

WOMEN'S LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT IN TURKEY

PROBLEM AREAS AND POLICY SUGGESTIONS

17th April, 2009

KEIG

Women's Labor and Employment Initiative Platform¹

The neoliberal system surrounding our lives for the past thirty years has finally brought the world into an economic turmoil, the duration of which is indefinite and so is the extent of havoc it will lead to. The destruction caused by neoliberal policies is not limited to the existing economic crisis; today we are also faced with environmental, food and energy crises.

The current crisis of this unequal and destructive system resulted in the dreadful increase of unemployment and poverty in the global scale. As was the case in most of the previous crises, state intervention is suggested to be the only way out of this crisis. All over the world, and primarily in developed countries, the public sector had to overtake the losses of financial sector and big-scale enterprises by consecutive bailout plans to make the system work again. Cost of these bailout plans will be increased external and internal debts of public sector, high interest rates, inflation, decreased real wages and salaries, further limitations in public services and increased taxes, all of which will again be born by the public and especially by the women.

¹ KEIG is a platform, which aims to continuously monitor the status of women's rights in order to contribute to women's liberation by way of determining problems and producing policy recommendations in the area of women's labor and employment since its establishment in 2006. KEIG (www.keig.org) is the platform of twenty seven women's organizations working on women's labor and employment. Those organizations are as follows in alphabetic order: Antalya Women Consultancy and Solidarity Center (Antalya); Avclar Women's Cooperative (Istanbul); Buca House of Women's Culture and Solidarity (Izmir); Canakkale Entrepreneur Women's Cooperative of Production and Marketing (Canakkale); Cigli House of Women's Culture and Solidarity (Izmir); The Association of Valuing Women's Labor (Canakkale); Association for Solidarity and Development of Housewives (Adana); Association for Supporting Women Entrepreneurs (Denizli); Izmir Association for Women's Solidarity (Izmir); Kadav New Step Women's Site (Kocaeli); KADER (Istanbul); Association for Women's Education and Employment (Ankara); Women's Labor and Social Working Group (Ankara); Group of Women Engineers (Istanbul); Group of Women Unionists (Istanbul); Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR) – New Ways (Istanbul); Foundation of Solidarity with Women (Istanbul); KAGIDER (Istanbul); Foundation of Women's Center (Diyarbakir); KEFA Feminist Researchers Studying on Women's Labor (Istanbul); Kirkoruk Cooperative of Struggle Against Violence Against Women (Ankara); Petrol Is Women's Magazine (Istanbul); Selis (Diyarbakir); Social Development and Gender Equality Policies Center (Istanbul); Women's Group of Union of Turkish Medical Doctors (Ankara); Van Women's Association (Van); Yasam Evi Women's Solidarity Center (Urfa).

One of the main sources fostering this system is the sexist inequalities. While capitalism forms mechanisms within patriarchal structures and relations that will increase its profit, it reinforces and maintains the patriarchal system. For instance; the fact that neither the state nor the employers ever attempt to provide widespread child and elderly care or undertake any costs for these services is a result of the role imposed on women by the patriarchal system. On the other hand, this is how local and global producers can find women to do piecework at their homes for very low earnings. Thus, women, who are confined to their homes both by patriarchy and capitalism, earn much less than a low paid workshop employee, even though they both do the same work.

Women have undertaken nearly all the housework and care services (like the care of the children, elderly and the ill) required by the family and the society. A significant part of this work should be provided in scope of public services, by crèches and day care centers that should be established central and local governments' initiatives. However, neoliberal policies that restrict public expenditures encourage these care services to be marketable goods which can be attained only by those who can afford it while they remain inaccessible for those who don't have the money. Funds allocated from the state budget to public services is further limited during times of crisis, which results in intensified volumes of care services to be laid upon the shoulders of women. On the other hand, as the family incomes get lower, women undertake the services available in the market as they are no longer affordable. As a result; while spending more labor for housework and care services, women become bound to accept any job that may provide an income just to compensate for the decrease or lack of men's earnings.

It is said that women are the first ones to be laid off in times of crises. Although this is generally true, it is a known fact that in certain sectors, the men who work with relatively high wages and social security are laid off and replaced by women as the cheap and

compliant labor force. Such examples show us that sexist inequalities and domineering relations between women and men are complementary and transitory between the spaces inside and outside the home. The distribution of male/female roles at home and outside grows stronger by feeding on one another. Furthermore, the sexist system gets to be fostered by all other social inequalities and relations of domination. Exactly for this reason, we want a world in which not only the domination over women and gender inequalities, but all social inequalities are eliminated. We want a world where ecological balance is restored and food security is provided. We want a world free from exploitation, oppression, violence, and wars. We think that women's liberation can be possible only in such a world.

Although egalitarian legal reforms are sine qua non first steps for the elimination of sexist oppressions, we know that this alone is not sufficient to eradicate all kinds of discriminatory and unequal practices. We know that sexist domination practices have an infinite variety of facets, ranging from a country's mode of resource utilization to the expenditure items in family budgets; from social protection to environmental conditions and infrastructure services; from the regulation of school hours to the availability of crèches and day care centers; from violence against women to the perception of women as sex objects, and the evolution of oppressive gender roles.

In this study, as the KEIG Platform, we availed of experiences and knowledge of women's movements in Turkey and abroad and aspired to determine the fundamental problems especially in the economic sphere in order to take a step towards the eradication of all kinds of structures, relations, laws and implementations that engender discrimination against and domination over women. We developed suggestions on the primary actions and changes that need to be undertaken within these problem areas. Surely, both our assessments and suggestions are yet to be perfected in order to create the world we wanted.

We have a long way ahead of us.

MAIN PROBLEM AREAS

Women's employment in rural areas and the break away from agriculture

Despite the rapid decrease in agricultural employment, agriculture continues to be the sector

with the highest level of women's employment. According to the November 2008 data,² share of agricultural employment in the overall employment of women is 45 percent. The decrease in agricultural income has led men to gradually leave this sector, resulting in the feminization of agriculture. In the rural areas, on top of the care services they provide for their families, women also carry on production activities at home (production of bread, tomato paste, cheese, yogurt, etc.) and also participate in agricultural production outside the home. Mostly women undertake the labor intensive works in small and middle scale enterprises; their workload is usually heavier than that of the men.

In addition to their domestic labor, women participate in agricultural production and are subject to hard working conditions and heavy work load. Moreover a significant number of these women work without pay in the fields of male members of their families, or the income they make in activities like marketing or paid labor is confiscated by the men. Taking into consideration the laws regulating heritage, women should have inherited a substantial amount of land, yet we see that this has not happened especially in Eastern and South Eastern regions. Due to patriarchal traditions, women are still obligated to part with their legal rights in favor of men. Another problem is the fact that 98 percent of the women who work in agriculture are not registered. A huge number of women in rural areas are excluded from the social security system.

On the other hand, women of families that own little or no land, participate in production as migrant or temporary workers. Migrant agriculture workers constitute the most disadvantaged group in agricultural employment. These workers, most of whom are Kurdish, are at times subject to ill treatment also due to their ethnicity. Their earnings are very low in addition to the extremely unfavorable conditions of housing, health, work, sustenance and transportation. They have to stay in patchy tents near the fields and lack facilities like hygienic toilets, bathrooms, laundry, kitchen or clean drinking water. In these adverse conditions, women try to carry out tasks like cooking, washing, dishes and childcare. Moreover, the dangerous modes of transportation to and from their villages and the work area threaten their very lives. Gathering and transportation of the migrant workers and their modes of work are all realized in a system of intense patriarchal relations.

² Unless otherwise specified, all statistical data in the report is taken from the Household Workforce Survey of TUIK.

Another problem area awaiting an urgent solution is women's withdrawal from agricultural employment. Women, who have receded from agricultural employment due to agricultural mechanization or migration to urban areas, do not have easy access to non-agricultural employment opportunities and are thus left with the options of either becoming a "housewife" or taking on informal jobs in the cities. Neoliberal policies that started to be implemented in the agriculture sector in the 1980s have picked up speed especially since 2001 through the abolition of agricultural subsidies and the introduction of direct income support, and have led to the demise of small scale producers and the constant decrease in the number of agricultural production fields and animals. As a result of these policies, between the years 2001 and 2007, 1.164 million women working in agriculture mostly as unpaid family workers were excluded from agricultural employment; the rate of women's employment in rural areas decreased 10 points in those 6 years and dropped from 41 to 31 percent; while the non-agricultural unemployment rate of women in rural areas increased from 11 to 19 percent. Consequently, it is evident that though there is a rapid break away from the agricultural employment; the non-agricultural employment opportunities are far from compensating the resulting gap with regards the women.

Low level of women's employment in the urban areas

Increase in employment in non-agricultural sectors that is concentrated in the cities falls much behind the increase in the population joining the labor force. Governments ignore the fact that the problem of low levels of employment we face today is essentially a problem of low employment levels of women or the exclusion of women from the labor market. In the cities, with regard to women over 15 years old, only 1 out of every 5 women is employed.

According to the population census data, the economic growth in Turkey between 1955-1990 created only 1.3 million jobs in non-agricultural sectors for women while it created around 7 million jobs for men; that is 5.5 times more jobs. **In other words**, the economic development process oriented to industry and services rather than agriculture involves a growth fostering gender inequalities. As one of the results of this, Turkey is one of the 10 countries to have the lowest women employment rate.

Number of women working in labor intensive works like garment production has been increased as a result of governments' attitude, beginning from 1980s, to lean international

competitiveness on export of labor intensive products. Yet, women work in small workshops in bad conditions with low wages and without social security. Hereby, unregistered sector has growth increasingly and mostly women's labor is used in export oriented production and commerce.

Unregistered employment

According to the December 2008 data, 58 percent of employed women engaged in unregistered sectors. For men this rate is 38 percent. An important development in 2000s is that the rate of increase in unregistered non-agricultural works is twice more than the rate of increase in non-agricultural employment. Considering that mostly women work in marginal and unregistered jobs in urban, it can be said that the significant part of the increase in employment in non-agricultural sectors is oriented to women's labor. Given that formal statistics cannot measure unregistered work in full, it is clear that the rate of women's unregistered work is more than the formally stated statistics.

Women work unregistered in small family enterprises in manufacturing industry or services sectors as unpaid family workers without receiving any payment for their labor. Unregistered work is very common among self-employed women (79 percent) as well as in manufacturing industry or services sectors and very high in comparison with men (52 percent). Unregistered work is a serious problem among waged worker women, too. One fourth of women work as unregistered.

There are thousands of women working as unregistered workers in small enterprises in services sector as secretary, telephone operator, hairdresser, manicurist, cashier, etc. Various women's groups or organizations work for unregistered working women to get organized. For instance, Cooperative of Women Working without Social Security İMECE (Güvencesiz Çalışan Kadınlar Kooperatifi İMECE) is an organization includes domestic servants, care workers, cleaning women and charwomen. Home-based women workers also have their own organizations. The establishment of Solidarity Network of Home-based Working Women in Turkey (HomeNet Turkey) in 2007 represents an important milestone in the organizing process of home-based working. This network is not a support or income generating organization solely. It is also an important institution in terms of being a home-based women worker's rights-based organization.

The unions are insufficient at organizing unregistered workers in Turkey. Organization of unregistered workers can be ignored. Demands of those workers (i.e. subcontracted workers) can be the first to recede during collective bargaining process even when existence of such an organization is accepted. Furthermore, unions can sometimes demand some kinds of unregistered work to be banned.

There is sectoral and occupational gender segregation. Women's promotion chances are very limited.

Women's jobs/men's jobs segregation, both sectoral and occupational, is very distinct. 40 percent of employed women in cities are white collar workers and the percentage of women working generally in services sector as unskilled labor is almost the same (40 percent). The percentage of blue collar women workers is approximately 20 percent. Women work in non-agricultural sectors mostly as nurses, salespersons, teachers, administrative staffs, receptionists, and cleaning workers in hotels. Women usually work in jobs closely related to domestic labor and care work. One of the foremost results of this sexist segmentation is the high pay gap between men and women workers doing the jobs of the same value.

Although the percentage of women in professional occupations is relatively high (29 percent), eliminating the visible and invisible barriers to the promotion of women would not be possible. Women are hardly in middle and junior management positions; the percentage of women in lawmaking, high management and, administrator positions was only 3 percent in 2006, while it was 11 percent for men.³

There is a huge pay gap

Most of the women, who managed to participate in the labor force, are employed in jobs with low wages and without promotion opportunities and it cannot be possible for them to receive the same wage with men even when they do the work of same value. There is a pay gap of 22

³ Tan, Mine (2008). Education, Gender Inequality in Turkey: Problems, Priorities and Solution Recommendation, "in Update of the Report Walk towards Gender Equality: Education, Working Life and Politics, TUSIAD-KAGİDER , İstanbul, p. 49, 84.

percent between average wages of women and men in cities in Turkey.⁴ Studies indicate that the pay gap between women and men working in private sector is higher than 50 percent and there is an undeniable wage inequality between women and men even when the factors such as education and work experience are fixed.

The fact that women receive lower wages than men doing the job of the same value is determinative in two aspects: firstly; it makes women dependent on men. This dependency is both economical and political and there is a fostering relationship between these two. While men's wage is determined as family wage, women's wage is considered as supplementary of men's. Secondly, with regard to capital's exercise of control over labor, it perpetuates women's jobs/men's jobs segregation by splitting the labor market.

Exclusion from social security

It is expected from a social security system to provide a life with human dignity for all citizens during old age, pregnancy, parenting, and unemployment periods; to furnish income and care security to them during the times of accidents, illness, and disability, and survivor's pension security for the ones left behind in case of death by using the redistribution role of the state with a consideration of inequalities in social life. An important part of the population has been excluded from social security system, which was already limited and deficient, with the Social Security and General Health Insurance Law no. 5510.

The new social security system, like the old one, has included only the individuals working and contributing in the system, in other words only the registered workers instead of including all society with a citizenship rights based approach. The second negative nature of the new social security system is that insurance provided to a big amount of contributors will stay on paper. Those people will be destitute of most of the aspects of social security since they would not be able to fulfill the requirements (especially for old age insurance) or to pay the contribution fee (especially for health services) for making use of these benefits.

Women are one of the primary groups that are excluded from social security. Housewives and women working/employed uninsured are made depended on their husbands and fathers (if

⁴ World Bank (2006) Turkey Labor Market Study Report No. 33254-Tr, p.55.

they are insured) with regard to social security. The consideration behind this implementation has two important aspects:

Firstly, the social security system prefers to approach women as persons dependent on their fathers or husbands instead of supporting and taking them under protection as individuals contributing in social production.

Secondly, this law excludes a lot of paid women working inside or outside home. This group is divided into two categories. The first category is composed of women receiving wage and income uncovered by the said law. For instance, charwomen in houses (daily servants), temporary (seasonal) workers in agriculture, small-size manufacturers who earn less than minimum wage and are exempt from income tax, trades people, home-based workers, and unpaid family workers. The second category is composed of unregistered women, who are in illegal employment relations and whose social security contributions are not paid by the employers. Government does not consider including all those women in social security system as a necessitate.

Voluntary insurance that was proposed as an alternative to housewives by the previous social security system and has been benefited from only by a limited number of women till now became inaccessible for this small group too, because of the high premiums.

It was expected from a social security system that promised to protect its citizens from risks in life to define a right of social security for situations where it is impossible for women to stay in family. It is crucial to give the right to health insurance and social monthly pay with no premium to women who are subjected to domestic violence to make those women able to leave the place of violence and to support them to start a new life on their own with free will.

Male dominant structures of unions exclude women

The rate of unionization in Turkey is around 9 percent. Number of workers with union membership is 892 thousands. Women workers make up only 10 percent of union members and are not represented on union boards. Only 19 out of 489 board members are women.⁵

⁵ Çelik, Aziz (2007). *Women and Unions*, <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/kategori/kadin/93376/kadinlar-ve->

This data reveals the male dominant structure of unions in our country.

There is no women's organization formed by election within the structure of Türk-İş, DİSK and HAK-İŞ – three main confederations of worker's union's in Turkey. While Türk-İş and DİSK have one women's bureau each in their headquarters, there is no such a formal bureau in HAK-İŞ. There is only an expert working in women's issues in HAK-İŞ. Although a decision was made in 1993 relating to the establishment of women's committees in every member unions of Türk-İş, it cannot be said that this decision is implemented. On the other hand, Women's Labor Platform established by Türk-İş is an important step; however it could not fulfill its mission and it became non-functional.

A CRITICAL OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

This section comes up with our critics regarding some solutions for increasing women's employment recommended frequently in recent years. With these critics we aim to refute the cliché that considers increasing of women's employment is only possible by “increasing women's education levels, having a flexible labor market and, increasing women's entrepreneurship”. In the following section, we make recommendations to improve women's labor and employment on the bases of above discussed issues. Many of those recommendations composed of our demands regarding rights that we have struggled for many years and that we will keep on struggling for.

Increasing education levels of women cannot be a solution for all problems of women regarding employment

The correlation between education and problems of women's labor and employment has been raised frequently by different groups and the fact that women have less access to education opportunities than men is considered as one of the main reasons of gender inequality in employment. This is a partially true determination. Funds allocated to education should be increased and all children should have access to qualified, equal, and free education. There are serious measures to be taken in the field of education to extend literacy courses for women, to increase girls' schooling rate and education levels, to guarantee equal access for

women to all education opportunities. However, the fact that education is not solely enough to increase women's employment is revealed clearly by current statistics, too. Labor force participation rate of women is considerably low when compared to men having the same education level. For instance, according to the data of December 2008 the labor force participation rate of primary school graduate women is 21 percent while it is 70 percent for men with the same education level; labor force participation rate of high school graduate women is 34 percent while it is 75 percent for men with the same education level; labor force participation rate of university graduate women is 72 percent while it is 84 percent for university graduate men. The inequality between women and men having same education level is crucial. Fostering of male dominant ideology by various centers of power including family and state institutions lies at the root of this injustice.

In addition to the deficiency of formal and informal occupational training opportunities for women, the type of education foments the segregation of women's and men's jobs and mostly reproduces the sexual division of labor.

Although there is no legal constraint in matriculating persons of opposite sex to technical schools for girls and boys till 1975 and there is a similarity in curriculums of those schools, only a limited transformation could be done in traditional gender composition of those schools. Still 80 percent of students in occupational technical girls' schools are girls and only 12 percent of students in occupational technical boys' schools are girls. It is necessary to combine General Directorates of Technical Education for Girls and Boys into one structure that will not involve a gender codification.

Flexible work can be accepted only in existence of fair wages and social security

Flexible and part time works are regulations that can be preferred by some workers. However, employers make use of different types of flexible work to decrease the labor costs. Furthermore, according to the regulations of new Social Security and General Health Insurance it is almost impossible for persons working flexible and part time to get the pension rights. Those types of work can only be accepted in the existence of fair wages and social security.

Women's employment problem cannot be solved solely by women's entrepreneurship

Women's entrepreneurship has gone beyond the issue of women's employment issue, in recent years. Women's entrepreneurship is proposed as the unique solution for increasing women's employment, instead of being discussed as a part of women's employment. Furthermore, it is claimed that women's entrepreneurship will eliminate poverty, empower women, ensure gender equality, and improve national economy. Yet, the increase in the number of women entrepreneurs – in fact it is not increasing considerably – is far away to reach the claimed targets.

Starting from 1990s, the issue of women's entrepreneurship increasingly became one of the main topics at the agenda of women's organizations, trade associations of entrepreneurs/employers, civil society organizations, governmental institutions and international organizations. Women's organizations working on women's rights and civil rights came face to face during their experience sharing and awareness raising activities with the increasing demands of women to earn money in order to take a step in having economic independency and/or to struggle with poverty. At the same time, some international institutions encouraged projects on women's entrepreneurship as a "new" component of neo-liberal program for struggling with poverty. As these two processes overlapped, women's organizations started to respond to the call for project proposals of international institutions without evaluating their capacities and opportunities sufficiently. Effects of those small scale projects implemented by women's organizations with limited capacities are limited, too.

On the other hand, governmental institutions such as KOSGEP and İŞKUR, and trade associations of entrepreneurs/employers such as TOBB, TESK, TÜSİAD, TÜRKKONFED, approach women's entrepreneurship as a social responsibility project, without changing their organizational structure. Those institutions firstly should transform their organizational structure and functioning to ensure and interiorize gender equality whereas to improve both women's employment and entrepreneurship. Although there is a high interest in women's entrepreneurship issue, we cannot say that the male dominant structure in organizational functioning of those institutions is abolished.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender equality approach should be included in Development Plans

Development Plans are the main policy documents presented to public by the governments. The 9th Development Plan 2007-2013 has determined 5 economic and social development axis: 1) Increasing competitiveness, 2) Increasing employment, 3) Improving human development and social solidarity, 4) Ensuring regional development, 5) Improving quality and efficiency in public services.

Women are mentioned only in disadvantage groups under the issue of social policy in this basic policy paper. However, all development axes have sexist effects and results. Because of this,

1. Ensuring gender equality should be adopted to be the fundamental principle of Development Plans and it should be linked to quantitative and qualitative targets within the development axis and sectoral priorities.
2. Authorities should act in accordance with the target of ensuring gender equality while maintaining both financial and monetary policies and, medium-term program, medium-term financial plan and annual plans should be redesigned to this effect.
3. Special budget items should be included in the budget for active measures to transform sexist structures.
4. Implementation results should be evaluated and audited continuously by independent monitoring mechanisms.

A governmental commitment should be built to adopt gender mainstreaming strategy that Turkey has committed in the presence of international institutions, of United Nations being foremost, in the largest scale. Coordination between central and local administrations should be ensured in accordance with this new vision. It is obvious that this new strategy necessitates financial resources to be restructured to eliminate gender inequalities. Gender budgeting should be implemented in Turkey to put this strategy into effect beyond commitments.

Gender budgeting is essential for equality

Gender sensitive analysis of all income and expenses should be done and, preparation of gender sensitive budgets in all levels should be provided for ensuring gender equality.

European Parliament has prescribed in its several resolutions in 2003 to consider gender equality in all levels of budgeting and to structure all income and expenses to provide for gender equality.⁶

The report⁷ of Council of Europe published in 2005 and in which gender sensitive budgeting implementations in 12 countries is evaluated, mentions Conditional Cash Transfer Application within the scope of the Social Risk Mitigation Project implemented by Social Solidarity Fund as the only example for Turkey. As is known, this implementation started in 2003 is a child focused application targeting the poorest 6 percent of the population. In its education component that National Ministry of Education is also involved, higher payments are done for girl child with the consideration of relatively low schooling rate of girl child. It is also targeted to empower women by making those payments to mothers. In its health component that Ministry of Health is also involved, it is targeted to prevent infant, child and mother mortality and, to reduce morbidity. The conditional Cash Transfer is maintained through local representatives (governorships and district governorships) of central administration.

The Public Financial Management and Control Law no. 5018, which has been introduced in late 2003 and in implementation till 2005, underlines participatory budgeting and transparency. This new settlement also highlights performance assessment and effectiveness monitoring of expenses. It envisages strategic planning and determination of targets coherent with vision and mission in every level of public institutions. Public and Financial Management and Control Law is a proper tool for designing gender sensitive budgeting in every level of public administration. However, when the current situation is considered the question of which public institution included what kinds of arrangements regarding eliminating gender inequalities in their strategic plans stays unanswered since those are not given place in general strategy. The same situation is valid for methods, too.

Employment strategies should be prepared

Creating new employment areas and ensuring them to be open to women is one of the basic

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/gender_mainstreaming/budgeting/budgeting_en.html

⁷ Gender Budgeting, <http://www.coe.int/equality>

responsibilities of the state and the private sector. In this regard, active employment policies devoted to mitigation of unemployment should be formed and a comprehensive women's employment policy should be incorporated. A planning comprises concrete and time-limited targets should be done to put those policies into implementation in a timely manner and, related institutions and mechanisms should be provided with enough funds and human resources via allocated funds from the budget to make them able to implement the equality policies that will be determined. In addition, employment policies should consider income inequalities between regions.

New steps should be taken in order to make rural women's labor visible; to increase schooling rate of girl child in rural areas; to ensure equal access of women and men to land ownership, new techniques, loan opportunities and, markets; to support and increase the number of women's cooperatives by including gender approach to those policies.

Discrimination in employment, vocational training and promotion should be eliminated

Public and private sector institutions should develop active mechanisms that will ensure questioning and transformation of gender based discrimination women are subjected to in every aspects such as employment, vocational training and promotion to ensure gender equality and to struggle with all kinds of discrimination. Labor relation in Labor Code should be defined to include "engagement process" to eliminate discrimination during recruitment process.

Along with training on vocational skills, training programs that will increase knowledge and skills on 'women's human rights' and will raise awareness on limitations created by gender roles should be included as a prerequisite in employment training programs targeting women and implementing by public institutions and private institutions with public funds. On the other hand, vocational training programs should be formed to be a part of the employment strategy that will be developed in accordance with employment demand and in different areas rather than sewing, needlecraft and, carper weaving, which are considered to be "women's jobs". Vocational courses with employment guarantee should have women's quota.

Sexual harassment should be prevented

Institutional structures devoted to prevent gender based discrimination and sexual harassment at the workplace should be developed and maintained urgently. The scope of the Labor code should be expanded to include ban of discrimination on the bases of sexual orientation along with gender based discrimination.

Establishment of counseling and solidarity bureaus against sexual harassment at the workplace should be provided.

Working conditions should be improved

The scope of the Labor Code is very narrow with regard to women's employment; necessary regulations should be done in this code not only for increasing women's employment but also for improving working conditions. In this regard, women working temporarily and with daily fee in house services should be covered by the code.

Agriculture-Labor Code should be introduced urgently and this code should be prepared with gender approach.

An objective job classification system that wages are based on should be developed in order to be able to implement the principle of equal pay for equal value work.

Minimum wage should be determined for depended home-based workers, too. Legal regulations and mechanisms that make home-based workers able to declare and enrolled themselves as home-based workers should be formed and including of those workers in social security system should be ensured.

Efficient auditing should be provided by Ministry of Labor and Social Security, İŞ-KUR and, Social Security Institution in order to protect all working rights of workers. In this regard, all auditing personnel should be trained on gender equality in accordance with international standards within the scope of their vocational training.

Positive discrimination should be implemented

Positive discriminations should be implemented until a balanced structure between women

and men in working life is established; state should encourage the implementation of positive discrimination.

Regulations are needed to ensure decisive gender equality in economic, social and political life. Temporary special measures and support policies should be implemented in recruitment and promotion processes in public and private workplaces until the equality in social life is reached.

Women's representation in unions should be ensured

Laws no. 2821 and 2822, which block unionization, should be amended. Those current laws block unionization with their regulations on threshold for obtaining the authorization for collective labor agreement and they almost make impossible to strike. Related regulations of the law do not provide protection when employers dismiss workers because of being a union's member. A worker who affiliates with a union should take the risk of being fired. This situation hinders the development of unions and makes it difficult for unions to act as democratic institutions.

Worker's union's federations should make structural arrangements that will provide for gender equality within their institutional structures. Those arrangements should be determined by statute. Ratio of women in administrative positions of unions should be increased via temporary special measures.

Demands and policies regarding women should be included in policies and papers of unions on issues of organizing, collective labor agreement, education, law, and external relations.

Women's quotas should be imposed in general training programs of unions. Childcare services should be provided for children of women members of unions during implementation of training programs.

Gender training programs for men, including employed men experts and administrators of unions, should be implemented.

Improving women's rights should be one of the main topics of the struggle maintaining by

unions. Collective agreements should include decisions that eliminate discrimination against women at the workplace as they include decisions that will provide gender equality. Demands on crèches, parental leave, equal pay, etc. should be joint demands of workers rather than being demands of women workers only.

Women should be considered while designing the policies regarding organizing. Women should be employed to organize women workers with regard to the principle of “persons organize persons who are similar to them”.

Unions should set up a budget to be used for activities related to organizing of women.

Law on Unions should be amended to provide the right to be a member of unions for all workers, including unregistered workers. Unions should struggle against exploitation together with unregistered workers rather than seeing them as a competitive element.

Policies regarding reconciliation of work and family life are urgently needed

Because of the sexist approach of “women are responsible for the housework–family–care of children, men earn money out of the house”, women never participate to labor force or do all the work in house without sharing with any family member even they participate to labor force. This unequal division of labor is an important reason of the labor force participation gap between women and men, some branch of professions to be closed to women, pay gaps, low representation of women in administrative positions and unions.

We do not accept such kind of working conditions put women in a work-family dilemma in the name of providing equality. We ask the workload within the family, a vast amount of which is shouldered by women, to be undertaken by public services. Our demands regarding reconciliation of work and family life can be classified under three headlines:

Maternity leave: Implementation of maternity leave should be complemented with “faternity leave” and it should be provided for families to look after their babies at least for the 6 months after child birth within the scope of a paid leave implementation. On the other hand, implementation of in-service training - which will make easier the adoption of women to changed working conditions after they return from maternity leave - by employers, should be

ensured and it should be guaranteed that women will work at the same or same value position after maternity leave. Labor Code should be amended with regard to this issue.

Working hours: When the long working hours are combined with “second working day” of women at home, women can decide to leave their jobs. Working hours should be shortened for all workers to make them able to allocate time for their private lives and families.

Arrangements regarding services: Responsibilities of women and men should be reconsidered with a gender equality perspective and, mechanisms should be introduced to transform the existing mentality. In this context, responsibilities shouldered by women such as care for children, elderly and ill should be accepted as social responsibilities which should be undertaken by women and men equally and those services should be provided via allocating public and private sector resources. In this regard;

In Regulation no. 25522 on Work Conditions of Pregnant or Nursing Women and Nurseries and Childcare Centers, the obligation of opening nurseries is connected to the condition of having a workplace with between a hundred and a hundred and fifty female workers and, the obligation of opening childcare centers is connected to the condition of having a workplace with a hundred and fifty and more female workers. This regulation should be amended to determine conditions according to the number of “women and men workers” and the number of total workers that will be determined as a condition for opening those facilities should be decreased in order to diffuse responsibility between women and men equally, to prevent discrimination in engagement process, to extend the responsibility of crèches. For instance, considering that the ratio of the workplaces with 150 and more workers in manufacturing is very low (0.7 percent in total manufacturing workplaces), obligations in this manner should be introduced to central and local administrations and small-scale employers to extend the responsibility of crèches. For example, obligation of opening nurseries and crèches should be introduced to Industrial Zones and Small Industrial Estates.

In addition, enterprises should be closely audited and documented (presently, it is impossible to reach information and data on workplaces with 150 and more workers and their crèches) with regard to the implementation of this article by Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MLSS). Determined fines for violations of those obligations should be deterrent.

Central government has entered into no obligation regarding crèche services for children 0-4 years old except than the limited implementation of kinder gardens for 5 years old children started by Ministry of National Education (MNE). Pre-school education is delegated completely to families and especially to women. Government should take necessary measures regarding implementation and funds allocation to extend the care and pre-school education institutions urgently.

Short school hours push women out of working life, who have to take care of their children at home. School hours should be made fit with the working hours of adults via etude implementations after school hours, especially for primary school students.

The prerequisite for cash transfers allocated to families from Social Solidarity Fund (SSF) for elderly and disabled care, which necessitates for the person undertook the care work not to work outside, should be abolished. Cash transfer implementation for elderly and disabled care is an implementation which confines women at home. On the other hand, to confine elderly and disabled people at home isolates them from social life. Because of this, institutional care for disabled people is very much important not only for rehabilitation but also as a tool for socialization. Government should present clearly how much funds it has allocated and what kinds of implementations it has carried out regarding care for elderly and disabled people.