields of intervention, implementations and similar topics. The content of the education can be prepared by such academic institutions as İstanbul Bilgi University, Harran University and Çukurova University. In delivering these educational activities, national or local civil society organizations can participate.

It is necessary to organize educational activities for employees of institutions that deliver services to seasonal agricultural workers in order to inform them.



**Bernard
van Leer**
FOUNDATION



İstanbul Bilgi University
**CENTER
FOR MIGRATION
RESEARCH**

THIS REPORT IS PREPARED AS PART OF THE PROJECT OF “IMPROVING THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF CHILDREN OF SEASONAL MIGRANT AGRICULTURAL WORKERS IN ADANA FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CHILD WELL-BEING” RUN IN THE PERIOD OF 01.02.2016-31.01.2017 WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE BERNARD VAN LEER FOUNDATION AND IN COOPERATION WITH THE ÇUKUROVA DEVELOPMENT AGENCY. THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE REPORT MAY NOT REFLECT THE OFFICIAL VIEWS OF BERNARD VAN LEER FOUNDATION OR ÇUKUROVA DEVELOPMENT AGENCY.

İSTANBUL BİLGİ UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR MIGRATION RESEARCH

SANTRAL İSTANBUL KAMPÜSÜ, ESKİ SİLAHTARAĞA ELEKTRİK SANTRALİ, KAZIM KARABEKİR CAD. No. 2/13, 34060 EYÜP, İSTANBUL - TURKEY
Phone +90 212 311 52 11 • E-mail: rc.mig@bilgi.edu.tr • URL: <http://goc.bilgi.edu.tr>