

► ILO TÜRKİYE OFFICE'S WORKS ON DOMESTIC WORKERS (2020-2023)

► EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Brief highlights the results of the ILO Türkiye Office's evidence-based advocacy activities on domestic workers in the years 2020-2023. In addition to highlighting the increased awareness of the stakeholders and their active engagement into the issues related with the domestic workers, the Brief provides a summary of the policy recommendations generated by the various stakeholders. We believe this Brief will pave the way for increased chances for stakeholders to work together for more and better jobs for domestic workers.

► INTRODUCTION

In 2011, the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and Recommendation (No.201) that is a landmark international treaty adopted to establish global labour standards focusing on domestic workers. The main objective of ILO C189 (ILO Domestic Workers Convention) is to address the unique challenges faced by domestic workers and promote their rights and protection. The convention recognizes domestic work as a legitimate form of employment and emphasizes the need to improve the working conditions and social protection of domestic workers. ILO C189 provides a framework for the member states to develop and implement laws, policies, and programs to protect domestic workers and improve their working conditions. It encourages governments to promote decent work for domestic workers and create an environment that recognizes and values their contributions to society.

According to the ILO estimation, in the world, there are 75.6 million domestic workers aged 15 years and

over as of June 2021.¹ Domestic work is an important source of employment, representing 2.3 per cent of total employment worldwide. When looking at employees only, this figure almost doubles to 4.5 per cent. Among them 40.7 million are without legal protection and 82 percent are in informal economy. The vast majority are women (76,2%), which accounts for 4.5 per cent of female employment worldwide, or 8.8 per cent of female employees.

In Türkiye, the number of domestic workers is not clear. The figure is more than 220,000, according to Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) 2020 data while it is estimated to be over 1 million by trade unions organizing domestic workers. Among them 70 percent are without social security, according to TURKSTAT 2020 data while the figure rises to 90 percent according to trade unions organizing domestic workers. The vast majority are women (90%).

Domestic workers provide services for millions of people in households around the world, they serve by providing

1 According to the ILO's global estimates of the number of domestic workers cover 155 countries and are primarily based on a systematic approach, which is designed to identify domestic workers in national labour force and household survey microdata sets, complemented by data from secondary official sources (in ten countries)



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS & STRATEGIES

The policy recommendations to better the conditions and rights of domestic workers in Türkiye were formulated and categorised under normative arrangements, decent working conditions, participation to the decision-making processes and advocacy.

essential services, such as cleaning, cooking, childcare, eldercare and patient care. And the demand for domestic work in all over the world including Türkiye is expected to grow considering demographic changes, population ageing and increasing long-term care needs. However, they work in some of the most vulnerable situations in terms of working conditions and access to decent works opportunities. Many domestic workers work in the informal sector, where they may lack legal protection, fair wages, and access to social security benefits. Domestic workers, who often perform their duties in private homes, are susceptible to various forms of discrimination and violence and harassment. They may face hazardous conditions, including exposure to harmful chemicals, ergonomic risks, and insufficient safety measures. Proceeding labour inspection steps is not easy due to being private sphere of the workplace.

Improving their working conditions helps to recognize their value and treat them with dignity and respect, just like any other worker. Besides, promoting decent work for domestic workers is essential to respect their human rights, enhance their economic empowerment, improve quality of care services and contribute to a fair and just society.

ILO's 5R Framework for Decent Care Work should also be tackled as an instrument for ensuring more and accessible decent work conditions for domestic workers. ILO 5R Framework for Decent Care Work aims to promote a high road to care work by recognizing, reducing, and redistributing housework and family care; rewarding care workers fairly, while generating sufficient care jobs to meet the demand; and giving care workers' rights, voice and representation in social dialogue and collective bargaining.

Normative Arrangements

- Recognizing domestic work as 'work' and recognizing domestic worker as 'worker'
- Ratification and implementation of ILO Convention 189 and adjustment of national legislations with the Convention.
- Taking legal measures considering specific conditions of domestic workers
- Ensuring effective implementation of inspection mechanisms on private employment agencies
- Ratification and implementation of the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment (No. 190)
- Development of an effective and inclusive social insurance system. Enabling premium incentives. Making arrangements on retirement. Development of social protection mechanisms.

Decent Working Conditions

- Providing same rights and working conditions as other employees in terms of hours of work, overtime pay, weekly rest, annual paid leave, fair wage standards and model employment contracts that will standardize working conditions
- Eliminating the difference between the rights of domestic workers who work less than 10 days and more than 10 days a month
- Raising awareness of both domestic workers and their employers on occupational safety and health)



TURNING ANALYSIS INTO RECOMMENDATIONS



- Combating all forms of discrimination against domestic workers
- Comprehensive protection of domestic workers against abuse, harassment and violence and providing grievance mechanisms, temporary accommodation, and health care services
- Development of professional competency system and delivery of occupational trainings

► Participation To The Decision-Making Processes And Advocacy

- Developing efficient social dialogue mechanisms
- Ensuring active involvement of trade unions organizing domestic workers in decision and policy making processes
- High level advocacy and collaboration to improve working conditions the of domestic workers
- Right of domestic workers and employers to establish and be members in associations and unions
- Developing methods to fill the gap on statistical data in calculating/estimating the numbers and unregistered numbers of domestic workers, eventually leading to grab the dimension of domestic workers' problems.

The development of policy recommendations for decent work for domestic workers has been supported by the ILO Office for Türkiye under Sweden-funded "[More and Better Job for Women Programme-II](#)". With this aim, the ILO Office for Türkiye conducted analysis, set up discussion platform, conducted awareness raising and advocacy activities.

Data Collection and Analysis: The ILO Office for Türkiye started collecting relevant data about domestic workers in 2020. This included information on their working conditions, wages, social protection, legal framework, and existing policies and/or practices. The data collected was analysed to identify trends, gaps, and challenges.





Since the COVID-19 crisis exacerbated the existing problems of domestic workers, ILO Office for Türkiye organized a webinar where Dr. Ceyhan Güler shared the preliminary findings of the study on domestic workers including the impact of COVID-19 pandemic undertaken under the Programme with multilateral support from such unions as IMECE, HIZMET-IS and EVIDSEN, BELEDİYE-İŞ, GENEL-İŞ, related public institutions as well as domestic workers in June 2021.

The ILO Office for Turkey conducted research and published a report, [Outlook of Domestic Work in Turkey: Scope, Dimensions and Challenges \(2021\)](#), authored by Dr. Ceyhan Güler. By conducting analysis, the ILO Office gathers valuable data and insights into the current situation of domestic workers in Türkiye. The report analyses the existing socio-economic and legal status and problems of domestic workers in the context of occupational safety and health, working conditions, employment methods, trade union rights and organization, supervision, and inspection, and proposes policy recommendations for domestic workers to work in decent conditions. Such information is crucial for identifying gaps and challenges in the existing policies and common practices related to domestic work. The report was shared with the public in an online event on 17 June 2021 with the

participation of representatives of workers' and employers' organizations and of public institutions, CSO's and related UN agencies.

Stakeholder Consultation:

Engaging with key stakeholders is crucial for developing comprehensive and effective policy recommendations. With this aim, ILO Office for Türkiye conducted consultations with domestic workers themselves, employers, workers' organizations, government officials, civil society organizations, and experts in the field. These consultations provide an opportunity to understand diverse perspectives, gather input, and ensure the recommendations are relevant and feasible.



In addition to webinar and conference, technical meetings were held for creating a common platform/coalition where policy makers/officials from the relevant public institutions and representatives of trade unions organizing domestic workers met and discussed the problems (informality, lack of statistical data on numbers and unregistered numbers of domestic workers etc) and policy level solutions at first hand.

Technical meetings were held under the broader theme of "Access to Decent Work and Work Conditions for Domestic Workers" with the

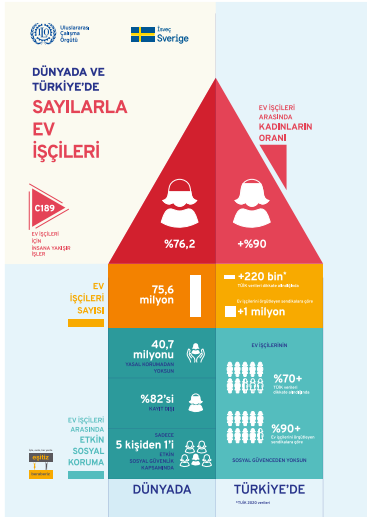
participation of platform/coalition members. These meetings paved the way for creating a common platform where policy makers/officials from the relevant public institutions and representatives of trade unions organizing domestic workers met and discussed the problems and policy level solutions at first hand.

During these meetings, the International Labour Standards and best practices related to domestic work and decent work were reviewed. This helps identify global benchmarks and recommendations that can inform the development of context-specific policy recommendations for Türkiye.

These processes resulted in increased engagement of various stakeholders on the subject. For example Ankara Metropolitan Municipality put the domestic workers issue on their agenda and a collaborative event on Occupational Safety and Health in Domestic Work Sector was organised. The women programme and refugee response programme of the ILO Türkiye Office joined forces for delivery of this workshop in collaboration with Ankara Metropolitan Municipality. Triggering this collaboration by "Supporting Resilience and Social Cohesion with Decent Livelihood Opportunities" project was important due to existence of high number of female migrant workers in the sector.

► Advocacy initiative raises awareness on DW & C189

Based on findings and recommendations of the Report, ILO Office for Türkiye also carried out an "Awareness-Raising Campaign for Decent Work for Domestic Workers" between 2021 and 2022. These activities include organizing technical meetings, seminars, and campaigns to engage different stakeholders,



including policymakers, employers, workers' organizations, civil society organizations, and the public. By highlighting the issues faced by domestic workers and promoting rights and benefits of decent work, the ILO Office aimed at keeping the issue higher on the agenda of public /policy makers/ social partners, exchanging information with partners, and ultimately developing policy recommendations for solutions through social dialogue practices. Additionally, the awareness raising, and advocacy activities carried out by the ILO Office help to raise public awareness about the importance of decent work for domestic workers.

The advocacy and communication materials addressed different target groups including domestic workers, their employers as well as public and policy makers. For each target group different materials were produced, such as [poster on C189](#), [infographic poster](#), a number of e-cards, billboard poster, [Employer Brochure](#), [Domestic Workers Brochure](#), and [short video on domestic workers](#), a [short video on employers](#) and [campaign videos with domestic workers and celebrities](#).

Likewise, in cooperation with the Actors' Union of Türkiye, celebrity engagement was ensured and short celebrity videos were produced to draw further public attention and raise awareness of broader audience on the working conditions of domestic workers. Burcu Biricik, Devin Özgür Çınar and Serdar Orçin, prominent and well-known figures of the world of arts, held interviews with three domestic workers in their homes to look into domestic work and domestic worker's problems from their perspectives, and these interview videos were presented to viewers in a meeting in İstanbul where most of the domestic workers lived. These videos were shared with public in communication channels.



► AS A CONCLUSION

Overall, the combination of analysis, awareness raising, and advocacy activities contributed significantly to the development of policy recommendations that aim to improve the conditions and rights of domestic workers in Türkiye. By promoting decent work for domestic workers, Türkiye can take a significant step towards creating a more inclusive and equitable labour market for all².

2 June 30 2020 – Outlook of Domestic Work in Türkiye: Scope, Dimensions and Issues – Virtual Meeting
 June 17 2021 – Tenth Anniversary of Domestic Workers Convention: Present And Future – Virtual Meeting
 November 17 2021 – Technical Meeting on “Expanding Social Protection Coverage for Domestic Workers” – Virtual Meeting
 April 27 2022 – Technical Meeting on “Access to Decent Work and Work Conditions for Domestic Workers” – Virtual Meeting
 June 23 2022 – Launch Conference on Domestic Workers Interview Video with the Celebrities



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