

Our institution helps children in remote areas in eastern Taiwan. While tutoring these children, we discovered an issue peculiar to disadvantaged children in eastern Taiwan: summer is the harvest season of watermelons and many children have to help their family harvest the fruit, hence causing them unable to study after school. The Taiwanese government provides a great many of subsidies or corresponding measures to help disadvantaged children. However, these mechanisms fail to protect the children in eastern Taiwan. Is it that these mechanisms don't serve the purpose of helping those in need or they simply benefit certain groups of people? Actually this is not the only issue faced by the children in eastern Taiwan. There are in fact many more which are not raised in the report. We doubt whether the government's equality measures can guarantee true equity. Taiwanese laws stipulate that employers shall not hire children under the age of 15. However, the children in eastern Taiwan have to work in order to help support their family. For their employers, these underage children are not legal workers and are exploited by the employers who pay them lower-than-average wages, which in turn do not improve their family finances. This has created a vicious circle: working children have no time to study and lack of study time causes them to do low-wage jobs.