

## **Türkiye’s contribution to the UN Secretary-General’s Report on the “Preparations for and observance of the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family”**

### **Policies to reconcile work and family life**

Policies for reconciling work and family life are policies that aim to develop legal, institutional and social support mechanisms to reconcile domestic workload of household and household care with responsibilities at work. These policies include detailed activities by closely following technology-based developments in accordance with the requirements of our times. It is possible to examine these policies in Türkiye under three main headings. These are leave policies, flexible working policies and care policies.

In leave policies the most important elements are maternity leave and parental leave. The scope of maternity leave in Türkiye has been expanded with new legal regulations that came into force in 2015 and 2016.

The Law No 6645, amended in 2015, provides the right of 5 days of paternity leave to the worker whose spouse gave birth. Also, the Law No. 6663, amended in 2016, grants rights on the evaluation of the time spent on unpaid leave due to maternity of civil servants in gradual progression, the introduction of paid part-time work for female employees due to maternity, the right to part-time work for working parents, premature birth and leave rights for workers in case of mother's death related regulations and leave rights for adopters. Within the scope of the regulations regarding maternity leaves which introduced by Law No. 6663, both parents are given the opportunity to work part-time until the child reaches the compulsory primary education age.

Flexibility can be defined as an application that allows the place where the work is done, the way the employees are employed and the nature of the work they will do, the working hours and the wages they will receive, to be rearranged according to the increases and decreases in the supply and demand in the market. Article 7 (Temporary Employment Relationship), Article 11 and 12 (Definite and Indefinite Term Employment Contract), Article 13 (Part-time and full-time employment contract), Article 14 (Work on call and telework) and Article 90 (Labor market intermediation- Private Employment Agencies) of the Labor Law No. 4857 appear as the reflections of flexible working policies in the legislation.

The most important pillar of the reconciliation of work and private life policies is care policies (child, sick, disabled and elderly). It is crucial that care policies have a holistic approach that concerns different sectors, that they are designed to increase the position of women in social and working life and are implemented in a way that supports equality between women and men, and that they adopt the principles of not creating a disadvantage for employers' competition and productivity.

Childcare and pre-school education services in Türkiye are basically provided with the approval of the Ministry of National Education (MEB) or the Ministry of Family and Social Services.

The MEB gives permission for the opening of private kindergartens and carries out inspections, and also provides direct service with its own kindergartens and independent kindergartens. According to the Pre-School and Primary Education Institutions Regulation, kindergarten classes opened within primary education institutions serve children aged 48-66 months; independent kindergartens serve children aged 36-66 months.

For the care and education of pre-school children working in public institutions, within the framework of the "Regulation on Child Nursing Homes to be Opened by Public Institutions and Organizations", which is in effect within the scope of Article 191 of the Civil Servants Law No. 657, for at least 50 children in the 0-6 age group of the civil servants employed by the institution, Nursing homes may be opened depending on the financial affairs department.

According to the Regulation on Working Conditions of Pregnant or Nursing Women, Nursing Rooms and Child Care Dormitories, which is in effect based on Article 30 of the Occupational Health and Safety Law, regardless of their age and marital status, in workplaces with more than 150 female employees, it is obligatory for the employer to establish a dormitory close to the workplace yet separate from the workplace, to leave and care for children aged 0-6, and for breastfeeding employees to breastfeed their children. If the dormitory is more than 250 meters from the workplace, the employer is obliged to provide a vehicle.

### **Digital Spring Project**

The "Digital Spring Project" is being carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Family and Social Services and the private sector, in order to improve the digital literacy of elderly individuals living in nursing homes affiliated to the Ministry of Family and Social Services. Within the scope of the project, it is aimed to establish "Digital Spring" technology rooms where elderly people can experience technology in 10 nursing homes between 2021-2024. Currently, six digital spring rooms have been established in five nursing homes in different provinces. Video calls have been made available for elderly people who cannot meet face-to-face with their families and relatives due to social isolation during the pandemic.

The use of digital technologies, which have become more important with the pandemic has gained great importance in terms of increasing the participation of elderly people and their families in social life. In this context, digital literacy trainings have been started to be given to elderly people living in nursing homes affiliated to the Ministry of Family and Social Services. The pilot implementation of the training program was carried out in December 2021 with the participation of 30 elderly individuals living in 5 nursing homes in Istanbul. With the positive feedback received after the pilot implementation, it is planned to expand the Digital and Financial Literacy Trainings throughout the country.

### **2030 Barrier-Free Vision Document**

2030 Barrier-Free Vision Document, which sets out the vision of our country to ensure an inclusive society where disabled people can realize their potential as equal citizens, was prepared by ASHB by taking the opinions of the responsible public institutions and organizations. The 2030 Barrier-Free Vision Document, which was announced in December 2021 in order to guide the policies to be developed and the services to be provided until 2030 for disabled citizens, has been prepared with a rights-based approach and covers individuals with disabilities and their families.

Access of the disabled person to the right to education and full participation in social life through education, as well as informing the disabled person and their family, is possible with their active participation in decision-making processes and support in every aspect. Considering this situation, within the scope of strengthening the evaluation, guidance and monitoring system for children with special needs, targets have been determined to direct children with special needs to education at the earliest age and to strengthen studies on the provision of family counseling. In addition, targets for informing and guiding the parents of children with disabilities and providing appropriate support to

families in this regard have been adopted in order to realize the right to education starting from the early education period of children with disabilities.

In the 2030 Barrier-Free Vision, it is planned to further strengthen the work for the families of the disabled, with the targets set within the scope of developing and disseminating diversified and new generation care services that support independent living for disabled individuals and their families.

Work in cooperation with the Ministry of Family and Social Services and UNICEF on the establishment of a family-based early intervention program in Türkiye started in 2020. Within the scope of this project, it is aimed to determine the risk situations of newborns and young children from pre-pregnancy against developmental delay or inadequacy and to take preventive measures to eliminate these risks, and to provide early diagnosis, early health, early education and rehabilitation services with a systematic intervention chain, family-centered and multidisciplinary solutions.

The Elderly Support Program (YADES) is carried out in order to support elderly people with their families and in the social environment they live in. With the program, it is aimed to protect and support the elderly who are over the age of 65 and the resident of Türkiye and in need of service, and to increase the quality of life of those in need of bio-psycho-social care by receiving the care support they need in the places where they live, and to expand these services throughout the country. In this context, home care and psycho-social support services were provided to 104,264 elderly individuals in 53,188 households through 55 different projects in 26 provinces and 6 districts, as well as social and cultural opportunities.

### **Demographic Aging Process in Türkiye**

The demographic aging process in Türkiye is progressing in the same direction and much faster than the aging process in the world. As of the end of 2021, the ratio of the population aged 65 and over in Türkiye is 9.7%. It is estimated that this rate will reach 12.9% in 2030, 22.6% in 2060, and 25.6% in 2080.

The basic approach of Türkiye in the field of aging are to ensure that elderly people, together with their families and relatives, experience an active and healthy aging in their environment. In this direction, necessary studies should be carried out to determine policies and strategies, to develop and diversify social work activities with a rights-based perspective and individual-focused, taking into account the different needs of different elderly profiles. Efforts are underway for the elderly to use their rights effectively in many areas such as care services, health, employment, accessible environment, lifelong learning, and social protection system.

In this context, the 2030 Ageing Vision Document, which is under preparation, aims to reveal the national vision for the development of new service and support models for the elderly with a rights and social inclusion-based approach, in order to support active and healthy aging in family unity and participation in social life, and to strengthen the rights of the elderly.

Implementation methods of the 2030 Ageing Vision Document have been determined in the perspective of mainstreaming aging and are expressed in a twin-track approach. The dual-process approach argues that aging should be addressed both at the level of social aging of the population and from the perspective of the individual life course, considering the changing needs and capacities of the individual as they get older. Within the scope of the approach, a consistent and holistic understanding that is human rights based and gender sensitive, and which ensures smooth transitions between different periods of individuals' lives in order to meet the needs of all generations is emphasized. With the mainstreaming of aging, the policies developed are expected to

respond more effectively to the needs of all age groups. The ultimate goal of mainstreaming aging, which is targeted by our country within the scope of the 2030 Aging Vision Document, is to ensure social development in a fair manner for all age groups.

Care services for elderly people in Türkiye are planned, coordinated, provided and supervised by Ministry of Family and Social Services. Family-oriented elderly care services planned by the Ministry are being updated and developed according to the changing demographic structure. Emphasis is placed on the transformation of care services from an institutional perspective to the care of the elderly in place and in the place they live. In this context, the “Integrated Care Services Model” was implemented with applications that support family care. With this Model, institutional care and home support and day care are integrated together and complement each other. With these services, it is aimed to support elderly individuals who have difficulties in performing their daily work independently.

In addition to basic personal care, services in different areas such as preventive health services, drug surveillance, psycho-social support mechanisms are also provided in the care centers for the elderly. In our country, long-term care services for the elderly include not only care and medical support, but also social and cultural support, and are provided in coordination by the public, local governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

For elderly individuals who do not need institutional care but prefer daytime services, 32 daytime centers with a capacity of 532 are in service. This type of care service also includes psycho-social support and health support as well as sporting, social and cultural activities in order to increase the quality of life of elderly individuals who live in their own home or with their families, and especially elderly individuals with degenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and dementia. In addition to day care centers, home care support services are also provided within the scope of day care services. Within the scope of home care support service, it is foreseen to reduce the need for long-term residential care services by supporting elderly individuals and their families. In addition to the existing institutions and services, various projects are also carried out in order to expand daytime and home care services for elderly individuals in our country.

On the other hand, temporary and guest care services are provided to support family members who care for their disabled family members. In this context, in cases where family members cannot provide care for the disabled person for various reasons (health, vacation, travel, treatment, etc.), temporary boarding care for disabled individuals for up to 30 days is provided free of charge in institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Family.

### **Family Oriented Services**

The Ministry of Family and Social Services carries out services for children with a family-oriented approach and prioritizing the best interests of the child.

Ensuring that children grow up in family unity and integrity is the basis of our protection services. Children in need of protection are primarily evaluated within the scope of Family Oriented Services in order for children to grow up mentally and socially healthier and with a developed sense of self-confidence.

On the other hand, if the institutional care is obligatory, the children are taken under protection and care in the Children's Home or Children's Home Sites, which are the closest service model to a home or family environment.

The same service is provided to all foreign national children in need of protection.

Foster Family and Adoption Services are carried out so that children who cannot be supported by their families live in the family environment and feel the warmth of the family.

### **Adoption Service**

Adoption is the establishment of a child-parent relationship by establishing legal ties between a child whose situation is suitable for adoption and the person/spouse who is eligible for adoption.

Adoption Service is being evaluated for children who have no opportunity to live with their biological family.

### **Foster Family Service**

Foster families are people or families who share with the government the responsibility of education, care and upbringing of children who cannot be cared by their natural family for various reasons on a paid or voluntary basis, for short or long terms.

With the intense activities and studies carried out within the scope of ensuring the care and upbringing of each child in a family environment, a rapid increase has been achieved in the number of children benefiting from foster family services, and foster family service has become a central position in our country's child protection system.

### **Protective and Preventive Services**

The Ministry of Family and Social Services focuses on protective and preventive services in order to support the development of children and to raise generations that are conscious and sensitive to risks. Mechanisms are established to anticipate risks to children and to take necessary steps.

### **Protective and Preventive Services for Children in Rural Areas**

In line with the child-specific targets determined by the Ministry of Family and Social Services, studies have been initiated to increase access to protective and preventive services and to provide equal opportunities for children living in rural areas.

### **Family Education Program**

The Family Education Program is an adult education program prepared by the Ministry of Family and Social Services to be implemented throughout the country. This program has been prepared so that family members can acquire comprehensive knowledge, skills and attitudes towards the basic family life skills required by the age. The program consists of 28 modules and 210 units prepared in the fields of education and communication, law, economics, media and health, which are considered essential for family life and encompass the whole of daily life.

The Family Education Program, which was prepared with the principle that "Education begins in the family", is an important step towards increasing the quality of life of families in accordance with the requirements of the modern age. The Family Education Program, which has gained importance as a protective and preventive social policy target, should be seen as a service move aimed at increasing family happiness with the support of scientific knowledge.

Educational materials have been developed to be used in the program's applications. Training contents prepared for each module and materials developed for use in training can be accessed at [www.aep.gov.tr](http://www.aep.gov.tr).

### **Pre-Marriage Education Program**

With the "Pre-Marriage Education", it is aimed to prepare the couples who have reached the age of marriage and come together to start a family, for marriage life. The Pre-Marriage Education Program provides the opportunity for couples to get to know each other well, to create realistic expectations about marriage, to know how to communicate effectively and how to deal with potential problems during the pre-marriage process, to make a "good start" to marriage. A total of 4 books, one of which is a trainer's handbook, have been prepared for Pre-Marriage Education:

- Communication and Life Skills in Marriage
- Family Law
- Marriage and Health
- Trainer's Manual
- Family counselling

The ability of the spouses to produce solutions to possible problems in the establishment and functioning of the marriage is effective in maintaining a healthy marriage. Professional family counseling support is important in solving the problems faced by family members related to marriage. In order to protect and strengthen family integrity, to regulate family relations, and to support the solution of problems experienced or likely to be experienced in the functioning of marriage, family counseling services are provided free of charge by the expert personnel in Provincial Directorates and Social Service Centers in 81 provinces.

### **SOCIAL AID FOR FAMILIES**

The regular social assistance programs made by the Ministry of Family and Social Services to support financially disadvantaged families are briefly as follows:

*-Conditional Cash Transfer (Conditional Education Assistance, Conditional Health Assistance and Conditional Pregnancy Assistance) Program:*

Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) is a cash social assistance program that aims to ensure that families at risk of poverty send their children to school regularly and benefit from basic health services regularly in order to invest in human capital.

The CCT Program consists of three components: Conditional Education Grants, Conditional Health Benefits and Conditional Pregnancy Benefits. The target audience of the CCT program is determined as the poorest segment of the population, who cannot send their children to school or have regular health check-ups due to economic difficulties.

Mothers in this target group of the CCT program are provided with regular cash assistance on the condition that they send their children in school age to school regularly, that their children between the ages of 0-6 have regular health checks, and that expectant mothers have regular health checks and deliveries at the hospital.

*Conditional Education Assistance:*

"Conditional Education Assistance" is provided to families in the poorest part of the population who cannot send their children to school due to financial difficulties, provided that their children continue to attend school. Payments are made directly to the accounts opened in the name of mothers. The amount of aid given to girls is higher than the amount of aid given to boys.

In order to increase the enrollment rates of female students and the transition rates from primary to secondary education, the amount of payments made to female students is higher than that of male students. In addition, as a result of the impact analysis on Conditional Education Assistance,

compared to those who did not receive assistance; It was observed that the number of absentee days decreased by approximately 50%, the rate of decrease in absenteeism was higher in rural areas, and absenteeism decreased 2 times more in girls than in boys.

*Conditional Health and Pregnancy Benefit:*

Within the scope of Conditional Health Assistance, regular cash assistance is provided to families in the poorest part of the population, on the condition that they regularly take their children between the ages of 0-6 for health checkups, that pregnant women have regular health checkups and give birth in hospitals. Payments are made directly to accounts opened in the name of mothers.

*Orphan and Orphan Aid Program:*

An aid program was launched in May 2015 to regularly support orphans and orphans in needy households without social security. In this context, monthly cash assistance is provided for children under the age of 18 who are in need, whose mother or father has passed away.

*Assistance Program to Provide Cash Support to Needy Families with Multiple Births*

As of November 2018, an aid program has been implemented to support the nutritional and self-care needs of households in need with children born with multiple births, in keeping with the protection of our country's dynamic population structure and the Social State Principle. Households whose per capita income is less than 1/3 of the net minimum wage are paid monthly per child. Payments are for children 0-2 years old.

*Regular Cash Assistance Program for Widowed Women*

Based on the fact that women are disproportionately affected by poverty, the "Research Project for the Development of a Cash Social Assistance Program for Widowed Women" was carried out, followed by the Regular Cash Social Assistance Program for Widowed Women that started in 2012, in line with the evidence-based social policy understanding. The target audience of the program has been determined as women in need within the scope of the Social Assistance and Solidarity Encouragement Law No. 3294 and whose spouses have passed away. Regular monthly assistance is provided to eligible women as long as their conditions continue.