

Introducing

Ayşegül Kayaoğlu

Ayşegül Kayaoğlu is a Senior Researcher at the University of Bremen, an Affiliated Researcher at the ISDC, and a Research Associate at the Economic Research Forum.

Ayşegül is a senior researcher in the DFG-funded “Global Developmental Dynamics of Social Policy” at the University of Bremen. She is also an affiliated researcher at the ISDC and a research associate at the Economic Research Forum (ERF). Her research interests are migration, labor economics, development economics, gender and impact evaluation. We spoke to Ayşegül about her current project on social policy, her previous work with Save the Children, and what inspired her to work on migration and development economics.



Hi Ayşegül! You are currently working on the *Global Developmental Dynamics of Social Policy* research project at the University of Bremen. Could you briefly tell us about the main goals of this project and your role in it?

The 'Global Developmental Dynamics of Social Policy' is a collaborative research center (CRC 1342) that aims to understand how social policies, particularly their inclusiveness and generosity, have evolved globally using a historical perspective. The second phase consists of 14 projects, including the one I am involved in: 'Pathways to Family Policy Universalism.' As a postdoctoral researcher, my role includes investigating the causal relationship between family policies and female empowerment in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), aiming to provide insights to influence future policy-making and promote gender equality in LMICs.

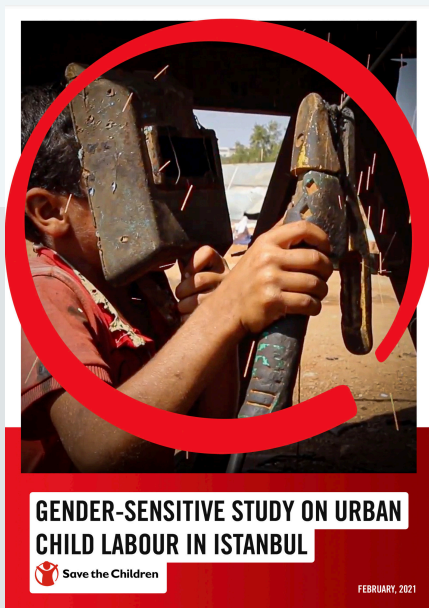
You have previously worked with Save the Children Türkiye as a Lead Researcher for the *Gender-Sensitive Study on Urban Child Labor* project. Did this project generate any policy implications or recommendations that influenced Save the Children's advocacy efforts or programming strategies?

This study provided a comprehensive analysis of urban child labor among Turkish, Kurdish, Roma, and Syrian refugee populations in Istanbul. We collected extensive qualitative and survey data, which revealed this issue's critical underlying factors. I compiled a detailed internal report for Save the Children Türkiye and disseminated the findings through webinars and evidence briefs. The research outputs were well-received and informed several of Save the Children's programming strategies; for instance, they began implementing targeted interventions in specific neighborhoods and schools. Moreover, one of our key recommendations—the provision of free lunch in public schools to prevent dropouts—has become a major request from NGOs and INGOs to the government. I believe our recommendations have helped shape policies to better protect vulnerable children in urban areas.

Finally, what has inspired or influenced your migration and development economics work?

My inspiration stems from my parents' experience as internal migrants in Istanbul, striving to improve our family's prospects. Growing up in a slum area where everyone was an internal migrant, I witnessed firsthand the challenges faced by my friends who worked in the streets or sweatshops. My parents' determination to send me to a primary school in a wealthier neighborhood, despite the hardships, profoundly impacted me. These experiences fueled my passion for addressing social problems in my work and led me to focus on migration and development economics during my PhD. I am particularly driven to explore how policies can mitigate the challenges faced by migrant populations and how migration affects socio-economic outcomes in both destination and origin regions. I am also very interested in understanding how different population groups are impacted by the same policies, programs, or interventions, with a particular focus on gender.

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The mentioned report "Gender-sensitive Study on Urban Child Labour in Istanbul," prepared by Ayşegül, can be found here: <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/gender-sensitive-study-urban-child-labour-istanbul/>

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