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# REPORT OF ACTIVITIES



## CONTENT



**03**

Workers' Power Report 2024



**05**

Progressive Forum's Podcast



**07**

School of Progressive Ideas



**09**

Progressive Forum Research Center



**13**

Promoting Decent Work



# WORKERS' POWER REPORT 2024



The Research Center of the Progressive Forum has developed the «Workers' Power Report 2024.» The publication reviews and analyzes the factors that determine the strength or weakness of workers in Georgia.

The report's authors, Kote Eristavi and Ana Mikhelidze, present three key components that define workers' power:

1. Workers' "voice" in the workplace
2. The ability of workers to "exit" labor relations and/or the labor market
3. The ability of employers to exit labor relations

Each component encompasses a range of factors that shape workers' power, including: contractual vulnerability, frequency of contract viola-

tions, rates of gender discrimination; strength of trade unions; access to enforcement mechanisms; competition among workers, workers' financial conditions; labor market monopsony, access to social protection; effectiveness of employment programs, and more.

«In Georgia, the importance of strengthening workers is rarely discussed in public or political discourse. The focus is generally placed on business prosperity and the creation of favorable conditions for businesses—often seen as the primary precondition for workers' well-being. In the rare cases where solutions to workers' problems are considered, discussions usually center on labor legislation and its enforcement,” states the report's introduction.

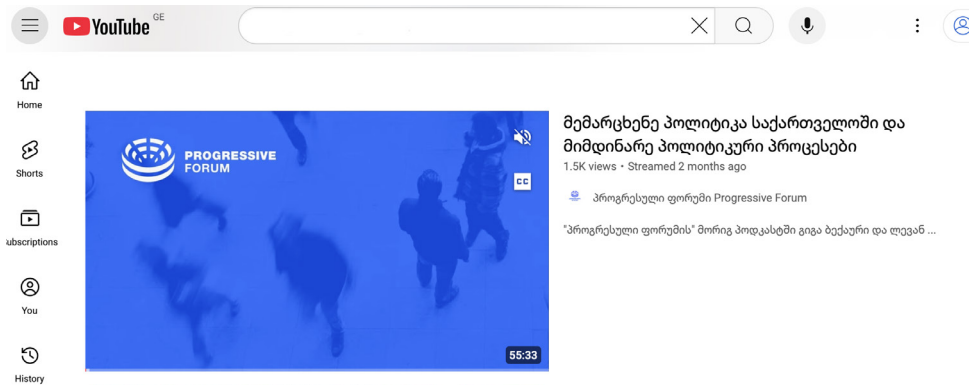
In this context, the purpose of the report is to provide as complete a picture as possible of the circumstances that hinder worker mobilization and well-being. It also outlines a set of essential steps the state must take to empower workers.

 To see the full report, please, follow this [hyperlink](#)

*This project was developed with the financial support of the Olof Palme International Center.*



## PROGRESSIVE FORUM'S PODCAST



Since 2024, the Progressive Forum has launched a series of podcasts. The episodes offer listeners and viewers in-depth, research- and fact-based analysis and discussions on social and economic issues.

The podcast is broadcast on the Forum's YouTube channel and addresses topics such as labor rights, environmental and social protests, the media landscape, and Georgia's economic transformation—all within the context of ongoing developments in the country.

The project has been made possible with the support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the Olof Palme International Center.

 To see the episodes, please, follow this hyperlink



## Social-Economic Issues in the Programmes of the Parties



One of the first projects of the Progressive Forum podcast was a pre-election podcast series, which featured discussions with representatives of political parties participating in the 2024 elections. These discussions focused on the socio-economic issues included in their election programs and how they planned to implement them.

The political podcast series was part of a joint pre-election project by Progressive Forum and the media outlet Publika, titled Socio-Economic Issues in Party Programs. Alongside the video discussions published on YouTube, Publika conducted research and provided intensive and in-depth coverage of the election programs and promises of the five main parties participating in the elections, from a socio-economic **perspective**.

The series was produced within the framework of the project “Supporting Public Discussion on Labor Rights.” From 2023 to 2025, Progressive Forum and Publika have worked to promote in-depth coverage and public debate on social issues in Georgian society and media. This work has resulted in research publications and hundreds of articles.

## SCHOOL OF PROGRESSIVE IDEAS



The Progressive Forum's longest-running project, now in its tenth year — the School of Progressive Ideas — returned in 2024 with a new round of trainings and workshops. With the support of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, more than 100 young participants took part in the School of Progressive Ideas over the past year.

From May 31 to June 2, 2024, participants had the opportunity to attend trainings on the following topics: feminism and women's movements and the welfare state — theory and practice. Representatives of another partner organization, the Max van der Stoep Foundation (FMS), also conducted a training on political communication for the participants.



## REPORT OF ACTIVITIES 2025

From September 27 to 29, the School's trainers held a new round of seminars for another group of young people. The topics included: "The Welfare State: Justice, Economy, and Power" and "Foundations of Social Democracy."

In December 2024, alumni of the school also participated in a winter school held at the Kurt Löwenstein Educational Center in Germany. The program focused on anti-fascism, the roots of far-right extremism, the influence of nationalism, and the dynamics of conspiracy theories. Among the 110 participants from around the world, three graduates of the School of Progressive Ideas were selected by the Progressive Forum through an essay competition.



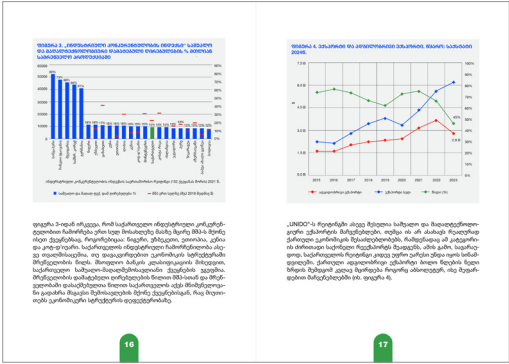


## PROGRESSIVE FORUM RESEARCH CENTER



In 2024–2025, the Progressive Forum Research Center worked on various studies and policy papers addressing issues of social justice in Georgia, offering the public fact-based, knowledge-driven recommendations. One of the most recent publications is the Worker Power Report 2024, but throughout the year, several other important publications were also released:

Structural Transformation of the Economy and ‘Good’ Jobs



A study by Tornike Chivadze and Kote Eristavi focuses on unemployment and the issue of “bad” jobs in Georgia, analyzing the structural causes behind them.

According to the authors, implementing mechanisms for labor regulation and employment policy is necessary but not sufficient to ensure “good” jobs. Achieving this goal fully requires a policy directed toward the structural transformation of the economy.

The paper outlines structural failures in Georgia’s economy and examines targeted policies from successful countries that could be relevant for Georgia as well.

 To see the full report, please, follow this [hyperlink](#)

Monopsony in the Labor Market – Challenges and Solutions

While the private sector in Georgia cites labor shortages as a key issue, the unemployment rate remains at 16%.

The lack of willing workers in the private sector stems from multiple factors, with low wages being a major one. A key underlying cause is monopsony — when employers hold dominant power in the labor market, allowing them to ignore prevailing wages and working conditions and instead set their own artificially low standards.

The Progressive Forum examined the causes and consequences of monopoly in Georgia. Kote Eristavi's research also presents recommendations for addressing this issue.



To see the full report, please, follow this hyperlink

### **Universal Free School Meals in Georgia – Justification in the Context of a Fragmented Social Protection System**

This policy paper reviews international practices of school meal programs and the challenges facing Georgia. It also offers international models that could be relevant in the Georgian context. The author of the document is Eto Gvritishvili.

The paper provides general recommendations on the design and targeting of a national free school meal program in Georgia. Based on international standards and good practices, and viewed through the lens of children's rights, it outlines the framework for introducing such a program. It argues for the adoption of a universal school meals scheme as the most effective approach.



To see the full report, please, follow this hyperlink

### **Teacher Pay Policy in Georgia – Policy Recommendations**

This document offers a retrospective analysis of policies related to teachers and outlines the context and challenges of the current teacher compensation scheme. It also proposes recommendations for improving both the planning and implementation of this policy.



To see the full report, please, follow this hyperlink

## Labor in the Gig Economy: What Happens When the Algorithm Is in Control?

This research by Progressive Forum's analyst Ana Mikhelidze explores the gig economy and platform-based labor systems. In such systems, a digital platform connects the worker to the customer, and the service process is governed by an algorithm.

The author investigates how real worker autonomy and flexibility are when labor is managed by algorithms. The paper aims to frame platform labor not only as a result of technological advancement but as a consequence of long-term structural changes.

It examines the key characteristics of platform labor, algorithmic management systems, and their effect on worker autonomy. It also discusses the precarious nature of this type of work.



To see the full report, please, follow this [hyperlink](#)

## Labor in the Gig Economy: The Story of Couriers in Georgia

Unemployment in Georgia is especially high among young people. Many citizens consider emigration, citing low wages and a lack of job opportunities. Additionally, a significant portion of the population is burdened with bank debt.

Against this backdrop, gig economy jobs and platform-based labor started gaining popularity. These industries promised flexible hours and worker autonomy.

This study investigates the experiences of couriers working for the two main platforms in Georgia — Glovo and Wolt. It explores the effects of algorithmic management, the precarious nature of the work, and the reasons behind recent waves of courier protests. The research is based on theoretical frameworks of platform labor and interviews with couriers and field experts.

These publications were made possible with the support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the Olof Palme International Center.



To see the full report, please, follow this [hyperlink](#)



## PROMOTING DECENT WORK



In 2024, the project “Promoting the Decent Work Agenda for Women in the Formal and Informal Sectors in Georgia” was completed. The project was implemented by the Progressive Forum in collaboration with the Comunicos Society, with the support of UN Women, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, and the Austrian Development Agency.

The project focused on two main directions: strengthening the institutional capacity of the Labor Inspection Office and supporting and mobilizing women employed in households.

Within the Labor Inspection Office, a methodology for Equal Pay Review and Reporting (EPRR) was developed. Trainings were conducted for labor inspectors, along with the creation of manuals, a gender equality strategy, and an online training course for inspectors and other stakeholders. A discussion was also held with private sector representatives on the issue of the gender pay gap, aiming to drive systemic change.

The second component of the project aimed to protect and formalize the labor rights of women employed in domestic work. In this area, research was conducted, a communication campaign was carried out, and key resources were established—including a nannies' association, a consultation hotline, and an informational website. Project participants received training on labor rights, self-organization, and advocacy.

As part of the project, a policy document titled “Invisible Hands: Formalizing Domestic Work in Georgia” was developed. The document highlights the situation of domestic workers in the country and provides recommendations for improving their legal status.



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