

INTERNATIONAL SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL MIGRATION IN TURKEY

Situation Analysis, Policy Recommendations and
Cooperation with European Union Countries

June 2015-May 2016



SEASONAL AGRICULTURAL MIGRATION PROGRAM



For centuries, Anatolia has witnessed the influx of refugees and immigrants coming in or passing by. Turkey's place in the international migration system has begun to dramatically change in the early 1990's, from a migrant sending to a migrants receiving country. Within its geographical region Turkey emerged as a popular destination for labour migration, as its large informal sector offers different opportunities for irregular migrants to stay for a while than travel further to other countries or return to their home countries. Together with the increasing number of Syrian refugees seeking shelter and safety in Turkey, the number of irregular migrants in the labour market reaches to thousand and these migrant workers mainly find work in production industry, general services, and agriculture sector¹. Agriculture is one of the leading sectors employing migrant workers. Migrant workers are primarily involved in mowing grass and livestock breeding in the eastern cities of Turkey such as Kars, Ardahan, and Iğdir, meanwhile in the Black sea, Eastern and South Eastern Anatolia, Aegean and Central Anatolia regions, migrants work in grazing animals, harvesting vegetative products like hazel nut, tea, cotton, apricot, sugar beet, citrus fruits, grapes and vegetables as seasonal agricultural workers.

The pool of irregular immigrants working² in seasonal agricultural work in Turkey also increased due to the outgrowing number of Syrian refugees fleeing from the Syrian civil war.

ORSAM³ and TESEV's⁴ joint January 2015 Report shows that according to the official figures, Turkey hosts 1.6 million (unofficial figure is 2 million) Syrian nationals and this number constitutes 2.1% of the country's population. Since the outbreak of the Syrian crisis, 85% of Syrian citizens who entered Turkey and were granted temporary residence status⁵ have been living with their own resources in 72 of 81 Turkish provinces; outside the camps established and managed by the Turkish Republic⁶. In order to sustain their lives, Syrian nationals are currently working in textile industry, service sector and seasonal agricultural work without social security, under poor living conditions and low wages, and in competition with the poorest segments of Turkey. Majority of the studies forecast that approximately 75 percent of Syrian nationals are likely to remain permanently in the country even though they are defined as "guests" by the Turkish government. Thus, coupled with the presence of undocumented immigrants coming from other neighbouring countries and working in Turkey's large informal sector, the pressing issue of Syrian nationals/refugees has become a human rights agenda for Turkey along with European Union countries.

The problematic areas;

- a. The impact of displaced persons/refugee and/or irregular immigrant labourer on the agricultural production and crop processing works is not visible enough yet. For instance, although there are many observations and field reports on the living conditions of Syrian nationals (prepared by international and national governmental,

academic, civil society organisations), these people's employment and especially their agricultural activities are mainly limited to the reports of short newspaper pieces. In summary, there is paucity of scientific data collection, analysis, reports and in-depth studies of the situation of irregular immigrants working in agriculture sector.

- b. There is no comprehensive study on the violation of rights regarding living and working conditions of irregular immigrant labourers involved in seasonal agricultural work.
- c. There is no mapping exercise that identifies in which areas as immigrant labourers work.
- d. There is neither any study that addresses educational, health, employment, living conditions etc. of the displaced/refugee or immigrant children involved in seasonal agricultural work which is one of the worst forms of child labour, nor is there a framework policy on the violation and enforcement of children's rights.
- e. It has been observed that immigrant families' living and working conditions are worse than Turkish workers involved in the seasonal agricultural production and they also live below the poverty line. This situation can be presented as an example of the "rivalry of the poorest". However, it is not known how the competition between Turkish and 'foreign' workers affect the production processes, social life and relationships within and between communities.

To sum up, immigrant labourers are grappling with severe violations of human rights, children's rights and women's rights.

1 <http://m.haberturk.com/makro-ekonomi/haber/502582-turkiyede-350-bin-kacak-isci-calisiyor>

2 The majority of immigrant workers in Turkish labour market work without a work permit and has irregular status. Irregular migrants working in the Turkish labour market comes from two sources. One is those migrant workers who enter into Turkey through using legal channels such as upholding touristic visas but do not hold work permit. The second is the immigrants like Syrians who are granted with a temporary asylum status, but do not have legal permits to work. Therefore, the term "irregular foreign immigrant worker/irregular immigrant worker/migrant worker" is used to define all foreign nationals involved in seasonal agricultural work without legal permit

3 Centre for Middle Eastern Strategic Studies

4 Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation

5 Temporary Protection Directive - October 2014- established rights-based reception procedures that provide unlimited stay, "non-refoulement" protection as a response to forced departure and urgent needs.

6 M. Murat Erdoğan, (2015) *Türkiye'deki Suriyeliler: Toplumsal Kabul ve Uyum*, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları (p. 40).



Main Goals and Outputs



The project aims to render the deprivation and discrimination immigrant seasonal agricultural labourers face every day visible in order to build a sustainable, participatory, democratic and transparent social development that respects and protects human rights of all habitants of Turkey. It also targets to stimulate action with evidence-based advocacy and result-oriented policy tools to prevent violation of immigrants' basic human rights and improve their living and working conditions.

To accomplish this;

- Prepare a situation analysis and mapping of the living and working conditions of immigrant labourers employed in agricultural production in Turkey with the aim to report the deprivations, identify the needs and requirements, envisage the remedies of their situation in Turkey.
- Meanwhile, examine the lessons learned and existing practices to combine evidence based recommendations with tested interventions and also to create means of collaborations with civil society and professional organisations primarily in Turkey and/or European Union member countries.
- Prepare a policy note containing solution-oriented recommendations for the government, the European Union member countries, international and civil society organisations, and private sector companies, and conduct

a widely participated validation meeting with national and international keynote speakers as the complementary advocacy work to make the subject visible and as a leverage for action.

With this project;

- a. The recruitment process and employment conditions of immigrant labourers involved in agricultural production will be portrayed.
- b. Since the majority of the Syrian nationals in Turkey are likely to remain permanent, a tangible input for a road-map of employment of these communities/people who came with irregular migration will be provided.
- c. Exemplary practices carried out by civil society and professional organisations in Turkey and/or European Union member countries will be assessed and collaboration opportunities will be examined; and solution-oriented partnerships with at least one NGO will be developed in order to provide solutions to the problems of immigrant labourers (primarily Syrian nationals) employed in agricultural sector.
- d. First systematic study on violation of rights exposed to the living and working environments of displaced/refugees and/or immigrant labourers involved in agricultural activities, will be conducted.



Project Results, Outcomes and Activities



Result 1

Publish the Lessons-Learned Paper on interventions and practices already in effect or started to be put into effect by national and international bodies (civil society organisations, academics, think-thanks etc.), the situation analysis and mapping of the living and working conditions of immigrants employed in Turkey's agricultural production (4 documents)

1. National and international interventions and practices Lessons Learned Paper
2. Desktop Study
3. Situation Analysis Report
4. Situation Analysis Map

Activity 1.1 Examining interventions and practices already in effect or started to be put into effect by national and international structures (civil society organisations, academics, think-thanks etc.)

Activity 1.2 Contacting and sustaining communication with identified institutions for validation and in-detail inquiry.

Activity 1.3 Preparing a Lessons-Learned Paper concerning interventions/project in the area of international seasonal agricultural migration (which includes irregular immigrant labourers)

Activity 1.4 Desktop study of the field study (preliminary literature review, internet search for secondary data).

Activity 1.5 Field study. In-depth and focus group interviews in at least five provinces (1. Ordu-Giresun, 2. Trabzon-Rize, 3. Ardahan-Kars, 4. Adana-Mersin-Gaziantep-Şanlıurfa, 5. Malatya-Ankara) spanning different geographies and product groups (hazelnut, tea, grass, vegetable, cotton, apricot, citrus harvesting) with provincial representatives of central government institutions, academics, five civil society organisations and provincial representatives of professionals organisations, international organisations, garden/field owners and agricultural intermediaries, immigrant seasonal agricultural workers.

Activity 1.6 Mapping exercise. Field observations, media coverages, reports, interviews

Activity 1.7 Design, printing and dissemination of Lessons Learned Paper, Situation Analysis and the mapping exercise

Result 2

Prepare the policy paper with participatory methods and advocate to make the subject visible (2 documents)

1. 1 validation meeting for policy development and advocacy with national and international experts
2. Policy Paper
3. Press Release

Activity 2.1 Preparation of draft policy paper and press release

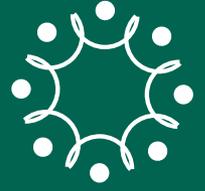
Activity 2.2 Conducting a one-day meeting in Ankara to present the findings and draft policy paper with the

participation of two national and two international key-note speakers and at least 50 participants that have roles and responsibilities related to the field.

Activity 2.3 Finalisation, designing, printing and dissemination of policy paper in Turkish and English to the participants of validation meeting and public using new media tools to raise awareness and implement the recommendations

Activity 2.4 Finalisation and wide range dissemination of press release with conventional and new media tools and announcement of study





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WORKSHOP



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