
The Bernard van Leer Foundation was established in 1949 and is based in the Netherlands. Our income is derived from the sale of Royal Packaging Industries Van Leer N.V., bequeathed to the foundation by Dutch industrialist and philanthropist Bernard van Leer (1883 - 1958).

Our mission is to improve opportunities for children up to age 8 who are growing up in socially and economically difficult circumstances. We see this both as a valuable end in itself and as a long-term means to promoting more cohesive, considerate and creative societies with equal opportunities and rights for all.

Our grantmaking works primarily through **supporting programmes** implemented by local partners in selected countries. Through our **publications and advocacy**, we aim to inform and influence policy and practice, globally and in the countries where we operate.

Strategic goals (2010- 2015)

- Taking quality early learning to scale
 - Reducing violence in young children's lives
 - Improving young children's health by improving their physical environments
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The countries where we operate

- Brazil
 - India
 - Israel
 - The Netherlands
 - Peru
 - Tanzania
 - Turkey
 - Uganda
 - European Union
(regional approach)
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Our goals in Turkey

1. A national reduction in violence in families with children 0 to 8 years of age
2. A reduction in child morbidity and malnutrition among children 0 to 6 years of age whose families subsist as seasonal migrant workers



Why these goals in Turkey

1. Violence: Estimates suggest the number of children aged 0 to 8 who witness violence in the family in Turkey is between 570,000 and 2.9 million. Young children also experience violence directly as victims of harsh disciplinary practices and various other forms of abuse. Comprehensive statistics do not exist, but one study of 16,000 children aged 4 to 12 found that 35% had experienced physical abuse. Social norms are the main driver of the problem. For example, 25% of women aged from 15 to 49 years of age believe that a husband/partner is justified in beating his wife/partner under certain circumstances. Nonetheless, opportunities for change exist: there is an increasing public debate about family violence, interest among Turkish NGOs and a formidable women's movement.

2. Migrants: Every spring, thousands of the poorest families in Turkey migrate to work on the farms of private landowners. Typically poor and with low levels of education, seasonal migrant farm workers are one of the most disadvantaged groups in Turkey – they are not protected by labour laws and are often not paid a living wage. We estimate that 125,000 children under 8 migrate seasonally, and their health suffers enormously – BvLF-funded research across nine migrant camps found that young children were almost always sick and diarrhoea was rampant. These problems are rooted in poor physical conditions: children frequently play in dangerous and dirty spaces, living conditions are overcrowded, there are no clean water or toilets, and fresh food spoils in the daytime heat. There is high-level political will to address this problem, and BvLF can draw on experiences in other middle-income countries that deal with internal agricultural migration such as Mexico and Brazil.



Lisa Jordan - Executive Director

Lisa joined the foundation in July 2009, having previously worked with the Ford Foundation. She is a senior executive in the field of philanthropy with over twenty years of experience in NGOs, foundations and governments.