



Gender Gaps in The Care Economy During The Covid-19 Pandemic In Turkey

Key messages

- Changes in workplace patterns during Covid-19 led to a shift in women's burden of household and care work, with men doing more than before.
- A nation-wide survey conducted in lockdown conditions in Turkey in May showed that men's unpaid work time rose substantially. Employed men who worked from home did five times more unpaid work than they did before the pandemic.
- A majority of women and men surveyed believe that household work should be shared more equally between men and women.
- Overall, the survey results show that lockdown conditions increased the unpaid workload for men *and* women. Women still shouldered more of this burden, doing nearly four times as much unpaid work as men.
- School closures, intensified demands for household consumption items and domestic and care services triggered an unprecedented increase in the demand for household labour. Women as a group have absorbed most of this demand, by increasing their paid *and* unpaid work hours.
- These findings underline the importance of urgent measures to address unpaid care and domestic work, which is [one of the targets](#) of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal on gender equality (SDG 5).
- The survey results show that workplace practices allowing for flexible forms of work, along with social care policies expanding access to quality and affordable care services, can transform economic opportunities for men and women and lead to lasting change in the sharing of unpaid work.
- Women's total workload (paid and unpaid work combined) is also greater than that of men. For employed women, the increase in total workload is especially striking. For women who continue to work at the workplace (as 'most essential' workers), the total work time is longer than 10 hours per day.
- When it comes to paid work, nearly twice the number of men as women reported that their jobs were disrupted due to the pandemic, possibly due to the relatively higher concentration of women among essential workers.



- But employed women experienced more negative impacts. More employed women than men left their jobs in vulnerable conditions. More women than men faced lay-offs. Women had less access than men to leave with pay. Women were also nearly twice as likely to switch to working from home compared to men.
- These findings underline the need for much more concerted policy measures to protect employment and income, with a focus on those in vulnerable forms of employment – e.g., informal workers such as wage workers without a legal work contract or social security coverage, domestic workers – and provide compensatory payments where necessary. [SEP]
- Together, the findings of the pandemic survey conducted in Turkey call for policy measures in the medium to long term to reduce and redistribute care work through a two-pronged approach.
- The first set of measures relate to labour market regulation to bring in family-friendly policies and workplace practices that address the work-life balance needs of both women and men (such as care leave, telecommuting, flexible family-friendly work schedules and hours).
- Second, it is essential to expand access to quality services to cover all care needs, including childcare, elderly, ill and disabled care (long-term care), education and health services. Such an expansion should include upgrading service delivery systems to improve their resilience in the face of shocks such as the current pandemic.
- Realizing these policies requires the necessary fiscal allocations at local and national levels. Stimulatory spending should be designed with a gender-responsive budgeting approach and with an awareness of the crucial role of care work in ensuring a resilient recovery.
- *The pandemic related survey was conducted on May 18-19 under a complete lockdown. Time-use questions were included in the regular life-styles survey conducted by the KONDA survey company, in an initiative led by two economists from Istanbul Technical University and Ankara University, with support from UNDP in Turkey. The survey covered 2407 people in all regions of Turkey and respondents answered questions about their time use on a typical weekday, when many workplaces and public spaces were closed.*