



## 2024 Harvest Season Migrant Agricultural Worker Training Continues

As the 2024 harvest season continues, Balsu maintains its training programs for the seasonal agricultural workers employed by the farmers in our supply chain. In August, wages for hazelnut harvesting have emerged as a significant issue. Although hazelnut farmers are aware of the importance of harvesting at the right time, finding workers has been challenging this year, and labor costs have become particularly burdensome for farmers. As a result, farmers are often forced to harvest based on their financial situation and the availability of workers, which can lead to delays in the ideal harvest timing.

As a result of the risk mapping conducted before the harvest, Balsu reached out to 90 groups of seasonal migrant agricultural workers in the Western and Eastern Black Sea regions, providing training on occupational health and safety as well as good social practices. Additionally, personal protective equipment was provided to approximately 1,700 workers. Our training sessions are ongoing through our seasonal social workers.





## **B.E.S.T (Balsu, Ethical, Sustainable, Traceable) Program**

As Balsu, we are taking significant steps to strengthen our ethical, sustainable, and traceable production standards. Through the **B.E.S.T (Balsu, Ethical, Sustainable, Traceable) program, implemented under a 5-year protocol with the Ministry of Labor and Social Security and Young Lives Foundation**, we are working to promote behavioral changes among our farmers to prevent child labor in seasonal agricultural work. During this period, we are reaching children through two summer schools and 24 on-site education models. We will continue to support and empower the children reached through these educational programs in harvest regions by carrying out monitoring, follow-up, and case management activities in their home provinces during the winter season.

During the harvest season, we provide training to seasonal agricultural workers employed by farmers and make interventions to meet field needs. In line with Presidential Directive 2024/5, we are working to improve the living conditions of agricultural workers across four provinces and fourteen districts. We will continue our activities throughout this process with training sessions and field visits.





## **Rainforest Alliance Visit within the Scope of the Sustainable Hazelnut Villages Project**

The activities of the 'Sustainable Hazelnut Villages Project,' which we are conducting in cooperation with the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) and Rainforest Alliance, were recently visited by Rainforest Alliance. During the visit, the summer school opened for the children of seasonal migrant agricultural worker families during the hazelnut harvest was reviewed, and the activities carried out were observed. In the meeting with the Young Lives Foundation, 90 children who participated in the trainings between August 12 and 29 were brought together.

Within the scope of the project, significant steps were taken during the 2024 harvest season to improve the living and working conditions of seasonal migrant agricultural workers. Three accommodation areas were equipped with mobile toilets and showers, necessary renovation work was carried out, and cooking areas were created. In addition, trainings on occupational health and safety and good social practices was provided to 18 worker groups, and personal protective equipment was provided to 360 workers.





## Young Lives Foundation's Harvest Period Activities Continue with the B.E.S.T Program



Throughout August, the activities carried out under the [B.E.S.T program](#) have created a significant impact by focusing on increasing local participation. Field visits were conducted by Young Lives Foundation, involving discussions with 386 farmers in their orchards, with the participation of local authorities in the process.

To help children in the seasonal migrant agricultural labor cycle cope with the challenges they face due to being away from their home and school environments, safe spaces were created, and educational activities were organized under the B.E.S.T program. With the support of Ministry of Education teachers, training sessions were held for age groups 6-9, 10-14, and 15-17, with 833 children participating throughout August.

The training focused on developing children's cognitive skills, enhancing their ability to express themselves, and increasing their adaptability. Additionally, families were provided with disaster and first aid training, and the impacts of our efforts were observed in third-party audit processes.





## **Review of the 2024 Harvest**

**In the 2024 season, the effects of global climate change have caused significant challenges in hazelnut production. The lack of rainfall and increased temperatures, particularly in April and May, adversely affected the quality of the crop, causing the hazelnuts to ripen prematurely and reducing yield. In the Eastern Black Sea region, a noticeable increase in the brown marmorated stink bug population accelerated the formation of empty nuts and led to fruit drop.**

**In August, the ongoing high temperatures in the Western Black Sea region further stressed the hazelnut plants, negatively impacting the quality of the crop. In some areas, the heatwaves prompted an early harvest by 10 days, and the rise in pest populations made production more difficult. It is expected that more precise information on yield and quality will be available in September, when the harvest is largely completed.**

