



Child Labour in Furniture Manufacturing in Turkey Rapid Assessment Report



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PREFACE

Within the scope of *Time-Bound Policy and Program Framework for the Prevention of Child Labour (2005-2015)*, an outstanding milestone in the battle against child labour in Turkey, employment of children in footwear and leathercraft, auto mechanics and bodyworks, and furniture industries have been identified as the worst forms of child labour. As the most current initiative and policy addressing the issue, the *National Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (2017-2023)* emphasizes that the worst forms of child labour in Turkey have been identified as “*working on the streets, employment in heavy and hazardous works in small- and medium-sized enterprises, and in paid migratory and temporary agriculture work except for family businesses*” and calls a series of institutions and organizations to action by indicating that elimination and prevention of child labour in these sectors must be the priority.¹ In addition, the program document points out: “*Since the migration flow began in 2011 as a result of the civil war in Syria, a great number of refugees -mostly women and children- have migrated to our country. Children of these refugees who are given ‘Temporary Protection Status’ are also at risk of child labour*”.² Within this scope, elimination of child labour in industrial and agricultural production is identified as one of the priority areas in national social policy.

The most recent study offering statistical information on child labor and working children in Turkey was conducted in 2012.³ However, it is not feasible to measure how child labor has been impacted by the rapid social and economic transformations taking place around the world and in Turkey for the past couple of years -including the global effects driven by the civil war that broke out in Syria in 2011- in light of these data which were collected almost 6 years ago. That is why; there is growing need for new research to assess the state of play in terms of child labor in various industries and fields across Turkey. Furthermore, the fact that child labor is a dynamic social, economic and cultural problem area in Turkey makes the growing need for up-to-date data and findings even more urgent.

The rapid assessment study conducted on children working in **furniture manufacturing** within the context of the worst forms of child labour in Turkey aims to present the current situation. The report presents the findings of the rapid assessment study conducted between December 2017 and February 2018 and the findings of 22 in-depth interviews conducted in the provinces of İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir.

¹ MoLSS, Directorate General of Labor (2017)

² Ibid, (2017) page 57

³ TURKSTAT Child Labor Force Statistics 2012

Child Labour in Turkey's Furniture Manufacturing Industry: Rapid Assessment Report show that the furniture manufacturing has a widespread informal structure and informal firms are basically labour intensive and small-scale natured. These firms run through the utilisation of traditional master craftsman-apprentice relationship. This causes the engagement of children into this sector at early ages to learn an occupation and to contribute to family income. Therefore, the sustainability of the sector depends on continuous supply of child labour. Additionally, the furniture manufacturing has been an area of widespread use of migrant labour traditionally, in recent years an increasing number of Syrian labour and child labour have become part of furniture manufacturing.

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ABBREVIATIONS

DW	Development Workshop
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
İŞKUR	Turkish Employment Agency
KOSGEB	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization
MoLSS	Ministry of Labour and Social Security*
MoNE	Ministry of Education
NACE	The Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community
SME	Small and Medium Size Enterprise
SSI	Social Security Institution
TEA	Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR)
TOBB	Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchange
TURKSTAT	Turkish Statistical Institute
TRY	Turkish Lira
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNWOMEN	UN Womens Division

* Ministry of Labour and Social Security was merged with Ministry of Family and Social Policies and became Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policies in 10th of July 2018. Since it was still the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, when the research was done and report was prepared, the former title and its abbreviation (MoLSS) was used in the report.

INTRODUCTION

Turkey ratified the International Labour Organization (ILO) **Convention No. 182 Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour** Article 6 of the Convention imposes on the states the liability to design and implement a time-bound programme of action to eliminate the worst forms of child labour as a priority. Article 2 of the Convention states that “for the purposes of this Convention, the term ‘child’ shall apply to all persons under the age of 18”. Following, former Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS) has prepared **Time-Bound Policy and Program Framework for the Prevention of Child Labour (2005-2015)** in 2004 for a period of 10 years and with a comprehensive approach to the broadest extent possible. In the light of the information obtained from the regional meetings and information gathered by the labour inspectors from the field study, the MoLSS determined the following lines of work in the industrial workplaces for the prevention of the worst forms of child labour:

- Shoemaking and leather goods
- Auto mechanics and body works
- **Furniture manufacturing**

National Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (2017-2023), published by the MoLSS in 2017, state that the worst forms of child labour are working in heavy and hazardous works in small- and medium-sized enterprises. Besides, although it does not explicitly refer which sub-sectors of the industry such forms of labour are employing children in furniture manufacturing is accepted as one of the worst forms of child labour as this line of business falls under the class of hazardous production determined in 2004 as per the ILO Convention.¹

For such kind of works that children start to work at early ages to contribute to the family income and to learn a profession, there is a huge need for examining the quantitative situation of child labour and the effects of such works on the children. However, there are very few studies exist on this topic and their scope is quite limited. **Research on the Children Working in the Woodworks Sector**² carried out in Ankara, İzmir and Bursa in 2004 within the scope of ILO’s **International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO-IPEC)** proposes possible and applicable interventions and improvements for identification of the poor working conditions of child workers, the reasons why they are working, their social and cultural conditions and for the immediate elimination of poor

¹ Ministry of Labour and Social Security (2017) National Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour 2017-2023, page 33

² MoLSS (2005)

working conditions.³ After this research, the activities for the elimination and analysis of child labour in furniture manufacturing were only conducted based on the routine inspections and actions upon complaint, the data and documentation regarding these efforts were not shared.

Rapid Assessment Study on the Child Labour in Furniture Manufacturing in Turkey, which covers the provinces of İstanbul, İzmir and Ankara, reveals the existence of child labour in informal and labour-intensive furniture manufacturing sector and argues that the process of providing an occupation from apprenticeship to traineeship and from traineeship to master craftsman status is based on child labour. This manufacturing process that is traditionally employing migrant labour force has now started taking a new form with increasing share of Syrian labour force and child labour in recent years.

The results obtained from the rapid assessment study are presented in three main chapters. The first chapter presents the background of rapid assessment and the scope of the study. The second chapter focuses on the data on the production and labour structures prevalent in the furniture sector in Turkey and analyses which type of companies and manufacturing processes have a tendency to employ child labour. This chapter also presents the current situation of child labour in furniture manufacturing using the findings obtained from the 22 in-depth interviews conducted in 3 major provinces between December 2017 and February 2018. The last chapter presents an overall assessment and policy proposals.

³ ILO-IPEC (2007) Project on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour in Furniture Sector





Chapter 1

**Rapid
Assessment
Field Study**

Rapid assessment¹ study has been conducted to determine the situation of child labour in furniture manufacturing. Unlike the rapid assessment for emergency situations and interventions, this method was preferred to present the overall situation of child labour in furniture manufacturing. Rapid assessment method is used to overcome the data and information limitations on child labour and to reveal the more hidden and invisible layers of child labour.

ILO and UNICEF developed a guideline for rapid assessment of child labour. This guideline was prepared for gathering information relatively quickly and at low cost.² As a methodology, it is ideally suited for obtaining detailed knowledge of the working and living conditions of children through discussions and interviews and it is well adapted for collecting information in a rapid and simplified way within clearly defined geographical areas. Its scope is therefore limited and local, and it focuses on areas which are known to have substantial concentrations of children involved in activities difficult to identify and quantify. Rapid assessment method uses semi-structured questionnaires or in-depth interviews and conversations; careful and attentive observation; and background information derived from a variety of sources, such as key informants or knowledgeable persons and it is primarily used for qualitative researches.³ In brief, *“Rapid Assessment is a research methodology that uses several data-collecting strategies contemporaneously in order to achieve an understanding of a specific social reality or situation in a given sociocultural context. It is usually done with the objective of formulating a project or some other kind of intervention”*.⁴

¹ A rapid assessment is an opportunity to collect information prior to designing an intervention; it can also be used to supplement or refine the existing data. A rapid assessment is conducted over a relatively short period and aims to answer a few specific questions. It can draw on any number of techniques including focus groups, participatory observation, key informant interviews, in-depth interviews, or more participatory techniques such as mapping, pile sorts, community mapping, and seasonal calendars. UNWOMEN (2003)

² ILO-UNICEF (2005)

³ Global Protection Cluster Working Group (2012)

⁴ ILO-UNICEF (2005), page 10

1.1

Research Rationale

Rapid assessment study to identify the overall situation of child labour in furniture manufacturing for the following reasons:

- a** There have been only a few researches with limited scope and a few numbers of projects implemented to prevent child labour for the last 14 years for children working in furniture manufacturing that was included among the worst forms of child labour in 2004.
- b** There is still child labour in furniture manufacturing and not much progress has been seen for its elimination despite of government planned and prepared action plan for time-bound elimination of child labour in furniture manufacturing until 2015. Even though child labour in furniture manufacturing is identified as one of the worst forms of child labour under the Time-Bound Policy and Program Framework, there is no impact assessment for the activities carried out during that period.
- c** There was news coverage on the child labour in furniture manufacturing in the printed and visual media, including social media,⁵ and child workers were observed during the interviews conducted in the urban areas, sites and/or organized industrial zones where furniture are manufactured.
- d** The situation of child labour in the sector must be addressed for rendering Furniture Sector, that is encouraged by Turkey to become open to international competition, more competitive and solutions for the elimination of child labour must be determined. Thus, a potential obstacle for international competition would be eliminated.

⁵ Al-Jazeera (14.10.2014) "Okul Çıkışı Ağır Mesai" (Hard work after school), CNN Türk (03.05.2017) "1 Mayıs'ta Çocuk İşçi Hayatını Kaybetti" (Child worker died in 1st of May), Milliyet Haber (09.10.2014) "Türkiye'de 320 Bin Çocuk İşçi Bulunuyor" (There are 320 thousand child workers in Turkey)

1.2

Field Research

The furniture sector in Turkey consists of three main branches;

- a *Inputs and subsidiary industry*; the business enterprises called suppliers who provide the basic furniture manufacturing, produce raw materials and supply manufacturing inputs such as machinery, chemicals and accessories.
- b *Furniture manufacturing*; small- and medium-size enterprises that manufacture furniture. These enterprises carry out manufacturing in the form of small workshops generally spread in organized industrial zones, furniture sites and urban areas.
- c *Marketing*; companies that convey products to consumers directly or through intermediaries or furniture brands.

This research carried out to identify the current situation of child labour in furniture manufacturing focuses on the manufacturing phase of furniture sector and on the small-scale workshops and companies manufacturing furniture. The research discusses the current workplace and employment structures of furniture manufacturing in Turkey, manufacturing processes and the roles and responsibilities of the key actors in the sector and it addresses the manufacturing and employment structure of the sector. It also analyses the child workers in furniture manufacturing and their working conditions, the involvement and situation of migrants and migrant children in the manufacturing and the current situation of occupational health and safety in this production.

In order to address the issues mentioned above, three provinces with the highest number of registered workplaces and employees have been identified based on data from Central Anatolia Development Agency's 2016 *Furniture Sector Report* for rapid assessment study on child labour in furniture manufacturing (Table 1). These provinces are İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir.

Table 1. The number of workplaces and employees in furniture sector (2015)⁶

Province	Number of workplaces	Number of registered employees
İstanbul	6.458	35.633
Ankara	5.361	30.062
İzmir	2.379	13.142
Bursa	2.130	16.096
Kayseri	740	20.280
Other provinces	12.278	42.000
Total	29.346	158.213

İstanbul has approximately 21 percent share in furniture sector and it is the biggest province in terms of the number of both workplaces and employees. Although furniture sector is dispersed in various districts of İstanbul, MASKO⁷ located in İkitelli Organized Industrial Zone and MODOKO⁸, furniture industrial site in Ümraniye district are the main locations where furniture products are marketed. There is furniture manufacturing in the peripheries of these industrial zones as well. There are manufacturing and marketing activities in such places as MODESA⁹, located in Eyüp district and ÇOMAÇO located in Çamlıca district.¹⁰ The average number of employees per workplace in İstanbul is 5.7. This ratio is below the average of overall manufacturing sector in Turkey¹¹ and it shows that furniture manufacturing is carried out mostly in small-scale enterprises. During the interviews carried out in İstanbul, it was stated that manufacturing activities are limited in the province, and that mostly the products manufactured in other provinces are marketed to domestic and international markets through İstanbul.

Ankara is an important centre in furniture manufacturing and it is the province with the highest number of workplace and employment capacity only second to İstanbul. The companies engaged in furniture manufacturing in Ankara constitute 18 percent of the companies in Turkey. The number of persons employed in these companies is

⁶ Central Anatolia Development Agency (2016), page13

⁷ S.S. MASKO İstanbul Furniture and Wooden Materials Manufacturers Site Management Co-operative, briefly called MASKO, was established by 13 shareholders on 19 March 1984. It is a furniture city consisting of 78 stores located at İkitelli Organized Industry Zone which is describes as industrial and commercial centre of İstanbul. (www.masko.com.tr).

⁸ MODOKO is a Furniture Manufacturers Site established in 1969 on the Anatolian Side of İstanbul with the support of the Ministry of Industry and Commerce at that time and the contributions of the shareholders. (www.modoko.com.tr)

⁹ MODESA was established as Carpenters Site in 1969. It serves in furniture design and manufacturing sector (www.eyupmodesa.com)

¹⁰ Central Anatolia Development Agency (2016), page 13

¹¹ İstanbul Chamber of Commerce (2016), page 87

approximately 30 thousand.¹² The furniture manufacturing in Ankara first started in the manufacturing sites within the borders of Altındağ district. This manufacturing centre briefly called Siteler was first established in 1960s and it operates on a land of approximately 5 thousand-decare. There are many enterprises in Siteler engaged in small- and medium-scale furniture manufacturing and marketing. These enterprises are mostly the labour-intensive ones, manufacturing furniture and the number of companies carrying out large-scale manufacturing is quite few. Altındağ district is followed by Akyurt road and İvedik Organized Industrial Zone in terms of intensive organized furniture manufacturing centres.

İzmir is the third biggest province in furniture manufacturing after İstanbul and Ankara. 15 percent of furniture manufacturing takes place in İzmir and the employment rate of the sector is 7.5 percent. The furniture manufacturing in the province concentrates in Karabağlar district and the furniture site in Kısıkköy mostly engages in furniture products sales and marketing.¹³

Because of these reasons, field research was done in these three provinces. In total 22 in-depth interviews were conducted between December 2017 and February 2018.

1.3

Field Research and Limitations

Due to time constraint and resource limitations, snowball sampling method was used to access key informants and to carry out interviews. The starting point of snowball sampling method is the network of Development Workshop formed as result of the field studies that have been carried out for the advocacy works within the scope of human rights since 2002 in all over Turkey. These studies include the dimensions of child labour, current situation analysis and assessments based on product, region and sector. In brief, the social relations and communication with employers, employees, local level actors that the Development Workshop has been maintaining for the last 15 years have been used. The research also appealed to the support and facilitation of experts, academics and volunteers that the Development Workshop has known, worked and cooperated with in various projects and fieldworks.

Certain topics have been addressed during the field interviews to understand the situation of child labour. A series of issues constitutes the major themes of the interviews such as; the workforce profile in labour-intensive stages of furniture manufacturing, the stages the employees go through to be entitled to apprenticeship, traineeship and master craftsman levels and the duration of these stages, the size of enterprises in furniture

¹² Ankara Development Agency (2011), page 13

¹³ İzmir Chamber of Commerce (2014)

manufacturing and the network of relations existing between these enterprises, how child labour emerges and at what stages of manufacturing children are employed, the tools and machineries used during the work, health and safety hazards and threats to be faced, and how the Syrian and other migrant children are engaged in furniture manufacturing.

Rapid assessment study was conducted in three phases.

- a *Desk review:* Information, data and researches on furniture manufacturing were collected. The reports, media news, articles, post-graduate and doctoral dissertations published in the last twenty years on furniture manufacturing and child labour in this manufacturing were collected and analysed.
- b *In-depth interviews:* Face-to-face and in-depth interviews were conducted with different actors of furniture manufacturing. A total of 22 semi-structured interviews (Table 2) were carried out using pre-prepared questions (Annex 1) with the institutional representatives related to furniture manufacturing and randomly selected furniture manufacturers in İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir provinces where the number of furniture manufacturing workplaces and the rate of employment is the highest. Due to time constraint and budget limitations, the field study was ended when the interviews conducted reached a certain number and saturation.

Table 2. The distribution of in-depth interviews by provinces and actors

Actors	İstanbul	Ankara	İzmir	Total
Furniture manufacturer	5	5	3	13
Chamber of merchants and craftsmen	2	3	1	6
Public institution	1	1	1	3
Total	8	9	5	22

- c *Observation in areas of furniture manufacturing:* Visits were paid to workshops, enterprises and workplaces manufacturing furniture. Upon consent by the owners of the workshops and workplaces but without prior appointment, instantaneous manufacturing and working processes and the working conditions of the children were observed on site without audit and inspection purposes. Photographs were taken, observing the privacy of persons at the workshops and workplaces who consented to taking such photos.¹⁴

¹⁴ Photos were taken deliberately without focusing on the children`s faces and distinctive features details and they are preserved in the institutional archive of Development Workshop in accordance with the principle of privacy.

The main limitations of rapid assessment study and field research are as follows:

- a** Most of the researches on furniture sector and furniture manufacturing and the reports published in this scope focus on such topics as production, machinery use, export, competitive power, capacity use and marketing in the sector and; therefore, these studies do not have sufficient data, information and analysis on workforce processes like worker profile, occupational health and safety, including child labour.
- b** The reports prepared at provincial level likewise contain limited data and information on labour force.
- c** Due to widespread informal employment in the sector, enterprise owners, company managers and representatives interviewed during the field research were sometimes hesitant and reluctant to share information. The information and data sharing by public institutions was very limited at local level.
- d** One of the main limitations of this study is that the data presented is not representative but descriptive only about the targeted people researched. Rapid assessment technique recognizes this limitation and it aims to ensure that phenomenon or the actual situation is understood.

During the data gathering and presentation of the findings, the research has adhered with the ethical guidelines of UNICEF¹⁵ and the research bears no conflict of interest between the persons, institutions involved in the data collection process and the personnel of DW and independent consultants.

¹⁵ UNICEF (2015)





Chapter 2

**Current Situation
of Child Labour
in Furniture
Manufacturing
Findings of the Rapid
Assessment Study**

A certain portion of furniture manufacturing in Turkey is in the form of artisan manufacturing which is labour-intensive and informal. The skill to manufacture furniture is gained through long years of on-the-job training in the informal apprenticeship, traineeship and master craftsman processes and this leads to utilisation of child labour in the production. This chapter of the report that presents the findings of the rapid assessment study carried out to display the current situation of child labour in furniture manufacturing, firstly focuses on the company and labour force structure in the sector and following shares the findings on child labour.

2.1

Furniture Manufacturing in Turkey*: Structure of Manufacturing Firms and Labour Force

Furniture is one of the oldest manufacturing sectors in Turkey. Furniture has a wide array of use in daily lives: it is commonly used in living spaces as well as at workplaces and hotels, shopping malls, schools, cinemas and such other places. Furniture manufacturing industry, together with its main and subsidiary industry, manufactures all types of furniture used in domestic and non-domestic buildings. Wood and wood products, metals, and plastics are used for manufacturing furniture.¹

Beginning from 1990s, furniture manufacturing in Turkey started to become more mechanized, mass production and organized.² It shifted from local needs-based manufacturing to a manufacturing that address the demands of national and international markets. Besides, there is a movement from manual labour-intensive manufacturing towards technology backed mass production. Within the framework of these developments, there are three main types of firms in furniture sector in Turkey.

- a Small-scale workshops that carry out traditional manufacturing with manual labour and intensive artisan works: these workshops are either in small size industrial zones or dispersed in the urban areas.

* In this report within the scope of furniture manufacturing, according to the coding system showing activity areas of the workplaces in the Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Community (NACE), various levels of furniture manufacturing which are specified by the code 31 of furniture and related products made of any material other than stone, concrete and ceramics have been taken into account.

31 Furniture manufacturing
 31.0 Furniture manufacturing
 31.01 Office and store furniture manufacturing
 31.02 Kitchen furniture manufacturing
 31.03 Mattresses manufacturing
 31.04 Other furniture manufacturing

¹ İstanbul Chamber of Industry (2015)

² İstanbul Sanayi Odası Mobilya Dergisi (02.10.2015)

- b** Large scale companies with their own brand that carry out mass manufacturing using automation and technology; these enterprises are mostly located in organized industrial zones.
- c** Large scale furniture stores of domestic or foreign furniture groups and brands that do not carry out actual manufacturing.³

Ercan Ata, President of Durable Consumer Goods Sector of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (MUSİAD) shared the following information on furniture sector during the national consultation meeting themed '4th Industrial Revolution in Furniture' "... It constitutes a prominent percentage of Turkey with 36.000 enterprises most of which are SMEs. There were only 76 companies employing more than 25 persons in 1993 but, today, more than one thousand companies employ more than 30 workers and the employment in the total sector is 165 thousand registered persons."⁴

“ Owner of a company in İstanbul Furniture Site

The furniture manufacturing in İstanbul concentrates in Dudullu, Kağıthane, Çağlayan, Arnavutköy, Okmeydanı and Bayrampaşa. In the establishment of MASKO, the manufacturers in Taksim Kumbaracı Yokuşu Gaziosmanpaşa, Hasköy, Kağıthane and Sefaköy (names of neighbourhoods and districts in İstanbul) moved to here. It was established in 1984.

516 stores here, selling products. 510 stores are related to furniture. Half of them are selling fabricated products and the other half is hand-made furniture. Only 30 to 40 percent of the enterprises do manufacturing here. Mostly, they have their furniture manufactured under contract. Some of them buy products from outside İstanbul.

Former artisans were Armenian and Jewish. There are still Armenians in MASKO. The number of artisans decreased a lot. The number of workshops started to decrease as well. The organized manufacturing of furniture increases as the amount of capital increases in the sector. The state supports the capital as well. Therefore, these workshops will go for artisan furniture manufacturing. The Roma people provided the labour force back then. There were Bulgarians as well. Syrians fill the gap for labour nowadays. Syrians generally work together with their family members.

There is a huge problem about the apprenticeship. The biggest obstacles are that the occupation is hazardous, includes dust and chemicals and there is no insurance. Therefore, fabrication is getting widespread. We say that it is now half-and-half.

³ Ibid.

⁴ İHA (08.04.2018) "Mobilya'da 4. Sanayi Devrimi Toplantısı" (4th Industrial Reform in Furniture Meeting)

Below are NACE reference definitions⁵ and hazard classes for furniture manufacturing as included in the workplace hazard classes list annexed to *Communiqué on Workplace Occupational Health and Safety Related Hazard Classes* issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security on 27 February 2017 and published in Official Gazette numbered 28509 and dated 26/12/2012 (Table 3).⁶

Table 3. Classification of the furniture manufacturing according to NACE code

NACE Rev. 2 Reference Code	NACE Rev.2. Reference Definition	Hazard Class
31	Furniture manufacturing	
31.0	Furniture manufacturing	
31.01	Office and store furnituring	
31.01.01	Manufacturing furniture for indoor areas such as offices, schools, places of worship, hotels, restaurants, cinemas, theatres etc. (except for stone, concrete, ceramic) (cloakroom, filing cabinets, niches, pulpit, lectern, student desks, office-type chairs and seats etc.)	Hazardous
31.01.02	Manufacturing of machines and furniture for laboratories and technical offices (microscope tables, laboratory tables (merchandise, gas burner, tap installed, etc.), fume hoods, non-equipment drawing tables, etc.).	Hazardous
31.01.03	Manufacture of custom furniture for the stores such stalls, counters, display cases, shelves, drawers etc. (except for laboratory and technical offices)	Hazardous
31.01.04	Manufacture of frames of office furniture	Hazardous
31.02	Kitchen furniture manufacturing	
31.02.01	Manufacture of kitchen furniture	Hazardous
31.03	Mattresses manufacturing	
31.03.01	Manufacture of mattresses (except for mattresses supports, rubber inflatable mattresses and water beds)	Hazardous

⁵ NACE Codes are used by the Ministry of Finance in economic classification of taxpayers, by TURKSTAT for statistical studies, by SSI for calculating insurance premium amounts and by KOSGEB for granting loans and incentives. Besides it is used by TOBB for regulating the internal functioning of professional committees. Ministry of Customs and Trade, Directorate General of Tradesmen and Craftsmen, Ahiname Journal (July-September 2017) Issue:1, page 65

⁶ Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı (27.02.2017) İş Sağlığı ve Güvenliğine İlişkin İşyeri Tehlike Sınıfları Tebliğinde Değişiklik Yapılmasına Dair Tebliği

31.03.02	Manufacture of mattresses supports (wooden or metal frames fitted with springs or steel wire mesh, wooden slatted bed base with decorated frames, mattresses, bedsteads, etc.)	Hazardous
31.09	Manufacture of other furniture	
31.09.01	Furniture painting, varnishing, lacquering, etc. complementary work	Very Hazardous
31.09.02	Chairs, seats laying etc. complementary work (office and home furniture re-coating excluded)	Hazardous
31.09.03	Manufacture of furniture such as sewing machine, TV, computer, etc. cabinets, coffee table, etc.	Hazardous
31.09.04	Manufacture of furniture such as bedroom, dining room, bathroom cabinet, youth and children's bedroom furniture, wardrobes, cloakroom, etc. (including cupboards, tables, service table, etc.)	Hazardous
31.09.05	Chairs, sofas, sofa beds, sofas, etc. manufacture of frames (frames) (except for plastic ones and those used in offices)	Hazardous
31.09.06	Manufacture of furniture used in parks and gardens, benches, tables, stools, chairs, etc. (except for plastics)	Hazardous
31.09.07	Chairs, sofas, seating furniture, sofa beds, sofas, awnings, etc. manufacturing (except for those used in offices, parks and gardens and plastic ones)	Hazardous
31.09.08	Manufacture of furniture such as plastic bench, table, stool, chair etc.	Hazardous

According to this Communique, special measures must be taken in the furniture manufacturing which is included in the hazardous class and working environment suitable for hazardous class workplace must be prepared for those to be employed in such manufacturing. It is forbidden by law to employ the minors under the age of 18 in these workplaces. It is also forbidden to employ young workers (those who completed the age of 15 but not over the age of 18 yet) in the works except for those cited in *Annex of the Communique on Amendments to the Communique on Heavy and Hazardous Works. Furniture manufacturing is not among the work allowed to employ young workers as per the Communique.*⁷

In 2017, there are 22 thousand registered workplaces engaged in furniture manufacturing. The number of workplaces has increased by 1700 within 5 years. (Table 4)

⁷ Employment of children under 18 yeras of age and young persons (22.07.2015)

Table 4. Number of workplaces in furniture manufacturing (2013-2017)⁸

Code	Line of Business	Number of Workplaces				
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
3101	Office and store furniture manufacturing	6812	7133	7434	7640	8067
3102	Kitchen furniture manufacturing	2592	2607	2671	2658	2765
3103	Mattresses manufacturing	350	385	407	450	482
3109	Other furniture manufacturing	10854	10899	11123	10812	11011
	Total	20608	21024	21635	21560	22325

The number of registered workers in the furniture business is 172 thousand as of 2017. When considered as per years, there is not too much fluctuations in the number of workers employed (Table 4). The ratio of workers employed in office and store furniture manufacturing and those employed in manufacture of other furniture is 85 percent (Table 5).

Table 5. Number of registered workers in furniture manufacturing (2013-2017)⁹

Code	Line of Business	Number of Workplaces				
		2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
3101	Office and store furniture manufacturing	62217	66632	67671	66671	68672
3102	Kitchen furniture manufacturing	1344	14036	14098	13262	13673
3103	Mattresses manufacturing	6798	7053	7350	7364	7752
3109	Other furniture manufacturing	79867	84708	83835	80115	82602
	Total	162126	172954	172954	167333	172699

Looking at the number of workers employed in the registered workplaces manufacturing furniture, there are 7228 workers working in workplaces where only one worker is

⁸ Compiled from the data provided by Social Security Institution on 5 February 2018 upon request by the Development Workshop.

⁹ Compiled from the data provided by Social Security Institution by the Development Workshop.

employed. These workers constitute 4.2 percent of all registered workers. The total number of workers employed in workplaces where 9 or less workers are employed constitute approximately 30 percent of total registered workers. The ratio of workers who are working in workplaces employing 10-49 workers to the total number of registered workers is 31 percent. These data show that the enterprises manufacturing furniture are mostly small- and medium-size enterprises with intensive manual labour (Table 6). According to the data by SSI for the year 2014, the number of enterprises employing 1-3 workers is 12832, those employing 4-9 workers are 4897 and those employing 10 or more workers are 3138. There are 12 enterprises in the sector employing more than 500 workers.¹⁰

Table 6. Total number of registered workers and their percentage as per the number of workers employed in furniture workplaces (2017)¹¹

Number of employees	Total number of registered and insured workers	Distribution of the number of workers (%)
1 person	7.228	4.2
2-3 persons	16.461	9.5
4-6 persons	17.283	10.0
7-9 persons	10.550	6.1
10-19 persons	21.223	12.3
20-29 persons	13.461	7.8
30-49 persons	19.395	11.2
50-99 persons	20.041	11.6
100-499 persons	34.278	19.8
500+ persons	12.779	7.4
TOTAL	172.699	100.0

Various reports and media news show that the unregistered employment is quite high in the furniture sector.¹² The 2012 Sector Report on Furniture Production Assembly by Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB) includes the following statement as to the unregistered employment in the sector.

¹⁰ Aşarkaya (2015)

¹¹ Compiled from the data provided by Social Security Institution

¹² Ada Tavır (06.06.2016) "Mobilya Sektöründe Kayıtdışılık Büyük Sorun" (Enformality is a big problem in furniture sector)

According to the figures by Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT), the rate of informality in the sector is estimated to be around 50-60 percent and this is considered one of the major problems. It is estimated that there are around 65 thousand furniture manufacturing and sales points in the sector most of which are small workshops. The information on input and output products, employment data and insurance premiums are not recorded precisely and there are problems in market audits.¹³

The child labour is most frequent in small-scale and informal enterprises. The Social Security Institution data provides information on the formal and registered sector. However, it is known and recognized that there is a widespread informal manufacturing that feeds the sector. The manufacturing in these enterprises is labour intensive, small-scale and is through traditional master craftsman-apprentice relationship. This causes the engagement of children into this sector at early ages to learn an occupation and to contribute to family income. Therefore, the sustainability of the sector depends on continuous supply of child labour. The next chapter of the report discusses the overall situation of child labour in furniture manufacturing in the light of findings obtained from the rapid assessment.

2.2

Current Situation of Child Labour in Furniture Manufacturing

Rapid assessment study shows that children start to work in furniture manufacturing as apprentices and then they go through traineeship and master craftsman phases with on-the-job trainings shaped by traditional manufacturing methods. The difficulties experienced in recruiting apprentice workers is balanced by the fresh supply of Syrian migrant children.¹⁴ Furniture manufacturing is a hazardous occupation for the employment of children and children become vulnerable to a series of hazards including chemical hazards, injuries and accidents while performing this work.

Hürriyet (15.07.2015) "Mobilya Sektörü Kayıt Dışı Üretimden Rahatsız" (Furniture sector is not happy with informal production)

HaberTürk (17.05.2017) "İnegöl'de mobilyacılar yüksek ücrete rağmen işçi bulamıyorlar" (Furniture manufacturers cannot find workers in İnegöl even for high level payments)

¹³ TOBB (2013)

¹⁴ Milliyet Haber (03.08.2017) "Suriyeli Hajhasan Bambudan Bahçe Mobilyası Üretiyor" (Hajhasan from Syria manufactures garden furniture from Bamboo)

Gönültaş, H. (29.05.2017) "Suriye'nin Kayıp Çocukları-1: Veri Bile Yok ki Çözüm Olsun" (Syria's lost children-1: No solution as there is not even data), Gazete Duvar

2.2.1 Strategies for Recruitment and Access to Labour Force

The processes for learning the profession and gaining expertise in furniture manufacturing are based on labour-intensive and traditional manufacturing methods and this renders the child labour a part of manufacturing process. The small-scale and labour-intensive furniture manufacturing is carried out mostly by apprentices, trainees and master craftsmen.

Informal apprenticeship, which is traditional apprenticeship without being affiliated to a vocational training institution, starts at the age of 12-13. The children who are new in the work mostly run errands and learn about the tools and materials used in furniture manufacturing in their early years of the profession. Later on, depending on the type of work they carry out simple tasks and then they are oriented to manufacturing and assembly works. They become trainees after apprenticeship status. The main duty of the trainee is to organize the works. The stage of master craftsman that follows the traineeship is mostly identified with “*having your own workshop*”. A master craftsman opens his own workplace when he gains mastery and occupational skills to manage a workshop employing 15-20 persons. This means that it takes 10-12 years from apprenticeship to becoming a master craftsman. With the increase of compulsory education first to 8 years and then to 12 years in Turkey, it is evident that there is a need for change of official apprenticeship in the manufacturing sector.

“ Ridvan, the master of furniture

I started to work at the age of 13. I used to harvest vegetables in the village. My father could not harvest our yield. We had financial difficulties. My father’s brother-in-law was furniture manufacturer. First, I started to work in his workshop. Later my two brothers joined me. My father handed us over to the master craftsman telling him ‘don’t spare the rod’. I worked as apprentice until 1978 and, later on, as trainees. I started to earn money. When I became a master craftsman, a started to get paid per piece of product. I saved some money and opened my own workplace after completing military service. There were times when I employed 35 workers. Now I have three manufacture facilities and a sales store.

The methods to learn about employment opportunities and to access such opportunities in furniture manufacturing are the ads placed in various places (electric poles, restaurants, walls of workplaces etc.) by the workshops who seek workers at the sites manufacturing furniture or through the relatives or friends who were previously employed in the sector. The children are engaged in furniture manufacturing processes through the same methods as well.

Kardeşlerin çıraklıktan fabrikatörlüğe uzanan başarı öyküsü

DHA

22.05.2018 - 11:03 | Son Güncelleme : 22.05.2018 - 11:03



DHA



Bülent DİKTEPE/KARABÜK, (DHA) - KARABÜK'ün Safranbolu ilçesinde, uzun yıllar çırak olarak çalıştıktan sonra evlerinin alt katındaki 80 metrekaarelik depoda mobilya işine başlayan Mustafa- Mehmet Ergül kardeşler, 39 yıl sonra 50 işçinin çalıştığı 7 bin 200 metrekaarelik fabrikanın sahibi oldu.

Safranbolu'da, inşaatlarda kalıp işinde, daha sonra da bir mobilya ustasının yanında çırak olarak çalışan Mustafa ve Mehmet Ergül kardeşler, 1979 yılında Aşağı Danaköy'de 2 katlı evlerinin altındaki depoda birkaç makineyle mobilya işine başladı.

The furniture craftsmen complain that “they cannot find apprentices and trainees as much as they used to, that it has become more difficult to find child labourers especially with the increase of compulsory education to 8 years first and then to 12 years”. They stated that, due to difficult working conditions and environment such as dust, heavy weights and the effects of chemicals, the families are reluctant to consent to their children becoming apprentice in furniture manufacturing and, if there is heavy weight lifting in the manufacturing, then they send their children to work in other professions such as textile and shoe-making. Therefore, it is shared that there are difficulties in finding child workers for manufacturing and limitations in child labour supply when compared to previous times.

It was stated that children working in furniture manufacturing mostly come from lower income level families and most of them are dropped out of school. It was also said that Turkish children are replaced by Syrian children in the recent times. It was noted that Syrian children living in Altındağ-Önder neighbourhood of Ankara generally run errands in the furniture manufacturing sites.

2.2.2 Working Conditions: Work Hours and Wages

The average daily working hours of children reaches up to 10-11 hours. The work starts at 8 am and finishes at 6-7 pm. It was stated that children have one-hour lunch break and two additional breaks of 20-30 minutes, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. They work 5.5 or 6 days a week.

The wages vary depending on apprentice, trainee and master craftsman status and it is generally paid weekly. The children who have just started working are called apprentice and they are paid TRY 300-320 per week. Payments for Syrian children can be TRY 250. It was stated that trainees are paid TRY 700-750 per week and master craftsmen are paid TRY 1000-1200 per week. It was also stated that trainees are paid per product they manufactured such as per table, per set, per chair etc. It was also noted that a great majority of the workers do not have any social security registration.¹⁵

2.2.3 Occupational Health and Safety Threats and Risks

As explained in previous chapters and emphasized frequently, furniture manufacturing is classified as a hazardous occupation. The interviews carried out also revealed findings that confirm the fact that the manufacturing methods contain quite high hazards and risks. One of the interviewees stated that *“Due to cutting stone and blades, every six out of ten persons employed in this manufacturing have had their fingers cut in one way or another”*. Besides heavy lifting, dust, noise and chemicals are cited among other major risks. It was shared that many families do not want their children to work in these occupations, so direct them to other occupations. For these reasons, all parties jointly stated that families do not prefer furniture manufacturing profession for their children and even those who are master craftsmen or who have manufacturing facilities do not want their own children to do this work, and so they canalise them towards other professions.

As per the report of *Research on Children Working in Woodworks Sector* carried out by the MoLSS in 2006, the hazards that children face are shown in Table 7.

¹⁵ Uluslararası İşçi Dayanışması Derneği (07.01.2015) “Gebze'nin Çocuk İşçileri” (Gebze's child workers)

Table 7. Hazards faced by children working in woodworks occupations¹⁶

Workshop	Processes	Hazards
Timber workshop	Transport Sawing Drying Storing	Fall down, noise, dust, impact, material bursts, ambient temperature, fire, electric, lack of training
Furniture workshop	Smoothing Refining, carving Cutting a screw thread Sandpapering Turning Drilling	Hand-finger squeezed, cut, injury, dust, noise, fire, ambient temperature, lack of training
Polyester workshop	Sandpapering Painting Lacquering	Chemical materials vapour and particles, fire, electricity, compressor explosion, building and lay-out, lack of training
Upholstery workshop	Upholstery for chairs, sofas and armchairs Cutting sponges Sandpapering Nailing Sewing	Noise, dust, electricity. Heavy weight lifting, chemical materials vapour and particles, median temperature, lack of lightning, lack of training

The work accidents, injuries and deaths suffered by children working in furniture manufacturing are sometimes covered in the printed and visual media.

¹⁶ Osan, F. (2009)

16 yaşındaki Ömer, 1 Mayıs'ta çalışırken hayatını kaybetti!



Paylaş



Paylaş

Oğlunun hayatını kaybettiğini öğrenip olay yerinde gelen yakınları, sinir krizleri geçirdi



02 Mayıs 2017 10:35

Beğen 31 Paylaş

Tweetle

Paylaşın

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Adana'da mobilya atölyesinde çalışan 16 yaşındaki çocuk işçi **Ömer Faruk Sever** 1 Mayıs günü çalışırken asansörde sıkışarak hayatını kaybetti.

Doğan Haber Ajansı'nın (DHA) haberine göre; Merkez Seyhan ilçesinin Onur mahallesinde oturan Ömer Faruk Sever, aile bütçesine katkı için 45001 sokakta bulunan mobilya atölyesinde çalışmaya başladı. Akşam saatlerinde Ömer Faruk Sever,

Kaynak: <http://t24.com.tr/haber/16-yasindaki-omer-1-mayista-calisirken-hayatini-kaybetti,402264> (Erişim tarihi 17 Temmuz 2018)

16 years old Ömer died while working in 1st of May

2.2.4 Migrants Labour and Syrian Children

As furniture manufacturing is a hazardous work, the compulsory education period in Turkey increased after structural changes in the education system in 1997 and 2012 and there has been an increase in the workforce costs and excessive tax burdens, the workforce supply gap¹⁷ is now tried to be closed with foreign migrant workers who are employed informally. The existence of migrant workers deteriorates the current structural problems in Turkish labour market. Turkish workers suffer problems such as informal employment, long working hours, low wages, absence of social rights and these practices become widespread in Turkey's labour market. Though working in various sectors and jobs, migrants are being integrated to informal economy. The migrants enter to the labour market through informal channels and in general this causes working in insecure jobs with poor working conditions and lower wages in the labour market. Especially the workers who are not organized (not in a labour union) and migrant workers are employed in dirty, dangerous and demeaning works, abbreviated as '3D works', that the domestic/national labour force are reluctant to work in. The process that started in 2011 with the Syrians' migration to Turkey, a significant number of Syrians started to live in Turkey under temporary status. Turkey tries to manage the Syrian migration by making major changes in its migration system. One of such changes is related to the issuing of work permits which is a significant problem for livelihood opportunities. However, such permits are allowed for certain sectors, lines of business, skills and competencies and for limited quotas and functions. Despite all these efforts, many studies focusing on Syrians reveal that Syrians engage in Turkish labour market as informal labour force (Akdeniz 2014, De Carpio X. V. and Wagner M.C. 2015; Development Workshop, 2016a, 2016b; Support to Life, 2016; Kaygisiz, 2017; Sahankaya Adar, 2018, Lordoglu and Aslan, 2018). The findings of various studies emphasize that Syrian migration made the already existing child labour problem in Turkey a chronic problem and that child labour is widespread among Syrian families. Child labour plays a significant role in the families' livelihood strategies. The Syrian families try to maximize their daily earning by employing many of the household members including the children, because the income of one or two persons makes it possible to sustain the livelihood of families that are crowded or in which one of the parents is missing, died, ill or disabled. As a matter of fact, it was observed during the field study that Syrian children are also included in the manufacturing process and the interviewees confirmed this frequently. It was stated that Syrian migrant workers are employed in 60 percent of the furniture manufacturing facilities in Izmir and that some of them are children. Besides, the sector employs not only the Syrian migrants but also the migrant workers coming from Afghanistan and Central Asia countries. This shows that informal employment has become an ordinary situation and general practice in the sector, and the inspections done within the legislation remain insufficient to ensure working conditions suitable for human dignity and to eliminate child labour.

¹⁷ HaberTürk (17.05.2017) "İnegöl'de mobilyacılar yüksek ücrete rağmen işçi bulamıyorlar" (Furniture manufacturers cannot find workers in İnegöl even for high level payments)

“ **Mustafa Usta, Master Craftsman of Table and Chair**

I started to work as an apprentice in 1972 when I was a child. We manufacture table and chair. My children are attending school and they come here in their free times. Children start to work as apprentices running errands. [At the moment] We cannot train the children as master craftsmen. The apprenticeship system was destroyed in 2000-2005. 80 percent of the children here (İzmir) are Syrians. We have a 13-year-old Syrian child working here. Turkish children do not prefer these jobs. The preferences of the families are important. They do not want their children to become furniture, chair and armchair manufacturers. Most of the workplaces here are informal. We cannot earn money if we comply with all the formal requirements. The work health and safety rules are not followed, and it is very difficult for us to comply with them. There are almost no social security benefits. The owners of the workplaces cannot pay their BAGKUR (social security) premiums.

We are not happy about Syrians, but we are obliged to employ them. Because we cannot find people to employ. They have no expectations from these jobs. They focus completely on earning money and they are right. They just go for another employer who pays TRY 5 more. We train them about the occupation and then they leave in a moment.

2.3

Institutional Structure

One of the important elements for fighting against child labour in furniture manufacturing is to ensure that children learn the occupation not informally but at schools and, of course, to prevent the informal employment in the sector. For this reason, this chapter addresses the training institutions that provide training on furniture manufacturing as well as a project carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security to fight against child labour in furniture manufacturing.

2.3.1 Vocational Training Institutions and Apprenticeship

The formal training on furniture manufacturing in Turkey is provided through two channels; (a) apprenticeship, traineeship and master craftsman trainings at vocational training centres, (b) vocational training at vocational and technical high schools. Additionally, trainings are also given at the level of Vocational School of Higher Education.

Students participate in training on furniture manufacturing once a week at vocational training centres and they work in the workplaces on the other days of the week. Students are required to have secondary school diploma to attend vocational training (apprenticeship, traineeship) in these centres. This condition is not required for Syrian migrant children. Those who attend trainings in these centres for three years are entitled to traineeship certificates.¹⁸ Upon completion of traineeship training, they are awarded master craftsman certificates after one semester training out of working hours.

With the amendments in Law no. 6764 on the Amendment of the Decree Law on the Organization and Duties of Ministry of National Education and Certain Other Laws and Decree Laws published in the Official Gazette no. 29913 of 09/12/2016 and National Education Basic Law no. 1739, Law no. 3308 on Vocational Training and Decree Law no. 652 on the Organization and Duties of Ministry of National Education, vocational training centres have been included within the scope of compulsory education since January 2017. Thus, the general vocational training of candidate apprentices, apprentices, trainees and master craftsmen has been assigned to the Directorate General of Vocational and Technical Training instead of Directorate General of Life Long Learning, therefore, it has been transferred from informal education to formal education. The requirement has been abolished to enrol the apprentices to open high schools (distant education) provided that they are enrolled to vocational training centres and, thereby, vocational training centres have become a component of compulsory education.¹⁹

During the interviews, it was frequently stated that the children attending vocational training centres are those who are pushed out of system, barely graduated from secondary school, coming from low level income and poor families who are forced to choose an occupation to earn their livings. During the interviews with the administrators of vocational training centres, they stated that the children of master craftsmen in furniture manufacturing used to take up their fathers' occupation but, today, the children of such master craftsmen do not prefer that profession anymore.

224.399 children, 35.581 being female and 185.818 being male, attended vocational training centres in 2016–2017 education year (Statistics of MoNE for 2016–2017). Data on how many students received training in these centres on furniture manufacturing could not be accessed. During the interview with the administrators of Vocational Training Centre in Siteler of Ankara (a cluster of furniture manufacturers), it was told that there are 900 students in the centre and 180 of them are children working in furniture manufacturing.

¹⁸ *“Those who cannot be enrolled in the Anatolian vocational program and those who do not wish to enroll in vocational open education high schools will be placed in vocational training centers within the framework of the principles and procedures regarding apprenticeship training. For those foreigners who will be enrolled, they will have to take the Turkish Level A1 program or they will be required to be successful in the literacy test. The field teachers of the vocational training centers will provide guidance to the students in order to enable them to choose the area and branch that is appropriate to their interests, wishes and abilities.”* Source: <http://meb.gov.tr/m/haber/11694/tr>

¹⁹ MoNE Directorate General of Life Long Learning, Vocational Training Centers <http://www.hayatboyuogrenme.gov.tr/OgrenmeFirsatlari/MeslekiEgitimMerkezleri>

“ **Administrator of Vocational Training Centre, İstanbul**

There is almost no child labour in furniture manufacturing in İstanbul. The fact that compulsory education has been increased to 12 years and there is no orientation to apprenticeship, forced everyone to be graduates of high school. The social structure of Turkey has transformed. No one wants to work in dusty woodworks. The level of welfare has increased when compared to past. As no new labour force is trained, the master craftsmen started to close down their workshops and become workers at factories. The wages for apprentices are too low. Therefore, they prefer to work in other works. Woodworks are heavy work and it requires strength. It requires obedience to the master craftsman. Everyone is a social media phenomenon nowadays. No one wants to obey a master craftsman.

For instance, we received 300 students to our vocational training centre. 179 of them were transferred from another centre. 60 children left our centre and went somewhere else during the year. 123 of our students did not attend. They never showed up in our centre. That is to say, 200 children are no longer attending the centre. We never opened a woodworks class. Children do not prefer it. Because, the wages are low and working conditions are heavy and poor.

There are 3.991 vocational and technical high schools in Turkey. 470 of these vocational and technical high schools give education and training on furniture and interior space design. 139 of these schools provide training on woodworks technologies, 448 of them give courses in interior space and furniture technologies and 54 of them give training on furniture frame and upholstery.²⁰ Children attending 9th grade in vocational and technical high schools take the same courses as all other students in vocational and technical high schools, and then they go to various vocational branches in 10th and 11th grades, attending vocational courses and practices. Beginning from 12th grade, children attending these high schools, continue their education in their own schools two times a week and they work three days a week in furniture manufacturing facility or a workplace controlled and guided by their schools to improve their vocational skills. Data regarding the number of children employed in furniture manufacturing within the scope of vocational and technical training could not be accessed.

Although it is not a recent study, the master's thesis by Necla Aslan Yandakçı (1994) titled ***The Role of Education in Work Accidents suffered by Child Workers and Apprentice Students in Furniture Manufacturing Industry***, is one of the few studies on this topic that within the study's sampling child workers are employed in works that are forbidden to employ child labour as per by law on heavy and hazardous works. It was also found out that the medical checks to determine aptness for work required before the start of the work and periodical controls are not conducted. The reason why a significant number

²⁰ Compiled from the database http://mtegm.meb.gov.tr/tr/okullar.asp?il=&ilce=&alt_tur=&alan=-Mobilya%20ve%20%DD%E7%20Mek%E2n%20Tasar%FDm%FD. Date of access 25 May 2018.

of children who suffer work accidents do not apply to hospitals but try to treat their injuries with temporary methods is that these children are outside the scope of social security system. Yandakçı identified that “there is no statistically significant difference in the surveys carried out to determine the role of apprenticeship training in preventing work accidents and children attending apprenticeship schools suffer work accidents at similar frequencies”. Yandakçı reflected that both theoretical and practical aspects of apprenticeship training are insufficient.

2.3.2 Experiences on Fighting Child Labour in Furniture Manufacturing

As per Article 6 of International Labour Organization’s *Convention No. 182 concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, to which Turkey is a party, the states have liability to design and implement a programme of action to eliminate as a priority the worst forms of child labour. In this scope, Ministry of Labour and Social Security prepared a time-bound policy and program framework for the prevention of the worst forms of child labour obtaining the opinions and suggestions of relevant institutions and employers and labour organizations. Furniture sector has been identified as a priority sector in eliminating the worst forms of child labour taking into account the information obtained in the inspections carried out by labour inspectors, the machinery, tools, equipment and raw materials used in furniture manufacturing and the working conditions. Subsequently, *International Labour Organization - International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (ILO/IPEC) Project for the Elimination of The Worst Forms of Child Labour in Furniture Sector* was implemented by the Labour Inspection Board Presidency of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. This project aims to withdraw all working children under the age of 18 from the worst forms of child labour and it was implemented in İzmir, Ankara and Bursa/İnegöl, to improve the working conditions for all children. Within the scope of this Project, it is aimed that children who are under the age of 15 will be directed to education removing them from work life completely and, as the furniture manufacturing is defined by MoLSS as one of the worst forms of child labour, the children between the ages of 15-18 will be eliminated from the works in worst forms and their working conditions will be improved. Besides a series of activities were organized to prevent the siblings of child workers from joining work life and to support their families. On the other hand, there has been no intervention for the other social and economic causes of child labour and other factors caused by sector and employers or informal employment. As result of the inspections done within the scope of the project; 656 children under 15 yeras of age, 1646 children between the age of 15 and 18 were identified working (in total of 2302 children). They were removed from working in the worst forms of child labour and refered to school. In order to prevent children to work, educational support were given to 3607 children who are the siblings of child workers.²¹

²¹ Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı, İş Teftiş Kurulu Başkanlığı (2007)

Conclusion

and Policy

Recommendations

The rapid assessment study has been conducted to evaluate the overall situation of child labour in furniture manufacturing which is one of the worst forms of child labour. For this purpose, interviews were made with 22 institutions/persons and observations were made in workshops in Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir provinces in December 2017 - February 2018. Certain topics have been addressed during the field interviews to understand the situation of child labour. A series of topics were discussed in these interviews such as the workforce profile in labour-intensive parts of furniture manufacturing, the stages the employees go through to be entitled to formal or informal apprenticeship, traineeship and craftsmanship levels and the duration of these stages, how child labour emerges and at what stages of manufacturing are children employed, the tools and machineries used during the work, the occupational health and safety hazards and threats that they face and how the Syrian and other migrant children are engaged in furniture manufacturing.

The furniture sector in Turkey is concentrated in certain regions where the market and/or forestry products densifies. There are many enterprises in the sector that are operating with traditional methods and a significant number of these enterprises carry out informal manufacturing. The ratio of enterprises carrying out informal manufacturing is estimated to be 50 percent in the sector.

The furniture sector fills the gap in labour force supply in the recent years with migrant workers mainly from Syria, Central Asia countries (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) and Afghanistan. Especially the demeaning works in small-scale enterprises are carried out by these workers. It was also stated that the furniture craftsmen who migrated from Syria started to open their workshops in Turkey.

Furniture manufacturing is classified as hazardous work because of the impacts of the tools and materials used on the workers' health and the conditions of working environment exceed well beyond the legally allowed limits. It was seen that children work six days a week and 10-11 hours a day and they are paid on weekly basis. They use sharp objects as a part of their work and they work in environment risky for health (dust, dark, high noise etc.). Compliance with most of the regulations on the use of chemicals and tools are not observed in most of the workshops and manufacturing facilities. Occupational health and safety measures are not taken and there are no emergency kits available on site. Therefore, this situation creates serious hazards on the health and safety of workers and especially that of children.

The hazardous and risky working conditions decreases the number of child workers joining to manufacturing process at early ages. Since there are no projects, programs or initiatives by the public institutions or other actors of the sector for intervention, protection or prevention measures for the child labour in the sector, it was emphasised in the interviews that all parties believe that it is very difficult to prevent child labour as the manufacturing can be carried out only with informal labour force due to increased competition and low prices in the furniture industry.

The fact that child workers engage in working life to earn incomes rather than learning an occupation shows that the manual labour will continue to decrease in furniture manufacturing and mechanization process will become widespread quickly. There is a widespread conviction that this process will lead to elimination of small-scale workshops.

Almost all of the interviewees agree that the industrialization and mechanization is increasing in furniture manufacturing and, therefore, child labour is decreasing. Besides, it was stated that the number of children enrolled and attending vocational training centres to become apprentice, trainee and, later on, master craftsman is very few and there are no children in some provinces to employ in furniture manufacturing.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Ensuring the Enforcement of the Legislation

Monitoring, inspection and guidance activities must be carried out to ensure the enforcement of legislation on fighting against child labour. The Ministry of National Education and its affiliated departments/units must be operational to ensure enforcement of legislation on education within the scope of children's right to education.

The most important issue on this matter is that vocational training centres and vocational high schools that provide human resources to the manufacturing sector must be reviewed and adjusted according to changing working conditions, working patterns and expected wages.

Strengthening the Institutional Structures

Child labour in furniture manufacturing is not in the agenda of public institutions and professional organizations as well as the non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and private sector companies. Therefore, the institutional structures of the relevant parties must be informed about child labour in furniture manufacturing and advocacy activities must be carried out to mobilize these structures. Professional organizations must be strengthened to eliminate child labour in furniture manufacturing.

Training and Improvement Works

It must be ensured that children in Turkey enrol to vocational training centre to learn furniture manufacturing and they must be included in the education system. The vocational high schools must prepare and organize the training activities that meet the needs of the sector. Meanwhile, the sector must take occupational health and safety measures to employ these children and the wages must be adjusted to the current conditions.

An information package must be developed as to which measures must be taken in the hazardous classified workplaces to ensure that children are employed for age-appropriate educational and training purposes.

Occupational health and safety measures must be taken, and inspections must be conducted in workplaces especially in the furniture manufacturing facilities where children are employed as official apprentices. Coordination must be ensured with the vocational training centres to ensure these objectives.

Expanding the Social Protection and Social Security Net

The families of children who are employed in furniture manufacturing for educational purposes must be provided with social protection benefits and these children must be employed within the scope of social security.

Fight Against Informality

In the sector, child labour is common in informal enterprises, and therefore, informal employment is an important tool in the prevention of child labour. Various tools and methods should be developed to combat different aspects of informality within the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Foreign Migrant Workers

An in-depth research must be carried out in a certain area -for instance in Ankara Siteler and İzmir Karabağlar- to explore in detail the situation of children working in furniture manufacturing, especially the foreign migrant children and the Syrian migrant children. It must be ensured that such research presents all the risks faced by the children. Turkish language education programs must be implemented urgently, since a certain level of Turkish proficiency is a pre-condition for the enrolment and attendance of Syrian and other migrant children to apprentice training centres and their employment through these centres. These children must be directed to these centres.

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ANNEX

Annex 1

Field research questions

1. Can you introduce yourself? How long have you been working in this job?
.....
2. Do you work for your own account? For whom do you manufacture?
.....
3. Can you give brief information on your own enterprise or the enterprise that you work for? When was it opened? How many employees are working here?
.....
4. What are the stages of manufacturing in this enterprise? Which tools and materials do you use?
.....
5. Can you inform us briefly on furniture manufacturing?
.....
6. What can you tell us about the furniture sector being present in your province?
.....
7. Can you inform us briefly on your organization? When was it established? How many members do you have?
.....
8. What is the main field of activity of your organization?
.....
9. Which phase of furniture manufacturing employs the labour force most? In which part of this manufacturing process are the workers engaged? Who are the workers of furniture manufacturing (how does master craftsman, traineeship and apprenticeship work)? Can you tell the workers' profile in the sector? Who become furniture manufacturing workers?
.....
10. How has the labour processes changed in the sector in the recent times?
.....

11. It is known that becoming a master craftsman of furniture requires working at early ages. Can you tell us a bit about this process? At what age do the children start working in furniture manufacturing and in which stages of manufacturing are they mostly employed? Which work does an apprentice do?
.....
12. From which segment of society do the children come to become furniture manufacturers and why do they work in furniture manufacturing?
.....
13. How many days a week and how many hours a day do the children work?
.....
14. What are the processes that have the most negative effects on the working children in the manufacturing process (such as chemicals, tools used, working environment etc.)?
.....
15. How does the mechanization of the sector affect the child labour?
.....
16. How were the workers affected in furniture manufacturing with the arrival of Syrian migrants (children)?
.....
17. Do you think that child labour can be prevented in furniture sector? Should it be prevented? What can be done to achieve this?
.....

Annex 2

Main Actors in Furniture Manufacturing

Public Institutions

Ministry of Labour and Social Security

Ministry of National Education

Ministry of Economy

Ministry of Health

Professional Organizations (Chamber of Artisans)

Chamber of Furniture and Lacquer Artisans

Chamber of Upholstery Artisans

Chamber of Woodworks Artisans

Associations

Association of Furniture Accessories Industrialists (MAKSDER)

Association of Wooden Kitchen and Bath Furniture Industrialist and Exporters (MUDER)

Association of Furniture Industry Businessmen (MOBSAN)

Association of Furniture Industrialists, Importers and Exporters (MOBDER)

Association of Industrialists and Businessmen in Office Furniture Industry (OMSIAD)

Turkish Association Furniture Industrialists (MOSDER)

Furniture Manufacturers

Furniture Industrialists (Industry, Trade, Exporters Unions)

TOBB Furniture Industry Council

Chamber of Industry Committee of Furniture Professions

Central Anatolia Exporters' Association

