

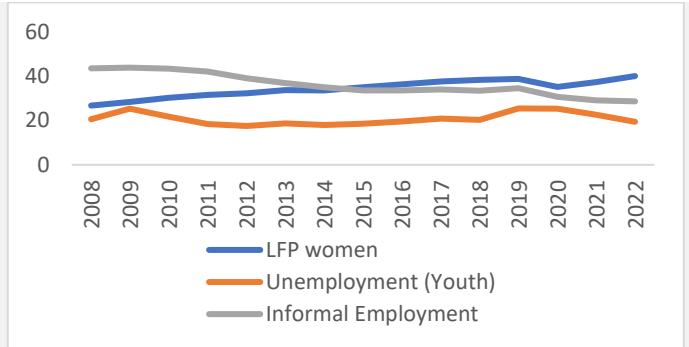
Social Dialogue in Defence of Vulnerable Groups in Post-COVID-19 Labour Markets (VS/2021/0196)



Turkey

COVID-19 labour market developments

- Despite an increase in labour force participation between 2008 and 2022, **female activity and employment opportunities** remain low.
- Younger workers also face more difficult labour market conditions, with **youth unemployment rates** reaching almost 20% in 2022.
- The **informal sector**, which has seen a significant reduction since the 2000s.
- However, it **continued to employ 30% of the workers** during the pandemic with a higher share of women due to unpaid family employment.



COVID-19 and vulnerable groups

- **Women** were vulnerable given the lack of childcare facilities and structural inequalities in the labour market.
- **Youth** experienced heightened risks due to higher rates of unemployment and difficulties in school to work transition.
- **Elderly** were seen as one of the most vulnerable groups both because of health problems but also low levels of pension incomes.
- The higher exposure to the virus made the **frontline workers** highly vulnerable during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Informal and daily wage workers** suffered both from lack of social protection and low incomes, and lack of social security registration hampered their ability to receive assistance.
- **Refugees and other marginalized groups** such as disabled and homeless were already at the fringes of the labour market, and the pandemic worsened their working conditions.

Social dialogue in defence of vulnerable groups

- **Health and safety measures** were implemented to provide hygienic working conditions to **frontline workers**.
- **Short-term working arrangements** were put in place to retain jobs for **all workers**.
- **Income assistance** was given on a non-regular basis to **individuals and families in need**.
- **Credit and tax payments were postponed**, which primarily targeted **small and medium sized enterprises**.
- Extensive **workplace and school closures** were put in place to minimize personal contact and **strict curfews** were applied to **elderly and youth**.
- **Donation campaigns** were organized to match donors with households that needed cash transfers or in-kind benefits.

Policy relevance

- **Pre-existing weak** industrial relations and social dialogue **structures** exacerbated the labour market impact of the pandemic.
- **All employer organizations and few trade unions** confirmed that social dialogue is strong in Turkey and policymaking during Covid-19 through **lobbying and information sharing**.
- **Most trade unions and civil society organizations**, in contrast, explained the limited social assistance and other measures to protect vulnerable groups by **lack of social dialogue**.
- Social partners increased their **legitimacy** among the public by **raising awareness** and being **vocal about vulnerable groups and policy areas** that central government did not address.
- All partners highlighted the importance of **inclusiveness** and the need to **institutionalize social dialogue** mechanisms.

Further information

Project details: <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/projects/social-dialogue-defence-vulnerable-groups/about>
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