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BİRLEŞMİŞ MİLLETLER TÜRKİYE
TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ AİLE VE SOSYAL HİZMETLER BAKANLIĞI
BİRLEŞMİŞ MİLLETLER KALKINMA PROGRAMI
Uluslararası Çalışma Örgütü

OUTCOMES FROM THE TRAINING ON TRANSFORMATIVE GROWTH OF CARE ECONOMY IN TÜRKİYE

A POLICY BRIEF NOTE ON THE POTENTIAL RETURNS AND BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN THE CARE ECONOMY IN TÜRKİYE

Equal and Sustainable Societies with #CareEconomy

Eşit ve Sürdürülebilir Toplumlar için #BakımEkonomisi

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This Policy Brief has been prepared under the United Nations Joint Programme on Transformative Growth of the Care Economy in Türkiye[1]

A Policy Brief Note on the Potential Returns and Benefits of Investing in the Care Economy in Türkiye [2]

Transforming the Care Economy: A Strategic Imperative

Transforming the care economy is essential for equality, poverty eradication, inclusive and sustainable growth, and social justice while contributing to multiple SDG targets, including 5 and 8. Investing in care creates jobs, promotes equality, enhances well-being, and strengthens resilience.

Inadequate labour market regulations and weak implementation of care-supportive workplace policies—such as care leave entitlements, equitable flexible work arrangements to support work–life balance and reduced statutory working hours—combined with limited access to care services, perpetuate the unequal distribution of unpaid care work, predominantly undertaken by women, thereby restricting their economic empowerment worldwide, including in Türkiye. Globally, women perform 76.2% of all unpaid care work, spending nearly three times more hours daily on care tasks than men (ILO, 2018; UN Women, 2020). In Türkiye, this imbalance is even more pronounced. Women undertake over five times as much unpaid care work as men, reinforcing persistent inequalities between women and men in labour force participation, income, and time poverty (TÜİK, 2021; ILO, 2022).

All people should be able to provide and receive care—including children, youth, older persons, persons with disabilities, and sick or critically ill individuals—as well as engage in self-care. Strategic investment in an integrated, rights-based care policy package—combining labour market regulations that promote care-supportive workplaces with universal care services—delivers significant returns in employment, inclusive economic growth, and equality between women and men. Moreover, other country examples indicate that workplaces which adopt - polices responsive to equality between women and men and family-friendly policies can contribute to reduced turnover, greater productivity and enhance women's labour force participation—underlining the economic value of such care-centred strategies[3].

[1] The UNJP aims to strengthen the capacities of public institutions, local authorities, social partners, and civil society to enhance care policies and services through digital transformation, in line with International Labour Standards and the SDGs, with the financial contribution of the UN Joint SDG Fund. Under the coordination of the UN Resident Coordinator, the ILO—serving as the lead agency—and UNDP are implementing the Joint Programme. To achieve the Programme's objectives, UN Women, UNICEF, and UNFPA provide technical support. The Ministry of Family and Social Services is the key national partner for the UNJP. Public institutions, workers' and employers' organizations, and civil society organizations (CSOs) are integral to the Programme's implementation.

[2] The Policy Brief was prepared with the technical contributions of Prof. Dr. İpek İlkkaracan (İstanbul Technical University), and the ILO HQ GEDI Department, in particular Laura Addati, Maternity Protection and Work–Family Specialist; Lorena Pastor Palacios, Economist – Care Policies Technical Officer; and Mia Touma, Technical Officer – Care Policies.

Investing in a transformative care policy package in Türkiye—including paid care leave and also other labour market regulations for care supporting workplaces offers significant returns across equality between women and men, decent work, and inclusive economic growth. According to the ILO Care Policy Investment Simulator, investing in a full package of care policies in Türkiye by 2035—including ECCE and long-term care—would require an additional 5.7% of GDP annually[4], yet yield substantial returns. The investment could create over 3.8 million new jobs (without induced effects), reduce the employment gap between women and men by 6.67 percentage points, and narrow the wage gap between women and men by 5.31 percentage points. For ECCE and leave policies alone, the projected return on investment is US$ 3.21 in GDP for every US$ 1 spent, underscoring the economic and social value of scaling up care services[5] . A comprehensive care investment strategy—encompassing both childcare and long-term care—can generate strong fiscal multipliers, enhancing Türkiye's macroeconomic potential for employment creation and inclusive growth.

Global and ILO Normative Frameworks on Care

Global instruments such as CEDAW, CRC, CRPD, and ICESCR recognize care as a human right and a public good. Building on this, the UN System Policy Paper on Transforming Care Systems (2024) and Our Common Agenda (2021) call for large-scale public investment in care to drive inclusive growth though substantial employment creation, equality between women and men, and sustainable development. The UN Human Rights Council (2023) reaffirmed states' duties to build inclusive, rights-based care systems, while UNGA Resolution 77/317 established 29 October as the International Day of Care and Support, urging action to promote decent work, -care systems responsive to equality between women and men, and the elimination of discriminatory norms.

The ILO Resolution on Decent Work and the Care Economy, adopted at the 112th International Labour Conference (2024), is the first tripartite global agreement on care work. It calls on governments and social partners to adopt integrated and coherent care policies and systems for decent work and equality between women and men based on the 5R Framework—recognition, reduction, and redistribution of unpaid care work, and reward and representation of care workers—anchored in international labour standards and social dialogue. The Resolution further calls for concrete action to ensure comprehensive maternity, paternity, parental, and long-term care leave and protection; to promote work–life balance and the equitable sharing of care responsibilities; and to invest in accessible, affordable, and high-quality care services for all.

[3] United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). (2022). The Family-Friendly Workplace Model. UNFPA Eastern Europe and Central Asia Regional Office; UNICEF (2025) Redesigning the workplace to be family-friendly: What governments and businesses can do; UNICEF (2025) Building Family-Friendly Workplaces A Toolkit for Business.

[4] Baseline year is 2019.

[5] The ILO Care Policy Investment Simulator calculates the investment requirements in 4 care policy areas and the related employment and benefits of between women and men for 118 countries, including Türkiye. The simulator can be accessed through this link: https://webapps.ilo.org/globalcare/simulator/1?language=en

Ratifying and implementing ILO standards relevant to the care economy remains central to advancing a rights-based approach.

An increasing body of research and policy simulations in different country contexts from around the world, point to the economic and social returns to public investments in the care economy (ILO 2018,2021; 2022, 2023 and 2025 and UN Women 2021). The ILO Care Policy Investment Simulator[6] is a comprehensive online tool developed to model the investment needs and socio-economic benefits of closing national gaps in care services and childcare-related leave. It enables users to design customized care policy investment packages across four key areas: childcare-related paid leave, breastfeeding breaks, early childhood care and education (ECCE) services, and long-term care services. The simulation produces detailed projections, including the required level of public investment, the potential for job creation, the extent to which employment and wage gaps between women and men can be reduced, and the return on investment (ROI) associated with narrowing the childcare policy gap—specifically by investing in paid leave and ECCE services.

ILO investment parameters are transformative, meaning they were selected to advance equality and promote human and labour rights as the only way forward when investing in the care economy. Hence, they are shaped by international labour standards and aim to provide decent work opportunities and reduce inequalities between women and men, as well as meet care needs. (Source: ILO 2023b; ILO, n.d.-a)

Global and National Childcare Policy Gaps: A Comparative Overview

Globally, there is a significant legal gap between the end of statutory paid childcare-related leave (including maternity, paternity, and parental leave) and the start of free and universal early childhood care and education (ECCE) or compulsory primary education. On average, households are entitled to only 6.1 months (0.5 years) of paid childcare leave, while children typically begin free and universal ECCE or mandatory primary school at 4.7 years of age. This discrepancy results in a global average childcare policy gap of 4.2 years, during which families must rely entirely on unpaid care work or privately paid care arrangements—often involving domestic workers who themselves lack adequate labour and social protection (ILO, 2022a; 2022b).

This **childcare policy gap** represents a critical structural barrier in the world of work—especially for women. While legal entitlements do not always ensure affordability or accessibility, they are a crucial foundation. When care policies are lacking or fragmented, unpaid care responsibilities—mostly borne by mothers—intensify, deepening inequalities between women and men in employment, wages, leadership, and pensions. These “motherhood penalties” contribute to intergenerational cycles of poverty and exclusion. Although the policy gap measures only legal provisions, it serves as a valuable benchmark to guide countries in building comprehensive and transformative care systems (ILO, 2019b; 2022a).

[6] *The ILO Care Policy Investment Simulator calculates the investment requirements in 4 care policy areas and the related employment and benefits for equality between women and men for 118 countries. https://www.ilo.org/topics-and-sectors/care-economy#tools*

In Türkiye, this gap is even more pronounced. The duration of statutory paid childcare-related leave available to households is around 3.9 months[7]. On the other hand, there is no publicly funded early childhood care or preschool education service in Türkiye that is universally available and free of charge for all children. According to national legislation, children begin free and universal compulsory primary education at the age of 6 (72 months). Although significant progress has been made in expanding free public preschool education for children aged 3–5, current provision still does not reach all children. As a result, this legal gap creates a childcare policy gap of more than five years in Türkiye. During this period, families have no formal entitlement to childcare support, and care responsibilities are largely met through unpaid family members or informal and unregulated care arrangements. This situation deepens inequalities between women and men and undermines access to decent work opportunities, particularly for women (ILO, 2022a).

The following recommendations are proposed to close the childcare policy gap:

- Increasing the total duration of legally guaranteed paid care leave for all parents (both mothers and fathers);
- Expanding institutional early childhood care services (for ages 0–3) and developing alternative care models, together with legal provisions ensuring that all children can access these services free of charge;
- Introducing legal regulations to ensure that preschool education services (for ages 3–5) are provided universally and free of charge.

As outlined below, although both of these policy recommendations require increased public budget allocations, their implementation promises significant economic and social benefits.

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) services

The ILO Care Policy simulation scenario on ECCE is based on universal coverage by center-based services, whereby 50% of children aged 0-2 and 100% of children aged 3-5 are assumed to be enrolled in childcare centers and preschools. The guaranteed hours in the simulation are set at 40 hours per week. This marks an increase from the current situation where children aged 0–2 currently have no access to such services, and 43% of children aged 3–5 are enrolled in childcare centres and preschools.The simulation also improves the child-to-teacher ratios to 5 children per teacher for age 0-2 years and 8 children per children for age 3-5 years (from a current ratio of 17.8 for this age group). The pay level of teachers (as well as their qualifications) is set equivalent to wages (and required qualifications) of primary school teachers (as is the current case). The pay level of teacher assistants is set equivalent 120% of minimum wage. In addition, the simulation assumes that the number of non-teaching managerial and service support staff (indirect care workers such as school managers, cleaners, cooks, etc.) will be at a minimum of 4% of total children enrolled.

[7] In Türkiye, maternity leave is 16 weeks and paternity leave is 1 week. The total duration of paid childcare-related leave is therefore 17 weeks. When converted (based on 4.3 weeks per month), this corresponds to approximately 3.9 months.

Achieving the above ECCE universal coverage rates with service quality and decent jobs for care workers, is estimated to be an additional 2.47% of Turkish GDP annual investment by 2035, over and above the current baseline (2019) ECCE spending of 0.15% of GDP.

Public expenditures of this magnitude towards expansion of ECCE services would create 936 thousand jobs directly in the sector (all formal jobs by design of the simulation scenario) and 111 thousand jobs indirectly in other related sectors (of which 78% are estimated to be formal jobs). The total job creation (936 thousand direct sectoral jobs plus 111 thousand indirect jobs) at 1,045,000 jobs, is estimated to improve the employment rate from the 2019 baseline of 50.7% to 52.4%.

Of the total job creation through increased ECCE spending, majority (88.5%) are estimated to hire women, given the female intensity of employment in the ECCE sector. This would narrow the employment gap between women and men to 33 percentage points from the current (2019) baseline of 36 percentage points (68.4% for men vs. 32.9% for women).This is a minimum (lower-bound) estimate on the narrowing of the employment gap between women and men as it entails only labour demand side effects of increased ECCE spending through new employment creation, but does not account for the expected positive labour supply effects on women through access to services and consequent alleviation of time constraints of unpaid care work.

Given that jobs generation means earnings generation which means tax revenue generation, the net cost of improving ECCE services for universal coverage is estimated at 1.83% of GDP (down from the gross cost of 2.47% of GDP). In other words, tax revenue generation at 0.64% of GDP, would contribute towards self-financing of ECCE expenditures.

Complementing the ILO's macro-simulation results, UNICEF's recent work provides an in-depth assessment of the fiscal requirements and equity implications of expanding early childhood education (ECE) in Türkiye. ECE Investment and Costing Analysis in Türkiye evaluates the financial and distributional effects of ECE expansion, offering policymakers a robust, data-driven foundation for investment decisions[8]. Building on UNICEF's ECE Accelerator Simulation Model, the study provided an analysis of key expansion scenarios, along with an interactive costing tool that enables decision-makers to project enrolment and financing outcomes under different policy options. It explored four expansion pathways: (1) extending free ECE to all 5-year-olds through public kindergartens; (2) expanding public provision to 3–5-year-olds; (3) combining public provision for 5-year-olds with subsidized private provision for 3–4-year-olds; and (4) combining public kindergartens for 5-year-olds with municipal crèches for younger children, supported by central government funding. Across all scenarios, substantial gains in ECE access are projected—especially for lower-income groups—demonstrating that equitable, universal, and high-quality ECE is essential to achieving the goals of Türkiye's Twelfth Development Plan (2024–2028).

Ultimately, the UNICEF analysis underscores that ECE investments yield very high social and economic returns.

[8] *UNICEF ECE Investment and Costing Analysis in Türkiye: https://www.unicef.org/turkiye/en/media/18926/file/ECE%20Costing%20-%20EN.pdf.pdf*

Overview of Care Leave Policies in Türkiye in Line with International Labour Standards

Ensuring comprehensive care leave policies is essential for promoting equality between women and men, decent work, and inclusive economic growth. Access to paid maternity, paternity, and parental leave, along with affordable and quality care services, enables workers—especially women—to balance paid employment with unpaid caregiving responsibilities. Equally important, these policies expand access to care for recipients—including children, older persons, persons with disabilities, the sick or critically ill, and through self-care—thereby enhancing well-being and improving living standards across the population. International labour standards provide a robust framework for guiding national care policies that protect workers' rights, strengthen access to care, and foster more equitable societies. The following section reviews Türkiye's care leave policies in light of these international benchmarks and highlights key gaps and opportunities for policy alignment and reform

The Main International Labour Standards for Care Leave Polices:

The ILO Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) and its accompanying **Recommendation No. 191** set global standards to protect women's health, employment, and income security before and after childbirth. They establish minimum requirements for **paid maternity leave, cash and medical benefits, health protection, breastfeeding support, non-discrimination** and **job security**. Specifically, the Convention mandates at least **14 weeks of maternity leave**, paid at least at two thirds of previous earnings by compulsory social insurance or public funds, while the Recommendation encourages extending it to **18 weeks** with full pay to allow sufficient time for rest and recovery. Despite the importance of these provisions, maternity protection remains inadequate in many countries. As of August 2025, only **44 countries** have ratified Convention No. 183—including **27 in Europe and Central Asia**.

The Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) and **Recommendation No. 165** recognize **the right to balance work and family life** and prohibit **discrimination in employment due to caregiving responsibilities**. These instruments paved the way for national entitlements such as **parental leave**, along with the **childcare and long-term care services**. To date, **48 countries** have ratified Convention No. 156, and many others have adopted legal reforms to **recognize, reduce, and redistribute unpaid care work**—between women and men, and between families and the State. Türkiye has not yet been among the countries that have ratified these Conventions.

Maternity leave is a universal human and labour right, and yet it remains unfulfilled

In Europe and Central Asia, the average duration of maternity leave is 21 weeks and all 53 countries in the region meet or exceed the ILO 14-week standard. In the region, 36 countries provide 18 weeks or more, meeting Recommendation No. 191. The provision of maternity leave in Türkiye is 112 days (16 weeks). While this provision exceeds the minimum ILO convention requirement of 14 weeks, it is under the recommended 18 weeks and substantially lower than the regional average of 21 weeks.

ILO standards require the amount **of cash benefits to be at least two-thirds (67%)** of the woman's previous earnings and recommend increasing it to 100%. In Europe and Central Asia, 30 countries offer maternity leave paid at 100% of the woman's previous earnings. Türkiye provides maternity leave cash benefits that cover 67% of previous earnings for new mothers who have worked as insured employees with the Social Security Institution (SGK) and have paid contributions for at least 90 days prior to the birth.

ILO standards require that **employers should not be individually liable for the direct cost** of maternity leave and these cash benefits shall be provided through compulsory social insurance or public funds or non-contributory social assistance to women who do not qualify for benefits out of social insurance. In Europe and Central Asia, most countries' maternity leave cash benefits are funded by social insurance, including Türkiye.

The fundamental right to paid and job-protected maternity leave should be guaranteed to all women, especially mothers from at-risk groups and in the informal economy. Nevertheless, maternity leave provision applies only to women in formal employment, excluding informally employed and self-employed in the country. Employment protection and non-discrimination is essential to make the right to maternity leave a reality.

Convention No. 183 states that it is unlawful for an employer to terminate the employment of a woman during her pregnancy, absence on leave or during a period following her return to work prescribed by national laws or regulation. Under legislation in Türkiye, women in formal employment have the right to return to their previous or an equivalent position after maternity leave. There is an implicit prohibition against pregnancy tests in employment, as derived from the non-discrimination policy in the Labour Code.

However, the legislation does not guarantee women in the informal sector the right to return to the same position after maternity leave, and the gaps persist even for women in formal employment.

Paternity leave is key to enabling men's care rights and responsibilities

In 43 out of 53 countries in Europe and Central Asia, fathers have the right to paternity leave. On average, paternity leave duration among countries with paternity leave is around 22 days but the duration in the region ranges from one day in Malta to more than 190 weeks in Slovakia. Since 2011, 21 countries in Europe and Central Asia have either introduced or increased the duration of paternity leave, including Belarus, France, North Macedonia and Tajikistan. Currently, paternity leave in Türkiye is only for a symbolic duration of 5 days (non-obligatory), substantially below the regional average.

The ILO Resolution[9] concerning the second recurrent discussion on social protection (social security) calls for Member States to foster income security during maternity, paternity and parental leave as part of social protection systems responsive to equality between women and men. In Europe and Central Asia, paternity leave is unpaid in eight countries, paid less than two-thirds in three countries (Austria, Ireland and United Kingdom) and paid between two thirds and 100% of previous earnings in 32 countries In Türkiye, paternity leave is paid at 100% of previous earnings: 5 days for employees covered by the Labour Law and 10 days for public officials covered by Law No. 657". In Türkiye, the cash benefits for paternity leave are funded by employers.

All fathers, without discrimination, should have right to paternity leave. Employment protection, non-discrimination on the basis of paternity leave and full pay coverage, can improve paternity leave take-up rates. In Türkiye, the paternity leave provision, like maternity leave, applies only to men in formal employment.

Lack of a comprehensive paternity leave policy is detrimental in several ways. It is a violation of father's right to care for his newborn and negatively impacts work-life balance for men in employment. It has a negative impact on child development by not allowing the space for a healthy bonding between the child and the father. Furthermore, it lays the basis for discrimination in employment, promotion and pay, as the substantially longer duration of maternity leave compared to paternity leave, inevitably results in discriminatory attitudes by employers.

Parental leave and other special care leave can also help balance the work and family responsibilities of mothers and fathers over their life course

ILO standards call for a period of parental leave determined by national laws, to be available to either parent after maternity leave without their having to relinquish employment and with their employment rights being protected. Statutory parental leave is available in 48 Europe and Central Asia countries. The average duration of parental leave among these countries is 149 weeks, with a wide range, from less than a year as long as parental leave that lasts until children reach three years old.

[9] *https://www.ilo.org/resource/ilc/109/resolution-concerning-second-recurrent-discussion-social-protection-social*

Parental leave policies in Türkiye vary by employment status and sex, with different entitlements for civil servants and private-sector employees. In the private sector, parental leave is not legally guaranteed. Women employees may take up to six months of unpaid leave following maternity leave, while there is currently no parental leave entitlement for employee fathers. Provisions are broader for civil servants: women may take up to 24 months of unpaid parental leave after completing paid maternity leave, and male civil servants may also take up to 24 months of unpaid leave starting from the child's birth. When both parents are public servants, only one parent may use this entitlement. In both public and private sectors, parental leave is generally unpaid, and there is no leave specifically reserved for fathers.

In most countries in the region (28), parental leave is paid less than two thirds of previous earnings. Eleven countries pay an amount between two thirds and 100 per cent of previous earnings (including Austria, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Sweden). Parental leave in Türkiye is unpaid. While in principle parental leave is provided either to the mother or the father. Its provisioning on an unpaid basis is a factor that contributes to the fact that parental leave is usually taken up by mothers.

Breastfeeding leave

All women should have the right to paid working time for breastfeeding, as called for by ILO Convention No. 183. Additionally, workplace nursing facilities are a key ingredient of breastfeeding-friendly workplaces. Paid nursing breaks are available in 35 countries in the region including Türkiye. In Türkiye, under the Labour Law (Law No. 4857), private-sector employees may take a total of 90 minutes per day for the first 6 months after childbirth. For civil servants, under the Civil Servants Law (Law No. 657), this entitlement extends up to 12 months. These feeding breaks are included in working hours and are paid. Türkiye has a statutory mandatory provision for workplace nursing facilities, but implementation is lacking and monitoring is weak.

Long-term leave Policy in Türkiye

Long-term care (LTC) constitutes another important area of care needs for Türkiye, particularly in the context of demographic changes and an aging society.

Türkiye's approach to aging and long-term care is guided by the **Aging Vision Document** (Ministry of Family and Social Services [MoFSS], 2021), aiming to improve the quality of life and social participation of older adults and persons with disabilities. **Law No. 5378** ensures equal rights and access to education, employment, and care services for individuals with disabilities, promoting accessibility and protection against discrimination. Complementing this, **Law No. 2022** provides financial support to needy citizens over 65 and to caregivers of disabled individuals, helping at-risk populations sustain daily living.

The current LTC system in Türkiye rests predominantly on unpaid care provided by households, with informal caregivers-mostly women-and to some extent on paid residential care (Gültekin et al. 2025). The home-based services composed of about 85% of care, while institutional services, including public and private nursing homes and day-care facilities, cover a smaller share (Erdoğan, 2022; Adaman et al., 2021). The Ministry of Family and Social Services regulates LTC services, supported by municipalities and NGOs. Key programs include the **cash-for-care system**, which provides means-tested benefits to disabled individuals and payments to home caregivers, typically female relatives, and social assistance for needy elderly over 65 (Law No. 2022).

As in the case of childcare, a transformative long-term care policy rests on expansion and upgrading of public provisioning of LTC services and care leave for LTC and emergency leave policies.

Long-term Care Services

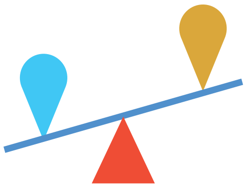
The simulation scenario for LTC services expansion is based on 2.5 care recipients per LTC worker for the population estimated to have care needs (both for elderly 65 and above and people with disabilities in the 15-64 age group). The share of personal care workers with professional qualifications among LTC workers is set at 67%. The pay level of professional personal care workers is set at 75% of average nurse wages and the pay level of other personal care workers is set at 120% of minimum wage.

Based on these scenario specifications, the additional annual gross expenditures for expanding LTC services is estimated at 3.04% of GDP by 2035, which could be attain with an annual incremental increase per year (from 2022 to 2035) of 0.23% of GDP per year.

Such an expansion of LTC services towards universal coverage would result in creating close to 2.1 million jobs in the LTC sector (all formal jobs by design of the simulation scenario) and almost 700 thousand jobs in other related sectors that are supplying the care sector (of which 63% would be formal jobs). With a total of 2.7 million jobs created through increased expenditures on LTC services, the employment rate is expected to increase by almost 5 percentage points from the baseline (2019) level of 50.7% to 55.3%.

Of the total 2.7 million jobs created through increased expenditures on LTC services, 73% would go to women. This would result in a narrowing of the employment gap between women and men by 4.5 percentage points down to 31.5 percentage points (71.0% for men vs. 39.5% for women) from the current baseline of 36 percentage points (68.4% for men vs. 32.9% for women).

With jobs generation translating into earnings and consequently tax revenue generation, the net cost of improving LTC services for universal coverage is estimated at 2.28% of GDP (down from the gross cost of 3.04% of GDP). In other words, tax revenue generation at 0.76% of GDP, would contribute towards self-financing of the initial lay out of LTC expenditures.



The way forward is investing in transformative care policy

Türkiye has a unique opportunity to transform its care economy into a driver of inclusive growth and demographic resilience and social wellbeing This transformation has the potential to shift care from a private, unequal household chore into a public and economic priority, expanding the formal care sector, creating decent and professionalized jobs, and enhancing the well-being of families, particularly women.

The current policy framework highlights the demographic transformation in Türkiye and the necessity of enhancing policies and the legal framework to reconcile family and work life, as well as increase the quality and quantity of care services. Family-friendly policies, including well-paid parental leave, flexible work arrangements, and accessible, high-quality childcare, disability and elderly care services, make it easier for individuals—especially women—to balance work and family aspirations. These policies boost female labor force participation and retention, address labor shortages, and enhance economic productivity. In contexts of low fertility and population aging, this support is crucial for strengthening demographic resilience, enabling couples to have their desired number of children without sacrificing career or financial security, while also ensuring a robust and skilled workforce to support an aging population. Therefore, supportive policies for the care economy represent a triple-win for families, businesses, and sustainable national economies.

ILO simulation results show that investing in early childhood care, long-term care, and care leave could create 3.8 million jobs, reduce the employment gap between women and men by 6.7 points, and yield US$ 3.21 for every dollar invested—proving that care is both a social necessity and a smart economic choice.

Grounded in the ILO 5R Framework—Recognize, Reduce, Redistribute, Reward, and Represent—transformative care policy requires coordinated public investment, labour regulation, and social dialogue.

The way forward for Türkiye rests on five priorities:

- Expand universal ECCE through affordable, quality, full-day services.
- Ensure comprehensive care leave for all workers, including long-term care leave.
- Formalize and professionalize care work with fair pay, skills certification, and social protection.
- Strengthen long-term care systems by scaling community and institutional services and developing sustainable financing.
- Establish sustainable financing and governance via integrated strategies and - budgeting responsive to equality between women and men.

Investing in care is investing in Türkiye's future—creating jobs, advancing equality, and ensuring care for all, decent work for all….

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Notlar

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