



# CHILDHOOD LOST IN TEXTILE

THE ISSUE OF CHILD LABOUR  
IN THE TURKISH  
GARMENT SECTOR


MARCH 2025

**CHILDHOOD  
IS OUR RIGHT** 

**CHEAP  
LABOR** **CHILD LABOR  
KILLS**



**Temiz  
Giysi  
Kampanyası**

Adil ve sürdürülebilir bir tekstil sektörü için 

# TEAM

## AUTHOR

Gizem Yücelen

## RESEARCH

Damla Uçak, Ömer Aksoy, Pelin İpek Boyacı, Halime Sancak,  
Funda Bakış, Ayşe Özçelik, Gizem Yücelen

## DESIGN

Ceren Bettemir

## TRANSLATION (Turkish to English)

Nihal Petek Boyacı

## PROOFREADING

Gizem Yücelen

## GENERAL COORDINATION

Bego Demir

## TEMİZ GIYSİ KAMPANYASI CONTACT

info@temizgiysi.org

## PUBLICATION DATE:

March, 2025



Co-funded by  
the European Union

**This publication was co-funded by the European Union.**

Its contents are the sole responsibility of Clean Clothes Campaign Türkiye and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

# CONTENT

---

INTRODUCTION	1
THE CONCEPT OF CHILD LABOR	1
THE CAUSES OF CHILD LABOR	3
CHILD LABOR IN NUMBERS	9
THE IMPACTS OF CHILD LABOR	10
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	11
REFERENCES	13

---

# INTRODUCTION

Child labour is a phenomenon that violates the fundamental human rights of children, is shaped by social and structural dynamics and at the same time poses a long-term threat to these dynamics.

The garment sector in Türkiye, where unregistered employment is widespread\*, is one of the areas where child labour is most prominently observed. In this context, while setting out to examine the working conditions in the Turkish garment sector, the *Clean Clothes Campaign Türkiye* made extensive evaluations on how the issue of child labour should be included in the research. The common conviction that research should be conducted with ethical sensitivities when it comes to children has been the main guide of our work. Accordingly,

since there were no pedagogues in the research team, it was decided not to conduct direct interviews with child labourers and child labour was not among the main focal points of the research. However, during the field research, the child workers encountered during the interviews with 296 workers, the narratives of the child workers who showed the will and courage to express their views and the statements of the other workers confirming their existence were not ignored. These accounts were recorded only by listening to what was said without any guidance or direct questioning.

It should be emphasised that this field research conducted by us does not aim to provide comprehensive data directly on the issue of child labour, but we have a responsibility to convey the information obtained during the research\*. On the other hand, the fact that child labour is generally unspoken about in Türkiye reduces the visibility of the problem and this situation paves the way for the deepening of the problem. In this context, it was decided to prepare a report on child labour in garment sector in Türkiye by combining the limited information obtained from the field with the data compiled from the existing literature, with examples and case studies. This report aims both to make the dimensions of the problem visible and to create a wider discussion platform.

# THE CONCEPT OF CHILD LABOUR

*According to the first article of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child, every individual is considered a child until the age of 18.*

The Convention defines the rights and freedoms of children such as the right to life, the right to grow up in a healthy environment, freedom of expression, freedom of association, the right to education, the right to play and leisure time and holds states parties responsible for the protection of these rights and freedoms of children.<sup>2</sup> The *International Labour Organization's (ILO) Convention on the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour* also states that anyone under the age of 18 is considered a "child".<sup>3</sup> In Türkiye, which is a party to both declarations, the age of majority is set at 18 years of age regardless of gender, and in parallel with the declarations, individuals under the age of 18 are defined as child in national laws.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the clear age limit set for the concept of child, the concept of "child labour" has a more complex structure. The *ILO's Minimum Age Convention* empowers States Parties to set their own minimum working age, but requires the development of national policies aimed at eliminating child labour and raising this age limit to a level that supports the physical and mental development of young people.

In this context, it is stated that the minimum working age to be determined should not be below **15 years** of age at the end of compulsory education. However, the convention allows flexibility for countries with underdeveloped economies and educational facilities to initially set the minimum age at **14**, provided that the views of workers' and employers' organisations are taken into account.

On the other hand, Article 3 of the convention emphasises that the minimum age should be **18** for work which, by its nature or circumstances, may threaten the health, safety or moral development of young people. However, there is a further exception in cases where they receive specialised education or vocational training. Young people may be allowed to work from the age of **16**, provided that their health, safety and moral development are fully protected and that they receive adequate special education or vocational training in the relevant branch of activity.<sup>5</sup> Due to the exceptional circumstances specified in the Convention, it is very difficult to make a clear definition of child labour based on the minimum age.

In Türkiye, which is a party to the Convention, Article 71 of the Labour Law No. 4857 defines children employed as "child workers" and "young workers" based on age ranges determined within the legal framework. According to this article, it is forbidden to employ children under the age of **15** in Türkiye. However, children who have reached the age of **14** and have completed compulsory primary education may be employed in light work that will not affect their physical, mental, social and moral development and will not prevent them from continuing their education. On the other hand, the definition of 'heavy and dangerous work' in the legislation has been abolished, and new regulations define the work that child labourers can and cannot do.

\* The names of all workers quoted in this report have been changed for reasons of personal data security.

## REGULATIONS RELATED TO CHILD LABOR

- 18** Work prohibited for children and young workers under 18 years of age

---

- 15** Work permitted for young workers over 15 years of age but not yet 18 years of age

---

- 14** Light work for children over 14 years of age and who have completed compulsory primary education

---

- 16** The jobs and working conditions for young workers who have completed 16 years of age but not yet 18 years of age are determined by the relevant regulations.<sup>6</sup>

According to these regulations, it is possible to reach the conclusion that those working between the ages of 14-15 are defined as “child labourers” and those working between the ages of 15-18 are defined as “young workers”. In the legislation, the definition of child labour is placed in a positive and legal framework, and there is no definition for children working under illegal ages or conditions. On the other hand, when the ILO defines child labour on the basis of the nature of work and working conditions, it places the concept of “child labourer” in this non-legal gap, contrary to the legislation, thus giving child labour a more negative content and emphasising the harmful aspects of children’s work more clearly.

ILO underlines that not all working children are child labourers. Defining child labour as “work that often deprives children of their childhood, diminishes their potential and dignity, and is harmful to their physical and mental development”, ILO includes within this scope work that prevents children from attending school regularly, deprives them of their right to education, causes them to leave school early, or is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children.<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, Article 32 of the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child* stipulates the protection of children from hazardous and harmful work that interferes with their education and adversely affects their physical, mental, emotional and social development, as well as from economic exploitation.<sup>8</sup> However, the ILO takes into account factors such as the age of the child, the type of work performed, the time spent, the working conditions and the political objectives of the countries in this field when evaluating whether a particular work is considered as “child labour”. Therefore, the definition of child labour may vary from country to country or between sectors

The variability of the conditions and the ambiguities in the concepts such as “hazardous”, “harmful work” or “economic exploitation” make it difficult to define child labour in a clear framework. In Türkiye, another element that further complicates the concept of child labour is the definition of apprenticeship. According to the *Vocational Education Law No. 3308*, an apprentice is defined as “a person with the status of a student who enters into the service of the owner of a workplace with his/her labour and apprenticeship contract, which is basically non-economic, in order to learn an art at that workplace according to the theoretical education programme organised for that art, and to develop the knowledge, skills and work habits required by the art”.

**According to these regulations, it is possible to reach the conclusion that those working between the ages of 14-15 are defined as “child labourers”**



Fotoğraf: AP Images, Lefteris Pitarakis

According to this definition, students under the age of 14 are considered as “candidate apprentices” and those who have reached the age of 14 are considered as “apprentices”. As clearly stated in the definition, apprenticeship is essentially a process of learning the theoretical and practical aspects of a profession and no economic expectation can be derived from this process. In this context, the difference between the concepts of apprenticeship and labour is clearly set forth. However, in practice, apprentices are often seen as cheap labour force in the workplaces where they work, and are located in sectors classified as hazardous work. In these cases where the specified working hours are exceeded, it is seen that the work performed in apprenticeship goes beyond vocational training. This situation makes the position of apprenticeship within the framework of child labour even more controversial. For this reason, Vocational Training Centres (MESEM), which will be discussed in detail in the following sections, are also becoming one of the focus points of child labour debates in Türkiye.

As can be seen, it is not possible to draw a clear and precise boundary for child labour within the framework of existing definitions, international conventions and legal regulations. While international conventions provide general frameworks for combating child labour, states parties are expected to develop limits, definitions and policies that will eliminate child labour over time within this framework. However, when the definitions and legislation in Türkiye are examined, it is seen that the inclusion of children in working life at an early age is accepted to a certain level. This situation gives the impression that regulations on the conditions under which children can be employed come to the forefront rather than the absolute prevention of child labour.

Involving children in working life at an early age often leaves them vulnerable to abuse, prevents them from experiencing their childhood and traps them in a system of exploitation where they are deprived of their fundamental rights. In order to protect children from such victimisation, it is critical that exceptional situations and conditions in legal regulations are defined in a way that prioritises the rights, welfare and best interests of children and that the boundaries of this phenomenon are clearly defined. However, it is clear that this struggle cannot be limited to definitions and/or prohibitions. This process, which requires a more holistic approach, demands an in-depth examination of the root causes of child labour and the simultaneous implementation of solutions to eliminate these causes alongside strategies to combat child labour.

## CAUSES OF CHILD LABOUR

Involvement of children in working life is usually not by their own choice, but is caused by a series of difficulties that push them to do so. Attempting to prevent child labour only through prohibitions without taking these difficulties into consideration is far from being an effective solution as it does not go to the root of the problem. It is vitally important to comprehensively understand the economic, social and cultural dynamics that lead children to work and to develop solution-oriented policies against these dynamics. The main causes of child labour include economic and social instability, structural deficiencies in the education system, migration and population growth, the role of cultural and traditional values, inadequacies in existing legislation and supervision mechanisms. These factors are often intertwined with each other, forcing children to work at an early age.

In this context, economic reasons and poverty are the most prominent factors. Both income poverty due to the absolute income level of individuals and human poverty due to difficulties in accessing basic needs, especially education, health and nutrition, are among the main reasons that lead children to work at an early age. Especially situations such as economic crises, unemployment and income injustice reflect the economic difficulties experienced by families to their children and cause them to feel obliged to work in order to contribute to the family economy.<sup>9</sup> In the event that a parent is unemployed or has no social security, the task of contributing to the family's livelihood, and "bringing home the bread" also falls on the child. Poverty in the family also causes children to have difficulties in accessing educational opportunities, cuts in the budget allocated for children's education, and thus causes children to withdraw from education and enter the labour force at an early age.

In the field research, a participant who dropped out of school in the 9th grade due to financial difficulties and started working in the garment industry at the age of 14 was interviewed. The participant, who works unregistered, stated that he worked in the garment sector during holidays even when he was a student, and that he is currently working without insurance and that the employer told him that he will be insured only when he turns 18.

*I dropped out of school in the 9th grade due to financial difficulties and started working in textile. I was already working in textile during holidays while I was studying.*

Yahya, 17

It is important to recall the fair living wage practice<sup>10</sup>, which we, as the *Clean Clothes Campaign*, have frequently emphasised in our previous researches and which forms the basis of our work, in the context of combating child labour. The fair living wage, which is determined to cover a family's basic food needs (3000 calories per day for an adult), clothing, health, education, rent (bills), transport and savings, is the necessary amount for a worker to live a life worthy of human dignity. A fair living wage for an adult worker is of great importance in preventing their child/children from joining the labour force due to poverty and in ensuring that the child, who does not have to "bring home the bread", has the freedom to ensure their own mental, physical and moral development.

Another economic reason for child labour is the increase in demand for cheap labour. Price pressures imposed by brands, increasing market competition and economic difficulties faced by workplaces increase the desire to reduce labour costs and fuel the demand for cheap labour. The most obedient response to the search for cheap labour is child labour. Children, who are seen by employers as cheap and easily manageable labour force, are employed at low wages and under unregistered conditions and child labour is seen as a way out of difficulties. The most prominent victims of unregistered child labour are migrant children.

Child labour is not only limited to economic reasons; social factors are also among the factors that deepen this phenomenon. In this context, the phenomenon of migration is an important topic at the intersection of economic and social factors. Migration from rural areas to cities or from one country to another for reasons such as wars, political conditions, economic difficulties, and the search for better job opportunities radically changes the living conditions of families. Migrant families struggle to survive in these new lands and face financial difficulties, uncertainties about the future, language, culture and social adaptation problems in this process. This situation prepares the ground for immigrant children to turn to the labour market; these children become a source of cheap labour for employers in sectors where unregistered employment is widespread.

The garment and textile industries are among the areas where such informal employment is most common, and it is known that migrant child labour has a significant presence in these industries. For example, in a field study conducted by the BBC in 2016, significant findings were shared on the employment of migrant children in garment production in Türkiye, in workshops producing for major fashion brands.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, in another study conducted in 2020 on migrant child labour, interviews were conducted with migrant child labourers, the youngest of whom was 11 years old, in textile workshops in Çağlayan, İstanbul.<sup>12</sup>



Fotoğraf: AP Images, Lefteris Pitarakis



The last tragic example of migrant child labour occurred in 2024. Ahmet Direk Turan Haskiro, the **11-year-old** son of Sefa Haskiro, a migrant worker in a textile workshop in Adana, was trapped in the workshop lift and died. The statements of other workers involved in the incident and the density of sweatshops in the region, where the majority of workers are migrant and child labourers, raise the suspicion that Ahmet was also employed in this workshop. However, the statements of the employers and the family, who were probably under pressure, were that the child was not working at the workplace. This led to a possible case of unregistered child labour being ignored; the case was handled only on the basis of workplace safety violations.<sup>13</sup> It is possible that the migrant status of the family may have deepened the obstacles they face in the process of claiming their rights and made it more difficult for them to resist the pressures. In this context, ignoring these possibilities and accepting these statements that the child did not work in the workshop may mean completely ignoring the existence of child labour in such workshops where workplace safety standards are inadequate even for adult workers.

Abdulkerim, an 18-year-old migrant worker interviewed in the field research, stated that he has been working in the textile sector since he was 8 years old, and when asked whether there are child labourers under the age of 16 in the workshop, he said, “Yes there are. There are 13-14 year old children working. They work as middleman.” These examples of migrant child labour reveal how child labour and unregistered employment have become a systematic problem, especially in the textile and garment industries. Such cases in unregistered workshops go beyond individual tragedies and point to a system where economic interests are prioritised and children’s physical, mental and emotional development as well as their fundamental rights are ignored.

*Yes, there are. There are 13-14 year old children working. They work as middleman.*

**Abdulkerim, 18**

Other social dynamics that play a role in the emergence of child labour include rapid population growth due to migration, unplanned urbanisation and low level of education. Rapid population growth and unplanned urbanisation, especially in developing regions, lead to insufficient resources and serious problems in access to basic services. In these situations, where inadequate infrastructure and low living standards are reflected in educational conditions, the difficulties experienced by children in accessing education are further increased. Deficiencies in the education system and problems encountered in children’s adaptation to education pave the way for children to turn to the labour force, which in turn serves to spread child labour.

The relationship between education and child labour is a complex problem shaped by both education policies and social contexts. State policies pursued for education are directly linked to child labour. Factors such as shortening the duration of compulsory education, insufficient budget allocated to education and the decline in the quality of education make it difficult for children to continue their education, which pushes children into labour either by their own choice or by the force of existing conditions.

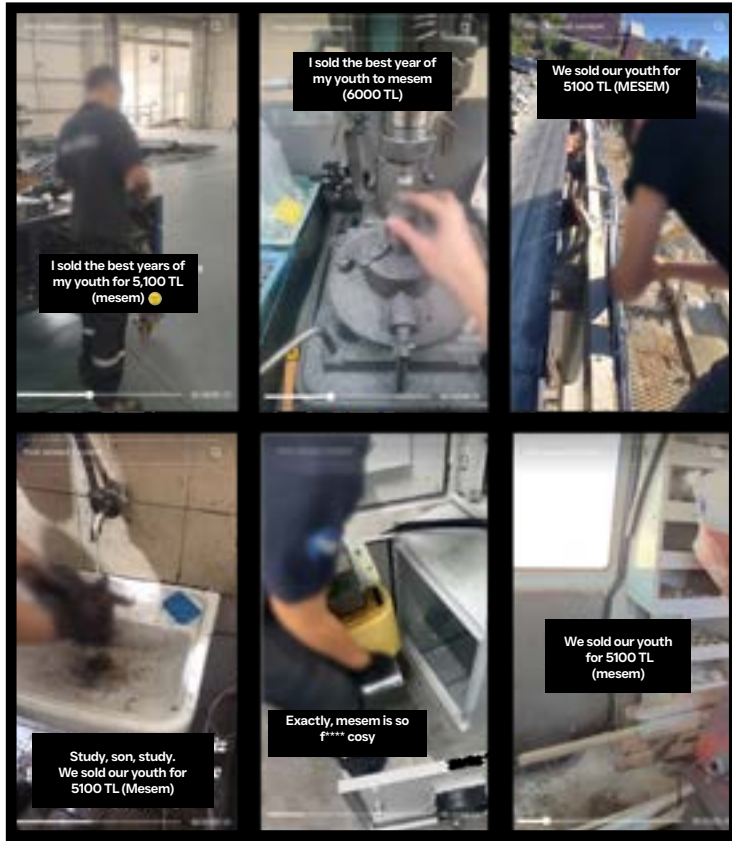
The use of unregistered child labour in garment workshops, especially during holiday periods, was also identified in our field research. Yasin, who was interviewed in the research, stated that he started working in a textile workshop at a young age and that now he teaches children who come to the workshop during holiday periods and guides their unregistered “apprenticeship” processes. Another worker interviewed stated that child workers come to the workshop when schools are on holiday to help them do small tasks. This temporary process, which starts with the aim of learning a job and earning income during holiday periods, becomes permanent in some cases and working life can replace education for children.

*There are employees under the age of 16 at work. Three of them came during the school holidays, they are like my apprentices, I will teach them how to work. They are unregistered, they will work during the school holidays.*

**Yasin, 38**

In this context, Vocational Training Centres (MESEM), which are offered by the Ministry of National Education as a bridge between education and work, are introduced as a model that aims to support students to discover their interests and talents and to have a profession in this direction without leaving education. The programme is open to applications from individuals who have graduated from at least secondary school, are over 14 years of age, and are in good health to learn the profession of their choice. Within the scope of MESEM, while students continue their compulsory high school education, they receive theoretical training at school one day a week and receive practical training in enterprises for the remaining four days.<sup>14</sup> However, as mentioned in the previous section, this practical training process, which constitutes a large part of the training programme, can lead to situations where the definition of apprenticeship exceeds the limits of vocational education. This situation brings with it criticism that students are employed in the industry as cheap labour and debates that MESEM programmes deepen child labour.

The promotion of the programme promises a salary of 30% of the minimum wage for 9th, 10th and 11th grade students and 50% of the minimum wage for 12th grade foreman, creating the impression that an attractive education model is offered. However, when “MESEM” is searched on TikTok, the posts of students who have experienced the programme reverse this impression. In the videos shared due to a trend spreading among students enrolled in MESEM programmes, the comment “**I sold the best years of my youth for 5,100 TL**” frequently draws attention.<sup>15</sup> This statement, which describes the difficulties the students are going through, shows that rather than seeing the MESEM programme as an opportunity, they consider it as a disadvantageous decision that may negatively affect their lives in the long term.



*I sold the best years of my youth for 5,100 TL*  
**Tiktok shares of students working at MESEM (Vocational Training and Social Education Center)**

In the introduction of MESEM, it is stated that students will be insured against occupational accidents and occupational diseases starting from the 9th grade. However, this situation points to incompatibilities between legal regulations and practices. The Labour Law strictly prohibits the employment of children and young people under the age of 18 in work that is hazardous to health and may lead to occupational diseases.<sup>16</sup> MESEM's proposal for insurance against occupational diseases, on the other hand, means that such risks for students are accepted from the beginning. However, jobs that carry the risk of occupational diseases are already among the prohibited jobs for the age group of students within the scope of MESEM. All this raises serious questions about the extent to which the programme respects both the rights of students and legal regulations.

In legal regulations, other jobs where children and young people under the age of 18 are prohibited from working are listed as follows: Work in environments with high noise and/or vibration, work that requires working in extremely hot and cold environments, work that requires constant attention and continuous standing, work related to harmful substances affecting human health, and work that carries the risk of lack of education, lack of experience and lack of attention to safety. In this context, the examination of MESEM programmes, which provide vocational training in 193 different branches, especially in the textile and garment sector, reveals another incompatibility between legal legislation and practice.

The textile and garment programmes offered by MESEM include the following branches:

TEXTILE AND GARMENT PROGRAMMES (MESEM)	
Fashion Design Technologies:	Weaving Operatorship, Nonwovens, Industrial Sock Knitting, Industrial Flat Knitting, Industrial Circular Knitting, Yarn Production Technology, Textile Printing and Patterning, Textile Finishing Processes (Finishing), Textile Dyeing.
Handicraft Technology:	Decorative Home Textiles, Decorative Handicrafts, Hand Weaving, Hand and Machine Embroidery, Carpet Designing, Industrial Embroidery.
Textile Technology:	Weaving Operatorship, Nonwovens, Industrial Sock Knitting, Industrial Flat Knitting, Industrial Circular Knitting, Yarn Production Technology, Textile Printing and Patterning, Textile Finishing Processes (Finishing), Textile Dyeing.

On the other hand, according to the “List of Workplace Hazard Classes” of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, most of the textile and garment industries are classified as “hazardous” or “low hazardous”. Some of these business lines are classified as follows:

WORKPLACE HAZARD CLASSES <sup>17</sup> Textile and Garment	
Manufacture of textile fibres	<b>HAZARDOUS</b>
Finishing of textile products (printing, dyeing, bleaching, finishing)	<b>HAZARDOUS</b>
Manufacture of finished textile products other than clothing	<b>HAZARDOUS</b>
Manufacture of non-woven fabrics and products made of non-woven fabrics (except clothing)	<b>HAZARDOUS</b>
Manufacture of needlework, lace and embroidery	<b>HAZARDOUS</b>
Manufacture of leather clothing	<b>HAZARDOUS</b>
Manufacture of underwear and outerwear	<b>LOW HAZARDOUS</b>

At this point, it is unclear on which standards or legal regulations 14-15 year old “child labourers” and 15-18 year old “young workers” working in these workplaces, which contain prohibited conditions for those under the age of 18, are based during the practical training process within the scope of MESEM. Considering that students work four days a week in these workplaces, the safety standards of these environments, the training processes in these environments and the contributions they provide to the students need to be questioned. This questioning can be done around the following questions:

- What tasks do students undertake in these workplaces defined as hazardous?
- How is the safety of students ensured in these work environments?
- How and by whom are the working conditions of the students supervised?
- What kind of an education process do students experience in the textile and garment industries, which are known for their production speed and intensity?
- What kind of contributions do the workplace and MESEM programme provide for students to go beyond being considered as cheap labour force and become qualified labour force in these business lines?



The deep relationship between MESEM programmes and child labour is not limited to inconsistencies on paper. The deaths of child labourers<sup>18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25</sup>, work accidents,<sup>26</sup> many news reports in the press<sup>27 28 29</sup> and the statements of children<sup>30 31</sup> enrolled in MESEM programmes raise serious questions about the effectiveness and reliability of this programme and its contribution to the long-term professional development of students. In this context, the critical role of state education policies in transforming this relationship between poverty and child labour should be recalled. In practice, factors such as education policies not being inclusive enough and the education system being supported by models that push children into the exploitation of the economic production cycle may reinforce these problems instead of solving them.

*The supervisors who come to inspect MESEMs look at how well we work instead of the conditions we work under. As a result of long working hours, going to work and coming home every day, I see myself working even in my dreams at night.<sup>32</sup>*

As mentioned earlier, for families struggling with poverty, children's education may fall behind other priorities for survival. At this point, the perception of vocational training programmes as a short-term economic solution for families or children may pave the way for depriving children of their right to education in the long term and making them a cheap labour force. In this framework, policies designed through vocational training of children should be structured in a way to break the cycle of social poverty and eliminate child labour. Otherwise, generational poverty, combined with lack of education, causes families to lack the awareness to direct their children to education and to see them as a labour force that will contribute to the family budget or the family business. This situation leads to the normalisation of child labour and the strengthening of social norms on this issue, hence the participation of children in the labour force is seen as a reasonable solution by the majority of the society.

The interviews conducted during the field research show that child labour is reinforced not only by economic reasons but also by cultural and social norms. For example, 16-year-old Uğur, although continuing his education, works as an uninsured labourer in the garment workshop of his father's friend until the school opens. Uğur's statement "They used to make me work like this in the village, I am used to it." reveals the relationship between getting used to working at an early age and the normalisation of child labour. However, his wish to "**work for 1 hour less**" is an indication of how permanent and internalised this way of life is, despite the difficulties of working conditions.

Zahide, 14 years old, who works in the same workplace as Uğur, stated that she spends her summer holidays and weekends working in the garment workshop. Although she

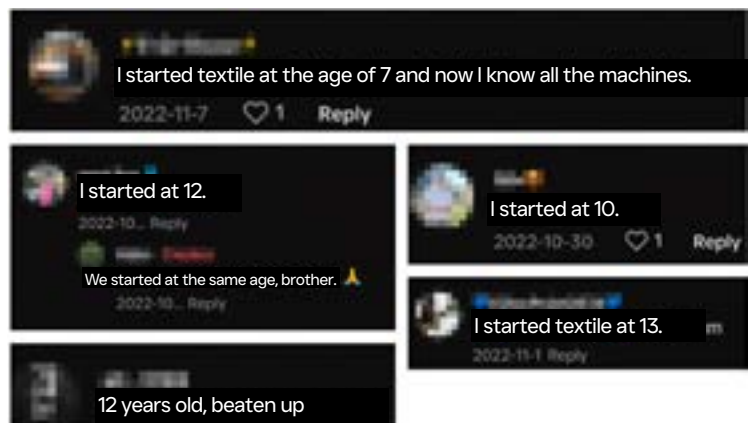
found the working conditions challenging in terms of heat and inadequate ventilation, and despite working without insurance, precariousness and daily wage, she expressed her satisfaction with her job. Zahide's statement, similar to Uğur's, exemplifies that working at an early age is accepted and internalised by the child.

*They used to make me work like this in the village, I am used to it.*

Uğur, 16

Although children's working at an early age arises from economic or social necessities, the traditional perspective that sees it as normal and positive for children to work, to gain responsibility at an early age, and to contribute to the family or family business plays an important role in reinforcing the problem of child labour. Under the influence of this perspective, the participation of children in the labour force from an early age is becoming widespread and often normalised. The situation of 12-year-old Önder met in the field research is an example of this. Önder stated that he worked in his father's garment workshop during the summer holidays, and when his father was asked about Önder's insurance status and rights such as overtime work, his father replied "**we are a family**". When asked whether there is any other worker under the age of 16 in the workshop, the father said, "**There is only Önder. So that he does not hang around on the street**". This explanation reveals that although Önder's work is not due to an economic necessity, child labour is seen by the father as an economic advantage as a cheap and additional labour force and is also associated with the social and cultural norms of the family. The family acts with the belief that the child should not "waste" his/her time and wants the child to contribute to the family by working in order to gain responsibility. It can be said that these social norms contribute to the normalisation of child labour, its social acceptance and in some cases even its praise.

Another observation supporting this situation emerged during the social media survey we conducted last year on child labour in the textile industry. In one of the countless textile worker videos detected on TikTok, viewers were asked the question 'Did anyone start working at a young age?' and it was found that the answers to this question went down to the age of 7. The striking aspect of these posts is that child labour is embraced as an accepted reality rather than being criticised or complained about. The experience in question has sometimes become a story told with pride, giving the impression that this situation has been normalised and even praised in a section of the society.

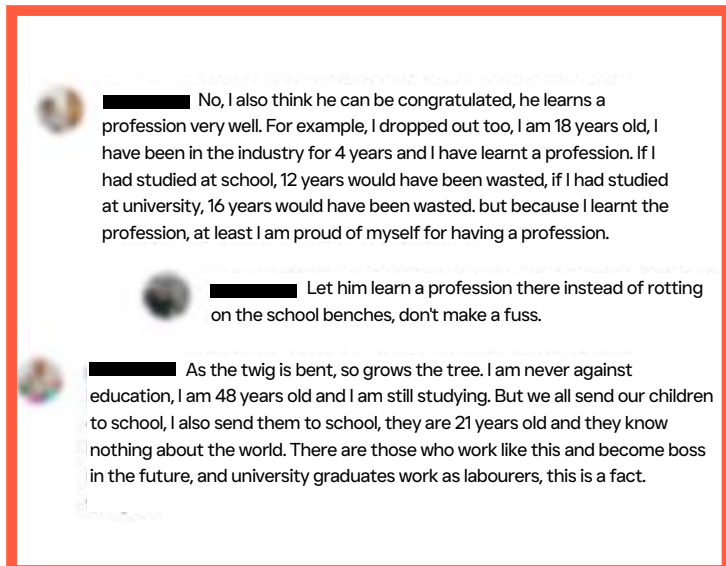


In the same scan, images of child labourers, which are shared in a very ordinary way among the videos of adult textile workers, were also encountered. In some videos, working children are caught on camera during the general shooting of the garment workshop, and in some videos, their working conditions are especially highlighted. In all of these videos, child labour is presented as a natural situation and the child's labour at an early age is glorified with flattering expressions.



In the reactions to the social media posts prepared as a result of the research, the praise for child labour has gained another dimension.<sup>33</sup> On the social media account of the Clean Clothes Campaign Türkiye, the statement "It is time to stop child labour in textiles, not to applaud it! Child labour cannot be romanticised and normalised." was posted. The comments on the post went beyond praise and questioned children's right to education, implying that children should work at an age when they should be dedicated to education and normalising early work.

Such comments reflect the tendency to see child labour as an opportunity or a way of development rather than a necessity or tragedy, and point to a lack of awareness that children should be supported to participate in educational processes rather than being directed to work. This perspective, which defends child labour, ignores the critical role of the right to education for social transformation and individual development and emphasises short-term economic justifications. However, this approach not only ignores the harsh working conditions that negatively affect children's physical and mental development, but also devalues the long-term opportunities that children can obtain through education.



Listening to the effects and real dimensions of child labour from a child worker's own narrative can reveal the serious aspects of this issue that cannot be romanticised. 17-year-old Derya, who was interviewed in a field study conducted in Pendik in 2023, stated that she had been working in textiles since the age of 13. Derya's story is as follows: "She can only eat one chocolate bar a day with the money she earns. Her father abandoned them, she is the only one working at home. Her mother takes care of her 3-year-old brother. Derya is 17 years old. She has no insurance either. They were receiving support from social services until recently. Someone from the neighbourhood supposedly reported 'this woman's daughter is working' and their support was cut off. They have no assurance. The whole burden of the house is on Derya's shoulders. She was sexually harassed at the place where she worked before, she was very scared and could not say anything to anyone. She left that place and started working at the workshop where women are the majority."<sup>34</sup> When Derya was asked about her opinion on continuing her education, Derya's response was "Our lives are being stolen, sister, education has passed us by".

Derya's story strikingly demonstrates that child labour is a human rights issue with its social, psychological and physical dimensions. Her experiences clearly reveal the systemic nature of this problem and how children are left in a vulnerable position. Derya is only one of the hundreds of thousands of child labourers whose exact number is unknown. The fact that the exact number is unknown points to the deficiencies in state control mechanisms and the inadequacies of brands in controlling their supply chains, which are another important reason underlying the deepening and spread of child labour.

Inadequacies in state inspection mechanisms constitute serious obstacles to the prevention and monitoring of child labour. Despite the existence of legislation, deficiencies in implementation and weaknesses in inspection processes make it difficult to detect and eliminate child labour. The majority of the workers interviewed (68.9%) state that inspections are carried out, but draw attention to the problems in the implementation of these inspections and state that permanent improvements have not been achieved. Workers reported that the presence of employers or other senior officials during inspections put pressure on them and raised serious questions about the transparency of the inspections. In addition, some workers stated that before the inspections, arrangements were quickly made to hide the problems in the factories, and after the inspections, short-term improvements were made, but this process resulted in the continuation of the old order.

*They get their own people to meet with them or when they call someone, it must be someone from the management."*

**Mahmut, 21**

This situation reinforces the perception that inspections are carried out only for procedural reasons. Especially in garment workshops where informal employment is high, workers' lack of trust, the fear of voicing workplace problems, combined with inadequate inspections, allows employers to continue their activities without facing serious sanctions. In this context, child labour, which is one of the leading unregistered practices reinforced by lack of inspections, is on the rise and this situation makes it more difficult to develop effective intervention strategies against child labour.

*Since I am not insured, if an inspection comes, I go outside, I do not stay in the factory*

Bedir, 51

In addition to the deficiencies in state inspection mechanisms, the fact that big brands do not take sufficient responsibility for combating child labour in their supply chains stands out as another important factor that makes it difficult to solve the problem. In the garment and apparel industries, the multi-layered and complex structure of the supply chain makes inspection and control processes even more difficult. Brands generally establish direct relations only with the Tier 1 production mechanisms and occasionally endeavour to recognise the links of these mechanisms with the Tier 2 subcontractors. However, as the supply chain expands to lower levels - for example, in cases where the Tier 2 also works with other subcontractors for its own production - the lack of control and informality gradually increases, and problems such as child labour become more evident in these areas. Even if the subcontractors who directly contribute to the production process are not included in the official records of the brands due to this complex structure, there is always the possibility that child labour may have been used in the production process of the brands and this situation makes the brands one of the addressees of the problem.

*They come from both the brand and the state. The brand comes and takes care of its business. The state looks at occupational safety, inspects, if there is something, they warn and leave*

Mustafa, 36

On the other hand, the inspection processes for the production mechanisms with which brands have direct relations also harbour various question marks. The scope, focus and transparency of inspections are critical in combating child labour. However, it is noteworthy that these inspections are generally aimed at controlling product quality rather than improving the working conditions or welfare of workers. It is also often unclear what measures brands take or what sanctions they impose when they encounter inappropriate situations. These uncertainties create an important area of debate that deficiencies in the control of supply chains and the activation of audit processes pave the way for the continuation of problems such as child labour.

*I don't think so, because when the inspectors arrive, we are already informed, we are told to tidy up here, close this, remove that, they cover it up. That's why nothing changes."*

Adnan, 36

In the conducted interviews, although the majority of the answers to the question of whether inspections were carried out or not were that inspections were carried out, when asked whether anything changed after the inspections, the majority of the interviewed workers stated that there was no change and that the inspections remained ineffective. The contradiction between these two responses reveals why it is so difficult not only to identify unregistered employment and child labour but also to combat these problems effectively.



# CHILD LABOUR IN TÜRKİYE IN FIGURES

## 1990



The year Türkiye signed the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*. The Convention entered into force in 1995.

## 1998



The year Türkiye signed ILO Convention No. 138 on *Minimum Age for Admission to Employment*

## 2001



The year Türkiye signed ILO Convention No. 182 on the *Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour*

# 7.034.000

## children living in poverty

Number of children living in poverty according to 2023 data determined by TurkStat. As of the end of 2023, children constitute **22 million 206 thousand 34** of Türkiye's population.

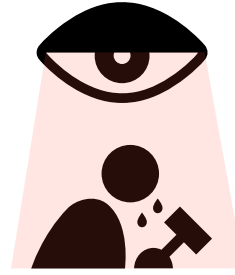
# 1 million 312 thousand 344

## child labor

The estimated number of child labourers in Türkiye including apprentices in 2024.

This number is estimated by adding the number of registered apprentices (**553 thousand 344**) to **759 thousand** child labourers in the **15-17 age** group for 2023. This number does not include the number of unregistered child labourers.<sup>36</sup>

No data on the number of unregistered child labourers could be found.

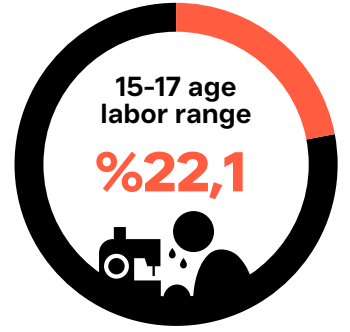


# 15-17

## AGE GROUP

The only age group for which up-to-date official data on child labour is available in Türkiye. According to the

2023 figures determined by TurkStat, the labour force participation rate of children in the 15-17 age group is 22.1%.<sup>35</sup>



# 695



## Lost child laborer lives

Number of child labourers who lost their lives in the last 11 years. 17 of the children lost their lives while working in the **garment and leather industry**.

In the last one year, at least **66** child workers, including **22** children between the ages of **0-14** and **44** children between the ages of **15-17**, lost their lives.

LAST  
1 YEAR  
**66**  
LOST LIVES

These numbers were determined based on the research conducted by the Worker Health and Work Safety Assembly and the information obtained from the press and the families of child workers.<sup>37</sup>

# 10 veya 6



## Child laborer who passed away while working under the MESEM training program

LAST  
1 YEAR  
**10**  
LOST LIVES

While the number of children who died while working within the scope of MESEM training in the last year is announced as **10** by the *Worker Health and Work Safety Assembly*, according to the data of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, this number is **6**.<sup>38</sup>

# EFFECTS OF CHILD LABOUR

revealed in detail the effects of this phenomenon on the society, especially on children. However, to summarise these effects in the simplest form, child labour is a phenomenon that directly threatens children's physical, mental and moral health as well as their safety, and detaches them from their childhood, potential, development and future. Children are forced to work in physically exhausting and hazardous jobs and face risks such as carrying heavy loads, being forced to work long hours or being exposed to harmful chemicals. Such working conditions adversely affect their growth and development and can lead to **physical** injuries, chronic diseases, permanent disabilities and even fatalities. In addition to all these, ill-treatment at the workplace, long working hours and the intense stress of work have negative effects on the **psychological** health of children. Such psychological effects can deeply affect children's future lives, making it difficult for them to adapt to society and realise their potential.

Such working conditions adversely affect their growth and development and can lead to physical injuries, chronic diseases, permanent disabilities and even fatalities. In addition to all these, ill-treatment at the workplace, long working hours and the intense stress of work have negative effects on the psychological health of children.

Child labour is a multidimensional problem with deep and long-term consequences at individual, social and economic levels, and these effects should not be ignored. These range from the effects on children's physical, mental and emotional development to the negative effects on social structure and economic development. When a child starts working at an early age, it is the beginning of a path that will affect the child's whole life and hampers the possibility of a better future for the child. At the same time, child labour puts at risk not only the child, whose potential to become a qualified labour force is threatened by being deprived of education, but also the chances of development and progress of the society at large. Hilmi, who was interviewed in the field research, stated that he had been working in the textile sector for 31 years and that he had no other choice in life as a primary school graduate.

*I've always done this job, primary school before this. I graduated from primary school, the only job I can do is textile, apart from that, maybe I can work as a security guard or waiter*

Hilmi, 43

Child labour deprives children of their **right to education**, which is one of the most important factors shaping their future, and deprives children who cannot attend school due to long working hours or who cannot access education at all, of the knowledge and skills that will provide access to better employment opportunities in the future. Individuals deprived of education are often forced to work in low-paid and precarious jobs, leading to the transmission of poverty from generation to generation. Lack of education also negatively affects social development by preventing individuals from actively participating in social and political life. The employment of children, especially those from poor and disadvantaged groups, further deepens **inequalities** in society and weakens social cohesion. **In economic terms**, although child labour may seem to provide low cost advantages to employers in the short term, it negatively affects **social welfare** in the long term. The lack of an educated and skilled labour force limits economic growth and makes it difficult to achieve sustainable development goals.

Child labour also has a negative impact on **family** dynamics. The fact that children become a labour force that can contribute to the family budget may reduce the tendency and motivation of families to invest in children's education. This situation leads to the **cultural** normalisation of child labour, making it more difficult to solve the problem. When the physical, psychological, educational and social effects of child labour are evaluated together, it is clear that this phenomenon is not only an individual problem, but also a social and global development issue. Therefore, policies to combat child labour should be designed by taking into account these multidimensional effects.



# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this report, starting from an international framework, the phenomenon of child labour has been tried to be examined with a focus specific to Türkiye. In the context of Türkiye, it was aimed to determine general definitions and boundaries and in addition to this, it was aimed to create a picture of the existence of child labour in the garment and textile industry.

However, in addition to the unregistered child labour, it has not been easy to record even the cases permitted by law and to draw the scope of child labour phenomenon.

If, according to the legislation, children between the ages of 14 and 15 who work in specified jobs are called “child labourers”, which definition is used for a 10-year-old working child? If everyone up to the age of 18 is a child, according to which definition are 16-year-old workers categorised as “young workers”? And how is a 17-year-old child working in a prohibited line of work defined? And how is the fight against child labour defined when child labour cannot be defined in this legal and illegal gap?

Child labour in the textile industry or in other sectors in Türkiye is not about individual tragedies, but also an indicator of a social and structural problem. Although the legislation places the definition of child labour in a legal and positive place, the dimensions of this phenomenon range from children working in poor areas of the cities to contribute to the family income, children participating in the labour force with their families, children whose labour is exploited under the name of job instruction, children given to acquaintances to earn pocket money during holidays, Derya, Yasin, Zahide, Önder, Uğur, Arda and many others whose names are unknown. From an early age, children are included in production mechanisms by depriving them of their basic rights such as education, play, leisure time and growing up in a healthy environment. The lack of a clear framework on child labour that prioritises the child makes us question whether it is possible to produce an effective solution without determining what exactly needs to be fought against. For this reason, the definition of child labour needs to be addressed together with the definition of the child and the existing legislation needs to be amended. The definition and framework should be prepared with an approach that includes clear and comprehensive regulations on how to protect children and prioritises the best interests of the child, rather than providing a guide on how employers can employ children. Strengthening children's rights and increasing positive regulations in this direction are essential elements of long-term solution strategies.

## FIGHT AGAINST CHILD LABOR

In the fight against child labour, it is necessary for each sector to carry out its own specific work by considering the best interests of the child as well as the regulation of general legislation. In the textile and garment industries, the first and priority target should be to conduct comprehensive research to create a realistic picture of child labour. These studies should be increased with the contributions of non-governmental organisations, associations and unions, i.e. different components of the industries. Data should be collected to determine in which lines of work, in which tasks and under which conditions child labour is used in the industry. In particular, any data on the reality of unregistered employment in the industry will be an important step towards understanding the true extent of child labour. On the other hand, research should not be limited to unregistered child labour; it is also necessary to clarify the number of children working within legal boundaries and to conduct analyses on which lines of work these children are concentrated. For example, determining the number of children working in the textile and garment industries through programmes such as MESEM will contribute to a better understanding of the problem. The numerical data presented as a result of the literature review shows that the clear and transparent dimension of child labour in Türkiye is not known. Increasing the number and working conditions of registered and unregistered child labourers will enable a more accurate and effective recognition of the problem.

Considering the effects of the deficiencies in the inspection mechanisms mentioned in the previous sections, which reinforce child labour, it should be emphasised once again that the inspection branches should be strengthened. It is necessary to rearrange the conditions of supervision in a way to benefit the worker rather than the employer, to increase the frequency of inspections and to support these inspections with sanctions. Furthermore, it is of great importance that brands, which are another important control mechanism, take responsibility down to the lowest levels of supply chains and carry out inspections at every stage. At the same time, it should not be forgotten that the purchasing decisions of brands can directly affect labour rights violations and unregistered practices. Brands' coercive price negotiations with producers or their decisions to impose economic difficulties on producers may cause producers to shift to cheap labour and this situation indicates that brands are also responsible for the existence of child labour.

The numerical data presented as a result of the literature review shows that the clear and transparent dimension of child labour in Türkiye is not known. Increasing the number and working conditions of registered and unregistered child labourers will enable a more accurate and effective recognition of the problem.

**FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY**

One of the most critical points to be emphasised in this struggle is that the issue of child labour is not a problem that can be ended only by prohibitions as mentioned before. Child labour is an outcome of poverty and the fight against this problem is a process intertwined with the fight against poverty. Child labour is directly related to poverty, social inequality and lack of education. In this context, the role of economic instruments such as fair living wages in preventing child labour should not be overlooked. It should not be forgotten that child labour and the choice of work over education is not the result of ideal conditions, but a compulsion under the severe pressure of poverty, as the “lesser of two evils” among limited and compelling options.

Conditions in which livelihood difficulties increase, earning income gains priority and education does not allow the family and the child to build their future, push children away from education and into labour life. In this context, along with the fight against poverty, it is important to restructure the education system based on the principle of the best interest of the child. Educational content should be organised in a way to support the quality development of children, should be inclusive and accessible, and equal educational conditions should be provided for every child. Vocational education programmes should be designed to enable children to gain competence in their chosen occupational field without being exploited as cheap labour. The limits of practical education should be determined in such a way as to prevent children from being exposed to conditions that threaten their mental and physical development, from being seen as part of production, and from jeopardising their present and future. The priority of this process should be to provide children with a quality life both in the present and in the future.

**FIGHT AGAINST NORMALISATION**

Without the necessary steps, child labour under the guise of vocational training, legitimised by law, will become increasingly accepted in society and will become a viable solution to employers' demands for cheap labour. This situation will further deepen the traditional perspective that normalises the idea that children, whether registered or unregistered, should “bring home the bread” at an early age. This understanding, which already needs to be challenged, encourages the acceptance of the situation as an ordinary and inevitable reality, rather than questioning why children are burdened with such a load, and creates a vicious cycle that normalises child work and even child employment. In order to break this cycle, awareness-raising activities should be carried out on the devastating effects of child labour on children and its long-term damage to the future of society. These initiatives, which aim to raise social awareness, can address the causes of child labour from a broader perspective and prevent this problem from being seen as a positive situation.

Child labour is a reflection of deep inequalities and problems affecting the social structure. Child labour, which is legitimised today by saying “there is no other option”, actually hides a question that is being ignored: “Why does a child have to work?”. Any regulation made without answering this question only touches the surface of the problem, not its root. For this reason, a multifaceted approach and comprehensive reforms are required to solve this chronic problem in textile and garment industries as in many other sectors in Türkiye. Creating an environment where children can develop healthily, receive education, rest and participate in social life is among the primary duties of a society.



# SOURCES

- <sup>1</sup> Temiz Giysi Kampanyası, (2022). Tekstil Geride Bıraktıkları: Tekstil Sektöründe Kayıtdışı İstihdam. [https://www.temizgiysi.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Tekstilin\\_Geride\\_Biraktiklari\\_TR\\_DIJITAL.pdf](https://www.temizgiysi.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Tekstilin_Geride_Biraktiklari_TR_DIJITAL.pdf) (04.01.2025)
- <sup>2</sup> Unicef. (2004) Çocuk Haklarına Dair Sözleşme. [https://www.unicefturk.org/public/uploads/files/UNICEF\\_CocukHaklarinaDairSozlesme.pdf](https://www.unicefturk.org/public/uploads/files/UNICEF_CocukHaklarinaDairSozlesme.pdf) (04.01.2025)
- <sup>3</sup> ILO. (1999). 182 No'lu En Kötü Biçimlerdeki Çocuk İşçiliğinin Yasaklanması ve Ortadan Kaldırılmasına İlişkin Acil Eylem Sözleşmesi. <https://www.ilo.org/tr/resource/182-nolu-en-kotu-bicimlerdeki-cocuk-isciliginin-yasaklanmasi-ve-ortadan> (04.01.2025)
- <sup>4</sup> Gökalp, Ö. T. (2012). Türk İş Hukukunda Çocuk İşçi Çalıştırma. Ejobov (Electronic Journal of Vocational Colleges), 2(1), p.127, 125-135.
- <sup>5</sup> ILO. (1973). 138 No'lu Asgari Yaş Sözleşmesi. <https://www.ilo.org/tr/resource/138-nolu-asgari-yas-sozlesmesi> (04.01.2025)
- <sup>6</sup> T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Mevzuat Bilgi Sistemi. (2003). İş Kanunu. <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/mevzuat?MevzuatNo=4857&MevzuatTur=1&MevzuatTertip=5> (04.01.2025)
- <sup>7</sup> ILO. Çocuk İşçiliği. <https://www.ilo.org/tr/regions-and-countries/europe-and-central-asia/ilo-turkiye-ofisi/politika-alanlari/cocuk-isciligi> (04.01.2025)
- <sup>8</sup> Unicef. (2004) Çocuk Haklarına Dair Sözleşme. [https://www.unicefturk.org/public/uploads/files/UNICEF\\_CocukHaklarinaDairSozlesme.pdf](https://www.unicefturk.org/public/uploads/files/UNICEF_CocukHaklarinaDairSozlesme.pdf) (04.01.2025)
- <sup>9</sup> Efe, H., Uluoğlu, P.A. (2015). Dünyada Çocuk İşçiliğiyle Mücadelede Geline Nokta ve Geleceğe Dair Bazı Öngörüler. Eğitim Bilim Toplum Dergisi, 13(51), p.52, 46-72.
- <sup>10</sup> Temiz Giysi Kampanyası (2022). Türkiye Tekstil Endüstrisi Profili ve Yaşam Ücreti. [https://www.temizgiysi.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/CP\\_TR.pdf](https://www.temizgiysi.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/CP_TR.pdf) (04.01.2025)
- <sup>11</sup> BBC. (2016). Çocuk mülteciler Türkiye'de tekstil atölyelerinde çalıştırılıyor. <https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-37748847#:~:text=Panorama%2C%20C4%B0stanbul'daki%20bir%20di%4C%9Fer,Suriyeli%20m%C3%BCiteci%20C3%A7ocu%C4%9Fun%20%C3%A7a%4B1nC5%9Ft%C4%B1r%C4%B1d%C4%B1C4%9F%C4%B1%20belirtiliyor> (04.01.2025)
- <sup>12</sup> Lortoğlu, P.C., Kurtulmuş, M.M. (2020). Tekstil Sektöründe Suriyeli Çocuk Emeği: İstanbul Örneği, Marmara Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi, 42(1), p. 124 - 156
- <sup>13</sup> Sol. (2024). 11 yaşındaki Ahmet'in ölümünde patronun örtbas girişimi: Aileye ifade baskısı. <https://haber.sol.org.tr/haber/11-yasindaki-ahmetin-olumunde-patronun-ortbas-girisimi-aileye-ifade-baskisi-393734> (05.01.2024)
- <sup>14</sup> Mesleki Teknik Eğitim Genel Müdürlüğü. Mesleki Eğitim Merkezleri. <https://meslegimhayatim.meb.gov.tr/egitim/mesleki-egitim> (06.01.2025)
- <sup>15</sup> Tiktok. <https://www.tiktok.com/search?q=mesem&t=1736337438977> (06.01.2025)
- <sup>16</sup> Aydın & Aydın Avukatlık Ortaklığı. (2024). Çocuk ve Genç İşçilerin Çalıştırılma Esasları Hk. <https://aydinaydin.net/cocuk-ve-genc-iscilerin-calistirilma-esaslari-hk/#:~:text=4857%20Say%C4%B1%C4%B1%20C4%B0C5%9F%20Kanunu'nun%2073%20C3%BCnc%C3%BC%20maddesi%20u-yar%C4%B1nca%20ise,saatleri%20aras%C4%B1daki%20i%C5%9F%C3%A7i%20postalar%C4%B1nda%20yasakt%C4%B1r> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>17</sup> ASMMO (2024). İş Sağlığı ve Güvenliğine İlişkin İşyeri Tehlike Sınıfları Listesi. <https://www.asmmo.org.tr/haber-detay/is-sagligi-ve-guvenligine-iliskin-isyeri-tehlike-siniflari-listesi/6458> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>18</sup> Evrensel. (2024). Başı makineye sıkışan 14 yaşındaki MESEM'li Arda Tonbul hayatını kaybetti. <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/508226/basi-makineye-sikisan-14-yasindaki-mesemli-arda-tonbul-hayatini-kaybetti> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>19</sup> Gazete Duvar. (2024). MESEM'de yine çocuk ölümü. <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/mesemde-yine-cocuk-olumu-haber-1710058> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>20</sup> Bianet. (2024). MESEM'li bir çocuk işçi daha öldü. <https://bianet.org/haber/mesemli-bir-cocuk-isci-daha-oldu-302088> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>21</sup> Evrensel. (2023). İş cinayetinde hayatını kaybeden stajyer öğrenci Ulaş, toprağa verildi. <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/505178/is-cinayetinde-hayatini-kaybeden-stajyer-ogrenci-ulas-topraga-verildi> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>22</sup> Çaklı, O. (2024). MESEM'de biten hayatlar-8: Zekai de Ömer de inşaattan düşerek öldü. Gazete Duvar. <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/mesemde-biten-hayatlar-8-zekai-de-omer-de-insaattan-duserek-oldu-haber-1720158> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>23</sup> Sendika.org. (2024). Çalıştığı inşaattan düşen 17 yaşındaki MESEM öğrencisi 72 günlük yaşam savaşını kaybetti. <https://sendika.org/2024/02/calistigi-insaattan-dusen-17-yasindaki-mesem-ogrencisi-72-gunluk-yasam-savasini-kaybetti-700214> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>24</sup> NTV. (2024). 16 yaşındaki Erol Can staj gördüğü atölyede öldü. [https://www.ntv.com.tr/galeri/turkiye/16-yasindaki-erol-can-staj-gorduguatolyede-oldu,jz1G\\_j0ChUq39Fzj33Efg/Hk07XepVEky81JSJDasZ\\_A](https://www.ntv.com.tr/galeri/turkiye/16-yasindaki-erol-can-staj-gorduguatolyede-oldu,jz1G_j0ChUq39Fzj33Efg/Hk07XepVEky81JSJDasZ_A) (05.01.2025)
- <sup>25</sup> Başakçioğlu, C. (2024). MESEM'de ölen Alperen Enes Ural davası: 'Çalışmaması gereken günde çalışırken öldü'. Gazete Duvar. <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/mesemde-olen-alperen-enes-ural-davasi-calismamasi-gereken-gunde-calisirken-oldu-haber-1732975> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>26</sup> Bildircin, M. (2024). MESEM'in makyajı döküldü. Birgün. <https://www.birgun.net/haber/mesemin-makyaji-dokuldu-523938> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>27</sup> Güngör, D. (2024). Sınıf tekrarında MESEM dayatması: Öğrencilerden vazgeçiyorlar. Birgün. <https://www.birgun.net/haber/sinif-tekrarinda-mesem-dayatmasi-ogrencilerden-vazgeciyorlar-548607> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>28</sup> Gazete Duvar. (2024). MESEM'lerde devamsızlık: 'Okula gelmiyor, çocuk nerede?'. <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/mesemlerde-devamsizlik-okula-gelmiyor-ise-gitmiyor-cocuk-nerede-haber-1743769> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>29</sup> Aydoğan, F.A. (2024). İşte yeni Türkiye yüzyılı; tüm meslek liseleri "MESEM"leştiriliyor (1). Birgün. <https://www.birgun.net/makale/iste-yeni-turkiye-yuzyili-tum-meslek-liseleri-mesemlestiriliyor-1-584966> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>30</sup> Doğan, A., Severcan, B. (2024). MESEM'e giriş var çıkış yok. Evrensel. <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/521705/meseme-giris-var-cikis-yok> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>31</sup> Çaklı, O. (2025). MESEM öğrencisi anlattı: Mesai, düşük ücret, baskı. Gazete Duvar. <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/mesem-ogrencisi-anlatti-mesai-dusuk-ucret-baski-galeri-1746399> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>32</sup> Doğan, A., Severcan, B. (2024). MESEM'e giriş var çıkış yok. Evrensel. <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/521705/meseme-giris-var-cikis-yok> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>33</sup> Temiz Giysi Kampanyası, <https://www.instagram.com/p/Cy3o6pGoGN/> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>34</sup> Doğan, A. (2023). Kız çocukları okulda değil tekstil atölyelerinde: Hayatlarımız çalınıyor abla. Ekmek Ve Gül. <https://ekmekvegul.net/dergi/kiz-cocuklari-okulda-degil-tekstil-atolyelerinde-hayatlarimiz-caliniyor-abla> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>35</sup> TÜİK, UNICEF (2023). Türkiye'deki Çocuklar 2023 İstatistiklere Bakış. [https://www.tuik.gov.tr/media/announcements/Turkiye\\_Cocuk\\_2023.pdf](https://www.tuik.gov.tr/media/announcements/Turkiye_Cocuk_2023.pdf) (03.05.2025)
- <sup>36</sup> Anka. (2024). Veli Ağbaba'dan 'çocuk işçi' raporu: Türkiye'de her 10 çocukta 3'ü yoksul. <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/turkiye/veli-agbabadan-cocuk-isci-raporu-turkiyede-her-10-cocuktan-3u-2216566> (03.05.2025)
- <sup>37</sup> İSİG Meclisi. (2024). MESEM'de, tarlada, sokakta, sanayide, inşaatta... Son on bir yılda en az 695 çocuk işçi hayatını kaybetti. <https://www.isigmeclisi.org/21015-mesem-de-tarlada-sokakta-sanayide-insaatta-son-on-bir-yilda-en-az-695> (05.01.2025)
- <sup>38</sup> Çaklı, O. (2024). Bakanlık MESEM'deki 4 ölümü görmedi: 'Yalan söylüyorlar'. Gazete Duvar. <https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/mesemdeki-olumler-iki-bakanlik-birbirinden-habersiz-haber-1742830> (05.01.2025)





# Temiz Giysi Kampanyası

Adil ve sürdürülebilir bir tekstil sektörü için



**Address:** Kemankeş Karamustafa Paşa Mahallesi,  
Halil Paşa Sokak, Ömer Abed Han, Kat 4 No:3-4  
Karaköy, 34425 Beyoğlu/Istanbul, Türkiye

**Phone:** +9 0212 251 99 79 [www.temizgiysi.org](http://www.temizgiysi.org)



Co-funded by  
the European Union