



Newsletter

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NEWS FROM ILO-ANKARA

Study on Women's Employment in Turkey launched

A research study on women's employment was recently completed, in line with the priorities of the ILO Turkey Decent Work Country Program. The research which was conducted by Prof. Gülay Toksöz of the University of Ankara Women's Studies Center was presented at a meeting held on 10 December 2007 in Ankara. Findings of the research were evaluated from different angles at three discussion panels conducted during the meeting.

Following opening speeches by ILO Ankara Director Gülay Aslantepe, Turkish Employment Organization (İŞKUR) Director Namık Ata and Ministry of Labour and Social Security Deputy Undersecretary Mustafa Gür, Prof. Toksöz gave a presentation of highlights of her report. While the employment rate for men in Turkey is 68% which relatively close to the 71% rate for EU-25 countries, the employment rate for women in Turkey is only 24%, less than half the rate of 56% in EU-25. In 2006, 68% of women in employment worked outside of any social protection system. This rate for men was 44% for the same period. The report also points out that 90% of women working on their own account are in the informal economy, compared to 61% of men. The unemployment rate for women is a high 25%, including those seeking employment and who are underemployed. Reasons for women's low participation in the labour market include gender-based division of work, a patriarchal mindset and insufficiency of child and elderly care services.

Some of the recommendations of the report to promote women's employment in Turkey are as follows:

- Formulation of the National Strategy for Women's Employment with the participation of social partners and women's organizations under the leadership of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security;
- Expanding the scope of public services in child, sick and elderly care on the premise that such care is a social responsibility to be shared on an equal basis by men as well;
- Municipalities, Social Services and Child Protection Agency and Ministry of National Education should develop action plans for services they will provide in child and elderly care and implementation of these plans should be closely monitored;
- Adoption of positive discrimination for women in order to encourage their employment and introduction of employment subsidies for female workers to be recruited;
- Amending income and corporate tax laws in a way to encourage women's employment;
- According purchasing guarantees to female entrepreneurs or giving priority to female contractors in public tenders;
- Ensuring that women in flexible employment have the same rights with full-time workers
- Combating informal employment by adopting an approach that supports small enterprises;
- As part of a comprehensive reform in vocational and technical training, training of young girls in areas other than their traditional gender roles;



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- Adoption of a provision in the İŞKUR Foundation Law to include the promotion of women's employment as one of the fundamental missions of the organization;
 - Using resources accumulating in the unemployment insurance fund especially for the vocational training of otherwise uncovered young girls and women.

Following the presentation of the report, representatives from HAK-İŞ, DİSK, TÜRK-İŞ, TİSK and Ministry of Labour and Social Security expressed their views about the findings and made recommendations. Further, in three separate panel discussions throughout the day, representatives from government agencies, workers' and employers' organizations and women's NGOs addressed the state of employment of women in Turkey under the headings of care services, flexible forms of employment and entrepreneurship.

IPEC-EU Project ends with final conference

An agreement between the European Commission and ILO was signed in November 2005 for the implementation of the project entitled "Eradicating the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Turkey" for the period 2005-2007. The technical assistance project was managed by the ILO Office in Turkey with its main institutional national counterpart, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

In collaboration with national counterparts, both at the national and provincial levels, outstanding success was achieved. A major achievement was the commitment of MoLSS at the policy making level and governors at the provincial levels to the sustainability of the project. The project also contributed to building national and local capacity and ownership. A systematic approach to capacity building was pursued. National and local efforts were compatible and mutually reinforcing. Major progress was achieved in building local capacity to collect and use data for monitoring child labour. Remarkable results were noted in withdrawing children from the worst forms of child labour and preventing them from re-engaging in child labour and ensuring their rehabilitation.

In order to increase the effectiveness of these activities, the project placed particular emphasis on strengthening existing institutional capacities at the district and local levels. Although this project targeted a total of 1,500 children, the project reached 4,891 children and provided 4,568 of them with educational and rehabilitative services.

Though initially the project targeted 200 families, success was achieved in this respect as well. The project was able to reach 1,722 family members of the targeted children and provided them with information and knowledge, awareness-raising and provision of income-generation activities.

The project has been selected as a success story by European Commission's DG for Enlargement in their first exercise of "selected projects from candidate countries". (http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/key_documents/selected_project/index_en.htm)

USDOL IPEC Project draws to a close

International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) projects funded by the USA Department of Labour have been finalized as of 31 December 2007. Participating partners, Ministry of National Education, General Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection Agency, Labour Inspection Board, Child Labour Unit of Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions, Confederation of Turkish Employers' Associations, HAK-İŞ Trade Union Confederation, Turkish Statistical Institute and Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality have all completed on time their direct action programmes geared towards children working in seasonal commercial agriculture, in street trades and in furniture manufacturing. These children have been withdrawn from their work environments and channeled into accessing or receiving education. The participation of provincial governorships, the municipalities and local NGOs in the mobilization of local resources was beyond expectations and all of the action programmes surpassed the original targets. The project at the end of 2007 has withdrawn or prevented more than 19,000 children from the worst forms of child labour. The sustainability after phasing out of IPEC support has been ensured for all the programmes through coordination of the implementing agencies with the local governments.

The ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities (Geneva-ACT/EMP) and the Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations jointly organized, with the support of ILO IPEC, the Inter-Regional Conference on Sharing Experiences and Lessons Learnt on Child Labour in late September 2007. The 2-day conference held in İstanbul was attended by high-level representatives from employers' organizations in 12 countries from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia. Employers' representatives of Turkey, Azerbaijan and Moldova shared their experiences in combating child labour. ILO experts made presentations on the role of employers in the fight against child labour and on the importance of tackling child labour in the agricultural sector where more than 70% of the 218 million child labourers are found. The aim was to inspire employers to take action and to better enable employers' organizations to design strategies and programmes aimed at addressing the problem in their respective countries, with particular attention given to the gender dimension of child labour.

A Joint Statement adopted by the Conference highlighted that child labour was a serious concern which employers' organizations were committed to eliminate. It stated that sustainable social and economic development was not possible without complete elimination of child labour and called upon governments, trade unions, other employers' organizations, civil society and the international community to cooperate in this common cause. The employers' organizations declared their commitment to raise awareness of child labour; to advocate compliance with national and international laws on child labour; to cooperate with national governments in developing and implementing elimination strategies at the national, regional and sectoral level, in particular, towards the worst forms of child labour, and to

promote education and health policies that support the lives and skills of children.

In its conclusion, the Statement reads, “This Conference will hopefully mark a turning point in the international challenge to combat child labour. We need to pull together to tackle the vital, urgent and complex problem of child labour. We are mindful of the fact that today’s children are tomorrow’s future.”

Also during the conference, concrete steps to promote collaboration between employers’ organizations on tackling child labour were discussed, with concrete proposals tabled for a future Inter-Regional Conference to be held in Azerbaijan.

Representatives from the following Employers’ organizations attended the Conference:

- Albanian Council of Employers
- National Confederation of Entrepreneurs’ (Employers’) Organizations of Republic of Azerbaijan
- Association of Employers of Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Georgia Employers’ Association
- Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs of Almaty City, Kazakhstan
- Confederation of Employers in Kyrgyzstan
- Confederation of Employers of the Republic of Macedonia
- National Federation of Employers in Agriculture and Food Industry and National Confederation of Employers from Moldova
- National Association of Small and Medium Business of Tajikistan and Union of Employers of Tajikistan
- Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations
- Federation of Employers of Ukraine
- Business Women’s Association of Uzbekistan

Other participants of the Conference included President and Secretary-General of TİSK and other TİSK representatives; representatives of Turkish trade unions; Undersecretary of Ministry of Labour and Social Security; from ILO-Geneva Director of IPEC, Director of ILO-ACT/EMP and an occupational safety and health specialist; UNICEF staff; the Director of ILO Office in Turkey; and IPEC NPM to Turkey.

Representatives of “Center for the Protection of Children”, a Kyrgyzstan based NGO paid a study tour to IPEC partners in İstanbul and Adana in November 2007. The representatives visited Social Services and Child Protection Agency Community Centers in İstanbul and Adana, the TİSK Child Labour Bureau in İstanbul, the TİSK-TÜRK-İŞ Social Support Center in Adana and the Ministry of National Education Social Support Center for children working in seasonal commercial agriculture in Karataş where IPEC activities have been carried out. They observed and benefited from the models developed in Turkey in combating child labour, enabling them to initiate similar activities in Kyrgyzstan.

The Third National Conference on “Attaining Gender Equality in Education and Social Participation; Local and Global Practices” was held on 15 November 2007 in İstanbul. Kazım İlkan Kertmen and Remziye Kozan presented the outputs of the “Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour in Seasonal Commercial Agriculture through Education” implemented by the Ministry of National Education IPEC project which was selected as a good practice by the conference organizers.

Social Dialogue Project Impact Assessment meeting held

The results of the “Social Dialogue as a Tool to Address the Informal Economy in Turkey” project -- implemented as a part of the follow-up to the Resolution on Tripartism and Social Dialogue adopted by the 90th International Labour Conference -- were addressed in an “Impact Assessment” meeting held in Ankara in December 2007.



Following discussions which took place in 2004 between ILO experts in Geneva and social partners on social dialogue mechanisms and their functioning in Turkey, social partners had identified unregistered employment as a priority issue and the provinces of Gaziantep, Çorum and Bursa were selected for initial interventions. In line with the National Action Plan prepared by the National Steering Committee comprising the representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and confederations of employers and trade unions, social partners launched action plans in these provinces. The main agenda of the December meeting was reporting on activities carried out in these provinces and their impact.

Local social partners implementing the project in Bursa summarized their work as follows:

- The issue of unregistered employment was addressed as the main item of the agenda during the April 2007 extraordinary meeting of the Provincial Employment Board and further discussed during the meeting in September 2007;
- Brochures and posters were distributed in the context of the Ministry’s “KADİM” (combat unregistered work) project;
- 29 firms in Bursa were visited to inform employers about the project and encourage them to recruit workers for formal employment;
- Supporting the work, tax inspectors identified 938 persons employed informally.

Participants from Çorum stated that informal employment in their province was widespread in enterprises operating on a seasonal basis and that as in other parts of the country, the same phenomenon could also be observed in small enterprises and casual work. A consensus was reached on an action plan encompassing the following:

- Ensuring that the work of social dialogue group is covered by local media;
- Bringing the issue to the agenda of the General Assembly of the NGO Platform;
- Bringing the issue to the agenda of the Executive Board which is a sub-commission of Provincial Employment Board;
- Visits to workplaces with Commission members;
- Dissemination of brochures, leaflets and posters;
- Cooperating with KOSGEB (Small and Medium Industry Development Organization) to hold information meetings in small enterprises;
- Identifying model enterprises and awarding them plaques.

Participants of the meeting from Gaziantep stated that despite its large productive capacity, the province remained above the country average in unemployment and incidence of informal employment, mainly as a result of the inflow of unqualified labourers. It was also added that informal employment in the province was more common among self-employed workers

and in small workshops. The main points in their action plan were summarized as follows:

- Information and awareness building meetings on informal employment with all professional organizations, associations, chambers, civil society organizations, KADİM Commission and action committee members;
- Preparing and posting banners in public places to encourage protected work and social security coverage;
- Organizing events in the local media with the participation of all social partners to highlight the issue of combating informal employment;
- Preparing small booklets emphasizing protected work as a legal right and giving information on sanctions applicable to workplaces employing unregistered workers.
- Visiting Gaziantep University to seek contributions from academics to ongoing activities.
- Organizing poetry and essay contests in secondary schools on the risks of unregistered work and the benefits of protected work.
- Visiting municipalities to ensure that their sub-contractors employ formal workers.

The Gaziantep group expressed that while the number of Social Security Institution contributors in December 2006 was 116,665, this number increased to 128,116 in October 2007 as a result of the action plan.

NEWS HEADLINES FROM ILO HEADQUARTERS, GENEVA

ILO projects global economic turbulence could generate five million more unemployed in 2008

Economic turbulence largely due to credit market turmoil and rising oil prices could spur an increase in global unemployment by an estimated 5 million persons in 2008, the ILO said in January 2008 in its annual Global Employment Trends report.

For more click:

http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Press_releases/lang--en/WCMS_090085/index.htm

ILO and Gates foundation join forces to develop range of insurance products in developing countries

In December 2007 the ILO announced a partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that aims to develop new kinds of insurance and improve existing products to promote decent work for tens of millions of low-income people in the developing world.

For more click:

http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Press_releases/lang--en/WCMS_088398/index.htm

ILO calls for new efforts to support people with disabilities in the world of work

Despite significant progress in recent years in improving their livelihoods, new efforts are needed to break down barriers that still prevent millions of people with disabilities from working and contributing to the economic growth of their societies, according to a new ILO report released for the International Day of Disabled Persons on 3 December.

For more click:

http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Press_releases/lang--en/WCMS_088028/index.htm

ILO Governing Body concludes 300th session: considers Labour situation in Myanmar, Belarus, and other countries as well as climate change and decent work

The Governing Body of the ILO concluded its 300th session in November 2007 following wide-ranging discussions among its government, employer and worker members on basic labour rights in Myanmar, Belarus and other countries as well as the impact of climate change on jobs, corporate social responsibility, and the implications of United Nations reform on ILO technical cooperation.

For more click:

http://www.ilo.org/global/About_the_ILO/Media_and_public_information/Press_releases/lang--en/WCMS_087653/index.htm

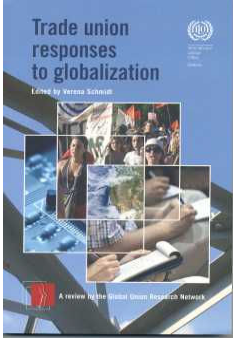
• **Forum on Decent Work for a Fair Globalization concludes – ILO Director-General calls for “Decent Work Movement”**

An International Labour Organization Forum on Decent Work for a Fair Globalization was held in Lisbon in late October and ended with a call of ILO Director-General Juan Somavia for a “decent work movement” to overcome the challenge of growing inequality and achieve fair globalization.

For more click:

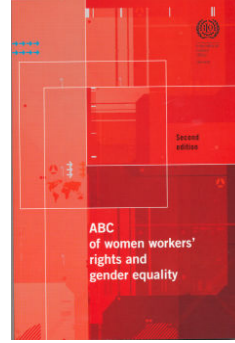
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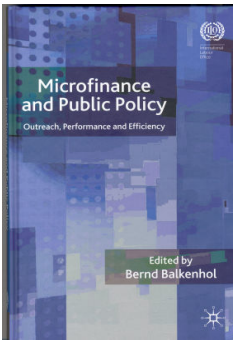
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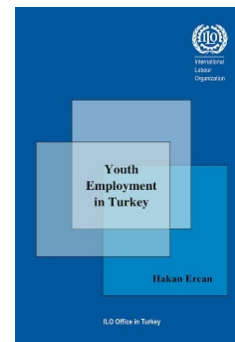
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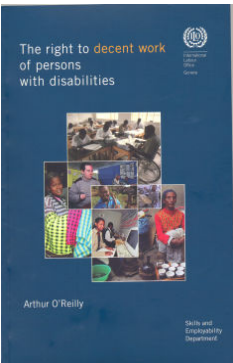
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