



“In a Nutshell” Focused Assessment in Balsu Supply Chain

Harvest 2023; Winter 2023-Spring 2024

September 2024

Focused Assessment

ABOUT THE FAIR LABOR ASSOCIATION

The Fair Labor Association (FLA) promotes human rights at work. We are an international network of companies, universities, and civil society organizations collaborating to ensure that millions of people working at the world's factories and farms are paid fairly and protected from risks to their health, safety, and well-being.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Background	3
2. Objectives	3
3. Methodology	4
4. Findings	7
4.1 Program structure and activities	7
4.2 Overview of harvest findings	7
4.2.1 Attendance at educational activities	11
4.2.2 Harvest program staff	12
4.2.3 Harvest educational content	12
4.2.4 Non-educational support to families	13
4.2.5 Partnership with public institutions and civil society	14
4.3 Overview of 2024 winter-spring findings	14
4.3.1 Winter-spring program staff	16
4.3.2 Winter-spring non-educational support to families	16
4.3.3 Winter-spring partnership with public institutions and civil society	16
5. Conclusion	17
6. Recommendations	18

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- Fair Labor Association – FLA
- International Labor Organization – ILO
- Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning – MEAL
- Non-governmental organizations – NGOs
- The Young Lives Foundation – YLF

1. Background

In line with Fair Labor Association (FLA) [standards](#), Balsu has been operating a farm-level labor monitoring program, "In a Nutshell," in Türkiye since 2014. "In a Nutshell" aims to eradicate the use of child labor for harvesting hazelnuts through various intervention models, such as implementing internal monitoring and facilitating access to safe spaces and age-appropriate education for children. In addition, the program also seeks to raise awareness in the regions that grow hazelnuts and throughout Türkiye to help influence the development of a sustainable model for combatting child labor more broadly.

Through a strategic partnership, Balsu and the Young Lives Foundation (YLF) are committed to mobilizing public institutions to prevent child labor at the national and local levels; increasing awareness of seasonal workers' labor rights and the risk of child labor; empowering women, families, seasonal workers, and local agricultural intermediaries through training programs; and providing in-kind support for families and scholarships for children in Diyarbakır, Şanlıurfa and Şırnak.

Balsu also participates in a remediation-focused FLA project, "[Harvesting the Future](#)," which aims to improve working conditions across various agricultural commodities. FLA member companies undergo independent external assessments yearly to measure and report progress.

During the [2021](#) and [2022](#) hazelnut harvests, FLA's due diligence included focused assessments of Balsu's labor monitoring and remediation program, implemented jointly with YLF.

2. Objectives

FLA conducted two focused assessments in 2021 and 2022 to inform decisions shaping "In a Nutshell" regarding the implementation model, organization and logistics, and the M&E system that enables Balsu and YLF to collect, analyze and use information during the project period, and assess and manage the program performance. The assessments identified strengths, weaknesses, and improvement points for the project.

In the third consecutive year of the FLA-led focused assessments, and nearly a decade after the program was first implemented in 2014, the 2023-2024 focused assessment primarily aimed to evaluate the "In a Nutshell" program's performance by analyzing its various components. The assessment evaluated the effectiveness and the impact of the program and presents recommendations to improve it.

Within the assessment scope, FLA also considered Balsu's and YLF's plans and targets for the 2023-2024 harvest and winter activities period, including:

- Reach 1,500 children during the 2023 harvest by establishing three summer schools and conducting on-site (yerinde) education activities to keep them away from the gardens during the hazelnut harvest;
- Develop educational content to support the social, emotional, and cognitive development of children and contribute to their psychological well-being; increase their attendance and facilitate their adaptation process when they are back at school in their cities of origin;
- Target children in three distinct age groups: 6-9, 10-13, and 14-17;

- Identify children at risk in Sakarya (the districts of Hendek, Ferizli, Akyazı, Karapürçek and Kocaali) and Düzce (the districts of Gümüşova, Cumayeri and Çilimli);
- Hold summer schools in Hendek, Ferizli, and Gümüşova between August 14-September 1, 2023. The schools should be open six days a week;
- Conduct on-site educational activities six days a week, between August 7-September 5, 2023 (in practice, the activities were completed on September 8);
- Open summer schools for 18 days, and conduct on-site educational activities for 29 days. Children should attend school for 18 days, and attend on-site activities for at least six sessions;
- Reach out to 1,500 children identified during the summer harvest in the provinces of origin as part of the 2024 winter-spring activities; and
- Carry out monitoring, follow-up, and intervention work to determine 1,500 children's attendance at formal education centers in their provinces of origin (Diyarbakır, Şanlıurfa, and Şırnak) between November 2023 and May 2024.

3. Methodology

FLA conducted the 2023-2024 focused assessment to evaluate the "In a Nutshell" program in two stages: first, the 2023 summer harvest activities, and second, the 2024 winter-spring activities.¹ The first stage of the focused assessment covered the period with field-level educational activities, from August 7-28, 2023. Between August 23-28, 2023, an independent assessor contracted by FLA visited Sakarya and Düzce to determine the impact and effectiveness of Balsu's child protection program that YLF implements.

This second stage aimed to evaluate the child protection program through winter activities and understand how harvest activities shaped plans for winter term, and more specifically, if YLF was able to follow up with the children identified during the harvest. The assessment covered YLF's winter activities from January 2023-May 2024. Between April 15-19, 2024, the assessor visited Diyarbakır and Şanlıurfa, the cities where the origin activities were concentrated, to interview the program participants.

During the focused assessment, an independent assessor conducted 177 (Table 1) surveys and in-depth interviews with children, workers, labor intermediaries, YLF field staff, teachers in schools and mobile workshops, and public stakeholders.² The assessor spoke with stakeholders in districts and villages across the Sakarya and Düzce provinces during the summer harvest.

¹ They are also referred to as origin activities since they are conducted in workers' cities of origin.

² YLF uses on-site/accommodation area education activities in its report.

Table 1: Key interviews during the summer harvest

Group	Participants
Children	161
Workers' families	4
Labor intermediaries	3
YLF field staff	3
Teachers	3
Public stakeholders	3
Total	177

More specifically, during the harvest, the assessor visited three summer schools (Kazımiye, Değirmencik, and Ulucami) and 10 mobile workshops in two provinces and conducted surveys with a focus group of 161 children between the ages of 6-17 (Table 2). The assessor interviewed 96 children in summer schools and 65 children in mobile workshops at the program's locations.

Table 2: Assessment locations and number of children (summer harvest)

Province	District	Village	Number of Children
Sakarya	Hendek	Kazımiye	36
		Hacıkişla	5
		Eskibiçki	6
		Yarıca	4
	Ferizli	Değirmencik	25
		Abdürrezzak	5
		Sarıahmetler	8
	Çilimli	Ulucami	35
	Akçakoca	Edilli	8
	Gümüşova	Pazarcık	11

Düzce	Cumayeri	Dokuzdeğirmen	6
		Sümbüllü	7
		Ordulukaradere	5
Total			161

For the evaluation of 2024 winter-spring activities, the assessor conducted 22 surveys and in-depth interviews with children, workers' families, labor intermediaries, and public stakeholders in Diyarbakır and Şanlıurfa.

More specifically, the assessor visited the Ergani and Bağlar districts of Diyarbakır and the Siverek district of Şanlıurfa and conducted 22 interviews, primarily with the heads of households, children, and representatives of public institutions to evaluate the "In a Nutshell" program's winter activities.

The assessor had challenges in accessing the families during the second stage of this assessment and could only interview a limited number of program participants. According to YLF, communicating with the families and organizing visits was challenging due to factors such as GSM coverage problems in the region, the absence of the heads of households due to their cross-border transportation jobs, and physical distances between target locations.

Table 3: Key interviews during winter

Group	Participants
Children	6
Workers' families	8
Labor intermediaries	1
YLF field staff	0
Teachers	0
Public stakeholders	7
Total	22

The team formulated assessment tools using qualitative research methods such as a desk review, key informant interviews, site visits, observation, and data analysis. FLA and the independent assessor prepared the survey and interview questions per International Labor Organization (ILO) standards and FLA benchmarks. Furthermore, the team used YLF's monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) reports as a secondary data source.

4. Findings

"In a Nutshell" is a sophisticated program that evolved over the years and consists of different parts that support and complement one another. The foundational pillars of the program are mobile workshops and summer schools. Mobile workshops are designed to be safe spaces for children and are usually close to settlements with clean and quiet environments. Children at risk but beyond the distance threshold for travel to summer schools are registered for mobile workshop sessions. Additional efforts that strengthen the program include providing non-educational support to families and developing partnerships with public institutions and NGOs.

4.1 Program structure and activities

Children engaged in seasonal hazelnut harvests in Türkiye face significant risks compromising their physical, mental, and social well-being. Exposure to hazardous conditions, such as heat and rain, and heavy lifting up and down steep hillsides pose substantial health threats. Additionally, due to the migratory nature of the work, these children often suffer disruptions in their education, limiting their future opportunities and perpetuating cycles of poverty.

YLF has designed and implemented various activities to prevent child labor and minimize risks in the Balsu supply chain. During COVID-19, YLF added the mobile workshop model to the existing summer school model. In 2023, YLF continued to implement the combination of these two models.

In addition to its harvest time efforts, YLF has been conducting activities in the cities of origin and working with families, teachers, labor contractors, and local authorities to raise awareness and monitor the children's school attendance.

4.2 Overview of harvest findings

Overall, the program reached the targeted number of children in 2023; 1,500 children participated in educational activities, according to the YLF MEAL Harvest Report. The program held a total of 1,784 educational sessions in two different cities.³

Phase 1: Identification of children

The first step in the program is registration. For this phase, YLF collected 802 household records (150 in Düzce and 652 in Sakarya); 714 of these households comprised seasonal migrant agricultural workers (131 in Düzce and 583 in Sakarya).

Of a total of 1,944 children identified, 19 of them were of Syrian nationality, and 138 had special needs encompassing a range of conditions such as asthma, kidney disease, celiac disease, learning disabilities, and more.⁴ During the registration activities, YLF observed that some children did not arrive in the harvest area with any first-degree relatives (identified in 133 households), adding to

³ In a Nutshell 2023 Summer Studies MEAL Report, page 32.

⁴ In a Nutshell 2023 Summer Studies MEAL Report, page 19.

the complexity of the situation.⁵ Of the identified children, 51.29% are girls and 48.71% are boys. The highest number of children falls between the ages of 14-17 with 833 children (43%), followed by the ages of 10-13 with 706 children (36%) and the ages of 6-9 with 405 children (21%).⁶

According to YLF's 2023 Summer Studies MEAL Report, 1,365 (70%) of the identified children work in hazelnut harvesting; 59% of these children are between the ages of 14 and 17.⁷

Table 4: Participation in educational activities during the harvest by age group and sex

Location	Age Group	Summer School		Mobile Workshops		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
Sakarya	6-9	18	13	2	6	89
	10-13	10	16	6	3	
	14-17	3	1	9	2	
Düzce	6-9	2	7	5	4	72
	10-13	13	7	7	5	
	14-17	2	4	7	9	
Total		48	48	36	29	161

Overall, the number of children working in hazelnut production remains high. Of 161 children interviewed during the harvest, 82 stated they worked in the hazelnut farms (51%) in 2023. More specifically, among 82 children:

- Thirty worked regularly (all those who participated in the mobile workshop for the first time);
- Thirty-two worked irregularly; and
- Twenty worked only during the weekends.

Of 161 children interviewed, 70 declared that they worked in the hazelnut farms last year, too (43%). There is a slight difference between the rate of working girls and working boys.

Nevertheless, educational activities have proven to be crucial in providing alternative opportunities for children engaged in hazelnut harvesting. These initiatives not only help reduce

⁵ In a Nutshell 2023 Summer Studies MEAL Report, page 3.

⁶ In a Nutshell 2023 Summer Studies MEAL Report, page 19.

⁷ In a Nutshell 2023 Summer Studies MEAL Report, page 23.

the time children spend working but also play a significant role in their overall well-being and cognitive and psychological development.

Table 5: Working children by age, group, and sex

Location	Age Group	Sex		Total	Working		Total
		Male	Female		Male	Female	
Sakarya	6-9	20	19	39	7	4	11
	10-13	16	19	35	9	10	19
	14-17	12	3	15	11	3	14
Düzce	6-9	7	11	19	1	1	2
	10-13	20	12	32	10	7	17
	14-17	9	13	22	9	10	19
Total		84	77	161	47	35	82



MOBILE WORKSHOP SESSION

Phase 2a: Mobile workshops

Mobile workshops are an integral part of Balsu’s child protection program. Children living in remote settlements are included in mobile workshops, usually five to six times during the harvest season for three hours a day.

Depending on the number of children attending the mobile workshops, YLF assigns a teacher who usually conducts the educational activities three to five times during the harvest season. Between August 7-September 8, 2023, YLF held 1,057 mobile workshop sessions in 52 neighborhoods and villages in the Sakarya and Düzce provinces. In 2023, 1,179 children attended mobile workshops.⁸

The assessor interviewed 65 children attending the mobile workshops. Of the 65 children interviewed, 19 were enrolled in primary school (29%), 16 in middle school (25%), and 21

⁸ In a Nutshell 2023 Summer Studies MEAL Report, page 48.

in high school (32%). Nine children either did not enroll in formal education or dropped out (14%).

As of the date of the assessment, 37 out of 65 children (57%) said that they worked harvesting hazelnuts in the gardens, including picking crops and carrying baskets. Children between the ages of 14-17 constitute the majority (37%), followed by the ages of 10-14.

Children participating in mobile workshops were asked to rate their satisfaction with the workshops on a scale of 1-10. The average satisfaction was recorded as 9.3. The surveys considered factors such as satisfaction with teachers and educational content, particularly for younger groups, and interest and support from field staff.

The high level of satisfaction with the mobile workshops can be considered an improvement that helped attract children from the hazelnut farms. However, the assessment findings indicate that mobile workshops, while they have a positive impact on the program, still face significant challenges and could benefit from additional improvements to address child labor in hazelnut production effectively.

Challenges mobile workshops face in preventing child labor include various factors caused by their existing structure and limited scope of activity. First, their limited duration and infrequent operation during the harvest season restrict their ability to provide sustained educational influence throughout the season. Additionally, the short daily sessions, coupled with the limited number of sessions conducted, may not adequately engage children in educational activities, especially given the demanding nature of hazelnut harvesting.

Phase 2b: Summer schools

Compared to mobile workshops, summer schools keep children in safe spaces for a longer time (both in terms of daily hours and the total number of days a child can attend across the harvest period). YLF provided education at Rveyde Gne Middle School in the Ferizli district of Sakarya, Kazmiye Cumhuriyet Middle School in the Hendek district, and İbrahim Hover Middle School in the Çilimli district of Dzce.

In 2023, 281 children attended YLF's summer schools, and 40 children attended both summer school and mobile workshop activities.

Comparatively, summer schools perform better in removing children from the hazelnut farms. Despite facing challenges, they represent a significant contribution to the effort to eradicate child labor. Assessors interviewed 96 children attending educational activities in three summer schools. Of the children interviewed, 45 of them stated that they worked in the gardens during the hazelnut harvest by the date of the assessment (47%).

The summer school in Ferizli was extraordinarily successful in attracting children to educational activities, compared to the other two summer schools. Out of 25 children, 22 said they participated in summer school regularly (every day), while the remaining three stated their



SUMMER SCHOOL IN DZCE

participation was irregular (attended for at least three days but not entirely). The assessor observed that the success is attributed to YLF's and Balsu's effort to actively involve farmers, labor intermediaries, and local authorities, particularly the district governor, in the program and seek public support in eradicating child labor. Also, committees consisting of local authorities contributed to this success.

4.2.1 Attendance at educational activities

Among 161 children that assessors interviewed, there is a notable irregularity in participation in both summer schools and mobile workshops. Overall, while 55 children (34%) interviewed stated that they regularly participated in the educational activities (every day the school is open or a mobile workshop is available), 41 children (25%) said they participated in the educational activities for the first time on the day of this assessment. Meanwhile, 39% attended the activities at least twice but did so irregularly. Two children did not answer the question.

According to observations both in the harvest region and the provinces of origin, and in interviews conducted with the stakeholders, reasons for children participating irregularly include:

- Families's frequent relocation or movement during the harvest due to the short duration of work on the farms;
- Families' reluctance to send their children to educational activities;
- YLF's inability to carry out the mobile workshops at fixed or stable locations; and
- The tendency among families to make children, especially older children, work on farms for economic reasons.

Obstacles

Assessment findings demonstrate that the program increasingly faces obstacles and challenges in addressing child labor on farms, primarily due to the economic downturn and high inflation in Türkiye. In February 2023, earthquakes deepened the existing economic crisis in Türkiye, and families are now struggling for their economic survival; 64.71% (1,258) of children come from earthquake-affected provinces. Among 1,258 children, 818 were living in houses damaged by earthquakes.⁹

Many families rely on their children's income, making it difficult to discourage them from sending their kids to work. According to YLF's 2023 MEAL Report, 674 registered families said they would not allow their children to work if their financial situation was good.¹⁰ Given high transportation and food costs, families usually depend on their children's labor once they've moved to the harvesting region. Interviews with YLF staff, teachers, and labor intermediaries also show that many families are reluctant to allow their children to quit work and participate in educational activities.

Assessment findings show that the number of children in the harvesting region is high, and considering the cost of transportation, children of working age often perform labor. The average number of household members is seven; 92 of the interviewed children (57%) stated that they

⁹ In a Nutshell 2023 Summer Studies MEAL Report, page 22.

¹⁰ In a Nutshell 2023 Summer Studies MEAL Report, page 12.

had at least one sibling below the age of 18 who worked on the farms.¹¹ According to both assessor findings and YLF's MEAL Report, children between the ages of 10-13 and 14-17 are likelier to work on the farms. Once they are in the region, they are expected to work, and it is difficult to break this expectation. The working status of children in the higher age group also affects their participation in educational activities. YLF's MEAL Report indicates that, on average, participation in educational activities decreases with the increasing age of children.¹²

Another significant limitation is the seasonal nature of the work, which makes it challenging to track and monitor the conditions children and their parents are facing. Laws and regulations to protect children are also not consistently and effectively enforced. Public institutions' awareness about child labor and their roles and responsibilities varies, affecting how the program functions.¹³

4.2.2 Harvest program staff

YLF's operational field staff consists of social workers and teachers at the National Education Ministry (MEB) and schools belonging to the Ministry of National Education operating in the region. YLF determines the number of field staff and teachers based on the number of children registering at the schools and mobile workshops. Before the harvest, YLF provides a two-day orientation training to field staff and teachers about effective communication with workers' families and children, educational and logistical operations, and adapting learning tools. During the assessment, teachers and school principals stated that they were happy to be involved in the program. The assessor also noted that children's satisfaction with teachers and educational activities averaged 9.5 out of 10.

YLF's operational field staff has necessary professional and language competencies, which are crucial to effectively implementing the program in the field. Field staff spoke to the children and workers' families in their language, which plays a significant role in building trust and reaching the target groups.

4.2.3 Harvest educational content

Summer schools and mobile workshops provide safe spaces for children engaged in seasonal hazelnut harvesting. Recognizing the educational discontinuity and vulnerabilities these children face due to migratory labor practices, YLF's program activities aim to provide safe spaces where children's psychological well-being is supported. In addition, these programs offer children stability, educational continuity, and skill development opportunities while they are away from formal education. By facilitating access to educational activities, summer schools, and mobile workshops, YLF strives to mitigate the adverse effects of child labor during the harvest.

¹¹ Child labor age limit is 18 years old for seasonal migrant agricultural workers since Türkiye ratified ILO Convention no: 182 and identified seasonal agricultural migratory labor as one of the worst forms of child labor. For local workers, child labor age limit is accepted as 15 years old.

¹² In a Nutshell 2023 Summer Studies MEAL Report, page 42.

¹³ Please see the [Partnerships with Public Institutions and Civil Society](#) section below for more information.

YLF designs the educational content in summer schools and mobile workshops, and develops materials tailored to the age groups of 6-9, 10-13, and 14-17.

The list of educational activity sessions organized during the harvest period included:

- Establishing trust and team spirit;
- Creating trust and positive peer relationships;
- Introduction and building trust within the group;
- Mindfulness;
- Developing positive self-perception;
- Coping with difficult emotions;
- Hope and problem-solving;
- Dealing with peer bullying;
- Occupational/professional development;
- Attention, concentration, and focus enhancement;
- Aesthetic thinking;
- Self-care;
- Attachment, dependence, and independence;
- Unity in diversity;
- Innovative thinking;
- Empathy;
- Children's games;
- Non-violent communication;
- Self-esteem enhancement;
- Music;
- Social support networks;
- Drama and closing; and
- Letter to their future.

The assessors found that the learning modules and educational content are appropriate for children engaged in hazelnut harvesting. Furthermore, the assessor also noted the demand for exam-oriented content from high school seniors participating in the summer harvest. The winter findings show that YLF is meeting this demand through a variety of educational activities, including mentorship programs, university visits, and similar initiatives in the cities of origin.

4.2.4 Non-educational support to families

YLF distributes all necessary educational materials to children participating in summer schools and mobile workshops, easing the economic burden parents face. YLF provided 440 food packages to 404 households, stationary kits to 1,472 children, and hygiene kits to 908 children.¹⁴ FLA also observed that children in visited summer schools were provided with breakfast, usually a sandwich and beverage, and a four-course lunch. Children who participated in summer schools are transferred to and from schools with shuttles daily, accompanied by a YLF field staff member, alleviating parents' concerns about their childrens' safety.

¹⁴ In a Nutshell 2023 Summer Studies MEAL Report, pages 48-49.

4.2.5 Partnership with public institutions and civil society

The program has been successful in raising awareness and building partnerships with public institutions and civil society. During the summer harvest, an assessor observed that YLF has successfully involved the district governors of Ferizli and Gümüşova in the program. Notably, YLF successfully attracted children to educational activities in the Ferizli district thanks to ongoing support from the governor.

4.3 Overview of 2024 winter-spring findings

The program successfully reached the targeted number of children in the provinces of origin. YLF identified 1,086 children in the Ergani and Bağlar districts of Diyarbakır, 219 children in the Siverek district of Şanlıurfa, and 223 children in the İdil district and central Şırnak; 181 children did not continue to formal education, **with 130 children between the ages of 14-17.**¹⁵

According to YLF, 1,350 children out of 1,500 continue their formal education regularly, and 44 participate in formal education irregularly.¹⁶ **In total, 181 children dropped out and did not continue their formal education.**¹⁷

YLF monitored the educational status of 1,500 children and included 243 children who did not continue their education within its case management system.¹⁸

YLF contacted 1,248 families by telephone during the monitoring process.¹⁹ According **YLF's interviews with families**, the highest reason (57% of respondents) for **children dropping out or irregularly attending** formal education is a "reluctance" among children to attend, followed by economic reasons and seasonal agricultural work.²⁰

The assessor conducted 22 interviews (6 interviews with children and **16** with adults) in the cities of origin, Diyarbakır and Şanlıurfa, to better understand the program beyond its numbers and explore its strengths and challenges.

Based on the data collected by an assessor, there are an average of seven members in each visited family. In households where there are an average of 2.5 children under 18, at least one child worked in hazelnut harvesting in 2023. **All of the interviewed households stated that they sent at least one child to educational activities during the harvest.**

Each of the six children interviewed stated they participated in **YLF's** educational activities during the harvest, while four of them said they also worked on the farms. Families and YLF field staff

¹⁵ In a Nutshell 2023-2024 Winter Activities Final Report, pages 4-7.

¹⁶ In a Nutshell 2023-2024 Winter Activities Final Report, page 12.

¹⁷ In a Nutshell 2023-2024 Winter Activities Final Report, page 12.

¹⁸ In a Nutshell 2023-2024 Winter Activities Final Report, page 29.

¹⁹ In a Nutshell 2023-2024 Winter Activities Final Report, pages 13-14.

²⁰ In a Nutshell 2023-2024 Winter Activities Final Report, page 19.

told the assessor that children who participated in the hazelnut harvest started school roughly ten days late after returning to their province of origin. Two of the children stated they attend school irregularly because their school programs do not coincide with shuttle timetables.

During the field visits, an assessor found that children returning from the harvest not only start school late in the provinces of origin, but also leave school early in the spring—mainly to harvest products such as apricots in Malatya and vegetables in Adana. Siverek’s district director of national education and Dumlupınar’s primary school principal stated that families are reluctant to leave their school-aged children at home when they migrate for seasonal agricultural work; they tend to take children with them, despite local public institutions providing dormitories to children. Due to the increased costs of traveling and accommodation for families with children, parents tend to see their children as an additional source of income.

During YLF’s monitoring, follow-up, and intervention activities in May and June, it identified that 18 out of 425 families migrated for seasonal agricultural work; 54 of children from these families did not continue education in the provinces of destination.²¹ The findings from YLF and the assessor show that starting in May, families migrate for seasonal agricultural work, which increases the number of children who drop out of formal education.

The assessor also found that in some schools (for instance, in İsmetpaşa Primary School in the Ergani district of Diyarbakir), teachers face classrooms that are over capacity; according to the deputy school principal, the average size of a classroom was 40 children. This makes it extremely difficult for teachers to help children who start school late due to seasonal agricultural work (approximately 40% of registered students) adapt to school and their classmates. The school worked closely with YLF, which provided a list of 34 students within the scope of their case management system.

Overall, the interviewed children stated that they were satisfied with the educational activities provided by YLF during the harvest period and that they would be more involved in these activities if **YLF increased** their frequency, particularly the mobile workshops.

Also, the assessor observed a strong connection between the YLF field staff, agricultural worker families, and their children, as well as a promising partnership with local public institutions. Due to these relationships, the YLF team was able to actively **work** in the region despite the challenges. In addition to the case management program, they delivered a number of educational activities for students, including:

- **Social and cultural activities:** YLF organized a film screening and library book awareness meeting to encourage children to read books and visit the library. The event was held on August 3, 2024 at Diyarbakır/Ergani District Public Library with 29 children from İsmetpaşa Primary and Secondary School.
- **Health and safety trainings:** On May 7 and 14, 2024, YLF trained 425 children at İsmetpaşa Primary and Secondary School in the Ergani district of Diyarbakır province to support children’s daily personal care (tooth brushing; hand and face washing practices; establishing cleaning routines at home and in the field; etc.) and physical self-care processes.

²¹ In a Nutshell 2023-2024 Winter Activities Final Report, page 16.

- **Mentee-mentor meetings:** Between January and June 2024, YLF, accompanied by an expert psychologist, organized a group mentee-mentor program for 20 eighth-grade and 10 twelfth-grade students. Eight sessions included methods to cope with exam anxiety, role-modeling, psychology training, and more to support the children's personal, academic, and professional development.

In addition, YLF organized a visit to Dicle University in Diyarbakır for children to experience university and campus life and to gain insight into career choices. The trip was planned for a total of 13 children between the ages of 14 and 17, comprising seven boys and six girls. The assessor finds that such activities are particularly crucial for the school attendance of children in that age range, where the tendency to drop out of school is usually high. YLF, with Balsu's support, also provided financial support for the education of 155 children in the 2023-2024 academic year.

4.3.1 Winter-spring program staff

Balsu and YLF piloted a case management system in the cities of origin. They worked with experienced YLF staff who were professionally equipped to carry out the targeted activities. The assessor noted that YLF carried out its winter activities with a total of six staff, including one project coordinator, four field workers, and a protection officer to support the team.

4.3.2 Winter-spring non-educational support to families

YLF distributed food packages to families in the provinces of origin during its winter activities. In total, YLF distributed 700 sets of food kits in the Diyarbakır, Şanlıurfa, and Şırnak provinces to promote economic support for worker's families and children's continuity to formal education. Food kits contain items that can be kept for a long time.²²

The assessor observed that YLF's non-educational support for children and their families played a significant role in attracting children and encouraging families to send them to the winter-spring activities.

4.3.3 Winter-spring partnership with public institutions and civil society

Interviews show that YLF has built solid and promising partnerships with public institutions in the cities of origin to raise awareness on the issue of school-aged children involved in hazelnut farming. The representatives of the institutions in Diyarbakır and Şanlıurfa indicated that they closely monitor YLF's activities on the prevention of child labor in hazelnut production and that they are open to further collaborations with, and willing to provide support to, YLF in this field. The assessor observed that the educational materials YLF provided to public schools in the cities of origin have also paved the way for positive cooperation.

However, YLF expressed its concerns that, in the long term, it could lose support from the governors and other officials both in the harvest areas and the cities of origin since those officials could be appointed to other provinces anytime. This implies that the support is individual and short-term rather than standardized and that YLF would have to reintroduce the program and make an effort to engage the newly appointed officials.

²² In a Nutshell 2023-2024 Winter Activities Final Report, page 9.

5. Conclusion

The focused assessment of Balsu's "In a Nutshell" program offers an insightful glimpse into Balsu's and YLF's efforts to counter child labor within the seasonal hazelnut harvest in Türkiye. Overall, the program successfully contributes to the broader goal of combating child labor in the hazelnut sector.

The program reached the targeted number of children both in the harvest region and the provinces of origin, and made positive improvements compared to previous years. The collaboration between Balsu and YLF has deepened, and the overall program has evolved to address child labor issues in the hazelnut sector effectively. At its current state, it is a sophisticated program with multiple components supporting and complementing one another. However, the two main pillars of the program, mobile workshops and summer schools, still have considerable improvement points.

Assessment findings indicate the need to improve the monitoring system to manage attendance records effectively, thereby preventing dropouts or irregular attendance. Both harvest season and winter findings show that mobile workshops' infrequency and limited duration create additional challenges, restricting their ability to provide sustained influence. Attracting older children (above 14 years old) is a persistent challenge for summer schools.

The assessment acknowledges that the program operates in a challenging environment. The transient nature of the work and mounting economic pressures on families present hurdles for the program's overarching goal of eradicating child labor in the hazelnut sector. During the assessment, YLF and different stakeholders drew attention to the need to address the root causes of child labor and initiate broader systematic change. The lack of alternative employment opportunities for families and the pressing need for consistent income remain the primary reasons that parents allow their children to work. These challenges require stakeholders to continuously adapt and improve upon their efforts to achieve a sustained impact.

As for the supporting program components, assessors noted that YLF's and Balsu's engagement with public institutions and local authorities could be improved. Although the organizations have made efforts to involve stakeholders at various levels, public institutions' awareness and interest regarding the complexities and challenges of child labor in the hazelnut harvest still varies. Wherever public institutions lack proactive involvement, this undermines broader advocacy efforts to create sustainable change in the hazelnut sector. There is a need to intensify efforts to bridge this awareness gap. YLF and Balsu should establish regular communication channels, conduct awareness workshops, and foster partnerships with critical officials in order to better inform public institutions about the specific challenges faced by children and families in hazelnut-producing areas.

YLF's and Balsu's future advocacy efforts should target public institutions to increase their awareness and understanding of the multifaceted issues surrounding child labor in hazelnut harvesting. These organizations need to proactively engage with authorities at both local and national levels to create an environment conducive to sustainable change, and to foster a commitment to eradicate child labor. As stated by public stakeholder representatives, there is a need for sustainable and effective nationwide policy that addresses this issue; this will require cooperation between different public institutions, civil society organizations, and companies.

6. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, FLA recommends the following:

1. Boost effectiveness of harvest interventions:

Improve educational content

Balsu and YLF should customize educational content to meet the needs of different age groups, particularly to address the needs of older children between the ages of 14-17 and those preparing for university entrance exams. Assessors found educational content for younger groups to be adequate, but the needs of older children were not fully met. FLA recommends that YLF strengthen vocational education for children between the ages of 13-17 and tailor content based on age groups to improve the program's effectiveness.

Increase the frequency and duration of mobile workshops

YLF should increase the frequency and duration of mobile workshop sessions to provide sustained educational influence and prevent child labor. The workshops' infrequent operation and limited duration limit their effectiveness in engaging children in educational activities, particularly those between the ages of 14-17.

2. Deepen engagement with public institutions, civil society and companies:

YLF should continue fostering partnerships with key officials, public institutions, civil society organizations, and companies to build awareness and create sustainable change. The organization should collaborate with public institutions and civil society to strengthen broader advocacy efforts and enhance the program's impact. In addition, YLF should continue engaging with the local authorities to raise awareness and mobilize resources to combat institutional memory loss due to high turnover rates.

3. Strengthen non-educational support to families:

YLF should continue to enhance non-educational support such as food packages, hygiene kits, and shuttle services to ease the economic burden on families and encourage children's participation in educational activities.

4. Provide training for adults:

YLF should continue regular training to raise awareness about child labor among farmers, worker families, and labor intermediaries. All of the named actors should be recognized as essential components of the sector and incorporated as legal and accountable actors.

5. Support a national policy on child labor:

YLF should continue existing collaborations with national and local authorities to develop a sustainable and effective nationwide policy for the prevention of child labor in the agricultural sector. A targeted approach is needed to increase awareness and understanding of the multifaceted issues surrounding child labor in hazelnut harvesting. Continuous engagement with authorities can help create an environment conducive to sustainable change.