



Türkiye Ekonomi Politikaları Araştırma Vakfı

NEWS RELEASE

Contacts:

Tunya Celasin, (90-312) 459 8343 tcelasin@worldbank.org

Nesrin Hocaoglu, (90-312) 292 55 80
n.hocaoglu@tepav.org.tr

Sema Hosta, (90-312) 454 1000
shosta@unicef.org

Economic Crisis Affecting the Welfare of Families in Turkey

A new survey of households in Turkey's five largest urban centers shows how families are affected by the economic slowdown and how they cope to make ends meet in difficult times

ISTANBUL, September 29, 2009— The economic slowdown, through lower incomes and higher unemployment, has affected the lives of the majority of families in the five largest urban centers in Turkey: Adana, Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, and Kocaeli. Almost three quarters of families report reductions in income between October 2008 and June 2009, according to a new survey of 2100 households, jointly sponsored by TEPAV, UNICEF and the World Bank.

“Unemployment is the most visible impact of the economic crisis in Turkey. Yet, even many workers who have held on to their jobs have seen their income fall, especially informal and self-employed workers,” said **Ulrich Zachau, World Bank Country Director for Turkey**. *“Moreover, falling incomes have hit the urban poor most frequently: among the poorest 20 percent of urban families, nine out of ten say that they have had to find ways to cope with lower incomes.”*

Urban families adjust to lower earnings in various ways. Families mostly buy cheaper food and non-food items, but they also try to economize on the amount of food consumption. Reducing expenditures for social events, producing their own food, and changing transportation also feature prominently. At the time of the survey, one third had fallen behind in utility payments, and nine percent had lost their electricity connection, at least temporarily. By contrast, families appear to protect what they spend on education and health as much as possible.

“The survey shows the many different ways that families try to deal with the consequences of the crisis,” said **Reza Hosseini, Resident Representative of UNICEF Turkey**. *“Among the poorest 20 percent of urban families, almost half of the parents reported that they had to reduce food consumption for their children. Monitoring closely whether such economic stress continues for these poor families will be a priority.”*

Many poor urban families say they have mobilized support from neighbors, friends, family, their community, and public programs to make ends meet. Yet, in-depth interviews with some families reveal that these support networks are stretched. About one-fifth of the poorest families say they have been left without any support at all.

*“The survey provides much information about the impact of the economic slowdown on Turkish families,” said **Güven Sak, Managing Director of TEPAV.** “It shows that there is a need for dialogue among Government, civil society, universities and the general public alike as to what social policies could best support impacted households in these times.”*

###

For more information, please visit: <http://www.worldbank.org.tr> and <http://www.tepav.org.tr>