



DECENTRALIZED GOVERNANCE MODEL FOR GENDER EQUALITY







KAMER Foundation

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Part I

The Decentralized Governance Model for Gender Equality Project



A. The Purpose and the Rationale

KAMER was established in Diyarbakır in 1997 and was organized in 23 provinces of Türkiye's South-eastern and Eastern Anatolia regions soon after its establishment.

KAMER had set its goal to:

“Contribute to increasing the number of empowered women who began to confront violence and attain effective participation in the society and communities”.

Because KAMER sought for:

“A transparent and participatory society that achieved gender equality, attained universal human rights and peace norms, and a nature-harmonious economy;” and believed that it could achieve its vision solely through the increase of the number of empowered women.

Ever since it was founded, KAMER strived to raise women's awareness on violence that was among its major and most challenging activities.

The results of a survey titled “The Status of Women in the Region” that was conducted in 1996 (to which KAMER's founders also participated) revealed that 95% of women accept violence that they are exposed to and their subordinate status as the “natural consequence of being a woman”. The survey was conducted in all of the 19 provinces in Türkiye's Eastern and Southeastern regions at the time.

During the 1990s, surveys conducted in other regions of Türkiye and in some other countries as well showed that women normalize violence.

The Survey on Violence Against Women in Türkiye that was conducted in 2007 indicates some examples on how women viewed violence in the 1990s:¹

Within the scope of a survey conducted in İstanbul by Yılmaz Esmer and his students in 1991 with a repre-

sentative sample of 572 women, nearly 50 per cent of women replied “Yes” to the question: “Do you think that there may be cases when women may deserve to be beaten?” (Esmer 1993, 116).

Leyla Gülçür who conducted a survey during 1993-94 in Ankara with a non-representative sample of 155 women reached a similar result: 43 per cent of women “justified” violence – either always, often or sometimes. (Gülçür 1996, 49).

During the same period, the results of the survey on the Causes and Effects of Domestic Violence conducted across Türkiye by the Family Research Association - Prime Ministry, Republic of Türkiye with a representative sample indicated that “the majority of women who were exposed to violence were inclined to ‘normalize’ violence conceptually.” (Causes and Effects of Domestic Violence, 1995, 158).

Surveys conducted in various parts of the world also support the finding that women, particularly those who are exposed to violence “justify violence” under specific circumstances. Within the scope of the National Family Health Survey conducted in India during 1998-1999 that was carried out in around 90,000 households selected by representative sampling, 56% of ever-married women stated had that wife-beating was ordinary (Merry 2006, 159).

The crucial issue during the '80s and the '90s was women's normalization of the violence they were exposed to.

Before everything else, women had to be aware of the issue – the violence they suffer from, object to it and demand lives free of violence, and even gender equality.

KAMER was established by identifying this need and since then it strived hard to raise awareness of women on gender-based violence for years. KAMER teams reached them at their own surroundings and communicated with them in their native languages. They got exhausted, risked a great deal, survived many dangers, but never gave up. They took action to raise women's awareness

¹ Prof. Dr. Yeşim Arat, Prof. Dr. Ayşe Gül Altınay, *Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Şiddet. (The Violence against Women in Türkiye).*

https://www.stgm.org.tr/sites/default/files/styles/gorsel_dikey/public/2020-09/turkiyede-kadina-yonelik-siddet.png.jpg?itok=5-k5zrYfO

on violence, inform them about their rights, bring them together with organizations and institutions from where they could get support, and escort to encourage them during the process of obtaining support. Those women were the hardest to reach, suffered from huge inequalities, were unable to exercise their rights to education, faced language-based communication problems since they did not speak Turkish; were unable to learn and enjoy their legal rights and opportunities available to them, tried to live on very low incomes and led lives restricted to their family environment since they had to conform to conventional norms.

KAMER teams came together with nearly 600,000 women in their own surroundings in 23 provinces of Türkiye's Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Regions and conducted a multi-lingual survey. Meetings were held in the neighborhoods and villages, and they were informed about their legal rights as well as the units from where they could obtain support.

Activities and projects carried out both in the regions where KAMER operates and elsewhere in Türkiye to empower women proved successful.

We gradually began to see women's shifting perception of violence. Women who led lives in the '80s and the '90s by normalizing violence learned the causes and effects of gender inequality. Women are empowered and continue to get empowered by recognizing violence, by becoming aware of the violence they are exposed to and that violence is not destiny, and learning their rights.

The Survey on Violence Against Women in Turkey² conducted in 2007 reveals a significant finding about women's awareness. Probably the most remarkable result of the survey is that nine women out of ten had replied the question below as: "Beating cannot be justified by any means."
"There are different views about domestic violence and beating. Some think that spousal beating must be con-

demned and beating cannot be justified by any means whereas others think that men may beat their wives under specific circumstances. What is your opinion?"

"Regionally, there is no significant difference of opinion with respect to justifying beating by husbands. The percentage of women who think that "Men may beat their wives under specific circumstances," stands at 11% across Turkey whereas it is 14% in the East sample group."

In 2009, the Directorate General on the Status of Women (DGSW) commissioned the Survey on Domestic Violence Against Women in Turkey.³ The findings of this overarching survey conducted by the Institute of Population Studies, Hacettepe University revealed that women could define (recognize) the violence they were exposed to:

"Although the majority of women (86%) think that violence is unacceptable, reporting of violence and requesting support is limited due to women's lack of information about their rights, inadequacy of support mechanisms, their lack of information about agencies and institutions that extend support, their shyness and anxiety due to various factors (including their belief that the agencies would not provide support) that hold them back, and since many women lead lives in conservative environments." (p. 188)

The DGSW commissioned two other surveys in 2014 and in 2018, the Summary Report of the one conducted in 2014 was published whereas the other was not. The 2014 Summary Report states the following finding under the heading of "Women's Awareness on Their Rights":

"More than 80% of women have heard about the provisions of the Turkish Civil Code on the legal age for marriage, type of marriage and equitable distribution. However, six women out of ten said that they did not hear about the provision stating that obtaining the husband's consent allowing the wife to work / get a job is not mandatory. Among the injunctions that were adopted by the

² Prof. Dr. Yeşim Arat, Prof. Dr. Ayşe Gül Altınay, *Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Şiddet*. (Violence against Women in Türkiye).

https://www.stgm.org.tr/sites/default/files/styles/gorsel_dikey/public/2020-09/turkiyede-kadina-yonelik-siddet.png.jpg?itok=S-k5zrYf0

³ <http://kasaum.ankara.edu.tr/wp-content/uploads/sites/34/2013/11/Aile-ici-siddet-HUNEE-2008-AnaRapor.pdf>

Law No. 6284, the most widely known are restraining orders and temporary protection and shelter orders.”⁴

We see that women are aware of the violence yet fail to escape from it due to a variety of reasons.

The views of 13,517 women who participated in KAMER’s survey performed in 2021 were as follows:

Do you think that women are exposed to violence? %

Yes	97.5
No	2.5

Why don't women struggle hard enough to escape from violence? %

Don't know where to report / demand support	13.0
Don't speak Turkish	10.0
Are afraid	77.2
Don't feel ready	41.8
Other	0.4

*More than one option may be selected.

We notice that 97.5% of women are aware of the violence against women and among those who do not struggle hard enough to escape from violence, only 13% don't know where to report / demand support from. This level of awareness must be acknowledged as an achievement of the women's movement. The main factor leading women stepping back from struggling hard to escape from violence is indicated as "fear".

This shows that there is no mechanism nor system safeguarding women's lives. Furthermore, high incidence of female murders and the fact that some of the victims had started to exercise their legal rights increasingly exacerbate women's fear.

Bianet's Male Violence Tally 2021⁵ reports:

"In Turkey, based on current data compiled from local, national and online news sources, during the period between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021, men killed at least 339 women. 20 women were killed despite having obtained restraining orders intended to protect them."

Murder motives are listed as:

"wanted to break up / divorce", "refused his marriage proposal" and "jealousy".

Today, women do not normalize violence any longer as they did in the '90s, they experienced and are experiencing change by recognizing violence and its obstructive effects. They learned their legal rights and began to fight by understanding that it is possible to escape from the violence they are subjected to. But that's about all! No support mechanism has evolved to enable them escape from the violence they suffer.

Even though their efforts may sometimes pay off if they come across a responsive executive / official / practitioner, most of the time those efforts to escape from the spiral of violence come to a halt when faced with an obstacle. Women continue to suffer violence although they are aware of and strive to escape from it. However, they overcame the feeling of helplessness and now they are frustrated and rebellious since they are aware of both the problem and the solution!

Raised awareness is irreversible and is the most effective vehicle to ensure political sustainability.

KAMER has closely tracked and is tracking the change women experienced/are experiencing and the futile endeavors of those who strive(d) to lead lives free of violence.

⁴ KSGM Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Aile İçi Şiddet Araştırması Özet Rapor (Survey on Domestic Violence against Women in Türkiye, Summary Report), Ankara, Aralık 2014 - s. 36

⁵ <https://bianet.org/bianet/toplumsal-cinsiyet/257621-erkek-siddetinin-2021-videosu-ve-grafigi>

In Türkiye, significant legislative adjustments have been made over the years within the framework of its candidacy to EU membership, due to the efforts of the women's movement, and pursuant to the provisions of the international treaties. However, lately the political authorities – not only do they disown the laws adopted/ratified by themselves – but started to take steps backward and renounce constructive decisions – e.g. Türkiye withdrew from the Council of Europe (CoE) Convention (İstanbul Convention).

It is imperative for central governments that are committed to advance gender equality, to empower local governments and allow for identifying problems and solutions at the local level regardless of a country's geographical size and population.

Some developed countries much smaller in size and less populated than Türkiye established gender equality as a State policy and are organized in a way to address and resolve the issue at the local level. Sweden and Austria with populations of approximately 10 million and nine million respectively are the two notable examples that stand out in this respect.

Türkiye spreads across a wide area and its population is approaching 90 million due to the immigration from Syria and Afghanistan during recent years. Its dense population comprises people:

- of diverse cultures and native languages,
- who do not get equal access to education,
- among whom there are huge inequalities in terms of knowing and benefiting from opportunities and rights.

For example, in Türkiye's Southeastern and Eastern Anatolia Regions where KAMER is organized, there are millions of women who speak Kurdish, Zazaki, Arabic and Farsi and who cannot speak and learn Turkish since they are deprived of access to education. Although primary education in Turkey is compulsory and free, the authorities did not ensure women's access to education nor made efforts to provide appropriate services for those who don't know their legal rights since they are illiterate and

don't speak Turkish. Women who do not speak Turkish do not know their legal rights and available services, therefore cannot exercise their rights and benefit from such services without obtaining support from a women's organization.

Inequalities among regions and particularly the income gap is huge. In poor families, mostly women apply for social aid and put efforts to comfort the family and obtain support for child care, nutrition and clothing; elderly care and to meet basic needs. All of these efforts lead women to ignore and endure all forms of violence they are subjected to.

During the pandemic period, KAMER saw that cases of inflicting violence against women rose by 35% whereas, on the contrary, the number of women who tried to escape from violence they were exposed to decreased by 20%. It is apparent that poverty aggravates gender inequality.

In Türkiye, there are huge inequalities in income distribution:

The Turkish Statistical Institute's (TURKSTAT) Income and Living Conditions Survey 2021 Regional Results indicate that:

In terms of annual income per capita, the lowest-income region was TRB2 (Van, Muş, Bitlis, Hakkâri provinces).

With respect to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by Province – 2019,

Istanbul had the highest share with 30.7 per cent.

In the estimation of GDP by provinces, the last three provinces were Tunceli, Ardahan and Bayburt with 4 billion 134 million TL, 3 billion 399 million TL and 2 billion 840 million TL, respectively.⁶

In spite of its high population, huge regional inequalities, and its commitments pursuant to international treaties, Türkiye did not ascribe the due importance to local governments at any period.

The Local Agenda 21 Program as an important local democratization initiative – by and large – reflects a decentralized and enabling approach grounded on civil involvement in decision-making processes as well as collaboration and networking among equal partners.

⁶ <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Gelir-ve-Yasam-Kosullari-Arastirmasi-Bolgesel-Sonuclari-2021>

Women's organizations that are aware of the importance of local politics strive to work with local governments and draw up Local Equality Action Plans for many years. However, we conclude that an adequate and sustainable system and political will are the key prerequisites to implement such practices and initiatives. In spite of the women's and some local officials' endeavors, works and efforts may rapidly prove futile unless sustainability is maintained.

The section titled "The Women's Movement during the Post-1980 Era and the National Legislation" describes the efforts of the women's movement organizations over the last 20 years and the legislative amendments achieved.

KAMER worked in collaboration with women's organizations in seven EU member states for many years and grasped the opportunity to examine their systems to achieve equality. KAMER also collaborated with the Swedish women's organization Winnet and had the opportunity to explore the practices implemented in Sweden.

While performing the preliminary studies on Decentralized Governance for Gender Equality, we learned from the experts the technicalities/details of the systems implemented in Sweden and Austria – countries that signed the same conventions with Türkiye. We had the opportunity to learn about both best practices – (a) implemented in Sweden and (b) of the Wien Municipality. In both countries, "equality" is established as a State policy; and roles and duties of all ministries and local authorities are defined to achieve smooth and flawless functioning. Using gender-responsive language is encouraged whereas discriminatory and judgmental language usage is considered to be a hate crime and punished. The practices will be summarized in the publication to be drawn up.

Women who strive hard and who closely follow-up best practices in various countries over the years are aware of and know their problems as well as the methods and approaches that need to be implemented to solve those problems.

Therefore, they want to work for devising a model integrated with the existing system seeking to achieve gender equality by enhancing their political impact and involvement. They believe that this can be achieved by developing and striving to ensure the implementation of the Decentralized Governance Model for Gender Equality.

The Decentralized Governance Model for Gender Equality comprises a set of recommendations developed to identify and eliminate deficiencies, setbacks and shortcomings that impair gender equality.

During the upcoming period, KAMER calls for a radical solution to be in place and does not want to be contented solely with intervening and witnessing concerns/issues through fieldwork.

The Decentralized Governance Model for Gender Equality Project was formulated and developed on these grounds.





B. Designing the Decentralized Governance Model for Gender Equality (DGMGE) Project

The KAMER Foundation Board of Directors is executing the DGMGE Project. The preparatory phase was completed by the participation of the KAMER Foundation Board of Directors and KAMER Teams in 20 provinces, and the engagement of all parties to be collaborated with during implementation.

The purpose of and the rationale for KAMER's DGMGE Project were explained in the preceding section. After it was decided to develop this project, the requirement for a Project Coordinator to supervise the implementation and an Expert Coordinator to provide and coordinate the provision of expertise, and to draw up the background study was identified. Attorney Berçem Akkoç served as the Project Coordinator and Prof. Dr. Serpil Sancar as the Expert Coordinator.

KAMER's Regional Representatives provided support to the Coordinators by ensuring KAMER Teams' involvement in the project.

The DGMGE Project study comprises the following three parts:

Part I

Part I includes the Purpose of and the Rationale for the DGMGE Project, How It Was Designed, and the Women's Movement During the Post-1980 Era and the National Legislation. KAMER drew up Part I.

Part II

Part II was drawn up as a background study under the coordination of Serpil Sancar with the contributions of 14 experts specialized in their respective fields.

The Expert Coordinator Serpil Sancar wrote the introduction indicating the objective and the scope of the study, and providing information about the contributing experts.

KAMER Teams in 20 provinces who had participated in the preparation of many Local Equality Action Plans, who are members of Provincial Coordination Committees and who contribute to Provincial Action Plans for Combating Violence Against Women processes were also engaged with the project prior to preparing Part II. They identified primary needs at the local level.

Part I and II were shared with the women's organizations, the women and a number of CSOs to ensure the widest possible involvement for Part III.

Part III

This section that describes the Decentralized Governance Model for Gender Equality is based on the background study as well as the views of relevant people and organizations, and indicates the required attitudinal and legislative changes to be implemented immediately to advance gender equality in Türkiye.

The full list of contributing persons and organizations that presented views is given at the end of the publication.

The entire content was finalized through obtaining consensus from all parties involved in the DGMGE Project.



C. Women's Movement During the Post-1980 Era and the National Legislation

1. Women's Movement During the Post-1980 Era

Prior to describing the decentralized governance model to advance gender equality, we will perform a brief context analysis on gender equality, the involvement of the women's movement and legislative advances during the post-1980 era.

However, before portraying the women's movement during the post-1980 era, we would like to quote the feminist researcher Nacide Berber's influential remarks about the involvement of the women's movement from the Ottoman era to the foundation of the Republic and to 1980:

"When we take a look at the women's movement during the Ottoman era and the foundation period of the Republic, we observe that the demands are predominantly for access to education, voting rights and civil rights. When we look at the constituents of the movement, we see fairly multicultural identities including Greek (of Turkish nationality), Armenian, Cherkess, Arab, Jewish, Kurdish, etc. women. The women's groups of each community published their own journals, established their own associations and foundations, and worked as active members of the struggle as the agents of the women's movement.

*Unfortunately, after the women's movements during the Ottoman era characterized by multi-lingual and multi-cultural diversity, we came across - not the women's movements - but predominantly the mono-lingual and mono-cultural women's movement shaped by the Turkish-Islamic values as from the foundation of the Republic until the 1980s."*⁷

The 1980 military coup led to the most devastating breakdown in Türkiye. During the first weeks in its aftermath and throughout 1981, not only well-known opponents but also politicians, academics, teachers, journalists, and lawyers were arrested.

On June 1981, debating on political issues in public was banned; freedom of press, individual rights and freedoms, and union rights and freedoms were extremely restricted. Furthermore, a restructuring project was put into effect after the September 12, 1980 coup. Some aspects that we described as "political" were somehow redefined, the borders of active engagement in politics were drawn by political parties with restricted grassroots. For example, political parties were banned to establish women and youth branches to prevent interactions with unions, associations, etc. Restrictions were brought forth to party membership. As such, active engagement of all segments of the society in holistic politics was hindered.

During the mid-1970s, the women who were influenced by the "second-wave" women's movement in the world and the UN's "Decade for Women" that was adopted in 1975, began to debate, get organized to advance, and join networks associated with women's rights.

The most prominent women's organization of the period was the Progressive Women's Organization that was established in 1975. It was closed down after the 1980 military coup and some members were put on trial.

Although the consequences of the 1980 military coup are known by and large, in order to comprehend the relation between the circumstances created by the coup and the dynamics of the involvement of the women's movement from 1980 onwards, key features of the period might need to be explored. Structural issues of the society such as underdevelopment, dependance on foreign resources, inequalities of opportunity and income, and huge inequality gaps among classes had marked the period before 1980.

Tekeli Ş's view about the Progressive Women's Organization and the period before 1980;

*"Following the establishment of the **Progressive Women's Organization** in 1975, the left-wing women began to question the circumstances. However, their driving motive was the class struggle and those militant women*

⁷ <https://tr.boell.org/tr/2017/09/18/osmanlidan-turkiye-cumhuriyetine-kadin-hareketi> (September 18, 2017, Nacide Berber)

who organized working-class women were committed **anti-feminists** as much as the men in leftist movements. The majority of those women who spent their lives in exile in the Western countries during the '80s after the 1980 military coup self-criticized themselves and joined the new women's movement again in the 1990s. During the exile years, they learned a great deal from the movement for women's freedom that profoundly affected the Western societies in the 1970s."⁸ Tekeli continues; "Under those circumstances when concepts like inequality and exploitation become the basic terms of political discourse, the awareness as to – women constituting an unequal 'sex group' albeit equality that is claimed to exist in the law – was inevitable. However, women were invited to a class struggle where they would fight shoulder to shoulder with men, to gain their freedom."

Meanwhile, Yeşim Arat remarking that the 1980 military regime created some sort of a space in political life as much as it led to a period of oppression adds that the space that was created by suppressing the right and left-wing political forces enabled identifying new parameters. In this respect, the pioneers of the feminist ideology could make their voices heard independent of the right and left wings, and the feminists such as those from the Islamic movement tried to redefine politics. Arat states that during the post-1980 era, women seeking to expand their opportunities have contributed to the formation of a more democratic state through either deliberate or spontaneous struggles or by means of vigorous protests.

During the 1980s, the women's movement started by challenging the apparent dissociation of public and private spheres over a political axis. Western women's popular rallying slogan during the 1960s – "The personal/ private is political" – was adopted in Türkiye only in the 1980s. This was a period marked by debating women's gender-based existential issues, discussing feminism as a social project, clarifying what it means to be a woman and womanhood, and defining diversities.

Women's associations founded in the past that encouraged women to play roles in public life similar to their roles at home were replaced with organizations that sought things for the good of women and struggled to this end after 1980. Demands of those women's organizations inevitably led to challenging the existing societal structure – questioning the male dominance that represents power and rule in public life just as in private life.

Fatmagül Berktaş believes that the mothers of women with raised-consciousness were the major beneficiaries of the Republic. She emphasizes that those women were raised by their mothers who were nurtured by the Republic, were supported by their fathers who were the founders of the Republic, and could stand on their own feet as women pursuing professions. She indicates that this is the underlying factor ensuring them achieve critical consciousness.

*"Despite all the oppression imposed by the patriarchal structure and ideology, girls who were raised by their "mothers of the Republic" and who were supported by their "founding fathers" enjoyed access to education that enabled them pursue professions. This facilitated their standing on their own feet while this served as the fundamental ground enabling them achieve critical consciousness just like elsewhere in the world. Although they somehow hesitated to challenge the roles ascribed to them and the homogenizing (masculine) citizenship approach adopted during the first half-century of the Republican era – as demonstrated in literary works –, discomfort and uncertainties emerged in their minds and souls even then, nevertheless it would be up to their daughters to explicitly expose the issue and challenge the dominating patriarchal values."*⁹

Following that period, a new era of women's movement was initiated in Türkiye. Those women understood that the "personal was political" during the consciousness-raising meetings they held about 10 years after the end of the second-wave feminist movement era.

⁸ <https://m.bianet.org/bianet/kadin/43145-on-maddede-turkiyede-kadin-hareketi>

Siyasal Bilimci-Yazar Tekeli'nin "Türkiye ve Avrupa Birliği'nde Kadınlar: Ortak Bir Anlayışa Doğru" başlıklı 13 Eylül 2004 tarihinde yapılan uluslararası sempozyumdaki sunuşu (Political Scientist-Author Tekeli's presentation at the international symposium titled "Women in Turkey and the European Union: Towards a Common Understanding" held on September 13, 2004.)

⁹ Fatmagül Berktaş, 2003, Tarihin Cinsiyeti (The Gender of History) - Metis Yayınları (Metis Publications), p. 111

<https://www.metiskitap.com/Catalog/Book/4549>

Women initially formed small groups to come together after 1980. The Cooperation of Writers and Translators (YAZKO) voiced the gender equality issue in an influential way during the symposium held at the premises of the Journalists' Union of Türkiye in Istanbul on April, 1982. A short-lived page titled "feminist women" began to be published in the *Somut Journal* issued by YAZKO later on.

In 1984, the Women's Circle Book Club opened in Istanbul.

In 1987, a women's group called the Thursday Group began to organize meetings aiming "to campaign against battering and for making women visible" in Ankara.

The United Nations had designated the period between 1975 and 1985 as the "Decade for Women" and scheduled a conference in Nairobi due to the termination of the period in 1985.

Türkiye ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1979 in order to join the Nairobi Conference held in 1985.

In 1986, the Women's Circle Book Club launched a petition campaign demanding the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women that was also ratified by Türkiye. The number of women who joined the campaign was well beyond expectations.

In 1985, the judge of the Family Court in the city of Çankırı dismissed the divorce case of a woman subjected to violence by her husband on the grounds that "No women should be without a child in her womb and a stick on her back." The women's movement against violence gained momentum when the verdict was heard.¹⁰ That verdict sparked a number of events and demonstrations including the march organized within the scope of the Campaign Against Battering that was initiated in 1987, debates, festivals, March 8th – International Women's Day celebrations and many other events organized by women.

Şirin Tekeli remarked on the significance of those campaigns as follows:

"CEDAW was approved in the UN in 1985 and it came into effect in Türkiye during the same year. Full of rage and resentment, we started to discuss what we could do to ensure the implementation of the Convention and prevent it turn into a blank scrap of paper. I've always been a law-abiding person, I have participated in only a few illegal events. At the time, the trial of Intellectuals' Petition was proceeding. I was thinking that we had to comply with the law since the campaign could also be risky. So what were we going to do? Since the Convention was approved by the Turkish Grand National Assembly, then we'll go there. But how? We would run a petition campaign and present the petitions to the National Assembly. Hence, we decided to start a signature campaign for the implementation of CEDAW upon my advice. But since we were not well-known people we thought that we should mobilize and get prominent women journalists into action. We invited many women journalists including Meral Tamer and Zeynep Oral to the meeting held at Ayla Gürsoy's house and obtained their approval and support. Meanwhile, the Women's Association Against Discrimination was founded and they also participated in organizing the campaign.

A petition was drawn up immediately and circulated by means of and among acquaintances, 4,000 women signed it. This number that was well above our expectations surprised us. We presented the petitions to the National Assembly on March 8, 1987. Following this campaign, we saw that we were not as alone as we thought. From then on, we advanced forward by growing in number. In spite of our fairly different perspectives, we organized many events and demonstrations in collaboration. The first event that we organized after the campaign was the March Against Battering of Women within the scope of the Campaign Against Battering of Women that we had launched in 1987. Thousands of women joined the march – the first mass street demonstration in the 1980s. We had then begun to transform into a movement.

In 1987, in the province of Çankırı, a pregnant woman with three children filed a divorce claiming that her husband beats her all the time. The judge – Mustafa Durmuş – dismissed the divorce case on the grounds of local customary rules by stating that "no woman should

¹⁰ <https://catlakzemin.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/FullSizeRender-768x576.jpg>

<https://catlakzemin.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/ilginckarar.jpg>

*be left without a child in her womb and a stick on her back." We were informed about the incidence that was published in the Journal of Supreme Court Decisions and decided to do something in response. Although some people objected to marching since the coup climate of September 12 was still in the air, we jointly decided to organize the march provided that permission is obtained. We obtained the permission and marched in the Yoğurtçu Park – that was the first march allowed in the aftermath of September 12. We did not expect a great number of people to join the march although it was legal, yet, on the contrary, thousands of women from all segments of the society and with diverse backgrounds joined."*¹¹

Nearly 2,000 people joined the celebration for the International Women's Day organized by the Ankara Women's Solidarity Group on March 8, 1988; the campaigns and that spectacular celebration event brought up the women's issue to the agendas of wider segments in the country.

During the years that followed, women ran an effective campaign against sexual harassment (1989) and began demanding opening shelters for women who were subjected to domestic violence; and they made efforts to establish collaborations with local governments by identifying the requirement to collaborate with them in order to open shelters.

These efforts proved successful; Bakırköy Municipality's and Şişli Municipality's Women's Shelters were opened on September 11, 1990 and on September 30, 1990 respectively. Unfortunately, both shelters were closed down by the Welfare Party government that came into power following the 1994 local elections on grounds such as maintenance and repair works.

The Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation that was founded in 1990 by feminists in order to combat violence against women had opened the first independent women's shelter – Purple Roof Women's Shelter in 1995 in Istanbul.¹²

In 1990, the "Library of Women's Works and the Information Center Foundation" was established. Its purpose was to gather all researches, printed and visual publications about the history of the women's movement and women's studies under a single center. All employees of the foundation were volunteers.¹³

In 1991, the Women's Solidarity Foundation collaborated with the Altındağ Municipality and contributed to the opening of the Women's Counseling Center in Ankara. Besides, in 1993, Altındağ Municipality's Women's Shelter was opened, again through the collaboration of the Women's Solidarity Foundation and the Altındağ Municipality.¹⁴

In 1993, women's organizations took joint action and submitted a petition concerning the amendments to the Civil Code with 100,000 signatures to the Presidency of the Grand National Assembly.

Women for Women's Human Rights - New Ways (WWHR) was founded in 1993 as an independent women's CSOs with the purpose of promoting women's human rights and equality, and eliminating discrimination in Türkiye and around the globe.¹⁵

Türkiye had become a state party to CEDAW in 1985 by making some reservations. After it came into effect and through the momentum created by the UN's Fourth World Women's Conference held in 1995, formation of policies to achieve gender equality advanced, national mechanisms were established, women started to get organized rapidly, women's studies started to become academic disciplines, and women's organizations began to turn into more influential pressure groups through collaboration and joint action.

During that period, the number of active women's organizations grew rapidly; diverse and effective approaches were adopted to mold public opinion and to influence policy-making.

¹¹ <https://www.stgm.org.tr/sirin-tekeli-soylesi-kari-kuvvetlerinden-feminist-harekete>

¹² <https://morcati.org.tr>

¹³ <http://kadineserleri.org>

¹⁴ <https://www.kadindayanismavakfi.org.tr>

¹⁵ <https://kadinininsanhaklari.org>

In 1996, Flying Broom (Uçan Süpürge) was founded in Ankara. Its purpose is defined as: "To inspire and effect change to achieve a fair world for all where women are empowered and gender equality is attained."¹⁶

The Association for Support and Training of Woman Candidates (KA-DER) was founded in 1997. KA-DER aims to strive for improving the representation rates of women at all decision-making bodies regardless of whether they are elected or appointed.¹⁷

KAMER was established in 1997 in Diyarbakır with the motto "No violence is to be justified." KAMER asserts that during a period when all forms of violence are normalized, the culture of non-violence would spring in the family. KAMER was organized in 23 provinces of Türkiye's Southeastern and Eastern Anatolia Regions soon after its establishment. It strives to increase the number of empowered women who began to confront violence and actively take part in the society in pursuit of "a transparent and participatory society that achieved gender equality, attained universal human rights and peace norms, and a nature-harmonious economy."¹⁸

Women who came together to heal the wounds of the disaster after the 1999 Marmara earthquake established the Women's Solidarity Foundation (KADAV) that was officially founded in 2001 in Istanbul. KADAV provides counseling, advisory, economic empowerment, solidarity and organizational support to women, immigrants, inmates and the LGBTI individuals subjected to multidimensional discrimination.¹⁹

We tried to list the women's organizations that were founded before 2000. Throughout the 2000s, the formation of women's organizations all around Türkiye gained momentum, hundreds of them were established. Women were organized by joining hands and became empowered; established networks enabling them take joint action and ran campaigns to voice their demands vigorously. In addition to effective networking to ensure legislative changes or to expose sexist practices, the

Women's Coalition was established in 2002. The Coalition asserts the importance of local politics since 20 years:

"For us, the participation in local politics is not limited to exercising the rights to vote and stand for election. We strive to enforce and challenge all types of participation channels and routes, and establish new ones to ensure that gender equality is observed in rendering municipal services; to prevent women and the LGBTI+ individuals being exposed to discrimination and ensure their recognition as equal fellow citizens. We know that the responsibility to address these issues should not rest only with the municipalities, the public administration should put efforts as well. By and large, local governments are more accessible than central bodies and are more open to hear our voices.

Political representation is both an instrument of the struggle for equality and a goal because we know that politics liberates us. Forget what's said about the dirtiness of politics; when we allow strong winds to blow, there would be no dirt, no nothing left. Politics gets dirty if we don't engage in and stay away from it."²⁰

The Coalition drew up important guidelines and prepared manuals on local politics that we may refer to and benefit from.²¹

Meanwhile, the global women's movement grew stronger due to CEDAW and women's organizations in Türkiye began to establish affiliations with women's organizations worldwide.

Serpil Sancar describes this era and its contribution to the women's movement as follows;

"CEDAW and the "Beijing Action Plan" form the backbone of the global women's movement that was developed and strengthened during the 1990s. The universal women's rights discourse created by the women's movement provided the grounds to individual governments / states to legitimize their struggles against the violation of women's rights. Many countries implemented significant legal and political reforms (although still inadequate) to this end. This allowed for legitimizing many feminist organizations that were highly effective in setting the agenda of the global women's movement. The women's issue and gender inequality have always

¹⁶ <https://ucansupurge.org.tr>

¹⁷ <http://ka-der.org.tr>

¹⁸ <https://www.kamer.org.tr>

¹⁹ <https://kadav.org.tr>

²⁰ <http://kadinkoalisyonu.org>

²¹ <http://kadinkoalisyonu.org/kutuphane>

been on the UN's agenda since 1945; in due course, this perspective both evolved and was modified depending on the context; paradigms were updated and continually revised under the influence of the women's organizations. Until the 1970s, women's issues were addressed within the paradigm of discrimination in general, and women were categorized as a group subjected to discrimination. However, as from the 1970s, arguments around social equality, development, eliminating underdevelopment, and denouncing exploitation constituted the political paradigm that was widely acknowledged throughout the world. This resulted in shifting of the paradigm of addressing women's issues to that political sphere. Therefore, women's issues were then addressed in the context described by the terms – women's evolvment and later by women's empowerment. We may conclude that today's predominant paradigm is the global women's rights politics centered around "women's human rights."²²

Signing of CEDAW by the member states of the UN and strengthening of the women's movement worldwide and also in Türkiye enabled legislative amendments in Türkiye to take effect. Yet, campaigns conducted by women were significantly effective in the adoption of almost all the amendments as from the 1990s.



²²Serpil Sancar 2011, "Türkiye'de Kadın Hareketinin Politiği: Tarihsel Bağlam, Politik Gündem ve Özgünlükler", içinde **Birkaç Arpa Boyu... 21. Yüzyıla Girerken Türkiye'de Feminist Eleştirinin Birikimi** (The Politics of Women's Movement in Turkey: Historical Context, Political Agenda and Peculiarities'), in: ibid. (ed.); (Feminist Research in Turkey in the Wake of 21st Century), ed. Serpil Sancar, Koç Üniversitesi Yayını (Koç University Publication), İstanbul; pp.11-12..

2. Regulations/Reforms for Gender Equality (1980-2002)

The State Planning Organization's Fifth Five-Year Development Plan (1985-1989) underscores one of the most urgent needs of women: "The participation of women and their enhanced presence in working life due to cultural, social and economic developments led by industrialization exacerbated the need for day care centers and crèches. Their number must grow and qualities must be improved."

Upon identifying this need, the Advisory Committee on Policies for Women was founded in 1987 under the State Planning Organization (SPO). This may be considered as the preliminary step to the foundation of the Directorate General on the Status of Women in subsequent years.²³

On January 1989, the Ministry of Interior announced that the women would be eligible to take the district governorship exam. This allowed for women to be appointed as district governors.

Meanwhile, the progress achieved to this end alarmed the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi – ANAP) Government of the time that led to penning reports drawing attention to changes in the "Turkish Family Structure", to the shift in conventional roles in the family due to women's participation in work life and to the descending significance of the "holy father's" role as the head of the family. Upon these ongoing concerns, the Turkish Family Association was established under the Prime Ministry in 1989.

The section titled "Family, Women and Children" of the Sixth Five-Year Development Plan (1990-1994) refers to: "*Enhancing the family institution as the fundamental element in safeguarding and fostering national and moral values, hence in reinforcing national integrity and solidarity in all respects.*"²⁴

In 1990, Article 438 of the Turkish Penal Code, reducing sentences by two-thirds for rapists of prostitutes was abolished. The incident that led the way to the annulment of Article 438 was reducing the sentences by two-thirds for four rapists who were standing trial for raping a woman, on the ground that the woman was a prostitute. Initially, the resolution

was referred to the Constitutional Court. However, the Court ruled by majority vote that the verdict was right. In response, the women's organizations, attorneys and the human rights organizations conducted a vigorous campaign resulting in the annulment of Article 438 by the government of the time.

In 1992, women campaigned vociferously for the annulment of Article 159 of the Civil Code that urged women to obtain permission of their husbands before taking a job. Those campaigns also proved successful. The 159th article was repealed by the Constitutional Court and the rescind order was published in the Official Gazette dated July 2, 1992 and numbered 21272.

The Directorate General on the Status of Women (DGSW) (or the "Directorate General of the Women's Status and Problems" as it was called during its foundation) was established on April 20, 1990 by the Legislative Decree No. 422.

The DGSW was initially under the Prime Ministry by the virtue of a legislative decree, then the Ministry of Labor and Social Security for only eight months, and subsequently the Ministry of State to be established under the Prime Ministry. The Directorate General of the Women's Status and Problems was considered as a contact center for addressing women's issues in Türkiye – executing programs and projects in collaboration with the UN.

The notion of establishing the Women's Ministry was first voiced at the Social Democratic People's Party's (SHP) Congress held in 1989 and the decision was taken to establish the Ministry. Upon obtaining the approval of the coalition partner the True Path Party (DYP), the DYP-SHP Government established the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs in 1991.

In 1992, the *Office of Social Structure and Women's Statistics* was formed by the State Institute of Statistics (DİE) to create a gender-based database.

Women's Research Centers were established – initially at the Istanbul University (1993) and later at the Ankara University and the Middle East Tech-

²³ <https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Besinci-Bes-Yillik-Kalkinma-Plani-1985-1989.pdf> pp. 173-668.

²⁴ https://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Altinci_Bes_Yillik_Kalkinma_Planı-1990-1994.pdf p.287.

nical University; graduate studies commenced. The first step toward the institutionalization of women's research centers at universities was taken by the Istanbul University in 1989, yet the progress was rather slow until the 2000s. As of February 2018, there were women's research centers at 85 universities that contributed to women's and gender studies at various levels through events and academic studies.

Adultery was decriminalized in 1999 for both women and men. In 1996, Article 441 of the Penal Code that criminalized adultery by men and two years later, in 1998, Article 440 of the Penal Code that criminalized adultery by women were annulled by the Constitutional Court on the grounds that the unequal treatment was a violation of the Article 10 of the Turkish Constitution stipulating that all individuals are equal without any discrimination before the law.

In 1997, the Constitutional Court decided that married women would be allowed to use their own surnames together with the husband's surname on the grounds that the obligation to take the husband's surname after marriage was a violation of the principle of equality (New Civil Code, Article 187). Article 153 of the former Civil Code which stipulated that "Women must take the husband's surname on marriage" was amended.

Marital status descriptions such as "single", "married", "widow", "divorced" were omitted and only the options of "single" and "married" were indicated on the marital status section of identity cards in 1997 as per the Ministry of Interior's circular put into effect upon the proposal of the Directorate General on the Status of Women (DGSW).

Likewise, descriptions such as "widow woman" were omitted from, and only the descriptions like "wife, daughter, mother, father" were indicated on the "Relationship with the Retired" section of the widows' and orphans' cards issued by the General Directorate of Pension Fund.

An amendment to the law on Income Tax annulled issuing of tax declarations by men as the head of

family. This allowed for married women to submit income tax declaration forms separately.

Limited protection from virginity testing was put into effect in 1997. Since the 1980s, virginity testing had been an issue that women and girls faced in many settings such as secondary schools and job interviews. In 1988, women bombarded with telegrams the General Directorate of Mapping that demanded virginity certificates from women who applied for jobs. Young girls who were subjected to involuntary testing committed suicides. Women conducted influential campaigns to restrict virginity testing.

Upon the agenda set by the Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women and the women's organizations, the Ministry of Justice issued a circular in 1997 stipulating that virginity testing may be performed under specific conditions: (a) in case of offences prosecuted on complaint by obtaining the victim's consent, (b) upon a judge's decision for ex officio offences like rape, (c) in non-delayable cases upon the public prosecutor's written consent.

The Law No. 4320 on the Protection of the Family that was enacted in 1988 is of utmost significance since the concept of "domestic violence" was first introduced by this law. Prior to its enactment, incidences of domestic violence were investigated pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Turkish Penal Code. Issues related to lodging/shelter, livelihood, property management, rulings concerning relations with children, etc. were resolved in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Civil Code – during marriage or divorce.

Although the Law No. 4320 on the Protection of the Family was enacted to prevent women from violence, its title is: "Protection of the Family". Women rightfully criticized this. Although the Law No. 4320 on the Protection of the Family was enacted to prevent all individuals living under the same roof subjected to violence from experiencing violence in the family, its formulation imposing the protection of the family and not the individual(s) is one of the factors complicating its implementation. Even though the law is applicable to everyone, in practice it was

said to be applicable only to the “wrongful spouse”. Besides, matters related to converting the custodial sentence of up to six months to be imposed to the spouse who has not abided by the protection order into a fine and the suspension of the sentence create confusion during implementation.

Türkiye removed its reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1999. While ratifying the convention in 1985, it had entered reservations on articles on family law. The removal of reservations required amending all of the discriminatory provisions particularly common in the Civil Code.

The Women’s Rights (Law) Commission of the Union of the Turkish Bar Associations (TÜBAKKOM) was established in 1999. Women lawyers who came together upon the Istanbul Bar Women’s Rights (Law) Commission’s call, established the “Turkish Bar Associations Women’s Rights Commissions Network”.

1999 witnessed a landmark event with respect to Türkiye – European Union (EU) Relations. At the EU Heads of State and Government summit held in Helsinki on December 11-12, 1999, Türkiye’s candidate status for full membership to the EU was officially recognized and it was declared as a candidate country on an equal-footing with other candidate countries in an unequivocal manner and with clarity.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (Beijing + 5) international session was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on June 5-9, 2000 with the participation of 180 government delegations and more than 2,000 independent women’s organizations. During the 1990s the Directorate General on the Status of Women (DGSW) had played a significant role in bringing Türkiye together with the international community – e.g. it facilitated Türkiye to play an effective role both at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 and also at the General Assembly session (Beijing+5) held in New York in 2000.

Serpil Sancar describes that era which she closely followed along as follows;

Türkiye’s participation in the UN General Assembly’s Special Session under the theme of “Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the 21st Century” with government representatives, women parliamentarians from different political parties and the representatives of CSOs was significant in this respect. The Turkish delegation played an effective and constructive role in decision-making during the Beijing+5 session held in 2000. This was achieved through substantial contributions and personal initiatives of officials who sought to collaborate with the CSOs by refraining from the fairly common exclusionary and obstructive attitude of state officials, thanks to positive relations and constructive collaboration between the state/government cadres and representatives of independent CSOs that are proficient in their fields. And thanks to that understanding, the issues of “forced marriage” and “honor crimes” that are among the key concerns in Türkiye were incorporated into a UN document; various forms of violence against women including domestic violence (that were considered as “private” matters - including marital rape, forced marriage and honor offences) were defined and criminalized for the first time during the Pekin+ session.”²⁵



²⁵ Serpil Sancar 2018, Siyasal Kararlara Katılımda Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Haritalama ve İzleme Çalışması (Gender Equality in Political Decision-Making: Mapping and Monitoring Study)
<http://dspace.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/176>

3. Regulatory Amendments as from 2002

“The era that started in 2002 by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) Government taking power marks the beginning of a new period around the women’s movement.

As a prerequisite of its ideology, the AKP adopted - to a certain extent - the women’s human rights approach as a political movement against gender equality; modified it partly in accordance with its ideology. We may say that the architecting force of this approach behind the scenes was strong collaborations among the Islamist/religious women’s organizations and close ideological, political and cultural interactions with feminist organizations in particular.

It is apparent that the half-closed door opened by the AKP concerning women’s human rights allows for only a very narrow path to the exit. The likelihood of the half-closed door policy to evolve into a full-fledged women’s policy is not sighted on horizon. Public entities do not seem to bother thinking much about the implementation of legislation. For example, Article 10 of the Constitution stipulates that men and women have equal rights and the State has the obligation to ensure that this equality exists in practice. Nevertheless, we cannot say that an “action plan” is in place and/or implemented; describing how that obligation would be implemented in practice by public entities, we rather see a list of wishful thinking examples on paper. The Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (GNAT) Equal Opportunities Commission for Women and Men was established, but there is no policy formulating how the commission would implement its monitoring and reporting tasks; likewise, the central government lacks a plan for the formation of equality units in local governments. That is to say, the women’s rights politics built around day-to-day political deals, negotiations and compromises is not yet behind us.”²⁶

During the first half of the 2000s, besides the AKP Government coming into power, substantial progress was made with respect to women’s rights in the institutional domain – marked by the ratification and entry into force of the United Nations conventions as well as the legislative amendments made due to Türkiye’s EU candidacy process.

The new Civil Code was enacted in 2002. It was the major agenda item of the women’s movement since 1985 until its amendment. Dozens of campaigns and protests were held during its amendment and the bill was adopted by the General Assembly of the Parliament (GNAT) on November 22, 2001. Thus, the Turkish Civil Code that had come into effect on October 4, 1926 was amended 76 years later. The most important amendment relates to the simplification of language. Besides, to ensure equality between women and men, the provision “declaring the husband as the head of the marriage union” was abolished, the spouses were given equal says in the management of the marriage union and it was acknowledged that the spouses should manage the marriage union together. The minimum age of marriage was raised to 18 for both women and men. The legal property regime changed to one “based on sharing of property acquired during marriage”, and “degrading treatment” was recognized as grounds for divorce.

The Optional Protocol that establishes an individual complaint mechanism allowing individuals to make complaints to the CEDAW Committee was enacted in 2002. The Protocol was adopted by the resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations numbered 54/4 and dated October 6, 1999 and it was opened to signature on December 10, 1999. Türkiye signed the Optional Protocol in 2000 and promulgated in 2002.

In 2003, Türkiye ratified the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights signed by the United Nations in 1966. During the same year, Türkiye ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, by making a reservation on Article 27. Türkiye had signed this Covenant in 2000. The Constitutional amendment adopted in 2004 established the supremacy of international law concerning issues on women’s rights. In this respect, the following provision was added to Article 90 of the Turkish Constitution: *“Moreover, in the case of a conflict between international conventions concerning fundamental rights and freedoms and the laws, due to differences in provisions on the same matter, the pro-*

²⁶ Serpil Sancar, Türkiye’de Kadın Hareketinin Politiği (The Politics of Women’s Movement in Türkiye), p.75

visions of international agreements shall prevail." This amendment facilitated the transposition of CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) into domestic law. Türkiye is a State Party to CEDAW – the so-called constitution of women's rights – since 1985.

Negotiation talks for Türkiye's full membership in the EU were initiated in 2005 and during the subsequent period the topic of women's rights in Türkiye was on the agendas of the European Parliament and the European Commission. The harmonization of policies with the EU *acquis* led to significant legislative amendments and enhanced democratization in the country. Regulations on civil rights and human rights, and particularly specific amendments to the Civil Code, Criminal Code and the Constitution were benefiting the women.

The Dutch parliamentarian of Turkish descent Emine Bozkurt brought the issues of women's rights, violence against women, the role of the civil society, women's education, women's presence in the labour market and the political life in Türkiye up to the agenda of the European Parliament via two reports she presented during 2005 and 2007.

The new Turkish Criminal Code No. 5237 entered into force in 2005. The objective of the Criminal Code that passed on September 26, 2004 is "to protect individual rights and freedoms, public order and security, the rule of law, peace in the community, public health and the environment, and to prevent the commission of offences."

During its amendment, women who were organized sought to be influential by concerted lobbying activities to revoke and/or amend provisions unfavourable to women on virginity testing, sexual harassment, honour killings, adultery, etc. The new Criminal Code adopted in lieu of the former that was in effect for 79 years led to a new era in relation to the penal law that envisages punishing several newly defined crimes like the law adopted in Europe.

The publication of the Prime Ministry's Circular numbered 2006/17 on "Measures To Be Taken To Com-

bat Violence Against Women and Children & Prevent Honor Killings" in the Official Gazette numbered 26218 on July 4, 2006 indicated substantial progress in addressing the issue.

In 2006, Türkiye ratified the First Optional Protocol to the ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly) that established an individual complaint mechanism as well as the Second Optional Protocol aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

Türkiye removed its reservation to the Paragraph 1 of Article 9 of CEDAW in 2008. This paragraph reads as: "States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband."

The Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (GNAT) Committee on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men (KEFEK) was established in 2009 by the Law No. 5840. Its duties included to: (1) review recommendations for drafts submitted to GNAT concerning equality between women and men, (2) follow-up the developments in other countries and organizations concerning gender equality, (3) provide advice on legislative and policy changes to ensure the compliance of Turkish laws and the Constitution in order to fulfill international obligations, (4) review gender discrimination complaints presented by the Speaker of the GNAT to KEFEK and forward those complaints to relevant public authorities when necessary, and (5) provide information to the public related to gender equality. The Committee produced reports and ensured debates in the parliament on violence against women, early and forced marriage, women's problems in rural areas and in work life.

Türkiye was the first country to ratify The Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) on May 11, 2011. The case of Nahide Opuz v. Turkey, the appeal to which was lodged

with The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in 2002, was filed against Türkiye on the grounds of domestic violence against women. Nahide Opuz who resided in Diyarbakır had filed a complaint to the ECHR claiming that “despite her numerous criminal complaints to the Diyarbakır Public Prosecutor’s Office on the grounds that she was subjected to her husband’s violence, authorities had failed both to protect the life and well-being of her and her mother who had been killed by N. Opuz’s husband.” In 2009, the Court ruled in favour of Opuz and convicted Türkiye for discriminatory practice - failing to protect a woman from her husband’s violence despite her complaints to the Public Prosecutor’s Office. This was the first time ever the ECHR convicted a State for failing to protect its citizen from domestic violence. The ruling inspired the Council of Europe to draw up another convention on human rights to protect family members from domestic violence. That Convention which was pioneered by Türkiye was opened to signature during the meeting of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe held in Istanbul and Türkiye was the first country to ratify it.

Act No. 6284 on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women, and the Implementing Regulation Concerning the Law entered into force on March 8, 2012 and January 18, 2013 respectively. The Act No. 6284 took effect in lieu of the Act No. 4320. The women’s organizations had claimed that the Act No. 4320 that was enacted in January, 1988 would be inadequate even while it was being enacted.

Although Türkiye had assumed commitments and obligations to ensure gender equality under international treaties, women’s organizations had to spend vigorous efforts during both the preparation and the adoption of the Act No. 6284 on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence Against Women.

Meanwhile, States Parties to The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) that was ratified by Türkiye in 1985 and went into force in 1986 condemn discrimination against women in all its forms and agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women. Furthermore, in 2011 Türkiye had admitted failure to protect femicide victim Ayşe Paşalı and paid compensation in the ECHR settlement.

In the meantime, negotiation talks for Türkiye’s full EU membership were continuing.

Despite the country’s obligations, it would be fair to say that the Act No. 6284 was enacted through the endeavors and ambition of the women’s movement organizations.



²⁷ <https://kadem.org.tr/uluslararasi-kadin-ve-adalet-zirvesi-sonuc-bildirisi>

²⁸ <https://kadem.org.tr/cumhurbaskani-sayin-recep-tayyip-erdoganin-iii-uluslararasi-kadin-ve-adalet-zirvesi-acilis-konusmasi/>

4. 2011 Onwards: The Decline of Women's Rights

We took a look at the women's movement organizations' struggle and regulatory amendments implemented as from 1980. Even in this brief overview, we observe that the women's movement organizations had to devote tremendous efforts for months just to make the slightest progress toward women's human rights.

The progress achieved at all costs began to take a turn for the worse as from 2011; all advancements achieved during the 1980-2002 era and throughout the Justice and Development Party (AKP) Government's rule were taken back one after another despite the women's movement organizations' vigorous efforts.

In 2011, the Ministry of State for Women and Family was renamed as the Ministry of Family and Social Policies by removing the word "women". Meanwhile, women's organizations were conducting campaigns to establish the Women's Ministry. Their request was denied. Besides, when the Presidential Government System came into effect in 2018, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Ministry of Family and Social Policies were merged. The merged Ministry was initially named as the "Ministry of Labour, Social Services and Family" and later as the "Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services" by a Presidential Decree issued in August 2018. Once again, the word "family" was used as an euphemism for saying woman without using the word "woman".

The Government authorities that renamed the Ministry of State for Women and Family in 2011 became the first signatory to the Istanbul Convention during the same year.

The Women and Democracy Association (KADEM) was founded on March 8, 2013. KADEM advocates the "principle of equality in existence and justice in responsibilities" rather than gender equality. KADEM initiated arguments on "equality versus justice" by disclosing that it strives to create a justice-centered discourse.

"In the relationship between men and women, an approach considering equality for the rights, but justice for the distribution of social obligations and roles is required. Ensuring equality through the values of dominant groups without considering differences/diversities may result in to the detriment of the disadvantaged groups in some cases. Despite the adoption of policies grounded on equality today, women do not enjoy equal status and rights with men in politics, decision-making and the economic life. A fair approach that accounts for women's multidimensional victimhood into consideration is crucial in this sense."²⁷

During his speech at the International Women and Justice Summit organized by KADEM, President Erdoğan referred to KADEM as "Our Foundation" and argued against gender equality as follows:

"Please note that we're referring here to women's differences based on creation, not their deficiencies. No justice throughout the world has been achieved through holding women and men equal in each and every respect."²⁸

Thereby, the shift from the gender equality-centered to gender justice-centered approach, the "different through creation" discourse arguing that women and men complement each other rather than being equal began spreading.

During the International Women's Day Panel held in Uşak in 2008, the Prime Minister of the time Erdoğan had advised women: *"I am not talking to you as a prime minister but as your worried brother. We must preserve our young population exactly as it is. What is essential to the economy is human beings. They want to clean out the root of Turkish people. This is exactly what they are doing. If you do not want your population decrease, then there should be three children for one family."*

Four years later, on May 25, 2012, access to abortion was made difficult in practice. During his closing speech addressed at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action held at the Istanbul Hilton Hotel, the Prime Minister of the time Recep Tayyip Erdoğan requested women to give birth to at least three children and said: *"I consider abortion as murder. No one should have the right to allow this."*

²⁷ <https://kadem.org.tr/uluslararasi-kadin-ve-adalet-zirvesi-sonuc-bildirisi>

²⁸ <https://kadem.org.tr/cumhurbaskani-sayin-recep-tayyip-erdoganin-iii-uluslararasi-kadin-ve-adalet-zirvesi-acilis-konusmasi/>

Although the law on abortion was not amended due to women's powerful protests, the right to abortion is denied in practice. And this is to the detriment of women who do not have access to private health-care institutions since they cannot afford.

In 2014, the concept of "gender equality" was brought up to discussion and the phrase was removed from official documents.

During the I. International Women and Justice Summit, President Erdoğan said: *"What do women need? Sometimes they say it is the equality between women and men. The right thing is equality among women. The right thing is equality among men. What's crucial is the women's inequality before justice. What women need is equivalence. You cannot bring men and women to equal status because that is against creation. Their natures, systems and innate features are different."*

His remarks, particularly the "gender equality is against creation" stamped its mark on the era and opened up debates on gender equality vs. creation.

Author Sema Maraşlı who opposed the "Gender Equality" project claimed that *"the practice was against creation, and the gender equality studies in Western societies led to the proliferation of homosexuality."*²⁹

On the other hand, Author Berrin Sönmez argued just the opposite:

*"Islam brought about the revolution of equality to humanity. Those who argue that equality is against creation must think again. How can a Muslim believer say that equality between women and men is against nature while the Quran definitively declares to humanity that supremacy is stated by taqwa only?"*³⁰

Fatmagül Berktaş says: *"Equality lies at the heart of human rights and democracy."*³¹

In her essay titled "Local Development and Gender Equality", Aksu Bora describes equality: *"Equality was one of the three principles of the French Revolution -*

Liberty, Equality, Fraternity – that formed the foundation of the modern society. The ideal of 'equality' by ensuring that people cannot be superior nor inferior to one another due to their innate features/qualities, marked the beginning of an entirely new era in the Social Contract (i.e. the Constitution) establishing the rules of living together.

*The principle of equality never meant that people are the "same". No doubt, we are different from each other not only because our genders differ but our several other traits and characteristics differ as well; and the richness brought by all those differences shapes and makes the society prosperous. However, the indispensable prerequisite for an equitable society is that every person must have access to equal (not less or more) opportunities and options regardless of her/his individual characteristics and traits. For example, being born into a farming family or a shoemaker's family does not obligate a child to pursue that profession – i.e. to become a farmer or a shoemaker. That is exactly why modern education is described as "contemporary" and equitable. National education took over the function of family and communities in learning."*³²

In 2019, the Council of Higher Education (CoHE - YÖK) removed the "Higher Education Institutions Gender Equality Document of Stance" from its website.

YÖK President had disclosed the Higher Education Institutions Gender Equality Document of Stance during the meeting held on the International Women's Day on March 8, 2016. The document that was published based on YÖK's General Assembly Resolution dated May 28, 2015 stated that gender inequality exists as a major concern; and all of YÖK's affiliated entities shall be committed to behave responsively and responsibly to advance gender equality. Within the scope of related awareness-raising programs, a "Workshop on Gender Equality in Higher Education" was held on April 26, 2018 at YÖK's premises.

Yet, under the influence of policies and discourses promoting social conservatism, the polarisation of the society, and religionization of life, the project

²⁹ <https://ilkha.com/guncel/cinsiyet-esitligi-projesi-fitrata-aykiridir>

³⁰ Berrin Sönmez -Gazete Duvar – March 7 Thursday
<https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/yazarlar/2019/03/07/fitrat-nedir-esitlik-fitrata-aykiri-mi>

³¹ Fatmagül Berktaş, 2010, *Politikânın Çağrısı*, (The Call of Politics), Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları (Bilgi University Publications) 309 p.131

³² Aksu Bora, Yerel Kalkınma ve Cinsiyet Eşitliği (Local Development and Gender Equality) – August 2009
<http://ka-der.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/yerel-kalkinma-ve-cinsiyet-esitligi.pdf> p.11

was terminated; and the document of stance was removed from YÖK's website on February 2019, on the grounds that "there was no compromise in the society on the notion of gender equality and it was not in conformity with our social values and acceptances."

As always, women's organizations were not invited to the session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women that took place on March 2015 in New York; relations between women's organizations and relevant ministries of the government almost ceased after then.

The women's organizations and the Ministry officials were in close collaboration during the enactment of the Act No. 6284 in 2012. The invitation to and participation of women experts and CSO representatives in official delegations established by the government, and ensuring their active engagement in negotiations were customary. This long-established practice had continued under the rule of different governments and Türkiye was indicated as an exemplary by the United Nations on the grounds that it makes positive contributions during deliberations.

During the Beijing 20 Conference, collaboration between the civil society and the government representatives broke off, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies took a tough line by allowing only the representatives' of the Ministry and the diplomats' engagement in negotiations and denying the participation of women experts and the CSO representatives in official delegations and negotiations.

Selma Acuner who closely followed-up the United Nations sessions then comments: "2013 was a significant year for Türkiye. During the 57th session held in 2013; all of a sudden, the authorities began to get uncomfortable since the CSO representatives joined the delegations. However, we had made outstanding contributions as a delegation in producing the highly comprehensive conclusions paper on the theme of eliminating and preventing violence against women. In response to their exclusionary attitudes, the women's organizations launched a campaign via the Women's Coalition's initiative, by producing a manifesto addressed to the Ministry

*of Family and Social Policies (MoFSP) titled 'MoFSP Excludes Women's Organizations from International Policy Initiatives.' Although independent experts were then allowed to take part in the official delegation, their participation was denied during subsequent years."*³³

2015 was a fairly turbulent year for Türkiye in view of recent developments. Two general elections were held; the first on June 7 and the second on November 1. Following the events and unrest in the southeastern Anatolia Region that began on September 2015, state of emergency was declared in some provinces on December 2015 and remained in effect until March 2016. Furthermore, the aborted coup attempt of July 2016 poured fuel on the fire and numerous CSOs were shut down; journalists, academics, intellectuals as well as the members of women's organizations were subjected to and suffered from greater oppression.

Women's organizations who could previously at least get into contact with the GNAT Committee on Equal Opportunities for Men and Women (KEFEK) and even if they had different viewpoints, who could provide information and opinions formally or informally about draft bills concerning women and children were then denied to maintain contacts and relations.

In 2016, the government introduced a bill that would have proposed postponing the sentences of convicted child abusers if they married their victims, but the bill was withdrawn due to widespread opposition by women's organizations and public pressure. A pack of laws was promulgated reforming the law on abuse of children. Modifications of the Article 103 of the Turkish penal code lowered the age limit to 12 years. With this reform, abuse on children less than 12 years old are the only ones covered by heavy sentences. Later on it was announced that a similar bill was being brought forward to the Parliament. Not only would this bill legitimise child marriage and statutory rape, but it would also increase the impunity of the abusers and create the perception that sexually exploiting and abusing a child can be excused. Women's organizations' opposition to this bill was denied.

³³ <https://esitlikadaletkadin.org/selma-acuner-ile-bm-kadininn-statusu-komisyonunun-dunu-ve-bugunu> Dr. Selma Acuner

“Promoting Gender Equality in Education Project” was terminated in 2016. The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) revised the Social Activities Regulation and terminated activities to advance “Gender Equality”. Yet, action plans to be implemented at schools under the MoNE were drawn up within the scope of the “Promoting Gender Equality In Education Project” launched in 2014, co-financed by the EU and the Government of Türkiye, and implemented by a consortium led by the General Directorate for Secondary Education- MoNE.

The Presidential Government System was adopted by referendum on April 16, 2017 and is in effect since July 9, 2018. Thereby, Türkiye began to be ruled by a more centralist and authoritarian government.

Türkiye announced withdrawal from the İstanbul Convention on March 20, 2021. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced the country’s withdrawal from the İstanbul Convention by the Presidential Decree numbered 3718 published in the Official Gazette on the same date. Previously, during an iftar program organized by the “National Will Platform” on August 2019, President Erdoğan had said that Türkiye might withdraw from the Convention, and other signs of withdrawal were noted as well. Even so, such a sharp reversal in approach sparked an avalanche of shock and rage. The withdrawal from the Convention that was ratified unanimously by the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (GNAT) – by a single person’s decision through a decree passed in the middle of the night – sparked harsh opposition from the women’s movement and all rights-based CSOs. Political parties and the CSOs filed lawsuits in the Council of State to overturn the decision, however the Council of State ruled that the termination procedure was right. The withdrawal gave a new direction and impetus to the women’s movement.

Fatmagül Berktaş says: “Language is not only a communication tool, it is a political and ideological weapon.”

“Although politics is defined in several ways, it is primarily a social activity and therefore conducted through language. At first sight, language is considered as something simple, straightforward and transparent; as a

descriptive medium / expression system representing things (physical objects, thoughts, emotions, etc.) by using symbols (words). Consequently, it may be concluded that language is something passive like a mirror reflecting reality as complete as possible. Yet, language is also dynamic (active); in addition to reflecting the world around us, it activates imagination, triggers emotions; and affects what and how we see things as well as our attitudes and responses to them. In this regard, it contributes to the generation (production) and reproduction of ideology. Indeed, that’s how the propaganda prowess of language materializes. Language is not only a communication tool, it is a political and ideological weapon.”³⁴

Sexist language used by authorities led to the continuance of intensified violence against women and sexist practices.

Some sexist remarks in the Turkish language:

“The Turkish woman is the ornament of her house.”

“The only career for women is motherhood.”

“A pregnant woman can’t walk around on the streets.”

“The rapist is more innocent than the woman who had an abortion.”

“The woman who bursts into laughter is virtueless.”

“Why do they want jobs? Isn’t household work enough?”



³⁴ Fatmagül Berktaş, 2010, *Politikanın Çağrısı* (The Call of Politics), İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayını (Istanbul Bilgi University Publications) 309, p.11

The most concrete indication of the decline from 2011 onwards relates to changes of the principles and policies in National Action Plans. In fact, the National Action Plans that are only advisory and allow for indirect intervention only since enforcement mechanisms are not in place, no longer aim to advance gender equality as may be seen from the chart below.³⁵

Comparison of National Action Plans on the Basis of Major Principles and Policies	
Gender Equality (GE) National Action Plan (2008-2013)	Women's Empowerment Strategy Document and Action Plan (2018-2023)
<p>Basic Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ GE action plan ■ GE approach ■ GE mainstreaming 	<p>Basic Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Women's empowerment ■ Combating violence against women ■ Combating early and forced marriages
<p>Basic Policies</p> <p>Nine core policy pillars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Promoting GE in Türkiye ■ Education ■ Economics ■ Poverty ■ Authorization and decision-making mechanisms ■ Health ■ Media ■ Environment ■ Human Rights and Violence 	<p>Basic Policies</p> <p>Five core policy pillars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Education ■ Health ■ Economics ■ Participation in decision-making processes ■ Media

³⁵ Data Source: Serpil Sancar 2020, *Siyasal Kararlara Katılımda Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Haritalama ve İzleme Çalışması 2018-2020 Güncel-lemesi* (Gender Equality in Participation in Political Decisions Mapping and Monitoring Study 2018-2020 Update) <http://dspace.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/1251>, p.27 The topics filled in red were excluded from the scope of the next action plan

In conclusion;

As may be understood from this brief overview, all progress in Türkiye around gender equality, even within the context of advancements achieved pursuant to international treaties that set out the obligations were accomplished by the efforts of the women's movement organizations.

The women's movement organizations strive to amend laws on the one hand and seek to minimize the number of women losing their lives or who are exposed to violence on the other. Between 2011 and 2022, at least 3,500 women were killed. Moreover, some of the victims had begun to take action to exercise their legal rights or had obtained protection (restraining) orders.

No matter how hard the women's movement organizations and other CSOs struggle, failure to establish political will (commitment) and do what is required and the lack of an accompanying system to ensure equality lead sexist practices to continue to increase.

Sexist language objectifying women and leading them to be perceived as sexual objects is among the most pressing issues of women in Türkiye. Sexist language is used by authorities at all levels and becomes widespread. The change must begin from the "language".

Women know their problems as well as the ways to solve them.

Therefore, they demand:

A system and the political will (commitment) aiming to achieve gender equality in Türkiye and

Global supervisory CSOs / entities to take action to ensure the implementation of international treaties/ conventions in Türkiye.





Part II

Gender Equality in Local Governance

Introduction

When compared to central governments, local governments are more effective agents of service delivery to meet the day-to-day needs and demands of citizens. Besides, local governments play a key role by ensuring equal access to urban rights and services of all city residents since they provide the means of one-to-one communication.

In Türkiye, as a result of rapid urbanization during recent years, 93% of the population live within municipal borders (including 77% in provinces designated as Metropolitan Municipalities). Therefore, the municipalities' decisions concerning cities and the provision of services in several areas gained importance over service delivery at the national level. The population shift from rural to urban areas requires developing a new **democratic and participatory municipality** approach in Türkiye although it is considerably delayed. And this renewed approach **must adopt the gender equality objective like many other principles of democracy in a clear and precise way.**

When we take a look at how local politics is executed and the public services are delivered in Türkiye, we cannot say that a clear and sustainable policy / political goal to achieve gender equality is pursued. This is the case both with respect to personal political perspectives and choices of the authorities, and the institutional structures and practices of municipalities. At present, decisions on how and to what extent to address gender-based inequalities seem to depend upon the individual choices of local authorities or efforts of a few locally employed/assigned/appointed experts who aim to take action to this end. However, as we seek to indicate in this study, the principle of gender equality has long been recognized and embodied in democratic public administration approaches and practices throughout the world. Safeguarding women's rights and preventing gender discrimination have become universal principles of democracy; furthermore, recognizing and implementing these principles at the

local governance level are of daily and strategic importance.

In order to understand the extent of adoption and the implementation of gender equality as a fundamental principle by local authorities and public administrations in Türkiye, we need to compare the country data with the global data.

The objective 5.5.1 of the Action Plan of the *United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030)* that was ratified and committed to be implemented also by Türkiye envisages the rise of the proportion of positions held by women primarily in local governments (expressed as a percentage of elected positions held by women in legislative/ deliberative bodies of local governments). The UN's report produced on January 1, 2020 based on data of Member States reveals striking findings:³⁶

■ Of the 6.02 million elected members in deliberative bodies of local governments worldwide – 2.18 million (36%) are women.

■ Women's representation rate in national parliaments worldwide is 25 per cent. Thus, the proportion of women represented in local governments is higher than in national parliaments.

■ Women's representation in local governments is higher than 40 per cent only in 20 countries. The figure ranges between 30-40 per cent in 28 countries.

■ Women's representation in the national parliament in Türkiye is 17 per cent; however, the proportion of women among Mayors is 3 per cent, and only 11 per cent among city councilors.

The data reveal that Türkiye lags far behind most of the countries in terms of participation in decision-making mechanisms concerning gender equality, both at national and local levels. Women's participation in decision-making mechanisms at the local level is almost none and we are confronted with this democratic deficiency that has critical political and social effects.

³⁶ For the analysis based on data of 133 countries, see: Ionica Berevoescu and Julie Ballington, 2021, *Women's Representation in Local Government: A Global Analysis*, UN Women, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/01/womens-representation-in-local-government>

As these data indicate, at the global level, women's representation in local decision-making organs is higher than in national governments since local services are regarded to be more "womenly" and "are attuned to women's needs and experiences", and women's participation in decision-making mechanisms concerning the implementation of local services is accepted more easily. However, it has always been just the opposite in Türkiye. Women lag far behind and are underrepresented in local policy-making mechanisms. Women's engagement in national politics is rather representative and symbolic, so as to reflect the contemporaneity of the Republic and the modernization of Türkiye rather than indicating their active involvement. Meanwhile, it looks to be that local politics is only for men and this seems unlikely to change easily in today's Türkiye; women cannot participate in local decision-making processes equally and actively, and they can't easily run for candidacy and be elected for positions at local decision-making bodies.³⁷ The data demonstrate that local decision-making bodies in Türkiye are "gender-blind" to gender equality – one of the fundamental principles of democracy.

In Türkiye, the municipalities may contribute substantially to achieve gender equality through their plans, programs, policies and services implemented at the local (grassroots) level or conversely they can exacerbate and solidify the existing inequalities. The primary strategy to achieve gender equality at the local level is to consider the diverse social needs and experiences of women and men while formulating and implementing all decisions, plans, programs, policies, projects and services to ensure equality between genders by providing equal access to representation and benefits; that is through **gender mainstreaming**.

We witness only a few high-performing cases in Türkiye when we assess whether different political parties and their elected local authorities are capable to eradicate gender inequality. Although some

organs / mechanisms like "equality units" or "gender equality committees" to address women's issues have been established at some municipalities recently, most of them are inactive, dysfunctional, lack democratic operation models, and are inadequately equipped in terms of staff and budget.³⁸

This situation needs to be transformed urgently in Türkiye. This purpose imposes crucial roles and tasks primarily on elected municipal decision-makers and their political parties. Certainly, the primary responsibility to achieve this transformation rests with the Ministry of Family and Social Services (MoFSS) and the Directorate General on the Status of Women (DGSW) as execution organs of the central government established for achieving gender equality.

This transformation, that is integrating the goal of achieving gender equality into local politics / local public services by those responsible organs seems unlikely to occur in itself. In order to transform the present "gender-blind" approach rapidly, all **rights-based** civil society organizations, local organizations of mainstream political parties, and institutions assuming crucial public responsibilities such as the Turkish Medical Association and the Union of Turkish Bar Associations must take action to this end. In short, a new **local political will** must be established envisaging progress by drawing up **Gender Equality Action Plans for Local Governments**. That means, no progress seems to come about unless all local political players formulate and implement a joint program to achieve gender equality collaboratively.

Meanwhile, the few organized CSOs that seek to prevent women's rights violations in Türkiye fail to be established as adequately effective, robust and organized political forces at the local sphere. The political weakness of the women's rights movement at the local level leads solid political demands for gender equality to be disregarded by local political players. It seems that the women's rights

³⁷ For national elections data, see: Serpil Sancar, 2018, *Siyasal Kararlara Katılımda Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Haritalama ve İzleme Çalışması* (Gender Equality in Participation in Political Decisions Mapping and Monitoring Study)

<http://dSPACE.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/176> and for updated report data, see: Serpil Sancar, 2020, *Siyasal Kararlara Katılımda Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Haritalama ve İzleme Çalışması 2018-2020 Güncellemesi (Update)*, <http://dSPACE.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/1251>

³⁸ For a recent study on this topic, see: Ülker Şener and Bengin İnanç, 2021, *Belediye Eşitlik Birimleri Mevcut Durum Analizi* (Municipal Equality Units Current Situation Analysis), Association for Monitoring Gender Equality (CEİD) Publication <http://dSPACE.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/1737>

movement needs to set “**devising a well-founded program devoted to ensure participation in local politics**” as a priority goal.

The purpose of this study is to compile and facilitate access to information, data and findings to guide the CSOs and civil actors that/who will work to transform the gender-blind aspect of local politics as well as local public services mentioned above; and to help designing the **Decentralized Governance Model for Gender Equality** by devising a roadmap to guide people and institutions that will work for this purpose. KAMER designed a project to perform the background study for the roadmap, and an experts workshop - “*Decentralized Governance Model for Gender Equality - Preliminary Phase Experts Workshop*” - was held to discuss the background.

The **Local Governance Model Experts Workshop** was held online under the coordination of Serpil Sancar with the participation and contributions of 14 experts during April 16-17, 2022. The names and the topics of presentations of the participants are as follows:

- Doç. Dr. Ece Öztan “*Uluslararası Belgelerde Yerel Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği ile İlgili Normlar, Stratejiler, Önerilen Politikalar ve Başarılı Örnekler*” (Norms, Strategies, Recommended Policies and Best Practices Related to Local Gender Equality in International Agreements) and “*Yerel Yönetimlerde Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliğine Nasıl Bakmalıyız?*” (How Should We View Gender Equality in Local Governments?)
- Yasemin Sezgin “*Yerel Yönetimlerde Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği için Mevcut ve Olması Gereken Hukuki Çerçeve*” (The Existing and Required Legal Framework for Gender Equality in Local Governments)
- Prof. Dr. Berrin Koyuncu Lorosdağı “*Yerel Yönetimlerde Cinsiyet Eşitliği Kurumsal Yapısının Değerlendirilmesi*” (Evaluation of the Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Equality in Local Governments)
- Dr. Özgün Akduran “*Belediyelerde Eşitlik Çalışmalarında Karşılaşılan Direnç ve Engelleri Nasıl Aşarız?*” (How Do We Overcome the Resistance and Obstacles Faced in Municipalities During Equality Studies?)

- Gülfem Kırac Keleş “*Belediye Stratejik Planlarında Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği*” (Gender Equality in Municipal Strategic Plans) and “*Viyana Belediyesi Örneği*” (Wien Municipality Case)
- Ayşen Savcı “*İsveç Yerel Yönetimleri Örnekleri*” (Local Government Examples from Sweden)
- Doç. Dr. Bilge Durutürk “*Adana Belediyesi Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Uygulaması*” (Adana Municipality Gender Equality Practice)
- Doç. Dr. Ahu Sumbas “*Yerel Kararlara Katılımın Cinsiyeti ve Kadınların Temsili*” (Gender in Participation in Local Decisions and Women’s Representation)
- Dr. Senem Yıldırım Özdem “*Yerde Kadın Temsili: ABD - Türkiye Karşılaştırması*” (Women’s Representation at Local Level: Comparison of USA – Türkiye)
- Doç. Dr. Ayşegül Yakar Önal “*Toplumsal Cinsiyete Dayalı Bütçeleme’nin Genel İlkeleri ve Yaklaşımlar*” (General Principles of and Approaches for Gender-Based Budgeting)
- Doç. Dr. Burcu Yakut Çakar “*Yerel Yönetimler için Toplumsal Cinsiyete Duyarlı Bütçeleme Neden Kullanışlı Bir Araçtır?*” (Why Is Gender-Sensitive Budgeting a Useful Tool for Local Governments?)
- Prof. Dr. Gülay Günlük Şenesen “*Belediye Bütçesine Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Amaçları Çerçevesinden Bakma Denemesi*” (Viewing Municipal Budgets from the Perspective of Sustainable Development Goals)
- Doç. Dr. Yelda Yücel “*Yerel Yönetimlerde İzleme, Değerlendirmede Göstergelerin İşlevi, Zorluklar, Fırsatlar?*” (Functions of Indicators, Challenges and Opportunities in Monitoring and Assessment at Local Governments)
- Dr. Hilal Arslan “*Yerde Toplumsal Cinsiyet Verilerinin Değerlendirilmesi*” (Assessment of Gender Data at Local Level)

Prof. Dr. Serpil Sancar drew up this roadmap based on input from experts’ presentations. KAMER’s members who participated in the preparation of various Local Equality Action Plans also contributed during this process. The views of KAMER members who took part in Provincial Coordination Commit-

tees and contributed to drawing up the Provincial Action Plans to Prevent Violence Against Women in 20 provinces were also obtained. The KAMER Team sought to identify priority needs and requisites to advance gender equality at the local level, and their insights were reflected in the study. Later on, the study was shared with women's organizations, women and several CSOs through the broadest possible involvement.

Certainly, this study must be viewed as a preliminary draft. The final roadmap and the **Decentralized Governance Model for Gender Equality** will be drawn up based on input from a myriad of studies to be carried out in order to bring the content of this study to life. We are well aware that this transformation process will be crucial and hard. Therefore, we thank in advance for the endeavors of all women and men, organizations and institutions that take and continue to take action to embed gender equality into local politics and policy-making. We wish good luck to everyone and strongly believe that each and every endeavor to achieve this goal will serve for the re-democratization of Türkiye.

Serpil Sancar





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A. The International Context of Gender Equality in Local Governance³⁹

Until recently, there was a common understanding worldwide to define democracy both at the local and the national level with similar norms and political implementations. This understanding has shifted over time and the need to view democracy from multiple perspectives to ensure its robust functioning began to be admitted. Because it was acknowledged that local politics – the level at which the citizens' issues and problems in their daily lives are addressed through democratic approaches – sometimes requires political solutions unlike those brought forward at the national level. This case is defined as **democratic deficit in local governance**.

From the 1990s on policies to address human rights violations that emerged worldwide at local spheres against women and immigrants in particular took precedence. Debates on new mechanisms to ensure equality – the basic legal norm of citizenship – intensified. The **norms, strategies and policies around local democracy were reviewed, redefined and collaborative steps were taken on a global scale**.

Global initiatives established to support the progress of local democracy achieved to bring together insights, views and approaches of a vast number of political actors. This perspective called for drawing up a joint roadmap to impose the **adoption of policies for protecting and implementing human rights** – the key drivers of democratic politics at the national level – at the local level as well. To this end, the goal to create **democratic and equitable cities** was set; plans that could be implemented within the framework of the charter for **the right to the city** that is recognized as a human right and **local development** were debated and defined. The goal to achieve gender equality was then embedded in this perspective over time.

Türkiye, regarding itself a contemporary country in modern civilization has long been engaged in international efforts to safeguard human rights and advance democratic standards; became signatory to several conventions and was involved in their preparation. The recent example is the Council of Europe (CoE) Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention) – that was prepared with concerted efforts of many women's organizations, and was opened to signature in Istanbul.

Türkiye became signatory to the following international key treaties that propose basic universal norms, strategies and implementation policies. By signing, Türkiye has committed to fulfill its obligations. The basic framework, principles and goals of Türkiye's future undertakings to achieve gender equality are outlined in those treaties and related documents.

The list of basic treaties and policy documents and an overview of norms and policies proposing how gender equality must be implemented by local governments are given below:

1. Proposed Strategies, Norms, and Policies for Gender Equality

Early on, the perspective of global strategies to protect human rights was 'gender-blind' – lacked consideration of gender differences. However, since it became apparent that gender equality would not be achieved in itself over time; the norms, strategies and policies to achieve gender equality began to be formulated.⁴⁰ The most important international conventions and policy documents indicating key developments are as follows:

³⁹ This section is drawn up with input from Dr. Ece Öztan's Workshop presentation.

⁴⁰ For information on the evolution and stages of this era, see: Serpil Sancar, 2021, *Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitsizlikleriyle Baş Etme Strateji ve Politikaları Eğitim Materyali* (Strategies and Policies for Dealing With Gender Inequalities – Training Material), Association for Monitoring Gender Equality (CEİD) Publication, <https://dspace.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1/1416/Serpil%20Sancar%20-%20E%c4%9fitim%20Materyali%20SON.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>

Principal treaties on gender equality

- 1981- *The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* Türkiye ratified in 1985
- 1995- Fourth World Conference on Women and the *Beijing Action Plan* (the first text defining the most comprehensive gender equality policies - Türkiye signed in 1995)
- UN- (2015-2030) *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*, Action Plan (Goal 5 focuses on gender equality at the local level)
- Palermo Protocol - UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Human Beings Especially Women and Children* (Türkiye signed the protocol on December 13, 2000 and ratified in 2003)
- Council of Europe (CoE) Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Istanbul Convention)* (Türkiye signed the convention in 2011, it was published in the Official Gazette on March 8, 2012. Türkiye withdrew from the convention on March 20, 2021 by a Presidential Decree)
- Council of Europe (CoE) Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention)* (Türkiye signed the convention in 2011 that was then published in the Official Gazette and entered into force)
- Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) - the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life - 2006* (The Union of Municipalities in Türkiye joined the CEMR in 2010 and opened the charter to signature of municipalities in Türkiye that wished to sign)
- Council of Europe (CoE) Recommendations* (In particular the Recommendation pointing to the relation of gender stereotyping, gender inequality and sexism with violence against women and girls (Recommendation CM/Rec (2019))

Türkiye had signed and committed to implement its obligations as per the above-mentioned treaties, and established a ministry and affiliated institutions to execute and oversee the implementation and practices from 1990s onwards. Until recently, significant legal reforms, action plans and services to safeguard women's rights were formulated and implemented. However, starting from 2015, practices contrary to universal principles were gradually adopted, progressive practices were not adhered to and a reversal in approach concerning women's rights was experienced. Türkiye's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention by a Presidential Decree is an indication of this reversal in approach.



Norms and policies

The norms and policies indicated in major treaties and other documents are briefly summarized below:⁴¹ Türkiye is obliged to implement the following norms and policies as per the international treaties signed.

Norms

Ensuring equal access to rights by individuals of different genders, sexual orientation and gender identity,

Preventing gender-based discrimination to ensure equality,

Ensuring gender equality both in terms of equality in sameness and equality in difference,

Fulfilling the obligation to observe respect for human being's dignity in all practices,

Paying particular attention to "multiple inequalities" suffered by individuals who are exposed to more than one source of discrimination such as gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnicity, religion and language (the principle of intersectionality),

The need to consider indirect discrimination besides direct discrimination,

Ensuring conformity with justice and equity principles as required by and if compatible with equality principles,

Implementing "special measures" and "affirmative discrimination" measures to tackle persistent inequalities and discrimination,

In order to prevent human rights violations against women, taking into consideration the norms for humanely employment, balance of work and family life and economic independence of genders, during the implementation and practices

Placing women's empowerment at the forefront of all practices and implementation,

Due to the nature of crimes against sexual inviolability, taking "woman's statement" as the basis, if an inquiry request is made or a complaint lodged.

Policies

Ensuring political will (commitment) of relevant public and civil authorities to achieve gender equality,

Embedding the basic policy i.e. gender mainstreaming (the gender perspective) into the formulation, implementation and monitoring stages concerning all laws, policies, programs and projects,

Devising and building all institutional structures / mechanisms required for gender mainstreaming,

Generating action plans indicating activities, the actors and institutions who/that will be engaged in implementing policies,

Collecting and publishing gender specific data on a regular basis to assess the effectiveness of implementation,

Implementing "special measures" and "affirmative discrimination" measures to eliminate persistent inequalities,

Performing gender-impact analysis to assess the impact of policy implementation and the achieved transformation,

Performing gender budgeting, assessing the effects on resource utilization,

Performing methodological monitoring to assess the level of policy realisation

Establishing and supporting independent monitoring agencies to monitor policy implementations,

Collaborating with social stakeholders,

Ensuring the participation of men in gender-based awareness raising processes,

Developing gender indicators to facilitate and ensure objective monitoring.

⁴¹ For further information, see: Serpil Sancar, et al., 2021, *Türkiye'de Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliğini İzleme Raporu (Monitoring Gender Equality in Türkiye Report) 2019-2020*, pp. 21-42:

<https://dspace.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1/1792/Ceid%20y%c4%b1ll%c4%b1k%20Rapor.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>

***So, the Gender-Blind Public Services Must Be Reformulated.*⁴²**

The modern public service approach is “gender-blind” and reproduces gender inequality(ies). Unfortunately the modern human rights law has failed to comprehend diverse issues of women, and consequently did not achieve to produce solutions.

The demand to uphold women and men as equal citizens; e.g. women to enjoy equal access to education and employment under same conditions with men, to receive equal pay and income for equal work, to possess equal rights of ownership and inheritance, and to ensure their safety and protection against violence dates back to almost two centuries.

The modern public administration approach was shaped according to the demands of men who constituted the majority in the marketplace, in politics, in day-to-day lives and even in recreational settings. Women’s demands for equal rights were either disregarded or suppressed. Since the emergence of the principles and institutions of modern public administration, these circumstances remained almost the same and did not change much. This is called “gender-blind” public administration and it is argued that it requires to be changed.

Women who claimed that their needs were not considered in the adopted public policies argued that their needs and priorities are different from those of men (based on their specific responsibilities like proper running of the house and raising children). They told that they require different public services since their responsibilities are different. Combating men’s violence against women is a good example to this differing requirement.

One of the most notable achievements of the women’s rights movement was to expose severe violations of women’s rights in their so-called “private” family/marriage lives hidden behind closed doors. It was noted that since women who are responsible from household work and child/patient/elderly care are not compensated for their labor, they depend on their husbands for livelihood.

As a consequence, in order to eradicate the gender-based discriminatory approach in public services delivery, women’s equal access to public services must be ensured and also public services tailored to women’s needs must be formulated and implemented.



⁴² For information on gendered public service delivery see: Serpil Sancar, 2021, *Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitsizlikleriyle Baş Etme Strateji ve Politikaları Eğitim Materyali*, (Strategies and Policies for Dealing With Gender Inequalities – Training Material), Association for Monitoring Gender Equality (CEİD) Publications, <https://dspace.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1/1416/Serpil%20Sancar%20-%20E%c4%9fitim%20Materyali%20SON.pdf?sequence=4&isAllowed=y>

2. Historical Background of Achieving Gender Equality in Local Governance

Major stages that depict how the need to take action at the local level to achieve gender equality evolved from the 1970s are as follows:

1972- **UN Conference on the Human Environment**- Many countries acknowledged that the primary path to drive and build a higher quality of life at the local level is to achieve sustainable development which in turn requires environmental protection and fostering democracy in local life. Many countries shared this view that enabled significant achievements in the subsequent 20 years.

1976- **HABITAT-I Conference** convened and the path forward began to be defined.

1987- The **Brunland Report** was published and the strategies to ensure environmental protection and development in local life began to be defined.

1992- **The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)**- was held in Rio de Janeiro. One of the major results of the conference was the **Agenda 21 Action Plan**.

1996- **HABITAT-II The United Nations Human Settlements Conference** was held. It was acknowledged in the conceptual framework that the sustainable development approach based on political priorities entails a holistic development model encompassing political, environmental and social perspectives along with the economic viewpoint.

These developments were realized through the establishment of new international institutions that support practices and implementations:

The first outstanding institution among those is the *International Union of Local Authorities (IULA)*. IULA had adopted the *Worldwide Declaration on Local Governments* ⁴³ in 1998 that was adopted by many countries.

Today, one of the most far-reaching organizations throughout the world is the *United Cities and Local Governments* ⁴⁴ (UCLG). UCLG is the largest local and regional administrative network representing 240,000 cities from diverse regions of the world. Following a long-lasting process that started during the *Habitat II Conference* held in İstanbul in 1996, the *International Union of Local Authorities (IULA)*, the *World Federation of United Cities (FM-CU-UTO)* and METROPOLIS (the global network of major cities and metropolitan areas) were incorporated under the name UCLG. ⁴⁵

UCLG set the aim to “achieve equality between women and men at the local level” among its primary goals which resulted in significant progress guiding the concepts, practices and implementations today.

Meanwhile, the European policy-makers took significant steps to implement the policy of safeguarding human rights at the local level and in particular to establish gender equality. The *Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)*, embedded gender equality goals into the duties and responsibilities of local governments. To this end, the *European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life* was drawn up and adopted. ⁴⁶

⁴³https://www.rgref.de/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/resolutionen/hg_iula_women.html

⁴⁴https://www.tbb.gov.tr/Tr/icerik_birlesmis-kentler-ve-yerel-yonetimler-dunya-teskilati-uclg_85#:~:text=UCLG%20Te%C5%9Fki-lat%C4%B1%20d%C3%BCnyan%C4%B1n%20farkl%C4%B1%20b%C3%B6lgelerinden,140%20%C3%BClkede%20aktif%20%C3%BCyelere%20sahiptir

⁴⁵ https://www.tbb.gov.tr/Tr/icerik_birlesmis-kentler-ve-yerel-yonetimler-dunya-teskilati-uclg_85

⁴⁶ The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life was launched by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) in 2005 for local governments to set the framework for and implement gender equality policies.

3. Global Approaches to Achieve Gender Equality in Local Governance

Now let's take a closer look at how the proposed norms and policies to achieve gender equality at the local level are approached in relevant documents.

We may track the implementations of local governments' obligations concerning gender equality on an international scale by three focus areas:

■ *The first is the **human rights in the city** and the **right to the city** approach that focuses on the duties and the responsibilities of the cities and local governments to ensure the protection of and implementing human rights.*

■ *Secondly, there are policies and projects focusing on local development produced within the framework of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.*

■ *The third is the primary source of reference and approach adopted in the documentation of the Council of Europe and the European Union, aiming to implement the **fundamental norm of gender equality** directly in local life and combining this with the goal of eradicating **multiple forms of discrimination**. This is the **European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life** framework that resonates significantly in Türkiye today.*

The scopes of international documents focusing on these areas are described below:

3.1. Documentation Focused on the Protection of Human Rights and the Right to the City

This approach primarily provides a fundamental framework built on the concepts of *human rights cities* and the *right to the city*. The related international documents are:

- *UN and The World Charter for the Right to the City*
- *UCLG and The European Charter for Safeguarding Human Rights in the City*
- *UCLG and The Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City*
- *The Council of Europe and The European Urban Charter*

Although these international documents are not produced with a direct focus on gender equality in particular, the concept of gender equality is addressed within the context of human rights:

The UN and the World Charter for the Right to the City

*The World Charter for the Right to the City*⁴⁷ was produced in 2005 with the contributions of the UN, HABITAT, UNESCO and similar entities. The Right to the City is defined as the *'Equitable usufruct of cities within the principles of sustainability, democracy, equity and social justice.'* (Paragraph 1.1.).

The Charter denotes that *"The Right to the City is interdependent of all internationally recognized and integrally conceived human rights, and therefore includes all the civil, political, economic, social, cultural and environmental rights which are already regulated in the international human rights treaties."* (Paragraph 1.2.).

Particular emphasis is placed in the Charter on gender equality and women's rights at the local sphere with reference to foundational documents such as the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* and the *Beijing Action Plan*. Correspondingly, the following are stated:

■ *Guaranteeing equal opportunities to women, impeding any discrimination as dictated by the principle of gender equality.* (Paragraph 2.3)

■ *Inclusion of women in vulnerable groups that have the right to special measures for protection within the scope of affirmative action policies.* (Paragraph 2.4)

■ *Implementing affirmative action policies for the representation and political participation of women in decision-making mechanisms concerning the city's public policy, budget, and program definitions.* (Paragraph 8.3)

■ *Observing gender equality in the acquisition of property on the basis of the right to housing.* (Paragraph 14.4)

■ *Facilitating women's access to employment through the implementation of appropriate measures and the provision of facilities for the care of individuals with disabilities and child care.* (Paragraph 15.4)

⁴⁷ <https://www.uclg-cisd.org/sites/default/files/World%20Charter%20for%20the%20Right%20to%20the%20City.pdf>

■ *The article that sets out the legal, legislative and administrative sanctions to be imposed if violations of the norms concerning the right to the city occur states that cases and circumstances that hinder collective political participation of all residents, including in particular women and social groups in city management shall be prevented. (Paragraph 19.1)⁴⁸*

The *Charter for the Right to the City* denotes commitments to be fulfilled by national and local governments to ensure gender equality – during policy formulation and implementation – directly or indirectly. Major commitments include:

■ *Developing and promoting institutional frameworks aligned with the principles depicted in the Charter, dedicated to city residents,*

■ *Generating action plans urgently to create a sustainable development model adapted to cities,*

■ *Building partnership platforms with broad participation of civil society organizations to promote sustainable development in cities,*

■ *Promoting the ratification and application of the human rights treaties and other international and regional instruments that contribute to the construction of the Right to the City.*

UCLG and The European Charter for Safeguarding Human Rights in the City

The concept of “human rights city” was elaborated in the European political territory. The UCLG made tremendous contributions to the preparation and the ratification of *The European Charter for Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City* in 2001. Within the framework of the *European Human Rights Cities Movement*⁴⁹, a major actor of this interdependence, more than 360 municipalities became signatories to the Charter. The only signatory city from Türkiye was

Istanbul. The European Human Rights Cities Movement constituted the human rights cities agenda that also included topics pertaining to gender equality and women’s rights in local governance, not only in Europe but throughout the world.

UCLG and The Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City

UCLG took a further step in 2011 and adopted the *Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City*, promoted its signing by a large number of local governments and decided to extend support to local authorities to this end.

The Global Charter-Agenda for Human Rights in the City states the following under the heading of “Right to Equality of Women and Men”:

“The city undertakes to refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation; the city shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures to ensure the full development of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.”

The Charter also proposes the introduction of the following mechanisms to improve local practices:

■ *Local governments to identify specific indicators and develop action plans concerning each right,*

■ *Establishing the required committees to ensure the implementation, monitoring and the assessment of the Charter,*

■ *Creating a public consultation mechanism for the implementation of the Charter and regular monitoring of its impact,*

■ *Establishing multiple collaborations at local, regional and the national level to exercise the right to the city.*

⁴⁸ <https://ceidizler.ceid.org.tr/dosya/ceidWeb1.4.1.1.5.pdf>, p.28

⁴⁹ Initially, the city of Saint-Denis in France adopted *The European Charter for Safeguarding of Human Rights in the City*. In 2009, the city of Gwangju in South Korea established a human rights municipality and in 2011 held the *1st World Human Rights Cities Forum*. The event that is held annually since 2011 in Gwangju brings together local governments, regional and global players, networks, platforms, CSOs, experts and academics supporting the human rights cities approach and practices, and working in this field. The *Forum* defines human rights cities as “both a local community and a socio-political process in a local context where human rights play a key role as fundamental values and guiding principles.” There are currently a number of human rights cities in Asia, Africa, Europe, Canada, the United States, and Latin America. The Forum is an essential gathering for the *European Human Rights Cities Movement*.

<https://uclg-cisd.org/en/news/european-charter-safeguarding-human-rights-city>

Council of Europe and European Urban Charters

To conclude, within the context of the right to the city and human rights cities approaches, we will refer to the *European Urban Charters* that are among the basic sources of reference concerning urban rights in Europe. The *Congress of Local and Regional Authorities* of the Council of Europe adopted the first Charter in 1992, and the *European Urban Charter II – Manifesto for a New Urbanity* in 2008.

3.2. Documentation Focused on UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The UN launched the second action plan aiming to ensure global development under the heading of *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* for the period between 2015 and 2030. The 11th Goal on “*Sustainable Cities and Communities*” and the Fifth Goal on “*Gender Equality*” need to be addressed together with the other goals. Paragraph 5.5 incorporates the local level in decision-making while describing women’s full and effective participation:

“5.5. Ensure women’s full and effective participation and access to equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.”⁵⁰

The sub-target 5.5.1b redefines the monitoring criteria of the corresponding indicator for the representation of women in the national government to further include representation at local governments.

The UN programs and projects focused on development are implemented today within the framework of the Local Agenda 2030 program.

Local Agenda 2030

“*The Local Agenda 2030*” or the “*New Urban Agenda*” was adopted at the *United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III)* held in 2016, proposing a new vision for cities and municipalities for the next 20 years⁵¹

The Local Agenda 2030 underscores the need to achieve gender equality at all areas for improvement with respect to the quality of urban life. Although gender equality is set as an individual norm, em-

bedding the concept into other areas through gender mainstreaming is proposed under Paragraph 5 of the Local Agenda 2030. Gender equality shall be integrated with the following areas through mainstreaming:

- Participation in decision-making (Paragraph 13c),
- Environmental sustainability (Paragraph 14c),
- Urban development projects (Paragraph 26),
- Housing and shelter policies (Paragraph 32),
- Security of land tenure (Paragraph 35),
- Embracing diversity and protecting multiculturalism (Paragraph 40),
- Enhancing collaboration and dialogue among stakeholders (Paragraph 42),
- Urban and territorial policy and planning processes (Paragraph 92),
- Provision of safe, accessible, green and quality streets, and other public spaces (Paragraph 100),
- Promoting access for all to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable urban mobility and transport systems (Paragraph 114),
- Financial planning and management (Paragraph 151).

3.3. The Gender Mainstreaming Approach and The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life

The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) adopted in 2006 *The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life* to enable local governments implement gender equality policies. Türkiye adopted the Charter which is the most comprehensive document on advancing gender equality, after *The Union of Municipalities of Türkiye (TBB)* joined the CEMR in 2010. The TBB, as the only local government union that is authorized to represent municipalities at the national and international levels, and of which all municipalities are members as of right, paved the way for municipalities to adopt the Charter. According to the provisions of the Charter, each municipality must sign it on its own behalf and start to implement commitments set out.

⁵⁰ <https://turkey.un.org/tr/sdgs/5>

⁵¹ HABITAT-III (2017) *UN New Urban Agenda* (71/256 UN Resolution). <https://habitat3.org/wp-content/uploads/NUA-Turkish.pdf>.

1865 municipalities internationally and 34 municipalities in Türkiye (out of the total of 1390) signed the Charter.⁵²

The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life is composed of three parts.⁵³

Part I describes **fundamental** guiding **principles** to achieve equality in local life; the **commitments** concerning the implementation of equality principles in local life and their **institutional governance framework** are depicted in Part II; **specific regulation areas** with regards to the adoption and implementation of principles stated in Part I are described in Part III. It is notable that the Charter provides guidance on governance frameworks and mechanisms beyond solely indicating principles and commitments.

The Principles

Equality of women and men is acknowledged as a fundamental right to be ensured by local and regional governments.

Gender equality is addressed within the framework of **multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage** based, in addition to gender, on race, colour, ethnic origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age, sexual orientation or socio-economic status.

The Charter holds local and regional governments responsible for **integrating the gender perspective into all their activities, countering stereotypes and allocating resources for equality action plans and programs.**

For local governments to fulfill those responsibilities, an **extensive sphere of action** is required to ensure equality. And the basic vehicles to reach the goals are the Equality Action Plans to be drawn up by local governments.

Fundamental principles to be adopted by signatories may be summarized as follows:

- *Equality of women and men constitutes a fundamental right.*
- *To ensure the equality of women and men, multiple forms of discrimination and disadvantage must be addressed.*
- *The balanced participation of women and men in decision-making mechanisms is a prerequisite of a democratic society.*
- *The elimination of gender stereotypes is fundamental to achieving gender equality.*
- *Incorporating the gender perspective into all activities of local and regional governments is necessary to advance equality of women and men.*
- *Properly and adequately resourced action plans and programs are necessary instruments to advance equality of women and men*

Charter Commitments

The signatory local governments **commit, within a reasonable timescale (not to exceed two years) following the date of signature, to develop, adopt and implement their Equality Action Plans.**

Additionally, the signatories commit to **draw up action plans through participatory processes and consultation**; commitments are also made concerning **resource allocation, setting out timescales** for implementation, disseminating the plans and reporting publicly on progress on a regular basis; monitoring, periodic review of the plans to ensure that they address all the relevant issues under the Charter, and revision of the plans.

Commitments to **establish and maintain collaborations on a global scale and to exchange information with other signatory local governments** are further made.

⁵² For the list of signatory municipalities to the Charter, see:

https://tbb.gov.tr/icerik_cemr-avrupa-yerel-yasamda-kadin-erkek-esitligi-sarti_304

⁵³ Information about the Charter is based on input from the Workshop presentations of Ece Öztan and Yasemin Yılmaz.

Recommendations Regarding the Implementation

Part III of the *Charter* indicates concrete **commitments** concerning achieving equality between women and men. The signatory ensures, on a basis of equality, the inclusion, representation and balanced participation of women with different backgrounds in all spheres of political and public decision-making. Eight section headings and scopes under Part III are as follows:

■ **Democratic Accountability:** *Political representation, participation in political and civic life, the public commitment for equality, working with partners to promote equality, countering stereotypes.*

■ **General Framework for Equality:** *Combating the effects of multiple discrimination or disadvantage.*

■ **The Employer Role:** *The right to equality of women and men in regard to all aspects of employment, equal pay, opposing sexual harassment in the workplace, supporting the reconciliation of professional and private life.*

■ **Public Procurement and Contracts:** *Promote equality of women and men in carrying out tasks and obligations in relation to public procurement.*

■ **The Service Delivery Role:** *Education and lifelong learning, health, social care and services, child care, care of other dependants, social inclusion, housing, culture, sport and recreation, safety and security.*

■ **Planning and Sustainable Development:** *Adopting and implementing solutions for urban and local planning, transport, economic development and environmental issues.*

■ **The Regulator Role:** *Taking into account the specific needs and circumstances of women and men.*

■ **Twinning and International Cooperation.**

In summary;

■ *The Charter places local governments at the center of an extensive and multidimensional sphere of activities to achieve gender equality.*

■ *Equality Action Plans to be drawn up by local governments are the major tools.*

■ *The municipalities must adopt a gender-based approach while drawing up plans, programs and policies that directly affect the lives of local residents.*

■ *To this end, women's socio-economic circumstances, daily life experiences, needs, requirements and expectations should be taken into consideration.*

■ *The signatory municipalities to the Charter demonstrate robust and strong will to ensure equality between women and men by signing the Charter.*

34 municipalities signed the Charter in Türkiye.

The central government's rather adverse approach to empower local political institutions indicates the long-standing attitude of the present political regime in Türkiye. Henceforth, local politics is considered to be solely associated with public services to attract local electoral support – both by the government and the ministries and the central management of political parties – rather than as an instrument of strengthening democracy. This understanding that is manifested as a state/public policy in general has hampered the implementation of the above mentioned treaties at the local level. At present, in most places the implementation of norms and policies are solely dependent upon the preferences of elected or appointed local authorities. Consequently, only 34 municipalities signed the Charter and as we will later see, many of them were contented with just signing it and disregarded implementing their commitments. Most of the signatories that lack the required expertise, responsiveness and political will behave as if they have completed the required practices and implementation, thereby cause the inconsiderate central policies of political parties they are from to remain unchanged. Indeed, this is among the factors behind the reversal in approach to women's rights at the local sphere.

Furthermore, although establishing gender equality mechanisms at the local level accelerated after the municipalities started to sign the Charter in Türkiye, the environment began to be reversed by the state of emergency practices from 2016 onwards. Related international projects were suspended; women's

centers were shut down in municipalities to which trustees were appointed under the state of emergency rule, and equality mechanisms that were started to be established became dysfunctional.

Henceforth, assessing and identifying the progress made by the signatory municipalities thus far on achieving gender equality will be a source of guidance for this study.

The adoption of the *Charter* by local governments must be promoted; its adoption must be considered as an integral part of both the national policy and political parties' electoral competition strategies. To this end, particularly the women's movement and rights based civil organizations must assume key political roles. Building a momentum is only possible through political demands and persistent endeavors of civil organizations. It has to be kept in mind that the political parties are the core policy-makers with respect to local policy transformations, and before all else, the political parties' policies need to be transformed.



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B. From Global to Local: Implementations for Gender Equality in Türkiye⁵⁴

In this section, an overview of practices carried out in Türkiye to implement the norms, approaches and recommended policies summarized in Section A is presented. Türkiye started to take action in alignment with the shared international wisdom as from late 1990s; collaborations were established with international organizations, and projects for **democratizing transformations in local governments** were supported.

1. Overview of the Evolvement of Gender Equality Policies in Local Government

Key milestones:

- 1992 – Türkiye adopted the *European Urban Charter - 1*.
- 1997 – *UN Local Agenda 21 Program* was launched and the **City Councils** began to be established within the scope of this Program. City Councils were defined as institutional mechanisms required to achieve sustainable development, participation and democracy at the local level.
- 2005 – Establishing City Councils was incorporated in Article 76 of the Law on Municipalities (No. 5393).
- 2006 – The *Women Friendly Cities United Nations Joint Programme* was initiated.
- 2006 – The *City Councils Regulation* was issued by the Ministry of Interior.⁵⁵
- 2008 – Türkiye adopted the *European Urban Charter - II*.
- 2009 – Amendments were made to the City Councils Regulation: (1) The President of the City Council Women's Assembly became a member of the City Council Executive Committee by the amendment to Article 11 and (2) The amendment to Article 16/A states that in-kind and cash aid shall be provided to city councils by allocating shares in the

budgets of municipalities. Following the local elections held on March 2009, several city councils and women's assemblies were established with the support of municipalities. However, the expected progress was not achieved in relation to city councils and the women's assemblies since the means of access to adequate resources and to ensure their authority and autonomy were not in place.

■ 2010 – The Turkish Union of Municipalities (TBB) joined The Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) that launched **The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life**. This opened the way for municipalities to sign the Charter.

■ Ministry of Interior Circulars were published.⁵⁶

■ 2012 – The *Women Friendly City Official Commitment* drawn up by the Ministry of Interior was signed by the governorates of pilot provinces.

■ 2013 – The Ministry of Interior published the *Legislation Concerning Local Administrations in Türkiye and the Formal Review Report on Barriers to Achieving Gender Equality*.

The above listed legislative measures and the guiding principles and norms that must be adopted and implemented indicate Türkiye's progress attained so far. However, now the issue is that the existing legislation is not being implemented (just like the legislation on some other matters). It must be seen that Türkiye is heading for and taking a different route by severing its ties with those norms, policies and related legislation.

2. Gender Equality in Local Governments in Türkiye: Preliminary Implementations

Key projects were designed by international organizations that provided documentation and support for the implementation of international norms, strategies and policies reviewed in the previous section. Türkiye also benefited from those projects and programs that provided guidance and support for implementation. Two of the most important programs are:

⁵⁴ This section is drawn up with input from Dr. Ece Öztan's Workshop presentation.

⁵⁵ Official Gazette dated 08.10.2006 and numbered 26313.

⁵⁶ See D. Gender in Participation in Local Decisions and Women's Representation, Principal Sources p. 107

 *Local Agenda 21 Program*

 *Women Friendly Cities Program*

Local Agenda 21 (LA 21) Program

The *Local Agenda 21 Program* that reflects the local governance approach concerning policies and mechanisms to be developed to achieve gender equality within the framework of the UN's *Sustainable Development Goals* provided support to implementations throughout the world.

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) - known as the Earth Summit - that was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 developed the *Agenda 21 Program*. The Program became widespread on a global scale through a series of UN Conferences held until Habitat II "City and Town Summit" that took place in Istanbul in 1996.

Local Agenda 21 Program was initiated in Türkiye in 1997 by the launch of the "*Promotion and Development of Local Agenda 21s in Türkiye*" Project that was implemented with the support and coordination of the UNDP and IULA-EMME (*International Union of Local Authorities – East Mediterranean and Middle Eastern Regional Organization*). The processes were launched in nine cities initially and later extended to a total of 23.

Circulars dispatched by the Ministry of Interior to all governorates on March 19, 1998 requesting the public officials' support for the *Local Agenda 21 Program* provided the favourable climate for participation and were encouraging for project partners.

Throughout the 2000s, the Project progressed with the participation of 48 local governments. During the second stage of implementation, the number of project partner cities was over 50 and the scope expanded through a number of sub-projects. Thereafter, *Local Agenda 21* implementation were no longer named as "Project" but as a long-term "Program".

The implementation of the LA 21 Program allowed for the establishment of *city councils* and the affil-

iated *women's assemblies, women's committees, and women's platforms* in local governments. The *City Councils* that were established in Project cities were regarded as governance mechanisms bringing together the central government, local government and the civil society organizations built upon the comprehension of "partnership".

The provision about *City Councils* was incorporated into the regulatory system by the amendment of Article 76 of the Municipal Law No. 5393 enacted in 2005, and its establishment became mandatory. The *City Councils Regulation* issued by the Ministry of Interior indicating the councils' duties and working principles entered into force in 2006. The Regulation was amended in 2009. The amendment reads: "City councils are democratic local governance mechanisms enabling local administration, built upon the comprehension of partnership of diverse administration units, and based on sustainable development goals attained through common sense and compromise." Pursuant to the provisions of the 2006 Regulation: "*Views and opinions generated by a city council must be assessed during the first meeting of the municipal council, and their feedback must then be presented to the city council.*"⁵⁷

"*Adequate representation of all partners; forming working groups, effective participation of women and youth in these groups; establishing General Secretariat to ensure coordination and provision of support for the implementation of the LA 21 Program and its processes; setting a vision about cities for a sustainable future; identification of current issues and solutions, timescales and costs*" are among the proposed topics to be addressed by city councils.

During the fourth stage of the LA 21 Program, the objective was set as achieving the *United Nations Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) at the local level. To this end, the goal was described as to "*mobilise the civil society and citizens to implement the MDGs at the local level and identify deficiencies and setbacks; emphasize local governments' vital role in ensuring gender equality; ensure participation of wider segments of the*

⁵⁷ http://uclg-mewa.org/uploads/file/cd17de500da24d4188d522147a1a1ad5/Surdurulebilir_Kalkinma_Hedefleri_Turkiye_Haritalandirmasi_Pilot_Projesi.pdf (Sustainable Development Goals - Türkiye Mapping Pilot Project)

society including the private sector in the localization of the central government's commitments concerning the MDGs."

The goal for the fifth stage of the LA 21 Program was set as: "Empowering the City Councils and providing training and capacity building support to ensure their functioning as local democratic governance mechanisms". Training and capacity building programs were designed for City Councils and implemented; and the "City Council Guidebook"⁵⁸ was drawn up.

The LA 21 Program proved to be beneficial in "project generation/development around the principles of democratic participation, multi-stakeholder governance, environmental protection and sustainability".

However, the failure of local authorities, civil actors and political parties to adequately hold onto, internalize and embrace the goals led the implementation and practices to wither away when the Project was over and financial support cut off. This indicates that the policies for local development and promoting local democracy still fail to find a place in the agenda of local politics and governance.

When we look back to the expected results and practices within the scope of the *LA 21 Project*, we see the necessity – in fact the crucial prerequisite – of adequate and sustainable political will to ensure continuity of practices. If sustainability is not achieved, all the efforts and progress may suddenly prove futile and what's left would only be the records kept and reports drawn up by practitioners and volunteers.

Women Friendly Cities Program

UNFPA's (United Nations Population Fund) *Women Friendly Cities United Nations Joint Program* is the first program with regard to implementing gender equality at the local level. Women Friendly Cities "support and encourage women to take part in all areas of urban life on an equal basis with men by ensuring their access to health, education and social services, employ-

ment opportunities, high quality and comprehensive urban services (transport, housing, security, etc.), and to mechanisms that will guarantee their rights in the event they are subjected to violence; and by ensuring their participation in local governments' planning and decision-making processes". (Women Friendly City Guidebook, 2015).⁵⁹

The Program that was initiated in 2006 aimed at embedding the gender equality principle into the planning and programming processes of local governments as well as building and advancing women's capacities in relation to gender equality policies by improving collaboration between local governments and women's organizations.

The Program was first launched in İzmir, Kars, Nevşehir, Şanlıurfa and Trabzon provinces. Based on the progress achieved in these provinces, it was expanded to include Adıyaman, Antalya, Bursa, Gaziantep, Malatya, Mardin and Samsun provinces that sought to implement the model. The second phase of the Program was implemented by the Directorate General of Local Administrations - Ministry of Interior, UNFPA and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

In order to embed the gender equality dimension into the planning processes at the local level, collaborations were made with governorships, municipalities and the CSOs.

Project Objectives

Expected results of the Program are listed below:⁶⁰

- *The empowerment of local organizations of the central government and municipalities in providing local services and developing policies that take **gender equality into consideration.***
- *The development of **gender-responsive strategic planning and budgeting** approaches.*
- *The **development of participatory mechanisms** by local authorities and women's CSOs to improve women's quality of life.*
- *The development of a **gender-responsive urban planning approach.***

⁵⁸ <http://efelerkentkonseyi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/kent-konseyleri-kilavuzu.pdf>

⁵⁹ <http://kadindostukentler.com/content/docs/kdk-uygulama-rehberi.pdf>

⁶⁰ <http://www.kadindostukentler.com/proje.php>

■ *Preparing legislative recommendations with the aim to maintain the sustainability and functioning of gender equality mechanisms.*

The recommendations stated in the *Women Friendly City Guidebook* for the establishment of Equality Mechanisms in cities are as follows:

■ *Setting up **Provincial Women's Rights Coordination Committees** at Governorships to bring together and coordinate gender equality related units and mechanisms,*

■ *Setting up **Equality Units** (in Governorships, Provincial Special Administrations, Municipalities),*

■ *Setting up **Equality Committees** (in Municipal Councils, Provincial Councils),*

■ *Developing individual **Local Equality Action Plans** for each local government,*

■ *Carrying out preliminary work for the identification of problems during the preparatory phase, developing plans with the local stakeholders and approval of plans by local councils, and integrating them with strategic plans.*

Extensive steps that may be taken collaboratively by all the stakeholders in a municipality seeking to be designated as a *women friendly city* are also depicted in the Guidebook.

The "*Legislation Concerning Local Administrations in Türkiye and the Formal Review Report on Barriers to Achieving Gender Equality*" was drawn up and published in 2013 within the scope of the Program.⁶¹

Commitment on Women Friendly City

The Official Commitment on Women Friendly City was drawn up and sent to partner cities by the Ministry of Interior, and was undersigned by related governorships and municipalities.

Commitment on Women Friendly City: We, as the cities having signatures below assume responsibility to:

- *Establish Provincial Women's Rights Coordination Committees in the provinces with the participation of local stakeholders,*
- *Establish Commissions on Women-Men Equality in Municipal and Provincial Assemblies,*
- *Establish Women-Men Equality Units in our Municipalities and Governorships,*
- *Prepare Local Equality Action Plans of the cities with our local stakeholders (local public institutions, local administrations, women's organizations, universities, non-governmental organizations) and monitor their implementation,*
- *Prepare our budgets by taking the "gender sensitivity" principle into consideration, Collaborate with women's organizations to advance the status of women and girls,*
- *Carry out awareness raising activities for promoting women-men equality,*
- *Support the activities to be organized within the scope of the Project, use all of the existing physical and social sources within the project and provide required convenience for the personnel to organize them,*

*and undertake designation as a **WOMEN FRIENDLY CITY.***

The Directorate General of Local Administrations of the Ministry of Interior had announced that the Municipalities and Governorships of Antalya, Bursa, Gaziantep, Malatya, Mardin and Samsun provinces undersigned the *Commitment on Women Friendly City* on July 6, 2012. The Commitment provides a brief and well-defined recap of what needs to be done at the local level to ensure gender equality.

It should be clearly stated here that when we evaluate the results of both the Local Agenda 21 and the Women Friendly Cities Projects today, unfortunately there seems to be nothing left. This indicates that

⁶¹ <http://kadindostukentler.com/content/docs/mevzuat-calismalari.pdf>

signing international treaties does not necessarily mean that they are and will be implemented. In order to adopt and implement the required norms and policies, political will (commitment) needs to be firmly established; the required legislation must be in place and the encouraging and mandatory measures must be stipulated. The political parties and rights-based democracy agencies, the women's movement organizations in particular, must be the political owners of these policies. Lobbying and drawing up detailed action plans to ensure that the requirements are met are of urgent and utmost importance.

3. Gender- Responsiveness in Legislation Regulating Local Administrations

From 1990 onwards, we see that practices began to be implemented in Türkiye in harmony with the "global common sense" developed to achieve gender equality at the local level within the context of democratization of local governments. Steps taken and the practices implemented in alignment with the guidance provided by the two major projects summarized above are as follows:

Legislation Guiding Preliminary Implementations: Ministry of Interior's Circulars on Equality Between Women and Men at the Local Level

The *Women Friendly Cities Program* was implemented by the partnership of the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and the United Nations. The Ministry of Interior issued and posted circulars⁶² to all governorships emphasizing gender equality in 2006 and 2010. The following guidelines were denoted in the Circular dated August 18, 2006 and numbered 2006/67 with the aim to implement, support and facilitate the adoption of the United Nations Joint Programme (UNJP) in Türkiye:

- *Representation and participation of women and women's organizations in events and programs implemented by local governments; attaching importance to and valuing their insights, views, recommendations and participation,*
- *Providing means of access to training and education at diverse levels for women to ensure gender equality,*
- *Prioritizing the provision of social services to children of all ages, youth, elderly, individuals with disabili-*

ties, and women subjected to domestic violence, neglect and abuse or implementing practices to strengthen and improve existing social support mechanisms,

■ *Considering these guidelines in the practices of city councils in particular,*

■ *Paying particular attention to enhancing women's active participation in social life, protecting legal rights of women and children, ensuring women's safety and freedoms in daily life, and strengthening the family institution that is the foundation of the Turkish society.*

The framework of **governance mechanisms** to institutionalize gender equality in local governments was set out in the Ministry of Interior's Circular dated February 19, 2010 and numbered 2010/10.⁶³ In order to expand the practices that were implemented in six pilot provinces across all the provinces, and to ensure other provinces to benefit from the practices implemented in pilot provinces; the Governorships were asked to announce the launch of the project to the Special Provincial Administrations, District Governorships and Mayorships, and ensure its implementation and monitoring. The Circular indicated the mechanisms implemented in pilot provinces within the framework of the institutional governance mechanisms (goals):

■ *Drawing up **Local Equality Action Plans** through a participatory approach (by the collaboration of local governments, women's organizations, local CSOs); approval of plans by Provincial Councils and Municipal Councils prior to the implementation stage,*

■ *In order to specify the institutional framework of local equality policies, setting up **Provincial Women's Rights Coordination Committees** to coordinate and monitor gender equality-related practices in provinces,*

■ *Setting up **Equality Units** at Governorships and Municipalities to carry out secretarial work and to process applications and complaints of women and girls,*

■ *Setting up **Gender Equality Committees** in Municipal Councils and Provincial Councils,*

■ *Within the scope of urban services; establishing **women's counseling centers**, community centers, girls' dormitories, shelters, nursery care and breastfeeding*

⁶² Ministry of Interior Circular dated August 18, 2006 and numbered 2006/67

<http://www.kadindostukentler.com/content/docs/genelge-2006-67-kadınların-ve-kız-cocuklarının-hakları.pdf>about:blank

⁶³ Ministry of Interior's Circular dated 19.02.2010 and numbered 2010/10:

<http://www.kadindostukentler.com/content/docs/genelge-2010-10-kadınların-ve-kız-cocuklarının-insan-hakları.pdf>





(lactation) rooms; improving access of girls to pre-school facilities; enhancing vocational education opportunities and learning environments in order to support women's participation in work life; conducting gender awareness-raising programs for local decision-makers and public servants; devising service delivery models for vulnerable women's groups including seasonal agricultural workers.

Today, the Ministry of Interior's Circulars are not taken into consideration in practice.

Gender Responsiveness in Basic Legislation – To What Extent Is It Ensured?

Global principles aiming to ensure gender equality must be transposed into basic laws regulating the political and social life, related legislation as well as the policies and projects shaping the framework of implementation in each country. The *Local Agenda 21* and *Women Friendly Cities* programs that were initiated to provide guidance in this respect sought to support countries in improving and strengthening local democracies through the provision of international financial and technical assistance.

Although both programs were implemented in Türkiye with long-standing support, the basic legislation setting out the duties, authorities and institutional structures of local governments did not change. The primary laws that need to be made gender-responsive are as follows:

-  Constitution – Article 127
-  Municipal Law No. 5393
-  Law on Metropolitan Municipalities No. 5216
-  Special Provincial Administrative Code No. 5302

Brief Overview of the Municipal Law:

Municipal Law No. 5393: Gender-Blind Legislation

The most notable provision of the Municipal Law No. 5393 is regulated by Article 14 that reads: *“The Metropolitan Municipalities and the municipalities with population more than 100,000 shall open houses for women's and children's welfare. Other municipalities may open houses for women's and*

children's welfare by assessing their financial and service priorities.”

*The municipal services shall be rendered in the **most appropriate manner, at the places nearest to the citizens. It is a basic principle to adopt a procedure most suitable for the disabled and old people as well as for those in destitute and with limited income.”***

The Municipal Law does not comprise any other gender-responsive provision.

The Municipal Law No. 5393 that sets out the legal framework involving the duties and authorities of local governments in Türkiye does not indicate “ensuring gender equality” as a principle to be considered in the delivery and the implementation of municipal services.

Primary laws regulating municipal services need to take into consideration the *differences in life styles, responsibilities and priorities of people based on gender*. For example, in general men commute to and from work by public transport or by their own cars. For this reason, fast public transportation and smooth traffic flow are important to them. On the other hand, women most often go to nearby markets for shopping, children's schools and parks and to their neighbors' homes, and generally on foot. So, sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, safety of the streets and street lighting, easy access to parks and children's playgrounds are important to women. Hence, since women's and men's connections with the city / in urban life are not similar; their purposes, ways, frequency and hours of using/visiting places, spaces and venues vary depending on their ways of life; their expectations from local governments are different. For this reason, gender diversity (like other types of diversity) must be taken into account in municipal service delivery. The failure to observe gender equality in core activities such as providing access to services, and assuming office in the municipal administration may lead to the aggravation of inequalities. This results in what we call **gender-blind** public services.

How can women benefit from the provisions of the Municipal Law?⁶⁴

Although “ensuring gender equality” is not indicated among service delivery goals in the Municipal Law No. 5393, we will point out the provisions that may be interpreted as supportive of safeguarding women’s rights:

Article 13: The Article reads: *“It is a basic principle to extend aid without hurting human feelings.”* This principle must be observed while extending aid to poor women and refugees.

Article 24: It reads: *“The municipal council may set up specialist commissions of three to five persons from among its own members.”* It is possible to establish commissions for ensuring gender equality according to this Article. The provision forms the legal basis for establishing an **“specialist commission on gender equality”** that would submit proposals and recommendations related to gender equality to the Council, take steps to lead decision-making that will serve ensuring gender equality, and to review proposals and motions through the gender equality perspective.

Article 38: Among the duties and responsibilities of the Mayor, the responsibility to **observe gender equality** while implementing duties is not mentioned.

Article 48: *“Other divisions and units may be formed according to the norm cadre principles and standards as and when required. The formation shall be subject to the decision of the Municipal Council.”* This provision forms the basis for **establishing equality units** in municipalities. An institutional unit is required to perform the necessary preparatory work in collaboration with relevant units of the Municipality to establish the **Local Equality Action Plan. Experts and experienced personnel must be employed in equality units** that are described as vehicles to develop service delivery models tailored to women’s issues and needs, to perform research and assessment work to identify requirements, and to ensure the collaboration of the Municipality with local institutions, councils and women’s organizations while drawing up the Local Equality Action Plans. According to the **Regulation on Norm Cadre Principles and Standards**

for local administrations, the equality units are not organized as directorates and this denotes that they are not allocated dedicated budgets and staff.

In most of the municipalities, there are no specific units for women’s services or to address / ensure gender equality in particular. Services to address women’s issues are provided within the scope of either the general community services or family services. This causes **local services to be completely gender-blind** in most cases.

Article 60: The article lists *“social services and aids to be rendered to the poor people and to those in destitute and with low income”* among the expenditures of the Municipality. Women may be included in this group, and service delivery to single-parent, elderly, widow, homeless, etc. women in particular may be addressed in this respect.

Article 69: *“Plots may be granted within the municipal boundaries and contiguous areas to people suffering from disasters and those with limited income provided that neither the person in question nor his/her spouse or children under the age of 18 own a house. The sales price shall not be less than the price determined by the appraisal committee according to the provisions of the Appropriation Law No. 2942.”* Women may benefit from this provision.

Article 76: This Article regulates City Councils: *“City Councils shall be responsible from the promotion of urbanization and fellow-citizenship vision, safeguarding the rights and the law of the city, and materializing the rules stipulating developmental consistency, environmental care, social solidarity, transparency, accountability, participation and decentralization principles. The municipalities shall provide the necessary assistance and support to the City Councils to enable the performance of activities effectively in cooperation with professional groups in the status of public institutions, trade unions, notaries, universities (if any), related CSOs, political parties, public institutions and organizations, representatives of executive officers of parish neighborhood mukhtars and other authorized bodies taking part in the City Council. The opinions declared by the City Council shall be put on the agenda and assessed during the first meeting of the Municipal Council. Working prin-*

⁶⁴ Information on the legislation is based on input from Yasemin Sezgin’s Workshop presentation.

ciples and the procedures of the City Councils shall be determined by a regulation to be prepared by the Ministry of Interior”.

As the information above suggest, the implementation of universal norms and policies is fairly limited in Türkiye. The policies that were once developed at the national level and shaped / regulated by legal adjustments are not being implemented. The primary objective of this study is to identify the causes of this and to provide support to promoting, enabling and ensuring change. We will proceed with presenting information as well as our assessments in subsequent sections.

4. Strategic Legislation List

International Treaties / Programs Adopted by Türkiye

The European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life

<http://dspace.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/724>

UN-Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (2015-2030 Plan): Implementing Goal 5.5 and Goal 11 simultaneously;

<https://turkey.un.org/tr/sdgs/5> or

<https://www.kureselamaclar.org/amaclar/toplumsal-cinsiyet-esitligi>

Legislation Imposing Obligations on Türkiye

Women Friendly Cities United Nations Joint Programme

<http://www.kadindostukentler.org/kdk-kadin-dostu-kent.php>

Women Friendly Cities – Commitment

<http://kadindostukentler.com/kdk-taahhutname.php>

Ministry of Interior's Circulars

Ministry of Interior Circular No. 2006/67, dated August 18, 2006 on Women Friendly Cities

<http://www.kadindostukentler.com/content/docs/genelge-2006-67-kadinlarin-ve-kiz-cocuklarinin-haklari.pdf>

Ministry of Interior Circular No. 2010/10, dated February 19, 2010 on Women Friendly Cities

<http://www.kadindostukentler.com/content/docs/genelge-2010-10-kadinlarin-ve-kiz-cocuklarinin-insan-haklari.pdf> (The circular obligates the mayor of a municipality with a population exceeding 50,000 people to prepare a development plan and program, as well as a strategic plan and an annual performance plan as per Article 41 of the Municipal Law).

Prime Ministry Circulars

Pursuant to the Prime Ministry Circular published in the Official Gazette dated May 25, 2010 and numbered 2010/14 on: “Increasing Women’s Employment and Ensuring Equal Opportunity”, the local administrations are obliged to integrate the gender equality dimension including relevant statistical data, scientific research and appropriation of funds into their plans and programs.

<https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2010/05/20100525-12.htm>

Prime Ministry Circular dated July 4, 2006 and numbered 2006/17 on: “Measures To Be Taken to Prevent Violence against Children and Women and Honour Killings”

<https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2006/07/20060704-12.htm>

The Union of Municipalities of Türkiye became a member of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) during the Political Committee meeting held in Oslo on June 2010 by unanimous vote, and adopted the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life. The list of the 34 signatory municipalities:

https://tbb.gov.tr/Tr/icerik_cemr-avrupa-yerel-yasamda-kadin-erkek-esitligi-sarti_304

City Councils Regulation

<https://mevzuat.gov.tr/anasayfa/Mevzuat-FihristDetayIframe?MevzuatTur=7&Mevzuat-No=10687&MevzuatTertip=5>

Regulation on Norm Cadre Principles and Standards for Municipality and Affiliated Institutions and for Unions of Local Authorities

<https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/anasayfa/Mevzuat-FihristDetayIframe?MevzuatTur=7&Mevzuat-No=11125&MevzuatTertip=5>

LGBTI+ Friendly Municipality Protocol

<https://kaosgl.org/haber/lgbti-dostu-belediyece-lik-protokolu-imzacisi-belediye-baskanlari>

National Action Plans

2018-2023 Women’s Empowerment Strategy Document and Action Plan (2018)

<https://dspace.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/887>.

2020-2021 Combating Violence against Women Coordination Plan (2020)

<https://ailevecalisma.gov.tr/media/31489/koordinasyon-plani-v13-1.pdf>.

Women Friendly Cities United Nations Joint Programme (UNJP)

<http://www.kadindostukentler.org/kdk-kadin-dostu-kent.php>.





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C. Examples of Gender-Responsive Municipalities in Türkiye

In this section, we will explore how some municipalities adopt and implement the approaches proposed in international and national legislation for gender mainstreaming as well as the tools and mechanisms to facilitate the implementation.

We seek to understand the situation in Türkiye based on examples (selected from only a few available studies) presented at the Workshop that we organized on gender equality policies implemented by local governments. First, we will assess the extent of adoption by a municipality aiming to ensure gender equality - of norms, strategies and policies defining *gender-responsiveness*, and whether the implementation has evolved into a fundamental governance principle and policy.

1. Examples on Embedding Gender Equality into Strategic Plans

The policies, strategies and service approaches of municipalities are stated under the section on vision, mission, and goals and targets of their strategic plans. The extent to which and how "safeguarding women's rights and gender-responsive equal service delivery approach" is integrated into the implementation processes is critical.

Integrating Gender Equality into Vision and Mission Statements

When we analyze the *mission* and *vision* statements of municipalities stated in their strategic plans in order to assess the extent to which goals to promote equality, gender equality, equal service delivery, and to prevent women's rights violations are integrated; we see that there is no municipality other than the Çankaya Municipality in Ankara that has integrated gender equality related principles and goals into their mission and vision statements. Çankaya Municipality emphasizes "equal service delivery" in its mission statement and also included the concept of "gender

equality" in its vision statement⁶⁵ where its objective is stated as *"...to be a leader in social municipalism... by adopting the gender equality approach... while bolstering efforts to combat all forms of discrimination"*.

Although the Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, just as the Çankaya Municipality, has signed the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life, and established the Local Equality Action Plans accordingly, the goal to ensure and observe gender equality is not integrated into its mission nor vision.⁶⁶

Integrating Gender Equality into Basic Principles

The "gender equality" concept is embedded into the basic principles of the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality. Çankaya Municipality emphasizes "equal service delivery" and also states its adoption of a municipal understanding to implement practices that help "women and children" live in safety, and ensure gender equality.⁶⁷

Integrating Gender Equality into Goals and Targets

When the objectives and goals stated in the strategic plans are analyzed in terms of gender equality, the following assessments may be made:

The goals and targets stated in the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality's Strategic Plan are as follows:

- Goal 4: *"To support women's employment policies"*;
- Target 4.1: *"To support women's cooperatives particularly the existing ones, in order to improve the rural economy"*;
- Target 4.3: *"To open various vocational courses to boost women's employment"*;
- Goal 5: *"To build a barrier-free city where the disadvantaged groups gain access to healthcare, education and training, employment, transportation, cultural and social facilities (women belong to the disadvantaged group)"*;
- Target 5.2: *"To organize and hold seminars and events for disadvantaged groups including women (as well as for women staying in shelters) to meet their social and cultural needs; and organize training programs on violence against women"*.

⁶⁵ https://www.cankaya.bel.tr/uploads/files/CANKAYA_BELEDIYE_STRATEJIK_PLAN.pdf

⁶⁶ <https://www.gaziantep.bel.tr/uploads/2020/07/2020-2024-stratejik-plan.pdf>

⁶⁷ <https://www.cankaya.bel.tr/>

Among the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality's ongoing activities indicated under the heading of "Developing Social Municipalism" in their Strategic Plan, "Women's Shelter and Women's Counseling Center" is listed.⁶⁸

Reference is made to gender equality in Çankaya Municipality's Strategic Plan:

● Goal 2: "Combating gender inequality and discrimination",

● Target 2.2: "Building a city where violence against women and discrimination is eradicated, and where gender equality is achieved through a participatory approach".

In order to meet this target, internal training programs on gender equality; training programs open to public (in particular to men) on gender equality and fatherhood; interviews, gender-responsive budgeting workshops, trainings on women's human rights are planned to be organized. Goals are stated for setting up a gender equality and women's library, and in order to provide economic support to women, for allocating spaces or facilities where they may sell goods. The unit responsible from these activities is specified as the Women and Family Services Directorate.

Relevant goals and targets stated in Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality's Strategic Plan are:

● Target 7.1 reads: "Persons with special needs will be supported" and underlines that to this end women friendly practices will be enhanced and work will be performed concerning gender-responsive budgeting.⁶⁹

The following reference is made to gender equality in the goals and targets stated in Eskişehir-Odunpazarı Municipality's Strategic Plan:

● Target 3.2 states: "Dissemination of the gender equality approach across the district and embedding into all municipal services".⁷⁰

The following references are made to gender equality in the goals and targets stated in Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality's Strategic Plan:

● Target 3.1 reads: "Implementing programs to enhance the scope and quality of services extended to women, children and other segments in need; devising programs to protect the family..."

● "Within the scope of practices related to gender-responsive budgeting; protection of women and ensuring their personal and social development, and conducting trainings and workshops for awareness-raising in communities",

● "The Department of Women, Family, Training and Social Services to be in charge of conducting these services".

Plans for setting up the *Women's Guesthouse*, the *Women Entrepreneur Support Center*, and the *Family Support Center* as well as for the formation of the "Women, Family, Health and Social Policies Council" to enhance participation of stakeholders within the Municipality are also stated in Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality's Strategic Plan.⁷¹

2. Equality Units for Gender Mainstreaming in Local Governments

Equality units in local governments to ensure gender equality refer to equality units and women's assemblies in city councils that are attributed institutional roles for gender mainstreaming.⁷²

The institutional aspects of and expectations from equality units are described both in the *Commitment on Women Friendly City* and the Ministry of Interior's Circulars referring to the related Program. While the framework of efforts to ensure gender equality

⁶⁸ <https://www.ankara.bel.tr/>

⁶⁹ https://www.eskisehir.bel.tr

⁷⁰ https://www.odunpazari.bel.tr

⁷¹ https://www.gaziantep.bel.tr

⁷² This section is drawn up with input from the study titled "The Institutional Assessment of Gender Equality in Local Administrations in Türkiye" carried out by Prof. Dr. Berrin Koyuncu Lorasdağı based on some data from the TÜBİTAK (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye) 1003 Project numbered 218K355 and titled "Sustainable Urban Policies: Cities & Districts in Türkiye in Terms of Quality of Life", presented by her in the Workshop.

in local governments in Türkiye is set by the *Local Equality Action Plans*, the following institutional mechanisms that will support the attainment of goals are also specified:

- Provincial Women's Rights Coordination Councils,
- Equal Opportunity for Women and Men; Gender Equality Committees of Municipal or Provincial Councils
- Municipal Equality/Gender Equality Units,
- City Council Women's Assemblies,
- Women's Solidarity and Counseling Centers.

These mechanisms are under Governorships (Provincial Directorates, Provincial Women's Rights Coordination Committees) and Municipalities or Municipal Councils.

The significant preliminary steps involving the development of institutional mechanisms as vehicles to ensure gender equality are manifested in the "Women Friendly Cities Project" (2006–2010) developed within the framework of the United Nations Joint Program (UNJP) to Promote and Protect Human Rights of Women and Girls.⁷³ Upon the completion of the First Stage of the project, the Ministry of Interior issued the Circular numbered 2010/10⁷⁴ requesting all the cities to implement the "women friendly city" model by holding the practices in İzmir, Kars, Nevşehir, Şanlıurfa, Trabzon and Van provinces as examples, and to prepare Local Equality Action Plans (LEAPs) by establishing **Local Equality Units** as institutional mechanisms of gender mainstreaming with the aim to achieve gender equality.

The first equality unit in Türkiye was established in Kars Municipality in 2006 within the framework of the aforementioned *United Nations Joint Program (UNJP) to Promote and Protect Human Rights of Women and Girls*. Eventually, the equality units were established upon municipal council decisions or by the issuance of regulations.⁷⁵

In general, the objectives and duties of an *Equality Unit* include tracking the municipality's activities undertaken in relation to the Local Equality Action Plan, contributing to the strategic plan preparation process, coordinating the collaboration between the municipality and local women's organizations, and developing service delivery models to meet the needs of women in the city. In Türkiye, there are 37⁷⁶ equality units as of March 2022.

Equality Units are institutional mechanisms that seek to ensure the disadvantaged groups that were/are subjected to discrimination due to varying factors benefit from services and resources on equal terms. As in other parts of the world, they are established to achieve inclusiveness in service delivery by local governments, prevent social exclusion and discrimination and establish gender equality in Türkiye as well.

⁷³ Cities within the scope during the 1st Phase: İzmir, Nevşehir, Kars, Şanlıurfa, Trabzon, Van.

Cities within the scope during the 2nd Phase: Adıyaman, Antalya, Bursa, Gaziantep, Malatya, Mardin, Samsun.
<http://www.kadindostukentler.org/kdk-kadin-dostu-kent.php>.

⁷⁴ Ministry of Interior Circular numbered 2010/10:

<http://www.kadindostukentler.com/content/docs/genelge-2010-10-kadinlarin-ve-kiz-cocuklarinin-insan-haklari.pdf>.

⁷⁵ For data summarized in this section, see: CEİD (Association for Monitoring Gender Equality), 2021, Belediye Eşitlik Birimleri Mevcut Durum Analizi (Current Situation Analysis of Municipal Equality Units), Ülker Şener; Bengin Inanç
<http://dSPACE.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/1737>

⁷⁶ The number of equality units that was stated as 34 in the CEİD (Association for Monitoring Gender Equality) Report was updated to 37 by Prof. Dr. Berrin Koyuncu-Lorasdağı who gave a presentation at the Workshop on the subject. According to Koyuncu-Lorasdağı, the difference in the figures may be due to the case that although setting up an equality unit might be planned by a municipality, it might not be yet set up or some units might be set up after the report was published.

Table 1: Equality Units of Municipalities in Türkiye⁷⁷

City	Municipality	Equality Unit
İstanbul	Maltepe Municipality – Directorate of Strategy and Development, 2021	Social Policies and Equality Unit
İstanbul	Kadıköy Municipality, 2016	Social Equality Unit
İstanbul	Ataşehir Municipality	Social Equality Unit
İstanbul	Avcılar Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services, 2020	Social Equality Unit
İstanbul	Beşiktaş Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services, 2014	Social Equality Unit
İstanbul	Şişli Municipality – Directorate of Social Support Services, 2015	Equality Unit
İstanbul	Beylikdüzü Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services, 2016	Social Equality Unit
İstanbul	Küçükçekmece Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services	Women’s Equality Center
Muğla	Bodrum Municipality – Directorate of Cultural and Social Affairs, 2019	Gender Equality Unit
İzmir	Metropolitan Municipality – Directorate of Women’s Studies, 2012 (within the scope of the Women Friendly Cities Project)	Women-Men Equality Unit
İzmir	Buca Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services, 2014	Gender Equality Unit
İzmir	Çiğli Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services, 2020	Equality Unit
İzmir	Karabağlar Municipality – Directorate of Social Services, 2015	Women-Men Equality Unit

⁷⁷This table is drawn up by Prof. Dr. Berrin Koyuncu-Lorasdağı.

Table 1: Equality Units of Municipalities in Türkiye⁷⁷

City	Municipality	Equality Unit
İzmir	Karşıyaka Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services, 2019	Social Equality Unit
İzmir	Konak Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services, 2018	Equality Unit
İzmir	Selçuk Municipality, 2021	Local Equality Unit
Eskişehir	Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality – Branch Directorate of Social Services for Women, Children and Persons with Disabilities, 2014	Equality Unit
Eskişehir	Odunpazarı Municipality – Directorate of Strategy Development, 2014	Equality Unit
Eskişehir	Tepebaşı Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services, 2014	Equality Unit
Gaziantep	Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality – Department of Women, Family, Education, and Social Services, 2014 (within the scope of the Women Friendly Cities Project)	Equality Unit
Mersin	Mersin Metropolitan Municipality – Department of Women and Family Services	Gender Equality Division
Mersin	Mezitli Municipality – Directorate of Cultural and Social Affairs, 2019	Equality Unit
Mersin	Yenişehir Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services	Equality Unit
Antalya	Metropolitan Municipality – Department of Social Services, 2012	Women-Men Equality Unit
Antalya	Muratpaşa Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services, 2014	Women-Men Equality Unit

⁷⁷This table is drawn up by Prof. Dr. Berrin Koyuncu-Lorasdağı.

Table 1: Equality Units of Municipalities in Türkiye⁷⁷

City	Municipality	Equality Unit
Bursa	Nilüfer Municipality – Directorate of Social Support Services, 2010 (within the scope of the Women Friendly Cities Project)	Equality Unit
Bursa	Osmangazi Municipality – Directorate of Health Services, 2012 (within the scope of the Women Friendly Cities Project)	Equality Unit
Trabzon	Trabzon Metropolitan Municipality – The Provincial Women's Rights Coordination Committee, 2014	Local Equality Unit
Adana	Metropolitan Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services	Equality Unit
Adana	Seyhan Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services, 2017	Equality Unit
Kars	Kars Metropolitan Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services, 2006	Local Equality Unit
Ankara	Çankaya Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services	Equality Unit
Tunceli	Tunceli Municipality, 2020	Equality Unit
Samsun	Atakum Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services, 2021	Local Equality Unit
Samsun	Governorate – Directorate of Provincial Local Administrations, 2017 (within the scope of the Women Friendly City Project)	Local Equality Unit
Nevşehir	Governorate – The Provincial Women's Rights Coordination Committee (UN Women Friendly Cities project)	Equality Unit
Şanlıurfa	Governorate – Directorate of Social Services (UN Women Friendly Cities project)	Local Equality Unit

⁷⁷This table is drawn up by Prof. Dr. Berrin Koyuncu-Lorasdağı.

The objectives of some equality units are given below:

Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality has defined its Equality Unit's objective as: *"In order to achieve equality between women and men and to embed the gender equality principle into the local governance approach; identifying local plans, programs and policy strategies in order to enhance women's participation in local decision-making processes and mechanisms, and ensuring women obtain equal share from the local budget; developing local service delivery recommendations that will ensure the implementation of strategies, and establishing collaborations with civil initiative groups and organizations."*⁷⁸

Bursa-Nilüfer Municipality's Equality Unit that was founded within the framework of the *Women Friendly Cities Project* has defined its objective as: *"Public/social awareness-raising, devising activities that will serve for the dissemination of the equality approach in the public, combating all forms of violence, and adopting a rights-based advocacy approach."*⁷⁹



⁷⁸ Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality's Equality Unit

<https://www.eskisehir.bel.tr/esitlik-birimi#:~:text=Amac%C4%B1%3B%20yerelde%20kad%C4%B1n%20erkek%20e%C5%9Fitli%C4%9Fini,-pay%20almalar%C4%B1n%C4%B1%20sa%C4%9Flayan%20yerel%20plan%2C>

⁷⁹ Nilüfer Municipality's Equality Unit

<https://www.nilufer.bel.tr/kategoriler/proje/sosyal-projeler/esitlik-birimiZC7B2>

Table 2: Equality Units and Dates of Establishment

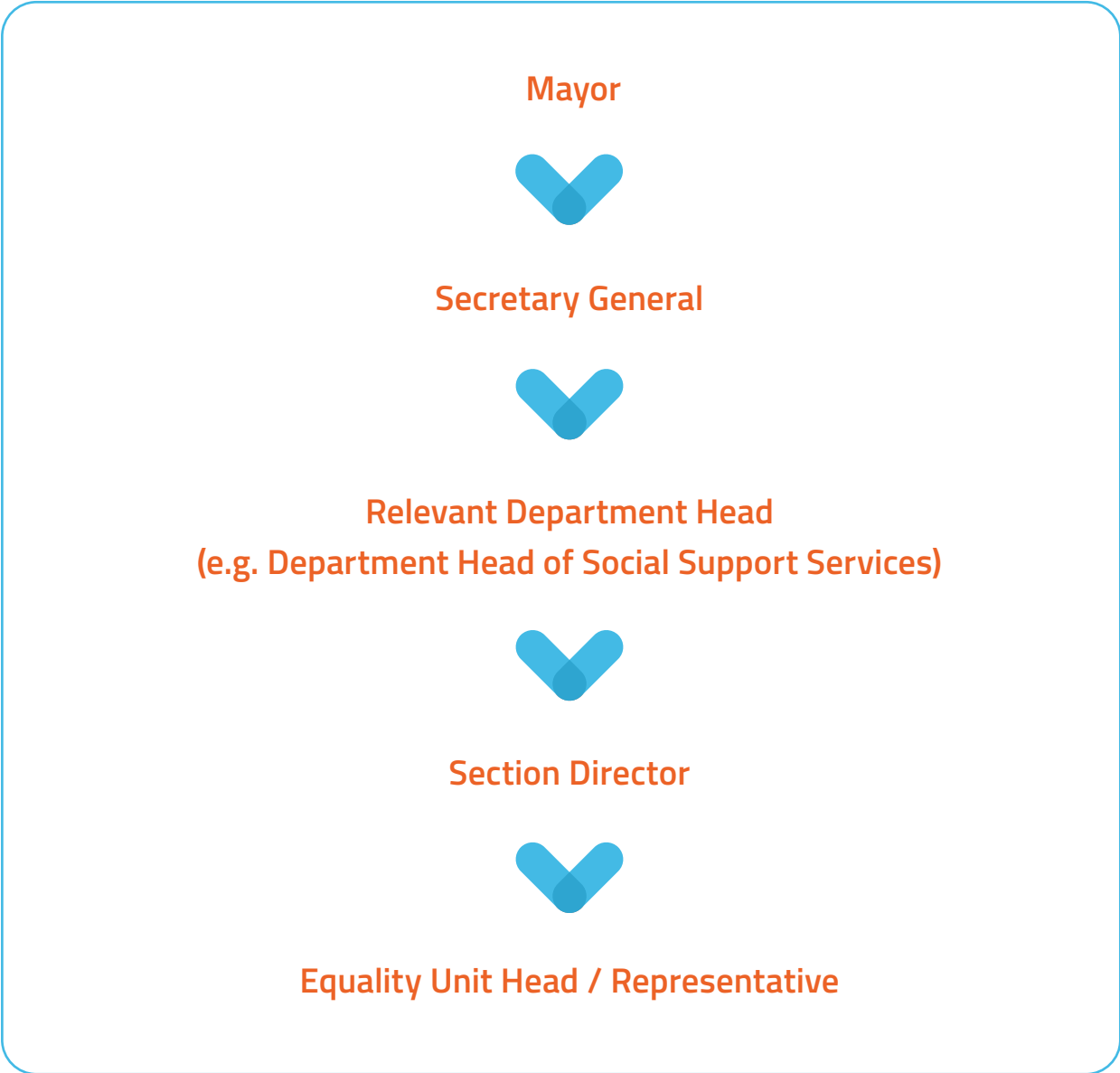
Full Name	Date of Establishment
Beşiktaş Municipality – Social Equality Unit	2014
Beylikdüzü Municipality – Social Equality Unit	2016
Buca Municipality – Gender Equality Unit	2014
Çankaya Municipality – Directorate of Women and Family Services, Equality Unit	2014
Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality – Equality Unit	2014
Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality – Equality Unit	2014
İzmir Metropolitan Municipality – Women-Men Equality Unit	2012
Kadıköy Municipality – Social Equality Unit	2016
Karabağlar Municipality – Women-Men Equality Unit	2015
Kars Municipality – Local Equality Unit	2006
Karşıyaka Municipality – Social Equality Unit	2019
Konak Municipality – Equality Unit	2018
Menemen Municipality – Equality Unit	2019
Muratpaşa Municipality – Equal Opportunities for Women and Men Unit	2014
Nilüfer Municipality – Equality Unit	2010
Odunpazarı Municipality – Equality Unit	2014
Ortahisar Municipality – Women-Men Equality Unit & Office	2017
Seyhan Municipality – Equality Unit	2017
Şişli Municipality – Social Equality Unit	2015
Trabzon Municipality – Local Equality Unit	

Table 3: Establishment Processes of Equality Units

	Municipal Council's Decision	Regulatory Amendment	Projects	Other
Beşiktaş Municipality	X			
Beylikdüzü Municipality	X			
Buca Municipality		X		
Çankaya Municipality	X			
Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality			X	
Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality			X	
İzmir Metropolitan Municipality			X	
Kadıköy Municipality	X			
Karabağlar Municipality		X		
Kars Municipality			X	
Karşıyaka Municipality	X			
Konak Municipality				X
Menemen Municipality		X		
Muratpaşa Municipality	X			
Nilüfer Municipality			X	
Odunpazarı Municipality		X		
Ortahisar Municipality	X			
Seyhan Municipality	X			
Şişli Municipality				X
Trabzon Metropolitan Municipality			X	

Table 4: Supervising Authority

Authority	Equality Unit
Directorate of Women and Family Services	Beşiktaş Municipality Beylikdüzü Municipality Buca Municipality Çankaya Municipality Kars Municipality Karşıyaka Municipality Konak Municipality Muratpaşa Municipality Seyhan Municipality
Directorate of Women's Studies	İzmir Metropolitan Municipality
Department of Women, Family, Education and Social Services	Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality
Directorate of Social Support Services	Kadıköy Municipality Nilüfer Municipality Şişli Municipality
Directorate of Social Welfare	Karabağ Municipality Menemen Municipality Trabzon Metropolitan Municipality
Department of Social Services, Branch Directorate of Special Needs	Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality
Department of Cultural and Social Affairs	Ortahisar Municipality
Directorate of Strategy Development	Odunpazarı Municipality



As may be understood from this hierarchic/bureaucratic authority and service delivery chart, the equality units seem to be dependent upon the decisions and responsiveness of senior authorities. This organizational structure causes the units to be ineffective and unable to take initiatives. Henceforth, they must be empowered both vertically - to strengthen their position of power in relation to higher-rank authorities, and horizontally - to strengthen their capacity to act on the same level. Our recommendations on this issue are presented in this study.

Table 5: Number of Employees in Equality Units

	None	1	2	3 or more
Beşiktaş Municipality		X		
Beylikdüzü Municipality			X	
Buca Municipality				X
Çankaya Municipality				X
Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality		X		
Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality			X	
İzmir Metropolitan Municipality				X
Kadıköy Municipality			X	
Karabağlar Municipality		X		
Kars Municipality		X		
Karşıyaka Municipality			X	
Konak Municipality		X		
Menemen Municipality	X			
Muratpaşa Municipality		X		
Nilüfer Municipality			X	
Odunpazarı Municipality		X		
Ortahisar Municipality		X		
Seyhan Municipality			X	
Şişli Municipality				X
Trabzon Metropolitan Municipality				X

Table 6: Individual Regulatory Document and Budget

Municipality	Operates under an individual regulatory document	Has its own budget
Beşiktaş Municipality	Yes.	Yes.
Beylikdüzü Municipality	No. Defined under the Regulation of the Directorate of Women and Family Services.	Yes.
Buca Municipality	No.	No. The expenses are covered by the Directorate's budget.
Çankaya Municipality	No. Defined under the Regulation of the Directorate of Women and Family Services.	No. The expenses are covered by the Directorate's budget.
Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality	Yes. Besides, defined under the Regulation of the Department of Social Services	No. The expenses are covered by the Directorate's budget.
Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality	No.	No.
İzmir Metropolitan Municipality	No. Defined under the Regulation of the Department of Women's Studies	No. The expenses are covered by the Directorate's budget
Kadıköy Municipality	Yes.	Yes.
Karabağlar Municipality	No. Defined under the Regulation of the Directorate of Social and Welfare Affairs	No. The expenses are covered by the Directorate's budget.
Kars Municipality	No. Defined under the Regulation of the Directorate of Women and Family Services.	No. The expenses are covered by the Directorate's budget.
Karşıyaka Municipality	No. Duties, authorities and responsibilities are defined under the Regulation of the Directorate of Women and Family Services.	No.
Konak Municipality	Yes.	No. The expenses are covered by the Directorate's budget.

Table 6: Individual Regulatory Document and Budget

Municipality	Operates under an individual regulatory document	Has its own budget
Menemen Municipality	No. Duties, authorities and responsibilities are defined under the Regulation on the Organization, Duties, Authorities, Responsibilities & Working Principles and Procedures of the Directorate of Social Services	No.
Muratpaşa Municipality	No.	No. The expenses are covered by the Directorate's budget.
Nilüfer Municipality	No. Defined under the Regulation of the Directorate of Social Support Services.	A budget is allocated to the Solidarity and Equality Office that supervises the Equality Unit.
Odunpazarı Municipality	Yes.	No. The expenses are covered by the Directorate's budget.
Ortahisar Municipality	No. Defined under the Regulation of the Department of Social and Cultural Affairs	No. The expenses are covered by the Department's budget.
Seyhan Municipality	No.	Yes.
Şişli Municipality	Yes.	No. The expenses are covered by the Directorate's budget.
Trabzon Metropolitan Municipality	No. Defined under the Regulation of the Directorate of Social and Welfare Affairs	Yes.

3. Local Equality Action Plans (LEAPs) as Tools for Gender Mainstreaming

The major path to achieve gender mainstreaming is to establish and implement Local Equality Action Plans (LEAPs). The LEAP is the planning roadmap describing ways of addressing institutional objectives derived from key strategic issues and solutions concerning gender equality. LEAPs must be prepared through a “participatory” approach – with the participation of all of the relevant stakeholders (public institutions in the province/district, civil society organizations, women’s research centers in universities, city council women’s assemblies, etc.) that are responsible for ensuring gender equality at the local level.⁸⁰

The notion of the *Local Equality Action Plan* was first introduced in the *European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life* that was launched by the **Council of European Municipalities and Regions** (CEMR) in 2006.

The Charter denotes that in order to achieve gender equality, local governments must integrate the gender dimension into all of their activities and establish Local Equality Action Plans (LEAPs). Besides, in order to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the implementation, adequate staff and budget must be provided.

In Türkiye, the first LEAPs were established within the scope of the *Women Friendly Cities United Nations Joint Programme* that was initiated by KA-DER Ankara Branch. The Program was bolstered by the participation of the *Women’s Coalition* in the 2000s and progressed with the “*Today for Tomorrow*” Campaign conducted in 2003 which played a key role in building the path from local policy-making endeavors implemented in diverse cities and districts to the LEAPs. “*Raising gender responsiveness of and amongst local governments, establishing perspectives to develop*

gender-equitable local governance policies, and enhancing collaboration between local governments and local women’s organizations”⁸¹ were among the goals of the Campaign that was run across the country with women’s organizations. Initiatives carried out to reach those goals provided the basis for the LEAPs that were to be developed later by municipalities. Eventually, the process accelerated as a result of advocacy endeavors of local women’s organizations and the signing of the *European Charter for Equality Between Women and Men in Local Life* by municipalities and their commitments. And subsequently the LEAPs began to be established.

The key challenge confronted during the implementation of the *Women Friendly Cities United Nations Joint Programme* was identified as the inadequacy of knowledge and capacity to **collect gender-sensitive data** at the local level, and the **lack of a regulation** prepared by a holistic and participatory approach providing the guidelines for related policies and institutional structures.⁸²

Additionally, the key issue faced during both the preliminary preparation and the implementation stages was the municipal staff’s **resistance and reluctance to embrace the project**. Since LEAP-related works/programs are initiated by an external institution, a women’s organization, an CSO and/or voluntary or professional expert support in general, the municipal staff are fairly unwilling to adopt and put efforts. The reason for this might be that municipalities striving under the pressure of generating and implementing a wide range of policies to ensure residents experience local life in good social, infrastructural and economic standards, may not consider the LEAPs as vehicles to facilitate and boost the efficiency of their endeavors, but rather as a cumbersome burden. On these grounds, as soon as it is decided to establish a LEAP, it may be useful to convey the preparation

⁸⁰ For guidance on preparing the LEAPs, see: www.kadindostukentler.com, Project Report, p.5

⁸¹ For publications published after the campaign, see: *Düğüm Bilgisi* (Untying Knots) (Aksu Bora, Ceren İşat)

<http://ka-der.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/dugumbilgisi.pdf>, *Belediye Kadınlara da Hizmet Eder/ Kadın Dostu Belediye Hizmetleri: Neden, Nasıl?* (The Municipality Provides Services to Women As Well / Women Friendly Municipal Services: Why? How?) (Ayten Alkan)

<http://ka-der.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/belediyekadınlarada.pdf>,

Yerel Yönetimlere İlişkin Yasal Düzenlemeler Çerçevesinde Kadınlara Yer Açmak (The Prospect for Women’s Inclusion Within the Framework of Legislation on Local Administrations) (L.Yıldız Tokman, Sema Kendirci),

<http://ka-der.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/yerelyonetimlereiliskin.pdf>

⁸² Women Friendly Cities United Nations Joint Programme (UNJP), *Kadın Dostu Kentler Kitapçığı* (Women Friendly Cities Guidebook), 2013, p.4

<http://www.kadindostukentler.com/content/docs/kitapcik-2.pdf>

and implementation methodology as well as the ultimate objective to authorities in an explicit way.

The LEAPs must be drafted prior to establishing the strategic plans to allow each unit focus on strategic planning by knowing the identified issues and expectations concerning its own services and other services to be executed in collaboration. In this respect, it is critical to draft the LEAPs and strategic plans simultaneously; it must be argued and advised that establishing the LEAP constitutes a **stage of the strategic planning process**.

The women's and rights-based civil society organizations may be informed about the scope and the preparation methodology of the LEAPs; **their advocacy efforts must be ensured** and during the election period, all candidates' commitments to establish the LEAPs as a stage/part of the strategic planning process need to be secured.

While drafting the LEAPs; the requirements, issues and solution alternatives are identified with the widest possible perspective – **through participatory focus group meetings and workshops allowing for the representation of all local residents**. Afterwards, those findings are shared with municipal authorities; and in order to bring solution recommendations to life, their advice is to be expected as to which actions, activities, and strategies would be more relevant as well as to which **indicators and monitoring method** would be more appropriate to enable monitoring at regular intervals. At this stage, the municipal authorities feel "undermined" **in the face of the content and the scope** of the LEAP; and it becomes apparent that isolated efforts of a municipal department, directorate or an equality unit will not suffice to face the challenge in the absence of robust planning and collaboration.

The LEAP mechanism was introduced within the scope of the *Women Friendly Cities Program* in Türkiye. The list of some municipalities that prepared and published LEAPs is given below:

Metropolitan Municipalities (MM) that issued Local Equality Action Plans (LEAP):

Mersin MM Local Equality Action Plan 2021– 2023
<http://dSPACE.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/1984>

İstanbul MM Local Equality Monitoring Plan 2019 – 2021
<http://dSPACE.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/167>

İstanbul MM Local Equality Action Plan 2021– 2024
<http://dSPACE.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/1377>

İzmir MM Local Equality Monitoring Plan 2019 – 2021
<http://dSPACE.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/168>

Trabzon MM Local Equality Monitoring Plan 2019 – 2021
<http://dSPACE.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/170>

Kars MM Local Equality Monitoring Plan 2019 – 2021
<http://dSPACE.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/169>

Adana MM Local Equality Monitoring Plan 2019 – 2021
<http://dSPACE.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/164>

Gaziantep MM Local Equality Monitoring Plan 2019 – 2021
<http://dSPACE.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/166>

Ankara MM Local Equality Monitoring Plan 2019 – 2021
<http://dSPACE.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/165>

Samsun MM Local Equality Action Plan 2016 – 2018
<https://www.samsun.bel.tr/icerik/yerel-esitlik>

4. City Council Women's Assemblies as Agents for Gender Mainstreaming

City Council Women's Assemblies are among the mechanisms providing strategic contributions to local governments in Türkiye in ensuring gender equality.

Preliminary practices were implemented in 1996 within the scope of the *Local Agenda 21 Program* supported by UNDP, and initiated both in Europe and Türkiye. The implementation in Türkiye served the provision concerning "City Councils" to be codified in Article 76 of the Municipal Law No. 5393 in 2005. Pursuant to this Article, the city councils shall endeavor to enhance the participation of local residents in the city; and the local governments are assigned to develop and implement programs that will ensure women's effective participation in local decision-making, planning and implementation processes in accordance with the goals of the Local Agenda 21 Program. The **City Council Women's Assemblies** were established in this context.

Women's Assemblies are civil structures centered around the principles of volunteerism, transparency, objectivity, governance, social responsibility and the like; composing of women representatives of CSOs, women's research centers in universities, the professional associations and unions. The list of 32 City Council Women's Assemblies is given below:



Table 7: City Council Women's Assemblies⁸³

City/District	City Council Women's Assembly (exists or not)
Konya/Karatay Municipality	Yes
Konya/Selçuklu Municipality	Yes
Konya/Meram Municipality	Yes (Inactive)
İzmir Metropolitan Municipality	Yes
İzmir/Buca Municipality	Yes
İzmir/Karabağlar Municipality	Yes
İzmir/Konak Municipality	Yes
İzmir/Güzelbahçe Municipality	Yes
İzmir/Karşıyaka Municipality	Yes
İzmir/Gaziemir Municipality	Yes
İzmir/Narlıdere Municipality	Yes
İzmir/Bayraklı Municipality	Yes
İzmir/Bornova Municipality	Yes (Inactive)
Eskişehir Metropolitan Municipality	Yes
Eskişehir/Odunpazarı Municipality	Yes
Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality	Yes
Adana Metropolitan Municipality	Yes
Adana/Seyhan Municipality	Yes
Adana/Çukurova Municipality	Yes
Adana/Sarıçam Municipality	Yes
Mersin Metropolitan Municipality	Yes
Mersin/Mezitli Municipality	Yes
Mersin/Yenişehir Municipality	Yes
Mersin/Toroslar Municipality	Yes
Mersin/Akdeniz Municipality	Yes

⁸³ This table has been produced within the framework of the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK) Project No. 218K355, titled: "Sustainable Urban Policies: Quality of Life in Cities/Regions" carried out by Prof. Berrin Koyuncu Lorasdağı.

Table 7: City Council Women's Assemblies⁸³

City/District	City Council Women's Assembly (exists or not)
Bursa Metropolitan Municipality	Yes
Bursa/Nilüfer Municipality	Yes
Bursa/Yıldırım Municipality	Yes
Samsun/Atakum Municipality	Yes
Samsun/İlkadım Municipality	Yes (Inactive)
Samsun/Canik Municipality	Yes (Inactive)
Samsun/Tekkeköy Municipality	Yes (Inactive)



⁸³This table has been produced within the framework of the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK) Project No. 218K355, titled: "Sustainable Urban Policies: Quality of Life in Cities/Regions" carried out by Prof. Berrin Koyuncu Lorasdağı.

Since the City Council Women's Assemblies do not have their own budgets, they require substantial support from political parties locally. This impedes women's assemblies to function as participatory and effective civil mechanisms. Since a women's assembly's operations are defined by influential political and economical actors at the local level it cannot operate independently of the City Council. Although they were envisaged to operate as "bipartisan" structures in ideal terms, the dominance of political circles that a municipality is affiliated with dissuades the participation of women of opposing viewpoints. Therefore, only a few of them function effectively at present.

A good example to women's assemblies is at the Nilüfer Municipality in Bursa. Bursa-Nilüfer Municipality's City Council Women's Assembly serves as exemplary thanks to the mayor's enthusiasm, commitment and support for gender equality; close collaboration with rights-based women's CSOs, conveying the Assembly's decisions directly to the Mayor's Office, and since the members and the president of the Women's Assembly are not political party members.⁸⁴

5. Strategically Prioritized Service Institutions for Women: Women's Counseling Centers, Women's Shelters, Crèches

According to 2020 data, the number of women's counseling centers in municipalities is 54 and the number of municipalities with shelters is 32.⁸⁵ Works related to combating violence against women, women's empowerment, and local equality action plans are performed simultaneously in those centers. The ratio of municipalities with **women's shelters** - that are among the key mechanisms in combating violence against women in Türkiye - to the total is 3.9 per cent. However, the mechanisms utilized by municipalities to combat violence against women are not limited only to shelters. For example, some municipalities without women's shelters provide **free of charge lodging** facilities. Therefore, in order to analyze municipal service delivery for combating violence against women, the services provided by all municipal social service units must be considered. In-kind, legal, and psycho-social support extended to women during the transition to independent life, and crèches are other important services. Ankara-Çankaya Municipality is a best practice example with the highest number of crèches (12).

⁸⁴ This information is based on interviews held within the framework of the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye (TÜBİTAK) Project No. 218K355, titled: "Sustainable Urban Policies: Quality of Life in Cities/Districts", carried out by Prof. Berrin Koyuncu-Lorasdağı.

⁸⁵ TESEV (Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation), 2021, *Yerel Yönetimlerde Kadına Yönelik Sosyal Politika ve Hizmetler* (Social Policies and Services in Local Administrations for Women), Author: Şenay Yılmaz
<https://www.tesev.org.tr/tr/research/yerel-yonetimlerde-kadina-yonelik-sosyal-politika-ve-hizmetler/>

6. An Overview of Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Equality in Cities Where KAMER Has Branches⁸⁶

An overview of institutional mechanisms that play key roles in gender mainstreaming in cities where KAMER has branches is given below:

Table 8: Presence of Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Equality in cities where KAMER has branches

	Equality Unit	Equality Committee	Women's Unit	Women's Shelter	Local Equality Action Plan (LEAP)	City Council Women's Assembly
Adıyaman Municipality	The unit is under the Governorship.	Committee for Equality Between Women and Men	Department of Women and Family Services	There is no municipal shelter for women.	The Local Equality Action Plan was established covering the 2013-2015 period within the scope of the Women Friendly Cities Program. However, new plans were not established in subsequent years.	Yes
Ağrı Municipality	No	No	Directorate of Women and Family Services	There is no municipal shelter for women.	No	No
Batman Municipality	No	Committee for Equality Between Women and Men	Directorate of Women and Family Services	There is no municipal shelter for women.	No	Yes
Bingöl Municipality	No	Committee for Equality Between Women and Men	No	There is no municipal shelter for women.	No	No
Bitlis Municipality	No	No	No	There is no municipal shelter for women.	No	No
Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality	No	No	Department of Women and Family Services	The Metropolitan Municipality provides shelter for women.	No	No

⁸⁶ This table was produced by Prof. Berrin Koyuncu-Lorasdağı for her presentation of the **Decentralized Governance Model Study for Gender Equality** at the **Experts Workshop** held online on April 16-17, 2022. The table indicates whether relevant municipal units exist or not. Please note that some units are under Governorates within the framework of the Women Friendly Cities Project in cities like Adıyaman and Kars.

Table 8: Presence of Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Equality in cities where KAMER has branches

	Equality Unit	Equality Committee	Women's Unit	Women's Shelter	Local Equality Action Plan (LEAP)	City Council Women's Assembly
Elazığ Municipality	No	No	No	There is no municipal shelter for women.	No	Yes
Erzurum Metropolitan Municipality	No	No	Directorate of Women and Disabled Services	The Metropolitan Municipality does not provide shelter for women.	No	Yes
Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality	Yes	Committee for Equality Between Women and Men	Department of Women, Family, Education and Social Services	The Metropolitan Municipality provides shelter for women.	The Local Equality Action Plan was produced covering the 2013-2015 period within the scope of the Women Friendly Cities Project. At present, work is in progress for the Local Equality Action Plan. The Local Equality Monitoring Platform founded within the scope of the "Enhancement of Participatory Democracy in Turkey: Gender Equality Monitoring Project" financed by the European Union contributes to the preparatory phase of the plan.	Yes
Hakkari Municipality	No	No	Directorate of Women and Family Services	There is no municipal shelter for women.	No	No
Iğdır Municipality	No	Committee for Equality Between Women and Men	Directorate of Women and Family Services	There is no municipal shelter for women.	No	No

⁸⁶ This table was produced by Prof. Berrin Koyuncu-Lorasdağı for her presentation of the **Decentralized Governance Model Study for Gender Equality** at the **Experts Workshop** held online on April 16-17, 2022. The table indicates whether relevant municipal units exist or not. Please note that some units are under Governorates within the framework of the Women Friendly Cities Project in cities like Adıyaman and Kars.

Table 8: Presence of Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Equality in cities where KAMER has branches

	Equality Unit	Equality Committee	Women's Unit	Women's Shelter	Local Equality Action Plan (LEAP)	City Council Women's Assembly
Kars Municipality	The unit is under the Governorate.	Committee for Equality Between Women and Men	Directorate of Women and Family Services	There is no municipal shelter for women.	A Local Equality Action Plan was produced within the scope of the Women Friendly Cities Project.	Yes
Malatya Metropolitan Municipality	No	Committee for Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men	Directorate of Women, Family and Youth Services	The Metropolitan Municipality does not provide shelter for women.	The Local Equality Action Plan was produced covering the 2013-2015 period within the scope of the Women Friendly Cities Project. However, new plans were not produced during subsequent years.	Yes
Mardin Metropolitan Municipality	No	Committee for Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men	Department of Women and Family Services	The Metropolitan Municipality does not provide shelter for women.	The Local Equality Action Plan was produced covering the 2013-2015 period within the scope of the Women Friendly Cities Project. However, new plans were not produced during subsequent years.	Yes
Muş Municipality	No	No	No	There is no municipal shelter for women.	No	Yes
Şanlıurfa Metropolitan Municipality	The unit is under the Governorate.	Committee for Family and Equality Between Women and Men	Department of Women and Family Services	The Metropolitan Municipality does not provide shelter for women.	The Local Equality Action Plan was produced covering the 2013-2015 period within the scope of the Women Friendly Cities Project. However, new plans were not produced during subsequent years.	Yes
Siirt Municipality	No	No	No	There is no municipal shelter for women.	No	No

⁸⁶ This table was produced by Prof. Berrin Koyuncu-Lorasdağı for her presentation of the **Decentralized Governance Model Study for Gender Equality** at the **Experts Workshop** held online on April 16-17, 2022. The table indicates whether relevant municipal units exist or not. Please note that some units are under Governorates within the framework of the Women Friendly Cities Project in cities like Adiyaman and Kars.

Table 8: Presence of Institutional Mechanisms for Gender Equality in cities where KAMER has branches

	Equality Unit	Equality Committee	Women's Unit	Women's Shelter	Local Equality Action Plan (LEAP)	City Council Women's Assembly
Şirnak Municipality	No	Committee for Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men	No	There is no municipal shelter for women.	No	No
Tunceli Municipality	Yes	Gender Equality Committee	No	There is no municipal shelter for women.	Tunceli Municipality initiated the LEAP Preparatory Phase in 2021 with the contributions of the Monitoring Delegation composed of the members of the Dersim Branch of the Human Life and Democratic Society Association and the Human Rights Association.	No
Van Metropolitan Municipality	No	No	Department of Women and Family Services	The shelter that provided services within the Rojin Life Center under the Van Metropolitan Municipality, Directorate of Women's Policies was shut down in 2016 by the trustee.	No	Yes

⁸⁶ This table was produced by Prof. Berrin Koyuncu-Lorasdağı for her presentation of the **Decentralized Governance Model Study for Gender Equality** at the **Experts Workshop** held online on April 16-17, 2022. The table indicates whether relevant municipal units exist or not. Please note that some units are under Governorates within the framework of the Women Friendly Cities Project in cities like Adiyaman and Kars.

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D. Gender in Participation in Local Decisions and Women's Representation⁸⁷

The representation rate of women in politics at the local level that is well below the world average is among the key obstacles hampering local development and prosperity.

On the other hand, women's weak and unequal participation in local politics and decision-making mechanisms is now being addressed as a major **women's rights and gender equality deficiency**. Because, unlike the central political sphere in Türkiye, in the local political arena that is dominated by men both due to their greater number and also since they monopolize the right to expression; unfortunately, the women and their local needs and requirements are not taken into consideration "automatically".

Certainly, primarily women politicians / elected women, women bureaucrats as well as various women's organizations and civil initiatives advocating women's rights are expected to promote the adoption of policies required for **gender mainstreaming** and ensuring the institutional transformation in local governments. Therefore, electing or appointing women who would be effective in local policy development and decision-making is among the most strategic prerequisites. Yet, effective support of men who promote gender equality is of vital importance, particularly at the local level.

While addressing women's equal participation in the local sphere; women who are appointed and assigned to and who nominate and are elected for varying posts must be taken into consideration. They range from those who take part in local political party organizations, who run for candidacy to be elected municipal councillors, mayors and mukhtars; to members of the City Council Women's Assemblies, local CSOs and professional chambers. Besides, women executives, experts and bureaucrats appointed to posts in local public institutions and organizations need to be considered in this context as well.

In other words, the presence of effective women in local public institutions, professional chambers and even in commercial companies, apart from the women executives at local organizations of political parties and elected municipal executives – as the key players of local politics – is also crucial in ensuring women's equal participation in local decision-making mechanisms.

Women's participation and representation in local politics refer to their involvement both in the decision-making processes and in the planning and execution of public services at the local level. Therefore, the indicators listed below reveal the extent of their participation in local decision-making mechanisms:

- Qualifications and the proportion of local women candidates in local and general elections,
- Qualifications and the proportion of women elected for mayor and municipal/provincial councillors,
- Representation of women's organizations in city councils, and effectiveness of women's assemblies in ensuring gender equality,
- Representation of women's organizations engaged in rights-based advocacy works, in specialization committees and whether they are allowed to attend local council meetings,
- The ratio of women employed as executives, experts, workers and civil servants in municipalities and their affiliated enterprises to the total headcount,
- The ratio of women in the Management of organizations like professional chambers, bar associations, chambers of industry and commerce that are active locally,
- The ratio of women executives, company/business owners and entrepreneurs among existing local companies,
- Involvement of equality units and rights-based women's organizations in the preparation and implementation of strategic plans of Municipalities and Special Provincial Administrations,
- Engagement of women's organizations in budgeting processes.

⁸⁷ This section is drawn up with input from Doç. Dr. Ahu Sumbas's Workshop presentation.

A brief overview of factors that affect women's equal representation / participation is given below.⁸⁸


1. Adverse Approaches of Political Parties to Gender Equality at the Local Level

In Türkiye, the most significant structural barrier hampering women's effective engagement in local politics is the **male-dominated** system / culture adopted by the **political parties in their centralized approaches, disregarding the adoption of gender equality policies at the local level**. Political parties – at their headquarters – may support gender equality policies as long as they are important for securing the voters' support and public advocacy. But in local politics; demonstrating political will, determination and commitment becomes a prerequisite to stand up against the political stance and approaches – that reproduce the patriarchal culture – of locally organized interest groups. Henceforth, it has to be explored whether or to what extent the political parties have integrated the gender dimension in their primary and prioritized local policies. It is important to start exploring from women's candidacy for elections.

The scarcity of women candidates in the elections


The issue is more apparent when we take a look at the proportion of women in the electoral lists of political parties during the 2019 local elections in Türkiye.


The ratio of women candidates who ran for the 2019 local elections:

 50% of People's Democratic Party (HDP) candidates (as per gender quotes);

 5.23% of the Republican People's Party (CHP) candidates;

 3.85% of the Good Party (İP) candidates;

 1.8% of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) candidates;

 1.25% of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) candidates.⁸⁹

In order to explore the reason for these disparities,

the party programs and the by-laws of the first five political parties (AKP, CHP, İP, MHP, HDP) that won the majority of votes according to the results of the 2019 local elections are overviewed below:

Gender-insensitive approaches in policy documents of political parties

The best performing party with respect to the adoption and implementation of gender equality-based policies is the People's Democratic Party (HDP).

People's Democratic Party (HDP)

There is no statement in the **HDP's Party By-Law**⁹⁰ about the principle of gender equality under the article elucidating nomination procedures and guidelines concerning the general and local elections.

"At the very least, the equal representation of women in all decision-making mechanisms" is safeguarded in the section on the **Organizational Principles and Internal Functions**.

In the section depicting the **Organizational Structure**, reference is made to "**Women's Assemblies**" – a term used in lieu of the "Women's Branches" mentioned in the by-laws of other parties. Women's assemblies may be established to address concerns and issues specific to women.

The section on "**Disciplinary Offenses and Enforcement Actions**" states the penalties to be imposed against "sexist practices including the perpetration of all forms of violence, oppression, intimidation, sexual abuse, contempt and dominance" against women and the LGBTI individuals.

The importance of implementing gender quotas also at the local government level is mentioned in **the HDP's Party Program**.⁹¹ The gender equality policy is adopted by local governments as well. The significance of decentralized and local governance is highlighted within the context of direct democracy and democratic autonomy principles. The Party strives to ensure the dominance of gender equality and ecological society approaches in local governance.

⁸⁸ Source of data for political parties: Dr. Senem Yıldırım-Özdem's Workshop presentation.

⁸⁹ <https://yesilgazete.org/ka-der-yerel-secimlerde-kadin-adaylarin-sayisi-hayal-kirikligi-yaratti/> (the number of women candidates in the local elections caused disappointment)

⁹⁰ <https://hdp.org.tr/tr/parti-tuzugu/10/>

⁹¹ <https://hdp.org.tr/tr/parti-programi/8/>

The “right to the city” concept is asserted; and the Program states that meeting women’s needs shall be prioritized in public services delivery, and their equal representation shall be ensured. Women’s assemblies are indicated as the first step in ensuring women’s representation in local governance. The model stated in the Program dictates that the decisions taken by the women’s assemblies shall be implemented by all of the internal executive bodies; and their related practices shall be subject to the supervision of the women’s assemblies.



People's Democratic Party's (HDP) Party Program

To ensure the dominance of gender equality and ecological society approaches in local governments;

- *By halting lucrative urban renewal policies victimizing people, building and developing cities that provide the means for humanely lives, through implementing transformation models supported by social projects;*
- *By generating measures that facilitate urban lives of children, the elderly and the retired individuals;*
- *By eliminating the barriers hindering/restricting the participation of persons with disabilities in urban life;*
- *By promoting the usage of native languages (mother tongue), and multi-lingual municipalism in the public sphere;*
- *By implementing social policies for the good of people and labour(ers) rather than the local neo-liberal economic policies.*

It is possible to bring to life a renewed democratic local governance approach securing women's equal representation, enabling meeting women's unique and specific needs, ensuring the planning of all local public services by prioritizing the women's requirements, and that is strengthened by the adoption of the positive discrimination principle favoring women.

In democratic local governments, women are directly represented / engaged in local politics via the women's assemblies composed of local women members. Within the framework of this model, decisions taken by the women's assemblies - concerning the identification/implementation of priorities in the public services delivery on a gender equitable basis, and meeting women's needs and requirements - are implemented by all local governing bodies such as the municipal and provincial assemblies. The women's assemblies supervise the implementation processes.

With respect to curriculum preparation, our Party pays regard to taking into account the demands of the Education Assemblies to be established at the local level in the first place, in addition to scientific methods and educator recommendations. It strives to restructure the system on the basis of an unsexist educational approach advocating LGBTI students' and employees' rights to good quality education and eliminating all forms of discrimination against individuals with disabilities, as well as to specify educational policies in alignment with these principles.



People's Democratic Party's (HDP) Party By-Law

Organizational Principles and Internal Operations: Article 3:e) "At the very least, equal representation of women" in all decision-making mechanisms is ensured.

Organizational Structure - Article 10: The Party Organization comprises central organs; provincial, district and municipality/town organizations, representative offices, the Party's GNAT (Grand National Assembly of Türkiye) Group, and the Provincial and Municipal Council Groups.

Women's Assembly - Article 40: The Party may set up Women's Assemblies to address the issues of its women members and issues specific to women as well as to carry out works concerning women's issues. The foundation, functioning and working procedures of the Women's Assembly are governed by a Regulation approved by the Party Council.

Disciplinary Offenses and Enforcement Actions – Article 58: Enforcement actions include imposition of notices, warnings, reprimands; temporary and permanent dismissal.

e) The following enforcement actions are administered against sexist practices including, "all forms of physical and/or psychological violence, pressure, intimidation, sexual abuse, humiliation and dominance against women and the LGBTI individuals – including offenses perpetrated in 'private spaces'":

Sexual abuse, physical violence: Temporary suspension of membership, in the case of recurrence(s), temporary and/or permanent dismissal.

g) Addressing the offenses committed against women, children and the LGBTI individuals by the Disciplinary Committees is prioritized. Members of the Disciplinary Committees cannot take office in any other Party organ.



The Justice and Development Party (AKP)

In the sub-section titled "Nomination Formalities for Local Elections" in the **Party's By-Law**⁹², the method of identifying and ranking of candidates as well as the Preliminary Elections and Organizational and Central Roll Calls held for local elections are elucidated, however there is no statement about observing gender equality in the identification of candidates.

AKP's Party Programme⁹³ includes the sub-section titled "The Women" under the section on "Social Policies". As mentioned below, particular reference is made to women's responsibilities related to motherhood and caring work besides their existence as individuals. Although women's engagement in public life as well as in politics is emphasized in general and by membership to political parties, there is no mentioning of their participation and representation at the local level.

Additionally, there is a sub-section titled "**Local Government**" under the "**Public Administration**" section which states that a constitutional amendment shall be promulgated pursuant to the European Charter of Local Self-Government within the context of the right to local governance; however, there is no statement concerning gender equality nor women's equal representation.

AKP's Party Programme

Addressing all kinds of women's issues that have piled up after years of negligence is among the priorities of our Party not solely because women constitute half of the population but above all since they are of prime importance and play the most effective role in raising individuals and healthy generations. On these grounds;

- *All measures shall be taken to promote women's participation in public life.*
- *Women will be encouraged to join our Party and take active roles in politics.*

- *Support shall be extended to women-related associations, foundations and the civil society organizations, and collaborations shall be established with these entities while formulating and drafting legislation concerning women.*

- *The prevention of violence against women as well as sexual and economic abuse, shall be among our Party's priorities and primary policies.*

- *Preventive and educational programs and trainings shall be designed and implemented for women and their families in regions where suicides by women and honour killings are common.*

- **Local administrations shall be encouraged to carry out work concerning women's issues.** *Educational and training projects suited to regional conditions shall be developed for girls in rural communities; civil society organizations that work on this issue shall be supported.*

- *Policies will be implemented to raise the enrolment rate, barriers to education shall be eliminated in this respect, awareness-raising programs shall be implemented on this issue particularly for families in rural communities.*

- *The implementation of the principles set forth by the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) shall be ensured.*

- *Work shall be carried out to ensure and safeguard women's access to social security rights. While maintaining appreciation and respect for household labour, new employment fields for women shall be opened.*

- *Programs will be implemented to protect women who are deprived of financial support or subjected to violence.*

- *Provisions in the legislation against women shall be sorted out and removed.*

- *Women's social security and working conditions shall be improved by taking into consideration their working lives and responsibilities concerning their children and families.*

⁹² <https://www.akparti.org.tr/media/279929/cep-boy.pdf>

⁹³ <https://www.akparti.org.tr/parti/parti-programi/>

The Republican People's Party (CHP)

Ensuring gender equality and the prevention of violence against women are listed among the "Objectives" stated in the **CHP Party By-Law**.⁹⁴

Objective - Article 2-1/j: *To ensure the adoption and implementation of the gender equality principle in all aspects of societal life; to eliminate all forms of violence against women (p. 10)*

The preliminary elections, organizational and central roll calls held for the local elections are elucidated in detail under the article on the **identification of candidates in local elections** (Article: 55/1). There is no statement concerning gender equality and/or women's representation in this article.

CHP's Gender Quota: Article 56 sets the gender quota as 33 per cent:

There is the sub-section on Gender Equality under the section on **"Our Goals and Priorities"** in the **CHP Party Program**.⁹⁵ The importance of ensuring gender equality in different spheres of life is emphasized while politics is depicted as a distinct domain. The Party seeks to enhance women's participation in public administration, politics and in decision-making mechanisms, and expresses that women party members will be encouraged to run for local and general elections. While the Party describes local governance as an indispensable component of pluralist and participatory governance, it aims to enhance the effectiveness of local governments (p. 32).

ARTICLE-56 (1) *During the nomination of candidates through central roll calls for membership at the parliament, provincial and municipal councils, the Party's assembly, provincial and district administrative committees, and at provincial congress and convention delegate elections; gender and youth quotas are imposed respectively as thirty-three per cent (33%) and twenty per cent (20%). If the number of eligible candidates is not adequate, the identification and election process is implemented with participating candidates.... Methods and other aspects of the implementation of quotas are governed by regulation (pp. 57-58).*

The GOOD Party (İP)

The GOOD Party By-Law⁹⁶ codifies the imposition of a gender quota of "at least 25 per cent" while nominating candidates for local and general elections. There is no statement about gender equality in the section on nomination formalities. The application fee for women is 50 per cent lower than for men.

Gender Quota – ARTICLE 13: *Effective for ordinary and reserve members (if any); the gender quota of at least 25 per cent is implemented during the a) nomination of candidates through central roll calls for parliamentary elections to which the GOOD Party participates, b) identification of candidates for memberships at provincial and municipal councils, c) Central Administrative Committee elections, d) provincial, district and town executive committee elections, e) congress and convention delegate elections, and f) Central Disciplinary Committee and Provincial Disciplinary Committee elections. In case of a vacancy when the name of a new candidate shall be reported to election boards in place of the candidate who was identified in accordance with paragraphs a) and b) above, the new candidate shall be of the same gender with the former. Vacancies of ordinary members of committees mentioned in the c), d), e) and f) paragraphs of this article shall be filled by calling the first reserve member. The Central Executive Committee or the Chairperson may decide to increase or decrease the quota by 50 per cent or leave it unchanged for each electoral district. If a decision is not taken for a particular district and the number of candidates of both genders is not sufficient, the election is held with the participating candidates. The gender quota requirement needs not be fulfilled if the number of members of both genders is not sufficient to establish the provincial and district administration organs. During the conventions and congresses, candidate lists are reviewed by the Council Chairperson, primarily with respect to the quota implementation. Candidate lists that do not comply with the gender equality quota requirement, shall be rejected (p. 10)*

⁹⁴ https://content.chp.org.tr/file/chp_tuzuk_10_03_2018.pdf

⁹⁵ <https://chp.azureedge.net/1d48b01630ef43d9b2edf45d55842cae.pdf>

⁹⁶ <https://iyipartikadikoy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/iyiparti-tuzuk-20191004.pdf>

Application for nomination to candidacy - ARTICLE 69: *The amount of the application fee to be paid by the nominees for candidacy for mayor and membership to the parliament, municipal and provincial councils is determined by the General Administrative Committee. The application fee for women is 50 per cent lower than that for men (p. 39)*

In **GOOD Party's Programme**⁹⁷, there is a sub-section devoted to women; the party's gender equality principle describes women and men as "two fundamental constituents of the societal life mutually supporting – rather than competing with – each other". The principle of "equal representation" is emphasized, and it is expressed that a women's quota shall be implemented in the formation of local administration cadres.

"Women" in the GOOD Party's (İP) Programme

It is not possible to achieve societal prosperity and sustainable development unless women who constitute 50 per cent of our population and who were introduced to the principle of "equality" in politics through the rights to vote and stand for election granted to them by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk well ahead of many Western countries play active roles in the economic and social lives. Women are the cornerstones of the society and the family. Even only the presence of a woman enlightens, glorifies and adds value to her surroundings. Our primary goal is to eliminate all kinds of discriminatory practices against women, to take all measures including legislative measures that will ensure their access to equal opportunities; and to improve their status within the social, economic and societal spheres in our country.

- *All administrative and legislative guidelines shall be formulated to enable women – as the symbols of labour, prosperity, and production – to eventually become the agents of development through their empowerment.*

- *There will be no illiterate women under the age of 40 at the end of the fifth year after we come into power.*

- *We will ensure women and men to stand alongside each other as two fundamental constituents of the societal life, mutually supporting – rather than competing with – each other. Our Party shall safeguard equal representation.*

- *Our Party shall eliminate all of the barriers that restrict women's access to equal rights in the society, and shall provide the means enabling them express themselves and ensuring their robust representation in every field, by mitigating their heavy burden of caretaking that impedes their participation in social life.*

- *Women's participation in decision-making mechanisms shall be enhanced through imposing women's quotas in the formation of cadres in public institutions, local administrations and politics.*

- *We shall immediately double the social aid resources allocated for child care and the care of elderly dependent family members – that is among the key barriers hindering the participation of our women in the labour force.*

- *Programs will be developed and implemented to increase literacy rates of adult women, measures will be taken to ensure girls' access to the K-12 continuous basic education system, and dropping out of school before the completion of basic education will be prohibited. Measures will be taken to effectively combat violence against women; to transform mindsets in our society with the aim to eliminate adverse behavior and attitudes that give rise to and intensify domestic violence. All required measures will be taken, primarily educational and legislative changes will be made. In this context, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies shall be restructured as the "Ministry of Women, Family and Social Policies" under our ruling. The Directorate General on the Status of Women shall be restructured and empowered as the executing unit.*

⁹⁷ <https://iyiparti.org.tr/storage/img/doc/iyi-parti-guncel-parti-program.pdf>

- *Legislative measures shall be augmented to prevent intervening in women's lifestyles and attire.*
- *Further regulatory guidance will be provided with regards to women's social security, education and training, acquisition of skills and profession, and implementing motherhood duties (p. 22)*

The Nationalist Movement Party (MHP)

In the **MHP By-Law**⁹⁸ the word "gender" is not mentioned at all; the word "women" is mentioned three times and "local" once. There is no statement about gender equality nor quotas in Article 96 that provides detailed information on the nomination procedures for local elections.

In **MHP's Party Program**⁹⁹ there is a sub-section titled **Women's and Children's Rights** under the section on **Safeguarding Basic Rights and Freedoms** which states that the Party denounces all forms of discrimination against women. Furthermore, in the sub-section titled **Employment-Based Growth and Promoting Employment** under the section on **Fighting Against Unemployment**, the adoption of an **incentive policy to enhance women's employment opportunities** is recommended. Reference is made to topics of education, employment, and violence against women in the sub-section titled **Family, Women, Children** under the section on **Social Goals and Policies**. There is no mentioning of women's equal political representation.

MHP's Party Programme

We denounce all forms of de facto and legislative discrimination as well as abuse against women. We deem it essential to safeguard children against all forms of violation of rights and abuse including incidences in their families (p.30).

An "employment-based" incentive policy shall be implemented to promote the employment of long-term unemployed individuals, youth, women and the disadvantaged groups. Support will be extended to young people who seek to start their own businesses and to graduates of vocational education/training institutions.

The Women

Women's educational attainment shall be enhanced; their societal status will be fortified via enabling them take more active roles in development, work life and decision-making mechanisms. By means of improving the employment potential of women, their falling into disadvantageous positions in the labour market will be prevented. By enabling non-working housewives gain vocational skills, their contribution to the family budget and the national economy will be ensured. The cultural, social, psychological and economical factors which lead to women's exposure to violence will be eradicated; civil society organizations' and media's responsive approach in this respect shall be ensured. All kinds of obsolete practices which tarnish women's respectability, restrain their fundamental rights and freedoms, force them to remain in the back seat of the society by allowing them to be subjected to abuses will be terminated (p.107).

⁹⁸ https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/mhp_parti_tuzugu_2009_opt.pdf

⁹⁹ https://www.mhp.org.tr/usr_img/_mhp2007/kitaplar/mhp_parti_programi_2009_opt.pdf

2. The Scarcity of Elected Women in Local Governments

The inequality against women concerning their representation in the local political sphere is primarily significant and devastating in municipal assembly and mayor elections in Türkiye. The extent of their representation is well below the level in the national parliament, political parties' executive organs and public administrations. In order to explore the underlying factors causing this, we need to compare women's participation in local politics both at the 'national vs. local' and 'global vs. country' axes.

■ According to data from UN Women¹⁰⁰, women's representation in deliberative bodies of local government is 36 per cent while their representation in national parliaments is 25 per cent worldwide.

■ Women's representation in local government is higher than in national parliaments worldwide. However it is just the contrary in Türkiye; indeed the women are almost non-existent in the local political arena.

■ In Türkiye, women's representation rates both at the national and local level are behind the global averages. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) report titled "Women in Parliament 2021"¹⁰¹, while the global average rate of women's representation was 26.1 per cent, it was 17 per cent in Türkiye during the same year. The difference is more striking at the local level.

■ According to the 2017 data from the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), women's representation at the level of mayor and council member in Europe stands at 32.1 per cent.¹⁰²

■ The rates in Türkiye are 10 per cent and 3 per cent at the level of municipal council member and mayor respectively.

■ Based on the results of the 2004 local elections, Türkiye ranks the 62th among 68 countries that have available statistical data on the proportion of women local council members, and the 54th among 57 countries that have available statistical data on the proportion of women mayors.

■ In the best-performing countries with respect to ensuring equality of women and men in local administrations, women's representation in local government is 47 per cent, 44 per cent and 39 per cent in Iceland, Sweden and Belgium respectively.

■ According to data from UN Women, Türkiye ranks the 118th among 133 countries worldwide with respect to women's representation at the local level.



¹⁰⁰ UN Women, 2021, Women's Representation in Local Government: A Global Analysis, prepared by Ionica Berevoescu and Julie Ballington, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/01/womens-representation-in-local-government>

¹⁰¹ <https://www.ipu.org/news/press-releases/2022-03/new-ipu-report-more-women-in-parliament-and-more-countries-with-gender-parity>

¹⁰² https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2019/635549/EPRS_ATA%282019%29635549_EN.pdf

Table 9: The Ratio and Number of Women Elected in Local Elections Held Between 1989–2019

	1989 Local Elections	1994 Local Elections	1999 Local Elections	2004 Local Elections	2009 Local Elections	2014 Local Elections	2019 Local Elections
Mayor	0.2% (2 women)	0.5% (9 women)	0.5% (14 women)	0.5% (18 women)	0.92% (27 women)	2.86% (41 women)	3% (41 women)
Municipal Councillor	0.7%	0.9%	1.6% (541 women)	2.3% (817 women)	4.4% (1,340 women)	10.72% (2,198 women)	10% (2,283 women)
Provincial Councillor	0.8%	0.9%	1.4% (44 women)	1.7% (57 women)	3.4% (110 women)	4.8% (60 women)	4% (48 women)

Source: Doç. Dr. Ahu Sumbas's Workshop presentation.

The first local elections were held in Türkiye in 1930. It is fairly hard to access data on the gender breakdown of administrators elected in 1930 and in subsequent years. Academic studies and surveys as well as data compiled by women's associations reveal that women's representation in local governments is very low since the first elections.

The following table indicates that only 175-80 women were elected Mayor since 1930.

Table 10: Ratio and Number of Women Mayors (1930-2022)

Election Period	Ratio (%)	Number of Women	Total Number of Municipalities
1930-32	0.1%	1	-
1950-55	0.1%	1	600 Municipalities
1955-60	0.2%	2	-
1963-68	0.2%	2	1,045 Municipalities
1968-73	0.4%	5	1,243 Municipalities
1973-77	0.2%	3	1,640 Municipalities
1977-80	0.3%	6	1,730 Municipalities
1984-89	0%	0	1,700 Municipalities
1989-94	0.1%	2	1,984 Municipalities
1994-99	0.5%	14	2,710 Municipalities
1999-2004	0.5%	16	3,215 Municipalities
2004-09	0.56%	18	3,225 Municipalities
2009-14	1%	27	2,948 Municipalities
2014- 19	2.86%	41	1,396 Municipalities
2019-	2.86%	41	1,396 Municipalities

Source: Doç. Dr. Ahu Sumbas's Workshop presentation.

Table 11: The Ratio and Number of Women Elected in 2019 Local Elections

Position	Men	Ratio (%)	Women	Ratio (%)	Total
Mayor	1,348	97%	41	3%	1,389
Metropolitan Mayor	27	90%	3	10%	30
Metropolitan District Mayor	494	95%	25	4.8%	519
Municipal Councillor	18,461	89%	2,284	11%	20,745
Provincial / City Mayor	50	98%	1	2%	51
District and Town Mayor	777	98.5%	12	21.5%	789
Provincial Councillor	1,223	96%	48	4%	1,271
Village Mukhtar	18,081	99%	115	1%	18,196
Neighborhood Mukhtar	31,049	98%	970	2%	32,019
Member of the Council of Elders of the Village	79,689	99%	1,007	1%	80,696
Member of the Council of Elders of the Neighborhood	134,362	97.5%	3,418	2.5%	137,780
Total	284,212	97%	7,883	3%	292,095

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT), Gender Statistics, 2021.

According to the results of the latest local elections held in 2019, the breakdown of women by the parties they represent reveals that the greatest number of women are elected on the HDP's ticket; the CHP and the AKP rank the second and the third respectively. Two independent candidates were elected mayor. As shown in the Table, the majority of women mayors are elected on the HDP's ticket in cities where KAMER operates.

The number of women candidates who ran for local elections was also very low. The number of women candidates who ran for Mayor in 2019 local elections was only 652 (7.89 per cent) out of 8,257. And only 10.8 per cent of candidates who ran for Metropolitan Mayor were women (34). Although there was a minor increase in the number of women mukhtars thanks to KA-DER's intensive campaign, the ratios were still below two per cent.¹⁰³

Following the appointment of trustees after 2016, the number of women elected mayor that was 41 in 2019 local elections fell below 16 at the end of the same year. Data on the decline in the number of local council members is not available. It is apparent that the appointment of trustees had an adverse impact on women's representation in cities where KAMER operates.

Table 12: The Ratio of Women Among Provincial Executives of Political Parties

Parties	AKP	CHP	HDP	MHP	İP
Provincial Head (Total)	81	81	81	81	81
Provincial Head (Women)	2	4	81	2	3
Ratio of Women (%)	2.46	4.93	100*	2.46	3.7

Note: Since HDP operates a co-presidential system of leadership, there is a chairwoman in every province.*

Source: Compiled from data on websites of political parties (Date of Access: 06.08.2021)

¹⁰³For data in the table below, see: Seren Selvin Korkmaz, *Kadınların seçilme hakkı sahiden var mı?* (Do women really have the right to stand for election?)

<https://medyascope.tv/2021/12/05/seren-selvin-korkmaz-yazdi-kadinlarin-secilme-hakki-sahiden-var-mi/>

Table 13: The Ratio of Elected Women Mayors (Provincial and District) by Political Parties

Parties	AKP	CHP	HDP	MHP	İP
Provincial Mayor (Total)	38	22	8	11	0
Provincial Mayor (Women)	1	1	3	0	0
Ratio of Women Provincial Mayors (%)	2.63	4.54	37.5	0	0
District Mayor (Total)	744	241	58	233	23
District Mayor (Women)	6	9	21	1	0
Ratio of Women District Mayors (%)	0.8	3.73	36.2	0.42	0

Source: The Supreme Election Council (YSK), "31 Mart 2019 Mahalli İdareler Genel Seçimi Seçim İstatistikleri Bülteni" (March 31, 2019 Local Administrations General Elections - Election Statistics Bulletin), pp. 25-32. Serkan Alan. "‘Ürperten’ sonuç: Bin 389 belediyeye 45 kadın başkan!" ('Alarming' result: 45 women mayors to 1.389 municipalities!). *Gazete Duvar*. (April 15, 2019). (Date of Access: 06.08.2021)

Table 14: The Breakdown of Women and Men Candidates in 2018 Elections by Political Parties

Parties	No. of Women Candidates	Ratio (%)	No. of Men Candidates	Ratio (%)	Total
AKP	26	2.02	1,256	97.98	1,282
CHP	50	5.66	832	94.34	882
HDP	50	21.36	184	78.64	234
MHP	23	2.81	794	97.19	817
İP	27	4.80	535	95.19	562

Note: The 'Republican Alliance' was established between AKP and MHP before the Presidential Elections were held on June 24, 2018. The parties remained in alliance as well during the local elections held on March 31, 2019 – collaborated in 51 cities including 30 metropolitan. In the meantime, CHP and İP acted in alliance as the constituents of the 'Nation Alliance'.

Source: KA-DER (Association for Support of Women Candidates), "Kadının Yokluğu Onaylandı" (Women's Non-Existence Is Confirmed), March 20, 2019. (Date of Access: 06.08.2021: <http://ka-der.org.tr/kadinin-yoklugu-onaylandi/>)

Table 15: Gender Breakdown of Municipal Council Members and Party District Heads in Provinces where KAMER has branches (prior to the appointment of trustees)

	Gender Equality Index		Gender Breakdown of Municipal Council Members		Gender Breakdown of Party District Heads	
	Overall Score	Overall Ranking	Women	Women/Men	Women	Women/Men
Erzurum (TRA11)	0.434	72	7.7%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Ağrı (TRA21)	0.449	57	10.6%	11.8%	6.3%	6.7%
Kars (TRA22)	0.464	46	7.9%	8.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Iğdır (TRA23)	0.508	13	8.9%	9.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Malatya (TRB11)	0.463	48	3.0%	3.0%	3.8%	4.0%
Elazığ (TRB12)	0.445	62	5.1%	5.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Bingöl (TRB13)	0.400	80	8.8%	9.6%	6.3%	6.7%
Tunceli (TRB14)	0.517	8	23.0%	29.9%	6.3%	6.7%
Van (TRB21)	0.470	40	26.5%	36.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Muş (TRB22)	0.395	81	4.6%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Bitlis (TRB23)	0.419	76	3.6%	3.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Hakkâri (TRB24)	0.468	41	16.7%	20.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Gaziantep (TRC11)	0.470	39	6.0%	6.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Adıyaman (TRC12)	0.442	66	3.8%	4.0%	5.6%	5.9%

Table 15: Gender Breakdown of Municipal Council Members and Party District Heads in Provinces where KAMER has branches (prior to the appointment of trustees)

	Gender Equality Index		Gender Breakdown of Municipal Council Members		Gender Breakdown of Party District Heads	
	Overall Score	Overall Ranking	Women	Women/Men	Women	Women/Men
Şanlıurfa (TRC21)	0.437	70	6.8%	7.4%	3.8%	4.0%
Diyarbakır (TRC22)	0.479	33	28.3%	39.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Mardin (TRC31)	0.445	61	15.8%	18.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Batman (TRC32)	0.417	77	21.5%	27.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Şırnak (TRC33)	0.403	78	19.3%	23.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Siirt (TRC34)	0.428	74	7.2%	7.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Türkiye Average	0.471	-	10.4%	12.0%	2.8%	3.1%

Source: TEPAV (Economic Policy Research Foundation of Türkiye), Gender Equality Index for 81 Provinces, 2014.

3. Does the Employment of Women Executives and “Gender Equality” Experts Create a Transformative Effect? ¹⁰⁴

It is crucial for women and men who are engaged in politics and public administration to articulate gender-specific issues and integrate the solution propositions into decision-making. We may envisage that women are more responsive and passionate than their male counterparts to integrate women’s demands into political processes, facilitate communication and encourage other women to participate in decision-making mechanisms.

Article 2 of the *European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life* signed by 34 Municipalities in Türkiye¹⁰⁵ denotes: “*The Signatory commits itself to promote and apply the principle of balanced representation to its own decision-making and consultative bodies, and in its appointments to external bodies.*”

In order to explore the impact of women executives – both elected and appointed – on the development of gender-sensitive local service delivery and governance approaches, we may analyze the evaluations by the *Gender Equality Index*.¹⁰⁶ The municipalities designated as “women friendly city” and where the women’s representation is strong at the executive level rank high up in the index list. For example, women’s representation is higher as deputy mayors and municipal council members as well as at women’s directorates and active women’s assemblies in İzmir, Eskişehir, Mersin and Adana than in other provinces and districts. Local women’s organizations in these provinces are effective and they maintain communication with institutions and institutional mechanisms such as the municipalities, city councils and the women’s assemblies.

A good example to the relation between the presence of women executives and top-level performance concerning gender equality is at the **İzmir-Karşıyaka Municipality**; the district ranks the second on the (HDI-District) index list “INGEV 2020 (Human Development Foundation 2020) District Level Gender Equality – Political Participation and Decision-Making”, and ranks the first on the Main Index list. Four of the five deputy mayors and 11 of the 37 municipal councillors are women; 16 of the 34 directorates are ruled by women.

It is told that the implementation of the *Local Equality Action Plan* initiated by the **Ankara-Çankaya Municipality** in 2018 progressed in spite of the pandemic, also by the support of the woman Deputy Mayor and the woman Director of Women and Family Services. In particular, the strategy of maintaining the support of the women’s movement and the LGBTQ organizations through interactions strengthens the struggle against the resistance rooted amongst the male executives and the staff in the municipality. Working with an external expert on “gender equality” while preparing the local equality action plan and the participation of all related women’s organizations and the CSOs in the monitoring and assessment process is an important factor in ensuring the municipality’s high-level of performance.

12 of the 47 members of the Çankaya Municipal Council are women; it is the municipal council in Ankara with the greatest proportion of women members. The district ranks the sixth on the (HDI-Districts) index list “INGEV 2020 (Human Development Foundation 2020) *District Level Gender Equality – Political Participation and Decision-Making*”, and ranks the fifth on the Main Index list. Three

¹⁰⁴ Evaluations based on the examples of municipalities were made by Doç. Dr. Ahu Sumbas within the framework of TÜBİTAK (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye) 1003 Project numbered 218K355 and titled “Sustainable Urban Policies: Cities & Districts in Türkiye in Terms of Quality of Life”

¹⁰⁵ https://www.tbb.gov.tr/Tr/icerik_cemr-avrupa-yerel-yasamda-kadin-erkek-esitligi-sarti_304

Although the number of signatory municipalities is stated as 34 on the TBB’s (The Union of Municipalities of Türkiye) official website, the decisions of some municipalities are still pending confirmation by the Ministry of Interior. For example, although the İstanbul Metropolitan Municipality had signed the Charter on February 2019 by its Municipal Council’s decision, its name is not on the list since the Ministry did not (yet) approve.

¹⁰⁶ INGEV (Human Development Foundation). 2020. “*Yerleşen İnsani Gelişime İndeksinin Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliği Alt İndeksi*” (Gender Equality Sub-Index of the Localized Human Development Index). https://ingev.org/raporlar/Yerellesen_Insani_Gelisme.pdf

of the five deputy mayors are women. Another best practice is that the Directorates of Building and Urban Planning, Building Control, Real Estate and Expropriation, and Strategy Development – that are considered to be men’s jobs by most of the municipalities – report to two deputy mayorships led by women.

Bursa-Nilüfer Municipality is a robust municipality that maintains interactions with the women’s organizations. Besides, Nilüfer is among the best performing districts with respect to women’s representation. It ranks the tenth on the (HDI-D) index list “INGEV 2020 (Human Development Foundation 2020) District Level Gender Equality – Political Participation and Decision-Making”, and ranks the fifth on the Main Index list. In the municipality, one of the six deputy mayors is a woman, 17 of the 27 departments are ruled by women, and seven of the 37 municipal councillors are women.

Samsun-Atakum Municipality is the only district municipality in Samsun that operates with an active Women’s Assembly, Equality Unit, and the Directorate of Women and Family Services. The district ranks the 92th on the (HDI-D) index list “INGEV 2020 (Human Development Foundation 2020) District Level Gender Equality – Political Participation and Decision-Making”, and ranks the 53rd on the Main Index list. There are three women in the municipal council.

Ankara-Yenimahalle Municipality had signed the *European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life*, applied to be designated as a Women Friendly City, and established the LEAP (Local Equality Action Plan) for 2021-2024. The gender-sensitive women personnel of the municipality constantly kept reminding/informing the executives about the required process to be followed. Good relations of the municipality with the women ‘gender equality experts’ and women’s organizations contributed positively to this end. Eight of the 45 members of the Municipal Council are women. The district ranks the 29th on the (HDI-D) index list “INGEV 2020 (Human Development Foundation 2020) District Level Gender Equality – Political Participation and Decision-Making”, and the 45th on the Main Index list.



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E. Gender-Responsive Policy Instruments I: Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB)

1. General Principles of and Approaches to GRB¹⁰⁷

Gender-Responsive Budgeting as a key instrument for gender mainstreaming provides the means to monitor the direct and indirect effect of public expenditures and revenues on women/men, girls/boys as well as to devise policies to eliminate gender inequalities. The GRB approach involves a 'gender based analysis of budgets and incorporating the gender perspective into all stages of the budgetary process, and transforming revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality'. In this context, the GRB is both the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process and also serves as a key instrument for gender mainstreaming.

Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is an ambitious implementation entailing a major change in perspective and practice, developed to transform existing processes and budgets with the aim to advance and support gender equality. It requires the inclusion of a wider group of stakeholders such as the city residents and civil society organizations in budgetary processes; prioritization of gender equality, and linking political commitments to resource allocations. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the primary responsibility of the GRB implementation rests with the central and/or local governments.

Australia was the first country to implement the GRB at the national government level. The GRB was introduced in the agendas of international organizations such as the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) that set women's empowerment as a strategic objective in the 2000s. The most significant regional progress in the legislative sphere was attained in the EU. 23 countries in the world take the lead in striving for implementing the GRB. Nonetheless, Gender Responsive Public Financial Management (GRPFM) and the inclusion of gender-specific

information in the budgeting process gets close attention in public financial management; gender-responsive fiscal policies are being implemented in many countries (although not within the framework of precise and clear-cut GRB initiatives), and more than 80 countries have adopted some form of the GRPFM approach although their activities vary.

The GRB may be applied in all budgetary systems, at all levels of central and/or local government; and at the sectoral, unit or program level. Nevertheless, local GRB implementations gain significance due to factors such as the regional and local governments' proximity to people's day-to-day lives suggesting that they can be more responsive to women's and men's needs when it comes to public policy and service delivery. At these levels, there is great opportunity to use participatory GRB approaches through the inclusion of local people's engagement. The GRB may be implemented by the private and the third sector as well. Recently, examples revealing raised gender awareness in the private and third sectors are becoming widespread in Türkiye and worldwide.

In Türkiye, the budgetary processes had been reformed by the *Public Financial Management and Control Law* No. 5018 that was adopted in 2003. This provided the favorable environment to initiate the GRB programs. In Türkiye, the GRB came to the agenda at the central government level in 2008; the strategy was set to commence preparatory work for the GRB implementation within the framework of the *National Action Plan for Gender Equality (2008-2013)* by the Directorate General on the Status of Women. The Minister of Finance had expressed that the budget would be drawn up with a focus on gender-responsiveness during the presentation he delivered in 2011 before the *Planning and Budget Commission* of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye. Türkiye's *10th Development Plan (2014-2018)* indicates that awareness would be raised on the GRB and exemplary practices would be implemented. However, no reference is made to it in the *11th Development Plan* covering the period between 2019 and 2023. The removal of the gender equality concept from the text while the *2020 Budget Justification* was being drafted indicates a reversal in approach,

¹⁰⁷ This section is drawn up with input from Assc. Prof. Ayşegül Yakar Önal's Workshop presentation.

and that the political will advocating for the GRB implementation no longer exists at the central government level.

Whereas at the local sphere, we witness that the civil society organizations and the municipalities initiated awareness-raising and training programs on the GRB from 2006 onwards. Major support for the design and the implementation of awareness-raising programs and activities both at the central and local levels are provided by UN's programs.

Lately, we see rising enthusiasm on the part of the CSOs in Türkiye for GRB initiatives at the local level. Within the framework of projects led by international organizations and/or the CSOs, the provinces that host GRB initiatives include Adıyaman, Antalya, Aydın, Bursa, Çanakkale, Edirne, Erzincan, Eskişehir, Gaziantep, İzmir, Kahramanmaraş, Kars, Kastamonu, Kayseri, Kocaeli, Malatya, Mardin, Nevşehir, Ordu, Samsun, Şanlıurfa and Trabzon. Furthermore, some specific practices are promising – such as of the İstanbul-Beylikdüzü and the Eskişehir-Odunpazarı district municipalities that began to incorporate the GRB into their administrative and budgetary processes – outside the scope of a national or international program.

The GRB implementation seeking to transform existing processes and budgets calls for the synchronized fulfillment of some requirements of particular importance; key enabling factors for the GRB include political will and leadership, high-level commitment of public administrative institutions, institutionalizing the gender equality policy and implementing organizational change, gender-disaggregated data as well as the contributions and engagement of civil society in establishing the GRB.

The **GRB implementation process** starts with the analysis of the budget and policies through a **gender equality lense**. Since the ultimate goal of the GRB is to advance gender equality, it is essential to link it to the **overall gender equality goals**.

The budget and the policies are transformed by making the required changes based on the gender

analysis performed with a focus on the responses to the questions: "What are the effects of the budget and policies on gender equality?" and "Do the policies and the budget decrease, increase or leave the gender inequalities unchanged?"

The GRB implementation is not a one-time process, therefore it is essential to integrate the gender perspective into the budgeting cycle, monitor and assess the results through that perspective. And this can be achieved only through a transparent and participatory budgeting process. The required policy changes are made based on the monitoring and assessment results, performed through a gender perspective integrated participatory approach; and the budgets are adjusted accordingly.

International experience shows that there are **many different approaches** (that are sometimes combined) to implementing the GRB. The most important approaches used in different gender budgeting initiatives are:

■ *Mainstreaming gender perspectives into the whole process of public financial management (PFM):* The Gender Responsive Public Financial Management (GRPFM) is a comprehensive approach that stands out lately, integrating the gender equality perspective into differing processes ranging from strategic planning to budget preparation and implementation as well as to auditing and assessment. The Austrian approach is identified as a best practice in this respect.

■ *Integrating the gender perspective into performance-based and programme-based budgeting:* Performance-based budgeting that is the key pillar of strategic planning is similar to the GRB in terms of 'focusing on performance and results', and facilitates the transition to the GRB. The basic approach here is to incorporate the gender perspective and priorities into the strategic plan while setting the goals, targets, activities and indicators; and to link strategic planning to budget allocations.

■ *Categorising budget programmes and gender analysis requirements:* This approach aims to identify budget programmes of particular relevance for

gender equality, and to link them with the specific requirements of the GRB implementation.

■ *Linking the GRB and participatory budgeting:* It is worth noting that participatory budgeting is not automatically 'gender just', and the GRB is not automatically participatory. Special effort is therefore needed to integrate gender (women & LGBT+ individuals) perspectives into the entire participatory process. Examples of the combination of participatory budgeting and the GRB can be found in several German cities, for example in Berlin, Munich and Freiburg.

■ *Tracking financial allocations to promote women's rights and gender equality:* The approach of tracking financial allocations can take many different forms and is aimed at highlighting the amount and share of resources allocated for the promotion of women's rights and gender equality. This information, produced in the context of the regular annual budgeting, can facilitate the monitoring of budget allocations over time.

■ *Applying standard GRB tools:* Gender-responsive policy and budget appraisal, gender-disaggregated public expenditure and revenue incidence analysis, gender-responsive beneficiary needs assessments, gender-disaggregated analysis of the impact of budgets on time-use, as well as gender-sensitive medium-term economic policy framework and gender-responsive budget statements are among the standard GRB tools developed early on in international gender budgeting works. Many, but not all gender budgeting initiatives make use of these tools in one form or another.

■ *Combining gender budgeting with impact assessments:* One of the analytical tools used in several GRB initiatives is an ex ante gender impact assessment of specific budget allocations (compared to ex post gender budget analysis). This is seen as complementary to the performance-oriented GRB approach.

■ *Implementing the wellbeing-based GRB:* The wellbeing-based GRB implementation is a gendered approach since wellbeing processes for women / men, girls / boys differ. The main focus is on directing attention towards the impact of policies on women's and men's, girls' and boys' wellbeing. In this respect, the approach focuses on the capabilities of individuals and specifically strives to identify the extent to which the activities / services of local governments improve the capabilities of women / men, girls / boys. One of the main tools is the use of a wellbeing matrix, which links a list of capabilities with different institutions' (e.g. departments and units) targets.

■ We know that the *caring economy* laid out a roadmap to build a new economy centered around the welfare of individuals, communities and the world at large. This is the most recent and comprehensive approach that must be encompassed in GRB-related work and efforts. As pointed out in the report titled *Creating A Caring Economy: A Call To Action*¹⁰⁸, the caring economy is of utmost importance as an economy that values care, both paid and unpaid, as the activity that nurtures us all; an economy which ensures that no-one faces discrimination, violence, or poverty, and in which no-one is left behind, or pushed behind. This new economy is described as a caring, mindful, affectionate, compassionate economy.

Whether these disparate approaches are implemented individually or together, it has to be kept in mind that the GRB entails a long-term strategy and its ultimate goal is to embed gender equality into the planning and budgeting processes at the central and/or local government levels. In this context, although the essentiality of establishing legislative and institutional regulatory frameworks and mechanisms for gender equality is apparent, the implementation should not be grounded only on those frameworks and mechanisms; the civil society must continue to support, track and oversee them. To this end, developing comprehensive and formalized **qualitative and quantitative monitoring**

¹⁰⁸ <https://wbg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/WBG-Report-v10.pdf>

and assessment systems, and investing in **generating gender-disaggregated data and information** including indicators is also of crucial importance. Furthermore, in order to ensure the free circulation of generated information and data; institutionalizing the coordination by establishing a **Coordination Unit** ideally under the **Ministry of Treasury and Finance** is a noteworthy advice to facilitate the implementation and enhance the effectiveness of the GRB.

International and local experiences indicate that despite the existence of legislative and institutional regulatory frameworks and mechanisms, the implementation remains inadequate if they are not internalized. Therefore, constant struggle is needed to ensure the adoption, embracement and the internalization of the GRB approach more broadly; and the involvement of women in this process is vital. Starting from the local level, women's representation and participation, and their influence on decision-making and resource allocation are determining factors in their lives. However, one of the main factors that affects women's participation is unpaid household work; or in other words, 'caring labour'. This is exactly why investing in or enhancing investments in the caring economy by central and/or local governments is of utmost importance. Only so, time-poor women exhausted of caring work may capture the opportunity to participate or enhance their participation. Caring work-oriented services to be delivered by municipalities as institutions within the closest proximity to people's day-to-day lives, circumstances and experiences, will contribute to advancing gender equality by enhancing women's representation and engagement in municipalities and their influence on decision-making and resource allocation.

2. Why Is Budgeting a Useful Tool for Local Governments? / How Can It Be Made Useful?¹⁰⁹

Public policies and the underlying planning and budgetary processes that establish the bases for implementation are not gender-neutral. When viewed from the perspective of specific factors such as the societal / socio-economic status, engagement in political and cultural life, participation in economic life / unpaid labor; public policies that are generally

established by a *gender-blind* approach reinforce and exacerbate existing inequalities among women and men, girls and boys based on gender roles and stereotypes. By integrating the gender dimension into planning and budgeting; the GRB contributes to the development and implementation of interventions to advance gender equality with a focus on disparities and inequalities.

Ideally, effective and sustainable gender-responsive budgeting is proposed to be implemented as a mainstreaming policy at all levels of public administration together with the involvement of non-governmental / civil society actors. Nonetheless, in the context of policy implementation and service delivery enabling participatory approaches, and taking the local circumstances into consideration, it is also of particular importance for local governments to implement the GRB with an array of tools.

At the macro level, it is possible to categorize the **benefits provided by the GRB to local governments** under the following six basic headings:

- *The GRB contributes to high quality and democratic governance; enables the engagement of diverse segments of the society in the budgeting and planning processes through a participatory approach.*
- *It ensures accountability and transparency; enables tracking the resources allocated to fulfill commitments for gender equality and related resource expenditures.*
- *It serves to ensure gender equality and women's empowerment; provides the means for the development and delivery of more egalitarian and fair policy and services by raising awareness through identifying the impact of public policies on gender equality.*
- *It develops gender-sensitive participatory approaches; ensures the representation of women and their viewpoints in the budgeting and planning processes (such as in committees, city councils, and strategic planning processes).*
- *It improves economical efficiency; enables the adoption of a budgeting approach taking into ac-*

¹⁰⁹This section is drawn up with input from Doç. Dr. Burcu Yakut Çakar's Workshop presentation.

count the caring economy/unpaid work categories as well, thanks to enhanced social welfare resulting from advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

■ *It contributes to alleviating poverty and enhancing welfare; provides the means for the implementation of policies that seek to alleviate women's poverty and enhance social welfare.*

When we view the work carried out to ensure and enable the adoption and the implementation of the GRB at the local governance level, we see that varying **stakeholders and mechanisms** are expected to undertake GRB-related work through establishing collaborations and partnerships based on their expertise and capabilities. In this context, defining the roles and responsibilities in a holistic frame is crucial; however, in some cases the actors may take initiatives within their own authority and responsibility to initiate the GRB implementation.

■ **Mayor-** establishes the political commitment that forms the basis of the GRB approach, and provides leadership and guidance in implementation to ensure the prioritization of the gender equality approach in the related planning and budgetary processes.

■ **Municipal government / administrative units-** are the main organs providing the expertise required for the GRB implementation. Units responsible for financial services assume the key role in integrating the gender equality dimension into the planning and budgeting processes in a formalized way. Likewise, sectoral units integrate the gender perspective into their activities within their fields of expertise. At the horizontal level, the responsibility(ies) of the unit(s) that provide(s) and store(s) gender-disaggregated data sets comprising detailed data compiled in a formalized way – a prerequisite of effective gender-responsive budgeting – gain(s) importance.

■ **Municipal council / council members:** The municipal council as the highest decision-making body on all matters including the approval of the budget rests on a tripod with respect to the GRB implementation. During the deliberations at the General Assembly/ committee meetings, the members of the council debate resource allocations for services and policy-making addressing gender equality in general and women's needs and issues at the local level in particular; and provide advice when required.

■ **Civil society organizations-** may play different roles in GRB-related work including (a) conveying information about the issues and needs of local women and girls to the decision-makers in the municipality, (b) undertaking advocacy and lobbying activities with regards to the delivery of gender-responsive policies and services, (c) performing independent monitoring and assessment and (d) providing expertise, training and support to the council members or the municipal staff on gender-responsive budgeting.

Institutionalizing Gender-Responsive Budgeting refers to the sustainable incorporation of the GRB into the planning and budgetary processes. In this respect, the GRB may be embedded into all stages of the existing process on planning and budgeting for local policy-making and service delivery. The **budget cycle** consists of four consecutive stages:

■ **Budget preparation and submission:** Includes all related activities starting from the preparation of the budget in alignment with the performance programmes and strategic plans to drawing up the draft budget, and submitting it to the relevant committee(s) and finally to the Municipal Council for deliberation and approval.

■ **Budget authorization:** The draft budget is debated by the relevant committee(s) and the Municipal Council, and the Council's approval is obtained during this stage.

■ **Budget execution:** Includes all activities related to the implementation of policies and programmes as projected in the budget.

■ **Budget audit and assessment:** Financial performance assessment and audit are conducted, performance results of policies and programmes are evaluated and submitted to the Municipal Council at this stage.

Within the context of this structural framework of the budget cycle, the GRB approach may be embedded, ideally into one or more stages to ensure its sustainability. In this context, activities that may provide the means for institutionalizing the GRB approach at each stage may be summarized as follows:

Budgeting and strategic planning: The units may be requested to prepare gender-responsive budgets through the budget call signed by the Mayor, initiating the budgeting process. The units then may set their priorities and targets in alignment with their gender equality goals, and incorporate them into their plans; they may enclose additional information on the budget's gender effect; and may prepare gender-responsive budget statements annexed to the budget.

Budget authorization: Gender-responsive budget statement(s) – if presented during the deliberation meetings of the Municipal Council committee(s) and at the General Assembly – may be approved at this stage. Thematic sessions might be held on the effects of the budget on gender equality. Furthermore, civil society organizations may communicate with the council members on gender equality priorities, and provide expertise at the local level if needed.

*The planning and budgeting processes of local administrations are set up on the basis of **performance-based budgeting** in Article 9 of the The Public Financial Management and Control Law Nr. 5018. In this context, the GRB approach envisages making the three components of performance-based budgeting gender-responsive. And this calls for,*

- *Setting gender-responsive goals, strategies and activities in the strategic plans,*
- *Defining gender-responsive performance indicators in performance programmes,*
- *Stating the effects of activity results with respect to gender equality and providing performance information in activity (annual) reports.*

For example, for the goal/target of “enhancing women’s participation in the labour force”, performance criteria such as: “the number of women who received a certificate by completing vocational education/training within the budget period (one year)” and “the number of women recruited within six months after the completion of vocational education/training” may be defined. As another example, for the goal/target of “adopting a gender-responsive approach in urban planning”, “the number of marketplaces with baby care facilities” may be defined as a performance criteria.

In the İzmir-Urla Municipality, the GRB statement issued by the Mayor in 2015 was annexed to the budget and approved by the Municipal Council on October 21, 2015. It was depicted in the statement that the GRB is an approach sought to be integrated into institutional programs and activities in particular. Furthermore, the formation of an Equality Unit within the organization of the municipality and the GRB Sub-Committee under the Planning and Budget Committee of the Municipal Council was approved in 2016.

**Detailed text is given in Box 15, Yakar-Önal (2021: 59-60).*

Budget execution: Municipal units that are at the frontlines in budget execution implement policy and services with a gender-responsive approach, collect policy and service-related gender-disaggregated data; track and monitor the gender-responsive performance targets and indicators identified during the planning stage; analyze and report the results/outcomes for policy formulation and service delivery. Furthermore, they compile data by incorporating the beneficiaries' experiences to improve the efficacy of service delivery.

In the Tekirdağ Metropolitan Municipality, "initiating the GRB programme" was included in the 2018 Performance Programme Preparation Guide annexed to the budget call. Information about the GRB was provided in the guide, and the units were asked to list and prepare budgets for policy formulation and service delivery within their fields of activity with a gender-responsive approach.

The İstanbul-Kadıköy Municipality established its institutional commitment concerning all units preparing budget requests in the light of the principles stated in the Gender-Responsive Budgeting Guide that was drawn up in 2018 while the strategic plan was being prepared.

For related news see:
<https://www.gazetekadikoy.com.tr/gundem/toplumsal-cinsiyete-duyarli-bte>

Since 2015, the İstanbul-Beylikdüzü Municipality, in accordance with its GRB approach compiles gender-disaggregated data of primarily its program and service beneficiaries, and the "Equality of Service Delivery Report" concerning gender equality is drawn up through detailed analysis of compiled data on the basis of age and location besides the gender component, and mapping the data with the budget.

For further information on the units' activities and the reporting process:

<https://www.skbgov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Gizem-Aykanat.pdf>

Budget audit and assessment: Units that perform audit and assessment, and draw up the activity report present inputs to the report in accordance with the gender-responsive assessment criterion. As such, the content is generated to assess the gender equality performance. Besides, the Municipal Council members present information on the progress achieved with regard to gender equality during the deliberations on the annual activity report.

Since 2017, the Eskişehir-Odunpazarı Municipality draws up the Budget Execution Equality Report within the scope of the GRB and presents the Report annexed to the activity report (Sönmez Seber, 2018: 85-86). Concerning this report that is reviewed and revised annually in the light of accumulated knowledge and experience, a directive establishing the framework of the scope, content, procedures and principles was put into effect as of 2021.

**For access to the directive:*
<https://odunpazari.bel.tr/upload/files/Toplumsal%20Cinsiyete%20Duyarl%C4%B1%20B%3%-bct%3%a7eleme%20Uslu%20ve%20Esaslar%-c4%B1%20Hakk%C4%B1nda%20Y%3%b6nerge.pdf>

In spite of the existence of opportunities and exemplary experiences mentioned above enabling the GRB implementation at the local level, the **decision-makers in local governments may have reservations and objections to the implementation**, and they may need to be convinced in this respect. In this context, we may scrutinize a few possible objections and criticisms that may be encountered.

“Our budget is not very large, we cannot allocate resources for additional policy and programs.” – The GRB does not require additional resource allocation, it aims to ensure more effective spending of existing resources to achieve gender equality. Besides, in terms of budget cuts, it helps to reallocate resources by taking into consideration the segments of the society bearing the burden of budget cuts.

“We already have many projects and activities addressing women.” – As a general rule; projects, programmes and activities addressing women must be increased, enhanced and diversified. On the other hand, the GRB approach helps setting / mainstreaming gender equality as a core political objective since it enables the prioritization of activities, projects and programs for women in general.

“We have many women employees in the municipality.” – Promoting women’s employment in public services is among the features of the GRB. On this ground, women’s representation at high levels of leadership and decision-making positions is important. The GRB is an appropriate tool to ensure equal representation of women and men at every sphere, area and level as well as to eliminate (existing) gender pay gaps.

“Not all women are disadvantaged, we are all equal!” – Gender inequalities and differences exist in social life and among social structures, and they are very visible. The effects of policies differ due to existing gender inequalities in many areas such as employment, healthcare, education, safety, division of household labor. In this respect, the gender-responsive budgeting aims to reduce gender inequality and transform it through a holistic perspective.

“We are not only concerned with the gender issue but with other disadvantaged groups as well.” – According to the GRB approach, neither women nor men constitute homogeneous groups. Assessments are made by taking other factors that affect them such as the socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and age into consideration as well. In this respect, the GRB approach ensures better and more effective implementation of programmes and policies by enabling overlapping inequalities to be also observed.

“We don’t keep gender-disaggregated data.” – The unavailability of data does not mean that they cannot be compiled. Indeed, gender-based data and information may be collected and compiled from different sources during the preliminary phase, and the inequalities and differences may be indicated. The GRB approach may encourage local administrations to compile quality data by showing them how they can be useful.

“Our classification scheme is not suitable.” – The GRB approach does not require a specific classification scheme nor creating a new or parallel budgeting system. Rather, it involves integrating additional tools into the existing budget system and, as mentioned above, it can easily be integrated with the performance-based budgeting approach.

“We have more important work to do.” – Since the institutional priorities are ranked by political authorities, therefore it is crucial to inform them about the impact of the GRB approach both on achieving gender equality and at the macro level. Furthermore, it must be kept in mind that the signatory municipalities to international treaties such as the European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life have committed to incorporate the GRB approach - the gender perspective - into all of their activities.

Since the GRB implementation is a long-term process, the need to adopt it as a strategic tool must be highlighted. Besides, it would not be realistic to adopt a universal “one size fits all” approach applicable for all local governments. Indeed; the social, institutional, cultural, economic and political differences at the local level define both the construct and the dynamics of the experiences related to the GRB in a unique way.

3. Viewing the Municipal Budget in the Light of Sustainable Development Goals¹¹⁰

The United Nations (UN), through its *Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*¹¹¹ agenda set up a roadmap covering a variety of areas to improve the quality of life particularly in developing countries and regions. The UN promoted the SDGs as global goals of sustainable development for the (2015-2030) period.

¹¹⁰ This section is drawn up with input from Prof. Dr. Gülay Günlük-Şenesen’s Workshop presentation

¹¹¹ <http://www.surdurulebilirkalkinma.gov.tr/>

The roadmap was approved by the governments of the UN Member States; the SDGs are not legally binding but the UN expects governments to take ownership of the process and enforce national regulations to achieve the goals. The different feature of the SDGs from the preceding *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs)¹¹² is that performance indicators for sub-targets are defined here. The performance assessment of policy implementation shall be based on relevant data that need to be compiled.

The SDGs envisage eliminating inequalities in opportunity and broaden people's array of capabilities in all areas. National public policy-making ensuring such transformation establish the framework while improving the quality of life is to be achieved through local policy implementations and practices.

As illustrated in Table 16, the indicator 5.c.1 of SDG 5 envisages the existence of systems to track and **make public allocations** for gender equality and women's empowerment. Although the Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is not mentioned here, it is underscored in UN's documents that the GRB has a focal function in achieving the SDG 5. As is known, the GRB has served as a key tool in many countries to track the impact of public policies in a variety of ways, in particular at the local level, on gender equality and in eliminating inequalities.

As emphasized frequently in the SDG documents, gender equality is not limited with the SDG 5 and it intersects with all the SDGs. Social inclusion is among the basic principles of the SDGs. SDG 11 indicates the requirements to improve the quality of urban life through this aspect (Table 16). And the *"New Urban Agenda"* elaborates the commitments to improve urban life with respect to transport, energy, safety, public services and the like; and outlines the localization of the SDG by embodying its components. No doubt, the elaborated commitments are the pillars for social inclusion. The *"New Urban Agenda"* also highlights the need to design and implement gender-responsive policies and budgeting. Paragraph 114 of the *New Urban Agenda* provides particular guidance to address the over-lapping and intersecting components of the SDG 5 and SDG 11:

"We will promote access for all to safe, age- and gender-responsive, affordable, accessible and sustainable urban mobility and land and sea transport systems, enabling meaningful participation in social and economic activities in cities and human settlements, by integrating transport and mobility plans into overall urban and territorial plans and promoting a wide range of transport and mobility options stated below."

In urban life, the inclusion of vulnerable groups in particular; in other words, elimination of exclusion requires the adoption of holistic and multifaceted approaches. Here, we will address two capabilities - **mobility** and **safety** - as the basic prerequisites of equal presence in the public space. These capabilities are the primary determinants of the inequality in women's participation in urban life, in other words, of their exclusion.

In addition to the danger of being subjected to violence in public space, the inadequacy of transport and infrastructural facilities such as the sidewalks and the public transportation poses a direct threat to women's lives and safety. Women's basic means of transportation/mobility in the city, particularly in developing countries, are walking and public transport. Taking women's caring burden into consideration, the sidewalks and buses must be convenient for women with young children, wheelchairs, baby carriages and strollers; passenger and pedestrian safety must be ensured. The responsibility in this respect rests with local governments. In conclusion, national SDG commitments may be delivered through mechanisms focused on gender equality at the local level. And these mechanisms require resource allocation planning, more specifically the public budgets to be drawn up with an eye on the quality-of-life. The **Well-Being Gender-Responsive Budgeting** (WGRB) framework - developed in the light of accumulated knowledge and experiences from the GRB implementation - enables mapping gender equality policies with capabilities (the elements of the quality-of-life) and resource allocation.

¹¹²<https://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>

Table 16: In terms of Budget, Mobility, Safety and Social Inclusion Sustainable Development Goals, Targets and Indicators

Goal	Target	Indicator
<p>5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</p>	<p>5.c Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels</p>	<p>5.c.1 Proportion of countries with systems to track and make public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment</p>
<p>11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable</p>	<p>11.2 By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons</p>	<p>11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities</p>
	<p>11.7 By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities</p>	<p>11.7.1 Average share of the built-up area of cities that is open space for public use for all, by sex, age and persons with disabilities</p>
		<p>11.7.2 Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months</p>

Sources: SBOPRT (n.d.), SBOPRT (2019), United Nations (n.d.)
SBOPRT: The Strategy and Budget Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye

4. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB)¹¹³

When the SDG performances of OECD countries are compared, Türkiye lags far behind in achieving its 2030 goals including the SDG 5 and the SDG 11.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, in the comprehensive official report – the Voluntary National Review – disclosing the assessments of authorities on the SDG performances, a holistic roadmap towards the localization of the SDGs is not presented. Issues of social inclusion, mobility and the GRB are reviewed with a limited focus. Some small-scale projects of selected municipalities are presented as exemplary practices. Women’s safety is addressed with respect to the violence against women.¹¹⁵

The following points pointed out in strategy documents with regard to the **SDG 5** and **SDG 11** are noted:

On **SDG 5**: It is stated that *“The gender-responsive budgeting approach as an item of Target 5.c is addressed in the 10th National Development Plan, the National Employment Strategy and Action Plan (2014-2016) and the GNAT (Grand National Assembly of Türkiye) Committee of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men’s Gender-Responsive Budgeting Report.”*¹¹⁶

For **Target 5.c**, the responsible institution is stated as the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services whereas the relevant institution is indicated as the Ministry of Justice. However, the Ministry of Finance is not stated as a relevant institution against expectations. Although current situation analysis is made by the indicators for other targets, there is no review of the Target 5.c’s indicator. Meanwhile, it is expressed that *“... almost all of the SDGs must be addressed through the gender equality perspective, and holistic approaches such as the gender-responsive budgeting should be underscored.”*¹¹⁷

On **SDG 11**, for **Target 11.2** - Reference is made to KENTGES¹¹⁸ (2010-2023). The inadequacy of public transportation services and the need for improve-

ment are predominantly reviewed with respect to the adverse impact on the environment. The municipalities are designated as responsible institutions. Besides, it is told that *“... the goal is to ensure the reliability and high level of accessibility of urban transportation systems that provide quality, effective and affordable services facilitating usage by the low-income individuals, people with disabilities and seniors.”* No mentioning is made to women in particular in the performance overview for Target 11.2; in the performance overview for Target 11.7, reference is made to Target 11.2 that mentions women among the vulnerable groups. It is also expressed that there is no legislation for vulnerable groups other than the disabled. The responsible institutions for Target 11.2 and Target 11.7 are stated as the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure, and the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services respectively. The municipalities are listed among the relevant institutions. As an exemplary practice (indicator for Target 11.2 and Target 11.7) only the Esenler Municipality’s activities are mentioned.

National policy documents indicate the dominance of the central government in the SDG 5 implementation, however the duties and responsibilities of the Ministry of Finance are not defined (although, in our opinion, the Ministry of Finance should be at the frontline in integrating the GRB). In conclusion, gender mainstreaming is not embedded into all of the public policies and budgets and remains limited to the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services’ scope. For SDG 11, the municipalities are designated as relevant government units.

This background study leads us to trace whether or not the SDG 5 and the SDG 11 are integrated with the policy-making and budget planning processes of the municipalities; and if so, to explore the related intersecting resource allocations, in particular for the capabilities of mobility and safety – the components of social inclusion. Information on three provincial municipalities is given below in this respect.

¹¹³This section is drawn up by input from Prof. Dr. Gülay Günlük-Şenesen’s Workshop presentation.

¹¹⁴ OECD, 2019, pp. 122–123.

¹¹⁵Turkey’s Sustainable Development Goals. 2019, p.19, p.70

¹¹⁶SBOPRT, 2019, p. 7

¹¹⁷SBOPRT, 2019, p. 79

¹¹⁸KENTGES: Integrated Urban Development Strategy and Action Plan
<http://www.sp.gov.tr/upload/xSPTemelBelge/files/bk0sC+KENTGES.pdf>

In 2011, the Ministry of Development ranked 81 provinces based on their socio-economic development levels by evaluating a variety of metrics. One would expect the provinces that rank at the bottom, in other words, that are at low levels of development, to prioritize the implementation of SDG-related policies. Meanwhile, since detailed and periodic strategic plans, performance programs and consequently budget data of some provinces that were at the lowest ranks were not available, we reviewed the findings for Van (ranking the 75th) and Şanlıurfa (ranking the 73rd); and compared them with the findings for a developed province -Eskişehir (ranking the seventh). Certainly, it is essential to assess activity reports instead of performance programs since they would indicate the actual level of implementing the commitments, unfortunately this was not possible.

Table 17 indicates the data (compiled from the Turkish Statistical Institute's (TURKSTAT) data source) on the quality-of-life in the provinces of Van, Şanlıurfa, Eskişehir and Muş. Available data and findings for Muş that ranks the 81st - the lowest - in terms of socio-economic development are given in the right-most column to illustrate the relative positions of the provinces (We were not able to review the budget for Muş in detail due to unavailability of relevant data and documents). It is not surprising for Van and Şanlıurfa to rank at the bottom in terms of the quality-of-life. Van has been exposed to internal migration from poor rural areas due to clashes and conflict since many years, and also suffered from the 2011 earthquake. Şanlıurfa is exposed to mass migration from Syria as from 2011. The infant and child mortality rates as well as the illiteracy rates are above both the Türkiye average and the rates in Eskişehir.

Since the availability of gender-disaggregated data for provinces is very limited, the SDG 5 indicators illustrated in Table 17 are also limited in scope; however, we may arrive at some conclusions regarding the women's exclusion. It is apparent that the lower enrolment rates of girls in Van and Şanlıurfa will adversely affect the quality of lives of the present and future generations.

As Table 17 illustrates, the issue of safety in public spaces (measured by the proportion of people who feel safe when walking alone at night) in all provinces is a serious concern. It is not hard to infer that this poses a greater problem for women. The low level of satisfaction in those provinces from public transport services – the basic means of mobility – may be indicating the difficulties in and the preclusion from participating in urban life in general.

Although significant disparities do not exist among the poverty rates by provinces based on TURKSTAT's data, the proportion of households that expressed that they cannot afford their basic needs (people's perception of their poverty) is fairly higher in Van and Şanlıurfa than in Eskişehir.

As a final note, most of the information and data in TURKSTAT's *"Sustainable Development Indicators, 2010–2019"* data set released in 2021 are either incomplete or have not been updated.

We will analyze the local policy and resource allocation priority mechanisms in selected provinces in the light of the SDGs. Since the performance program of the current year is drawn up before the end of the preceding year, we may not expect to see explicit mentioning of / reference to the SDG(s) in the 2016 documents. However, we expect the programs to be drawn up in accordance with the SDG obligations particularly in under-developed provinces from 2017 onwards. To this end, we will perform our review in two steps. First, we will look at the mentionings of /references to the SDG(s) as well as to the capabilities of mobility and safety in the documents in selected provinces between 2016–2020. And secondly, we will review the breakdown of resource allocations by those capabilities.

Table 17: Socio-economic Indicators for Selected Provinces

Year	Indicator	Van	Şanlıurfa	Eskişehir	Muş
2011	Socio-Economic Development Index (SEDI-2011) Ranking	75	73	7	81
2018	Population (1,000 people)	1,124	2,036	871	408
2015	Quality-of-Life Index Ranking	71	73	15	81
2015	Safety Index Ranking (Quality-of-Life Index)	60	31	57	53
2015	Social Life (Quality-of-Life Index)	59	71	8	78
2015	The proportion of households expressing that they cannot afford their basic needs (Quality-of-Life Index)	65%	69%	44%	69%
2018	Poverty Rate (below 60% of the median income) (Türkiye: 21%)	18%	18%	17%	18%
2020	Income per Capita, TL (Türkiye: 60.525)	22,104	20,421	65,188	28,678
2018	Gini coefficient (household equivalent income inequality) Türkiye: (40.8)	0.34	0.38	0.34	0.34
2018	The number of cars per 1,000 people (Türkiye: 151)	25	47	191	22
2015	The proportion of people who feel safe when walking alone at night (Quality-of- Life Index)	59%	69%	61%	55%
2015	The level of satisfaction from municipal public transport services (Quality-of-Life Index)	55%	65%	66%	36%
2020	Illiteracy Ratio (Türkiye: 3%)	5%	8%	2%	6%
2020	Secondary education (lycee) schooling rate, women (Türkiye: 88%)	75%	62%	96%	59%
2017	Life expectancy at birth (years) (Türkiye: 78)	77	78	77	78
2019	Infant mortality rate at birth (‰) (Türkiye: 9.1)	10.8	15.3	7.1	12.2
2019	Under-five mortality rate (‰) (Türkiye: 11.2)	13.4	19.6	8.7	14.9

Note: Higher ranking indicates worse conditions.

The socio-economic development index (SEDI) is a composite index of a large number of variables classified as demographic, employment, education, health, competitive and innovative capacity, finance, accessibility and quality-of-life indicators.

The quality-of-life index is a composite index based on a variety of metrics including housing conditions, income and wealth, employment, social ties, education, environment, civic engagement, health, well-being, safety, and access to infrastructural services.

Source: The Turkish Statistical Institute: <http://tuik.gov.tr>;

SEDI-2011: The Ministry of Development (2013)

1. Step: Scanning and reviewing policy documents, 2016-2020

Our review of the policy documents of Van, Şanlıurfa and Eskişehir municipalities is summarized in Table 18. Contrary to our expectations, while the SDGs are on Eskişehir's - a developed province - policy agenda, there is no mentioning of/reference to them in the documents of under-developed provinces. Likewise, gender equality that is among the basic SDG concepts is referred to in Eskişehir's policy documents. Although the municipal activities for poverty alleviation and improving mobility are similar, "placing emphasis on the quality of urban life and pedestrians' needs" is also highlighted in Eskişehir's documents. Activities to ensure / improve safety are the same in all provinces (disaster management and fire safety); however, the issue of "violence against women" is not on the municipal agenda in Eskişehir whereas it remains on the agendas in the other two provinces irregularly (even in a contradictory way). For example, in Van, reference is made to this issue in the beginning, then there is no mentioning during the subsequent two years although the construction of a women's shelter commenced. In 2020, reference is made to the issue, the construction was completed and the name of the district is made known. Van municipality's most recent documents serve as exemplary to all provinces with respect to gender equality; international treaties including the Istanbul Convention are pointed out. What's really surprising is that although Şanlıurfa was a project city within the scope of the Women Friendly Cities UNJP between 2006 and 2010, no reference is made to this project nor to the issue of violence against women in documents from 2018 onwards. Eskişehir took part in the UN Gender-Responsive Budgeting Project (2012-2015), and reference is made to gender equality in all of the related municipal documents.



Table 18: Reference to Policies in Municipal Plans and Programmes 2016–2019 and 2020

Policy	Van	Şanlıurfa	Eskişehir
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	-	-	SDG 11 SDG 1, 3, 5, 10, 11 (2020)
Social Inclusion	-	-	Mentioned
Poverty	Cash and in-kind benefits Health	Cash and in-kind benefits Health	Cash and in-kind benefits Health
Safety	Disaster Management Fire Safety Violence against Women (2016/17); - (2018/19) Mentioned (2020) Building a women’s shelter (2019) (Neighborhood specified, 2020)	Disaster Management Fire Safety Violence against Women (2016/17) - (2018/19) - (2020-2024)	Disaster Management Fire Safety The quality-of-life in the city is highlighted
Mobility	Public transport Road planning Traffic planning	Public transport Road planning Traffic planning	Public transport Road planning Traffic planning Pedestrians’ needs
Gender Equality	Mentioned (2016/17) - (2018/19) Mentioned (2020) (CEDAW, CEMR, İstanbul Convention)	Mentioned - (2020-2024) Women Friendly Cities UNJP (2006) - (2020-2024)	Mentioned UN Women’s Gender- Responsive Budgeting Project (2012)

Note: For 2020, only changed or new observations are indicated.

Source: <https://van.bel.tr/>

<http://www.sanlıurfa.bel.tr/>;

<http://www.eskisehir.bel.tr/ebb.php>.

2. Step: Resource allocation planning for women's quality-of-life, 2016-2019

The projections of general observations in Table 18 in terms of resource allocations are shown in Tables 19-21 that have dual functions; firstly, they propose an analytical framework to monitor local policy commitments; and secondly, they project any policy transformation with respect to the SDG(s).

The municipal performance programs for a period of four years in the three provinces were reviewed and the findings compiled; the projections of activities for women's safety and mobility as well as gender equality (stated under different sub-headings of goals and targets) and the corresponding resource allocations to carry out those activities were put together. It is clear that urban mobility predominantly depends on pedestrians' and public transportation facilities for all. However, as was mentioned above, these facilities are of critical importance to women. We excluded large-scale investments such as highway constructions from the scope. In terms of safety, disaster management and fire safety are general activities; gender disaggregation is not relevant. On the other hand, although the policy of violence against women and the allocation of related resources directly aim to improve women's safety, it is not easy to establish the linkage with the safety in the public space.

The major setback that we need to point out here is that the municipal documents of Van and Şanlıurfa lack the consistency in format and scope in comparison to Eskişehir's. The empty boxes in the tables denote either that there is (a) no resource directly mapped with the policy or (b) no available data related to that policy. Likewise, the breakdown of the total amount of social transfer payments by the quality-of-life metrics cannot be tracked. The values indicated in Tables 19-21 are only presumptions; comparing nominal values over time would be inconsistent.



We see that the Van Municipality allocated only a small amount of funds for combating violence against women (Table 19) in 2018 while the figure for 2019 is much higher. We had seen before that this issue was not referred to in documents during that period, however, building a women's shelter was initiated (Table 18). The mindset shift behind the political discourse becomes apparent through its reflection on resource allocation. We assessed

the 'building baby care rooms' that would facilitate women's mobility in the city in this scope since there was no mentioning of other facilities and/or activities in the documents. The cancellation of the budget of the department in the Van Municipality responsible for gender equality programs as from 2018 is noteworthy, complementing the overview in Table 18.

Table 19: Van - Resource Allocation Plans Stated in Performance Programs to Ensure/Improve Women's Safety and Mobility (TL1,000)

Year	Safety Women	Mobility Women	Gender Equality		
2016	(VaW) 560	25	DWFS 129		
2017	(VaW) 505		DWFS 140		
2018	(VaW) 20		DWFS	No cadre	No budget
2019	(VaW) 327		DWFS	None	No budget
	General*	General*			
2016	17,599	14,593			
2017	26,480	12,550			
2018	28,467	150			
2019	10,796	32,652			

Note: The figures are rounded; Source: <https://van.bel.tr/>

VaW: Violence against Women; DWFS: Department of Women and Family Services.

* Shows total municipal expenditures for the corresponding capability.

In Şanlıurfa, the regular allocation of resources for combating violence against women shows that the significance of the issue is acknowledged. In terms of mobility, there is no prioritized activity / plan specifically for women. Being designated as a *Women Friendly City* might be a driving factor in allocating resources for gender-based awareness raising programs before 2020. The relatively low rate of women's schooling (Table 17) might be an interesting starting point for the impact analysis of that project.

Table 20: Şanlıurfa - Resource Allocation Plans Stated in Performance Programs to Ensure/Improve Women's Safety and Mobility (TL1,000)

Year	Safety Women	Mobility Women	Gender Equality
2016	(VaW) 15		30
2017	(VaW) 100		20
2018	(VaW) 42		70
2019	(VaW) 70		150
	General*	General*	
2016	5,115	84,065	
2017	4,530	16,600	
2018	2,610	11,000	
2019	2,700	4,536	

Note: The figures are rounded; Source: <http://www.sanlıurfa.bel.tr/>

VaW: Violence against Women

* Shows total municipal expenditures for the corresponding capability

Activities related to both the gender equality and the GRB are pointed out in all of the documents of the Eskişehir Municipality that we reviewed. However, activities to ensure/improve safety are limited to only the fire safety. Although there is no mentioning of any prioritized activity specifically for women, it is clearly pointed out that the needs of all vulnerable groups will be taken into consideration in public transport planning.

Table 21: Eskişehir - Resource Allocation Plans Stated in Performance Programs to Ensure/Improve Women's Safety and Mobility (TL1,000)

Year	Safety Women	Mobility Women	Gender Equality
2016	(GRB-Fire Safety) 4		(GRB) 39
2017	(GRB-Fire Safety) 5		(GRB) 64
2018	(GRB-Fire Safety) 5		(GRB) 24
2019	(GRB-Fire Safety) 17		(GRB) 26
	General*	General*	
2016	17,085	149,068	
2017	29,998	104,921	
2018	27,300	113,789	
2019	30,023	188,462	

Note: The figures are rounded; Source: <http://www.eskisehir.bel.tr/ebb.php>

* Shows total municipal expenditures for the corresponding capability.

Our view for all the municipalities is that the urban infrastructural planning is solely based on technical considerations without taking the social dimension into account. Consequently, the policies concerning the capabilities of mobility and safety as well as the resource allocation lack the gender perspective. It is clear that the issue of violence against women is ongoing in Van and Şanlıurfa (Tables 19-20). Eskişehir differs from the other provinces by consistently including the SDGs and the GRB in the agenda.

How can we assess the SDG and the GRB implementation?

The SDG agenda proposes a holistic perspective to improve the quality-of-life in the city (SDG 11) with a focus on gender equality (SDG 5) in particular. The SDG agenda is expected to function as a catalyst in projecting the global policy agenda into the local sphere and to serve as a support mechanism in establishing national policies. Human rights constitute the basis of endeavors to improve the quality-of-life. Therefore, the dominance of a multifaceted and holistic approach is anticipated in policy formulation and implementation. Achieving the goals at the national level and improving the quality-of-life depend upon regulatory adjustments adopted in the local sphere. Yet, our review of selected local data and information in view of the extent to which the SDGs committed by the central government are achieved, reveals that the setbacks and disparities in approach are exceedingly reflected at the local level.

Establishing the linkage between regulatory adjustments in the local sphere and capabilities that are the elements of women's quality-of-life will enable tracking and monitoring the concrete steps taken. In this study, we address the capabilities of safety and mobility that are the basic determining factors of women's participation in the public space. Even this limited scope provided us the clues to indicate the deficiencies and setbacks with respect to local policy formulation and resource allocations, and consequently what needs to be done in order to improve the quality of women's lives.

Utilizing the indicators that measure the quality of urban life and demanding the compilation of related data from the public authorities robustly support, inform and underpin advocacy. In this way, the rationale for the demands to transform the public policy formulation and the corresponding resource allocation mechanisms in a way to eliminate inequalities will be built on a robust and objective foundation.



5. Primary Sources on Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB)

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F. Gender Responsive Policy Instruments II: Developing Gender Monitoring Indicators in Local Governments¹¹⁹

1. Indicators for Social Research and Policy Formulation

Monitoring and the evaluation of gender equality in local policies, and their functions in policy-making processes are important.¹²⁰

The indicators for social research and policy formulation are tools fed by data that make it possible to observe, measure and assess complex situations. Based on the information comprised, the indicators may be **objective** or **subjective**, or may be distinguished as **structural**, **process** and **outcome (results) indicators** depending on their functions. Although scientific information production in itself is affected by values, perceptions, political views as well as data collection and production approaches; an objective indicator is expected to be free of subjective bias – value judgments and approaches – as much as possible; to be equally observable by third parties, and to allow for a specific level of standardization.

We may define the meaning and value loaded content of indicators as follows:

■ Indicators may be regarded as highly condensed summaries of data, meanings and values. They combine explicit empirical data with implicit assumptions on the meaning of the data. The indicators also embody certain values regarding the kinds of data that “matter” in grasping the phenomenon measured.

■ Therefore, indicators that may be effective in formulating policies are expected to have certain attributes such as close relevance to the targeted

goal, measurability, comprehensibility, consistency over time and replicability. Furthermore, effective functioning requires timely and periodic generation grounded on realistic and accessible data and information that enable comparisons.

■ **Structural indicators** are important in identifying the issues and gender gaps in the city, and the corresponding priority areas of improvement. **Process indicators** enable monitoring the measures taken by local governments and the performance. They indicate the alignment of policy goals and targets with resource allocation. The **Output (Results) indicators** help the public authority to assess the impact of policy implementations. They provide information on public policy practices such as whether the goals and targets are achieved, and feedback received from beneficiaries.



¹¹⁹ This section is drawn up with input from Doç. Dr. Yelda Yücel's Workshop presentation.

¹²⁰ The gender indicators established while developing the rights-based indicators within the scope of the Human Rights Project led by the Raoul Wallenberg Institute and Research Worldwide İstanbul and implemented in Türkiye between 2018-2020 with seven partner municipalities are presented here.

Table 22: Examples of Rights-Based Gender Indicators – Urban Mobility (Situational-Process-Outcome)

Structural	Process	Result/Impact
Is there an equality/discrimination unit?	Are there any measures stated in the strategic plan or the performance program related to meeting women’s specific needs and priorities (eliminating blind spots, lighting deficiencies, panic buttons, surveillance system...)?	Improvement in (structural) inequality indicators
Gender breakdown of satisfaction from the municipality’s public transport services (%)	The amount of resources allocated to improve areas of mobility where gender gaps are identified	Gender breakdown of satisfaction from the municipality’s public transport services (%) The breakdown by gender of people who feel safe while walking alone at night (%)
The breakdown by gender of people who feel safe while walking alone at night (%)	The number of meetings held with women’s organizations	Ratio of women to the population over 65 years old who have discounted transport cards (%)
Ratio of women to the population over 65 years old who have discounted transport cards (%)	Proportion of resolved complaints to the total number of complaints	Ratio of the amount spent / the amount of resources allocated to improve areas of mobility where gender gaps are identified Beneficiaries of the expenditures above Feedbacks received from the beneficiaries (number of complaints/petitions, contents)
		Enhanced municipal services and the number of beneficiaries

Source: Akduran et al., (2018); author.

Table 22 provides examples of indicators with different functions, that identify gender gaps in urban mobility. As will be described in the next section, these indicators observe the accessibility to urban mobility through a rights-based approach.

Indicators represent reality with numerical or other forms of data. In social studies, **quantitative data** convert abstract ideas and situations into numerical data. Most of the objective data are quantitative, i.e. observable, replicable, and comparable. Quantitative data allow for statistical analysis when the volume is adequate. They are unlikely to be loaded with value judgments. However, in general, they shed light on only some facets of reality. For example, it is recognized that measuring poverty by cash income and consumption thresholds over years leads to unequal allocation of public resources.

Qualitative data may be numerical at times but mostly are expressed in written and verbal words, actions, sounds, symbols, visual images, audio and video materials/recordings. Indicators composed of qualitative data embody the elements of depth and detail. They may enable discovering a new dimension that was not predicted at the outset, and comprehending complex, multidimensional processes. They are open to bring out creativity both from the part of the researcher and the participants, and help arriving at different representations of reality through service providers' self-expressions. However, their subjective and case-specific nature as well as the information/detail overload render data unsuitable for generalizations and comparisons.

Together with these potentials and restraints, the indicators must be based on a clear and precise conceptual approach. The conceptual framework provides the rationale for the selection of data and variables that compose the indicators. It builds the bridge between the societal objectives, goals and policy propositions.

In surveys, the conceptual basis helps to establish causality relationships between the variables and consequently to think on what and how the indicators will measure. And this enables the transition

from concepts to facts. For example, we may describe/define the abstraction, 'the right of access for all to safe and secure cities' by the following indicators, with the help of the "capability approach" that has been highly effective in setting the human rights norms/frameworks as well as in the development literature:

- Crime rate per neighborhoods (%)
- Crime rate per avenues/streets (%)
- Are there measures in place to provide safety in public transport vehicles? (Yes/No).
- If there are measures in place to provide safety in public transport vehicles, what are the qualities/types of these measures?
- Number of cameras in public transport vehicles (their ratio to the total number of public transport vehicles, %)
- Is there citizen-satisfaction data available on lighting in each neighbourhood? (Yes/No)
- Ratio of parks with security cameras, % (number of parks with security cameras / number of parks)

As may be seen here, the indicators that are mostly quantitative and the qualitative indicators help to understand the multidimensional feature of this concept.

The final requirement to ensure the effectiveness of indicators in policy formulation is to identify/set realistic and accessible criteria (metrics) including:

- Historical average data
- International standards
- Feedback received from beneficiaries
- Completion rate of activities
- Sustainability of intent, targets and outcomes/results

Studies point out the scarcity and irregular allocation of resources by municipalities for implementing activities that would serve to ensure gender equality. Sustaining the municipalities' GRB performance levels is of great concern. The inconsistencies between

the indicators, intent and goals of a municipality that took part in *Women Friendly Cities* projects since 2011 and that had a certain level of awareness on the GRB indicate the difficulty of continuing to make endeavors in this respect.

2. Gender Indicators for Local Governments

In this section, we will propose some indicators that may be utilised by local governments in Türkiye, based on the *Gender Indicators* established within the framework of the *Human Rights Cities Project*.¹²¹

Human Rights Cities (HRCs) are settlements that refer to international human rights treaties; and where the local public authorities are expected to adopt the principles and standards of human rights in a way to embrace all city residents. As distinct from the urban approaches focusing on groups of people such as of women, children, older people, individuals with disabilities, refugees and asylum seekers; effective engagement of local governments in building participatory, inclusive, equitable, accountable and democratic cities is the distinguishing characteristic of these cities.

In literature, human rights compliance is assessed by employing different approaches. The **capability approach** investigates whether or not the public authorities comply with the international treaties and norms. The **progressive realization approach** assesses the steps taken by the public authorities to ensure exercise of rights. To this end, exercising rights is ensured in a progressive way through the allocation of resources. The HRC study in Türkiye obliges the municipalities as public authorities to observe, safeguard and implement the rights in the cities and is based on all rights that require public contribution and resources for implementation.

Also, the HRC project utilizes the **capabilities approach** to link public service delivery to rights. Functionings are beings and doings that people value and have reason to value. The capability approach defines people's well-being as valuable sets of their beings and doings. This state depends on the availability and accessibility of opportunity sets (capabilities). When conditions are in place, it is up to the individual's free choice whether to act upon the capability. Discrimination and human rights violations in the city adversely affect the residents' access to rights and thereby their capabilities. Impeding the exercise of rights would mean that well-being of people deteriorate as much as it indicates the violation of fundamental human rights. Therefore, relating the public budget and policy formulation to capabilities establishes the link between the public service delivery and the human rights framework as well. When the municipalities design and deliver services by acting on fundamental human rights, the capabilities of people would improve. The **capabilities** that the municipalities in Türkiye would be the most effective on are identified as the **accessibility** of public services, **participation** in urban life and **safe and secure life** by the project.

Discrimination and violence against women in particular emerge in the public space, at home and during different life cycles. Women's access to economic, social and cultural rights in the city depends on the attainment of several factors such as ensuring an environment free of violence and fear; accommodation of basic human needs such as water, livelihood, housing, employment and education; designing environmentally responsive and sustainable settlements, eliminating barriers to mobility in urban settings, eliminating sexist practices concerning property and asset acquisition.

¹²¹ The Human Rights Cities Project which covers the period between 2018-2020 was carried out by the collaboration of the Swedish Lund University, Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law (RWI), the Union of Turkish World Municipalities, and Research Worldwide Istanbul.

The project municipalities were Ankara-Altındağ and Ankara-Çankaya; İstanbul-Maltepe and İstanbul- Zeytinburnu, Gaziantep-Şahinbey, Antalya-Muratpaşa municipalities and the Mersin Metropolitan Municipality. Within this context, discrimination and violence against vulnerable groups in the city were deemed as violations of fundamental human rights; and a methodology / indicator guidebook was drawn up to enable specifying the priority areas for improvement and the promotion of human rights in the city.

Experts from municipalities that sought to integrate human rights into their policies and representatives of civil society organizations came together to identify issues, viable solution recommendations and expectations concerning human rights in urban settings. An example on women’s issues and solution recommendations is given in the Table 23 below:

Table 23: An Example to Specify the Areas for Improvement (problematic areas)

Describe women’s existing, concrete problems in the district (in negative-wording).	What can the Municipality do to improve / provide remedy for this situation? What is your solution recommendation?	How can the project contribute to implementing the solution recommendation?
1. Street lighting is not adequate. Therefore, we cannot prevent incidences of violence and harassment both at the center and on the alleys.	1.1 Performing needs and data analysis with the participation of mukhtars, the residents and the CSOs in the district; drawing up neighborhood maps (lighting, crime rates)	1.1 Providing expert support in drawing up the needs map

RWI (2018). The Human Rights City Project, Project Development Workshop Final Report, Antalya.

These participatory studies provided the preliminary basis for developing both the common indicators of ‘human rights in the city’ involving all people, and the groups that require special focus (women, asylum seekers, elderly people, persons with disabilities, children). There are 75 Gender Equality Indicators (GEIs) composed of 42 for accessibility, 24 for participation, and nine for security and safety (Table 24).

3. Recommendations to Facilitate Data Generation and Compilation

To ensure the effectiveness of the indicators, the associated data collection process must be robust. In order to facilitate and overcome the difficulty in data collection, different solutions might be formulated. For example, it needs to be explained that (a) requesting data from within the institution by the Mayor’s cover letter will speed up the process, (b) improving the culture, practices and processes of data generation internally – by and while drawing up activity reports, strategic plans and performance programs will contribute to data generation, (c) the importance of personal relations and equipping the staff with required skills and knowledge and (d) the requirement for external expert support.

Enhancing participation is among the areas that needs to be improved the most. The communication with local residents is generally maintained through conventional means such as petitions, media and press. However, improvement is required, not only concerning the residents’ complaints and requests but also for enhancing their participation in the local decision-making mechanisms.

In order to enhance the efficacy of practices, efforts must be spent to boost the resources that are generally scarce and may be subject to negotiations, compromise and bargaining. The expectation to finance studies, projects and programs on gender equality and social expenditures through project based extra-budgetary funds is a major challenge confronted. In order to ensure effectiveness and the efficiency in the allocation of resources, expected outcomes (results) of the implementations must be clearly stated because this is the key factor in convincing the decision-makers.

Table 24: Gender Equality Indicators (GEIs) That May Be Used by Local Governments

GENDER EQUALITY INDICATORS	
PARTICIPATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ratio of women's representation in the Municipal Council (W/M, %) 2. Representation in executive positions in the Municipality: The total ratio of women in the position of Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Director, Deputy Director, Chief or Coordinator (W/M, %) 3. Is there a Department for Women's Affairs in the Municipality? (Yes/No) 4. If there is a Department for Women's Affairs in the municipality, what is the ratio of W/M in these units? (%) 5. Is there a Directorate for Women's Affairs in the municipality? (Yes/No) 6. If there is a Directorate for Women's Affairs in the municipality, what is the ratio of W/M in these units? (%) 7. Ratio of W/M in the equality committee (unit), if any, in the Municipality (%) 8. If there is an equality committee (unit), the ratio of decisions originally put forth by the Equality Committee to the overall decisions taken by the Municipal Council, % (Number of decisions suggested by the Equality Committee / total number of decisions taken by the Municipal Council) 9. Is there a volunteering programme available for women? (Yes/No) 10. If there is a volunteering programme for women, what are its qualities? (What kind of services are provided?) 11. If there is a citizen satisfaction survey on municipal services, the ratio of women respondents in the survey (W/W population in the city; W/M, %) 12. Ratio of women who sent petitions to the Municipality (W/W population in the city; W/M, %) 13. Ratio of women who put in requests via the website of the municipality (W/M, %) 14. Ratio of women who put in requests by phone calls to the municipality (W/M, %) 15. Ratio of women who put in requests to the Municipality in person (W/M, %) 16. Are there any projects (events, cooperation) underway with organizations working on gender (or women)? (Yes/No) 17. If there are projects (events, cooperation) carried out with organizations working on gender (or women), what are its qualities? (What kind of services are provided?)

GENDER EQUALITY INDICATORS

PARTICIPATION		<p>18. Ratio of women’s civil society organizations (CSOs) which, as external stakeholders, participate in the meetings held to develop municipal strategic plans, % (number of women CSOs which participate in strategic plan preparation meetings held with external stakeholders / total number of CSOs which participate in strategic plan preparation meetings held with external stakeholders)</p> <p>19. Ratio of women in the team responsible for strategic planning preparations, % (Number of women in the team / Total number of team members)</p> <p>20. Ratio of trainings on women’s rights and gender in the annual staff training programme (%)</p> <p>21. Ratio of members of municipal staff and management who attend the annual trainings on women’s rights and gender (to the total number of staff, %)</p> <p>22. Ratio of women to men in municipal staff and the management who attend the annual trainings on women’s rights and gender (W/M, %)</p> <p>23. Does the municipality provide trainings on women’s rights and gender equality in the city? (Yes/No)</p> <p>24. If the municipality is providing trainings on women’s rights and gender equality in the city, the ratio of attendance to such trainings (number of participants/ target audience in the city (the police, neighbourhood residents...)) (%)</p>
ACCESSABILITY	TRANSPORTATION, MOBILITY	<p>25. Number of buses suitable for persons with disabilities, older people, and prams (the ratio to the total number of buses, %)</p> <p>26. Are there women-only alternate stops, in addition to regular transit stops? (Yes/No)</p> <p>27. If there are women-only alternate stops, what are their qualities? (frequency, time intervals...)</p>
ACCESSABILITY	CARE SERVICES	<p>28. Number of parks larger than 1000 m² with nursing rooms or baby care facilities. Ratio of these parks to the total number of large parks (%)</p> <p>29. Number of municipal buildings with nursing rooms or baby care facilities Ratio of these buildings to the total number of municipal buildings (%)</p> <p>30. If the municipality has an institution providing services for older people, what is the ratio of beneficiaries (W/M, W/ (65+ W population); M/ (65+ M population))</p>

GENDER EQUALITY INDICATORS

ACCESSABILITY

CARE SERVICES

31. Ratio of women who receive homecare services provided by the Municipality (total, W/M, %)
32. Ratio of women over 65 years old who receive homecare services provided by the Municipality (W/M, W/(65+ W population); M/ (65+ M population %)
33. Ratio of women who, among those receiving homecare services provided by the Municipality, get support such as at home-cooking, cleaning, and grooming (caring for hair and fingernails) (excluding home health care for sickness), (W/M, %)
34. Ratio of women who, among those receiving homecare services provided by the Municipality, get home health care for sickness (W/M, %)
35. Does the Municipality have its own day nursery and day care centre for children? (Yes/No)
36. If the Municipality has its own nursery and day care centre, the ratio of girl and boy beneficiaries of this service (W/M; W/girls in the 0-4 or 0-5 age group in districts according to data by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT); M/boys in the 0-4 or 0-5 age group in districts according to data by TURKSTAT)
37. Does the Municipality support any nursery or day care centre open to public (public-private) (Yes/No)
38. If the Municipality supports any nursery or day care centres open to public (public-private), the ratio of girls and boys benefiting from this service (W/M; W/the relevant age group in districts according to ,data by TURKSTAT; M/the relevant age group in the relevant age group in districts according to data by TURKSTAT (note: TURKSTAT Address Based Population Registration System (ABPRS) and projections use the 0-4 age group)
39. Does the Municipality have a nursery or day care centre for its own staff? (Yes/No)
40. If the Municipality has a nursery or day care centre, what is the ratio of girl and boy beneficiaries of this service? (W/M, %)

EDUCATION TRAINING

41. Ratio of beneficiaries of trainings provided by the Municipality (W/W population; M/M population; %)
42. Ratio of beneficiaries of skill development courses provided by the Municipality (W/W population; M/M population; %)

GENDER EQUALITY INDICATORS

ACCESSABILITY	CULTURAL LIFE	<p>43. Ratio of beneficiaries of hobby courses provided by the Municipality (W/W population; M/M population; %)</p> <p>44. Ratio of beneficiaries of sports centres provided by the Municipality (W/W population; M/M population; %)</p> <p>45. Ratio of beneficiaries of exhibitions staged by the Municipality (W/W population; M/M population; %)</p> <p>46. Ratio of beneficiaries of concerts held by the Municipality (W/W population; M/M population; %)</p> <p>47. Ratio of beneficiaries of artistic performances organized by the Municipality (W/W population; M/M population; %)</p>
	HEALTH	<p>48. If the Municipality has a hospital, the ratio of its beneficiaries (W/W population; M/M population; W/M, %)</p> <p>49. If the Municipality provides health care, the ratio of its beneficiaries (W/W relevant age group population; M/M relevant age group population; W/M, %) (Note: relevant age group can be defined as adults, children and older people)</p>
	EMPLOYMENT	<p>50. Does the Municipality provide specific support to women in starting a business or finding employment? (Yes/No)</p> <p>51. If the Municipality provides specific support to women in starting a business or finding employment, what are the qualities of such support?</p> <p>52. Does the Municipality provide support to women cooperatives and income generating women's organizations? (Yes/No)</p> <p>53. If the Municipality provides support to women's cooperatives and income generating women's organizations, what are the qualities of such support?</p> <p>54. Is there a business development and consultancy centre specifically for women? (Yes/No)</p> <p>55. If there is a business development and consultancy centre specifically for women, what are its fields of activity? (manufacturing industry, services, agriculture)</p> <p>56. If there a business development and consultancy centre specifically for women, ratio of women getting service from this centre in a year (W/Women population, %)</p> <p>57. Is there a shop or bazaar which sells products made by women? (Yes/No)</p> <p>58. If there is a shop or bazaar which sells products made by women, ratio of women producers who benefit from this opportunity in a year (W/W population, %)</p>

GENDER EQUALITY INDICATORS

ACCESSABILITY	EMPLOYMENT	<p>59. Ratio of men and women who are employed in the Municipality (civil servants, workers) (W/M, %)</p> <p>60. Ratio of men and women who are employed as civil servants in the Municipality (W/M, %)</p> <p>61. Ratio of men and women who are employed as workers in the Municipality (W/M, %)</p> <p>62. Does the Municipality impose a quota in favour of women in recruitment? (Yes/No)</p> <p>63. If the Municipality imposes a quota in favour of women in recruitment, what is the percentage of the quota? (%)</p>
	OTHER	<p>64. Does the municipality have a service centre for women? (Yes/No)</p> <p>65. If the municipality has a service centre for women, what are its qualities (Which services are provided?)</p> <p>66. Ratio of single parent women who receive poverty assistance from the Municipality to the total of single parents (%)</p>
SAFETY		<p>67. Does the Municipality take measures against crime and violence against women? (Yes/No)</p> <p>68. Is there an awareness-raising program to prevent violence (training, posters, leaflets...)? (Yes/No)</p> <p>69. If there is an awareness-raising program to prevent violence, what are the qualities of the program? (training, posters, leaflets...)</p> <p>70. If there is a training on the prevention of violence, the ratio of participants (participants / target audience in the city (municipal employees, the police, neighbourhood residents...)) (%)</p> <p>71. Is there a call centre (consultation centre) where women subject to violence can apply to? (Yes/No)</p> <p>72. Does the Municipality have a shelter (guest house)? (Yes/No)</p> <p>73. Ratio of women beneficiaries of the municipal shelters (to the women population, %)</p> <p>74. Are there any post-shelter empowerment and safe living opportunities for women who had been subject to violence after they leave shelters? (Yes/No)</p> <p>75. Are there any satisfaction data on whether women feel safe in the city? (Yes/No)</p>

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G. Gender-Responsive Policy Instruments III: The Assessment of The Regional Gender Data¹²²

1. Gender Sensitive Data

Gender-sensitive data, which is known to be an effective tool when it comes to tackling gender-based inequalities;

- makes hidden inequalities and discriminations visible,
- questions the existing data in terms of inequality and discrimination,
- changes/transforms and eliminates inequalities and discriminations,
- functions as a source to empower groups exposed to inequality and discrimination.

Gender data has different names and forms:

- Gender data
- Gender-based data
- Gender sensitive database/portal
- Gender-related data
- Gender sensitive data
- Gender sensitive research
- Gender statistics
- Gender indicators
- Gender index
- Gender sensitive statistics
- Gender sensitive indicators

The distinction between sex and gender forms the basis of any gender-based analysis. However, the data formed through sex differentiation is not always sufficient and generally is not a requirement for gender analysis. Gender data is needed for developing awareness in the social scene, improving the theoretical studies made in the scientific field, engaging in effective advocacy, and developing policy.

The gender-sensitive data in policy development and implementation is used for;

- identifying the gender-related issues in society,
- producing gender statistics,
- spreading the usage of gender statistics,
- shaping the gender analysis that is used in the political activities,
- defining the gaps within the policy-making processes and their application,
- formulation of the new questions.

Rights-based monitoring, on the other hand, is carried out with the aim of revealing human rights violations, preventing these violations, and fundamentally protecting and securing human rights. In rights-based monitoring, gender data focuses on exposing gender-based inequalities and discrimination. Gender-sensitive rights-based monitoring is not limited to quantitative indicators where monitoring has traditionally been more widely used for its production. Since its main goal is to achieve gender equality, gender-sensitive rights-based monitoring is known to be a more comprehensive monitoring activity that takes every type of social structure, process, and outcome into account.

Key references to the production and use of gender data across international conventions and policy documents are:

- CEDAW Recommendation No. 9 (8th Session, 1989)
- CEDAW Recommendation No. 17 (10th session, 1991)
- Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development, and Peace (September, 1995)

¹²² This section is based on the presentation of Dr. Hilal Arslan whose material is prepared for CEİDİZler Project supported by EU Turkey Delegation and directed by Association Gender Equality as monitoring training material entitled "Gender Sensitive Data and Indicators". For detailed information see: Yüksel-Kaptanoğlu, İ., Arslan, H. & Akyıldırım, O. (2021). *Toplumsal Cinsiyet Eşitliğine Duyarlı Veri ve Göstergeler*. (Gender Sensitive Data and Indicators). CEİD Yayınları (Association for Monitoring Gender Equality Publications) <https://dSPACE.ceid.org.tr/xmlui/handle/1/1415>

Article 11 of Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention, 2011) which focuses on the data collection and research contain these entries:

1. For the purpose of the implementation of this Convention, Parties shall undertake to:
 - a. collect disaggregated relevant statistical data at regular intervals on cases of all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention;
 - b. support research in the field of all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention in order to study its root causes and effects, incidences and conviction rates, as well as the efficacy of measures taken to implement this Convention.
2. Parties shall endeavour to conduct population based surveys at regular intervals to assess the prevalence of and trends in all forms of violence covered by the scope of this Convention.
3. Parties shall provide the group of experts, as referred to in Article 66 of this Convention, with the information collected pursuant to this article in order to stimulate international co-operation and enable international benchmarking.
4. Parties shall ensure that the information collected pursuant to this article is available to the public.

The provisions of this convention specified how gender data can be used to combat violence against women and girls to the contracting countries.

The importance of the gender data within the principle of "developing a local/decentralized administration model for gender equality" is also mentioned in another international convention, Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), under the heading of "European Charter for Equality of Women and Men in Local Life":

Article 25 – Urban and Local Planning

(2) The Signatory commits itself to ensure that, in drawing up, adopting and implementing such policies and plans.

- the need to promote effective equality in all aspects of local life is fully taken into account
- the specific needs of women and men, in relation for example to employment, access to services and cultural life, education and family responsibilities, based on relevant local and other data, including the signatory's own gender assessments, are properly taken into account
- high quality design solutions are adopted which take into account the specific needs of women and men



2. The Sources for the Regional Gendered Data

Gender data are generally collected and obtained through (1) censuses, (2) administrative records, and (3) large-scale country-representative household surveys. In addition to these, the number of studies that makes it their number one goal to eliminate the gender data gap within the literature by producing statistics through digital data and big data sources has been increasing recently.

- Administrative Data
- Data Produced by Local Governmental Bodies
- Data Produced by Non-Governmental Organizations
- Data Produced through Household Surveys
- Digital Data and Big Data

One of the most important data sources for generating gender data is censuses. In modern societies, the main reference data used in the planning of public policies and the evaluation of their outputs are censuses. While, historically, they were carried out for the collection of military power and taxes by counting the people living within the borders of certain lands, primarily men, in today's world, population censuses continue to be one of the most important data sources in which main demographic characteristics such as age and gender structure of the population are produced. Although the process of data collection varies between different countries, various sociodemographic data, such as education level, marital status, employment participation status, ethnic identity, household size, as well as information about population sizes and their changes over time, are obtained through the censuses made at regular intervals. In Turkish case, the general population censuses were conducted every five years after an order of curfew until the year of 2000 which last one were carried out; since the year of 2000, statistics on population are produced through the Address Based Population Registration System (ABPRS). The information of both citizens and foreign nationals residing at the addresses defined in the National Address Database were matched with the state registers in the Central Population Administration System (MERNIS) database according to the identification number of the citizens and the particular identification number starting with 99 of

the foreigners. The census statistics produced by ABPRS are regularly shared with the public every year through TURKSTAT news bulletins and can be accessed through the TURKSTAT Statistics Portal.

Address Based Population Registration System

Another common data source from which gender data is produced and compiled is register-based administrative data which is recorded by institutions and organizations that also produces vital records and census statistics, as well as ABPRS. Administrative data is defined as data which is collected primarily for administrative (non-statistical) purposes such as registration, transaction and record-keeping; this type of data is usually collected by public institutions with a specific purpose in mind. The use of administrative records in generating gender data is especially advantageous since it reduces data collection costs and removes the burden of respondents by accessing the data that is already available for use.

Another advantage of register-based administrative data is that it allows to combine different data sources and establish new connections between them. Annual Education Statistics produced from the recorded-data of Ministry of National Education (MEB) can be given as an example to the gender statistics produced from register-based administrative data.

Figure 1: "Gender Equality in Education" in KAMER Provinces

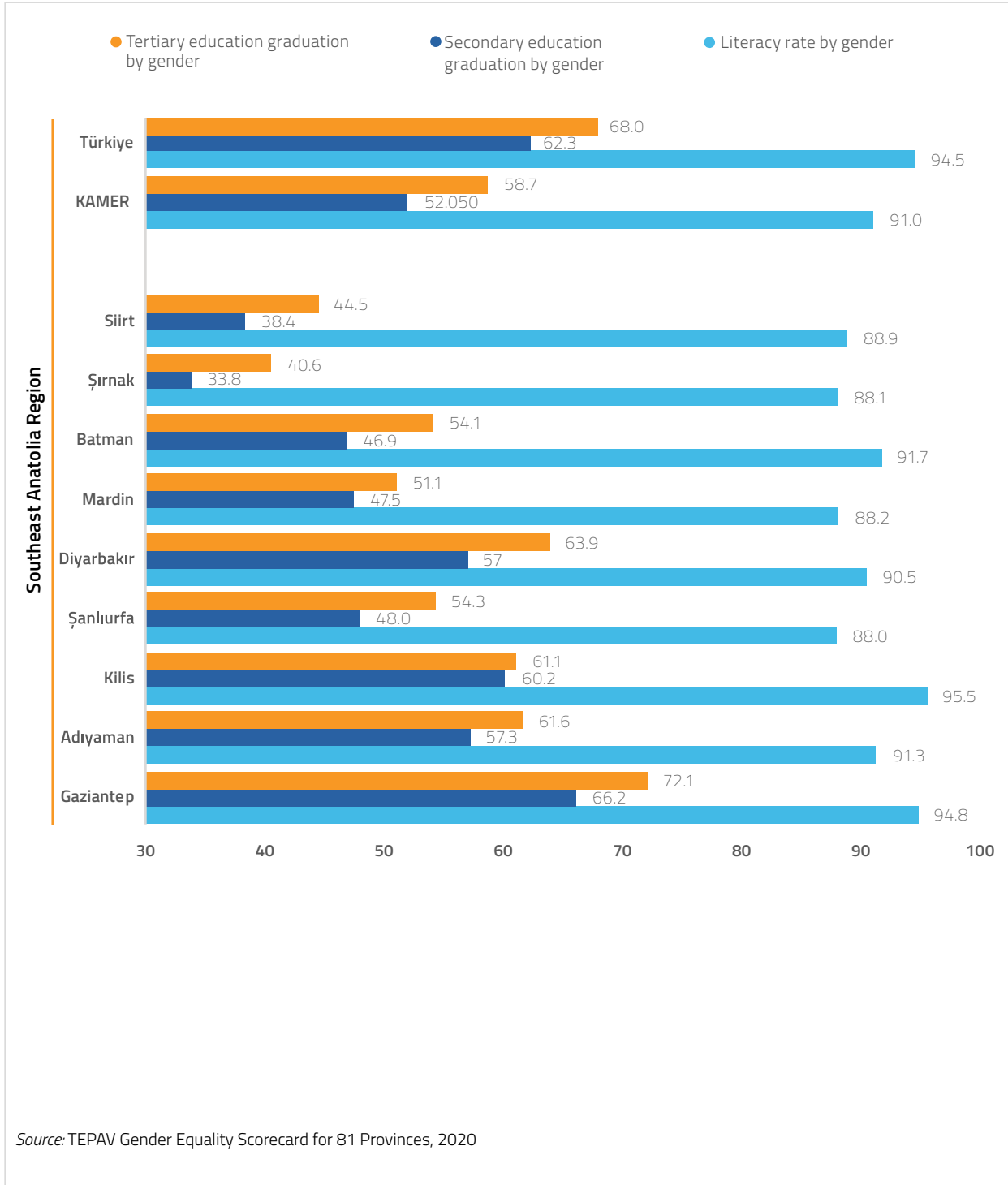


Figure 1: "Gender Equality in Education" in KAMER Provinces

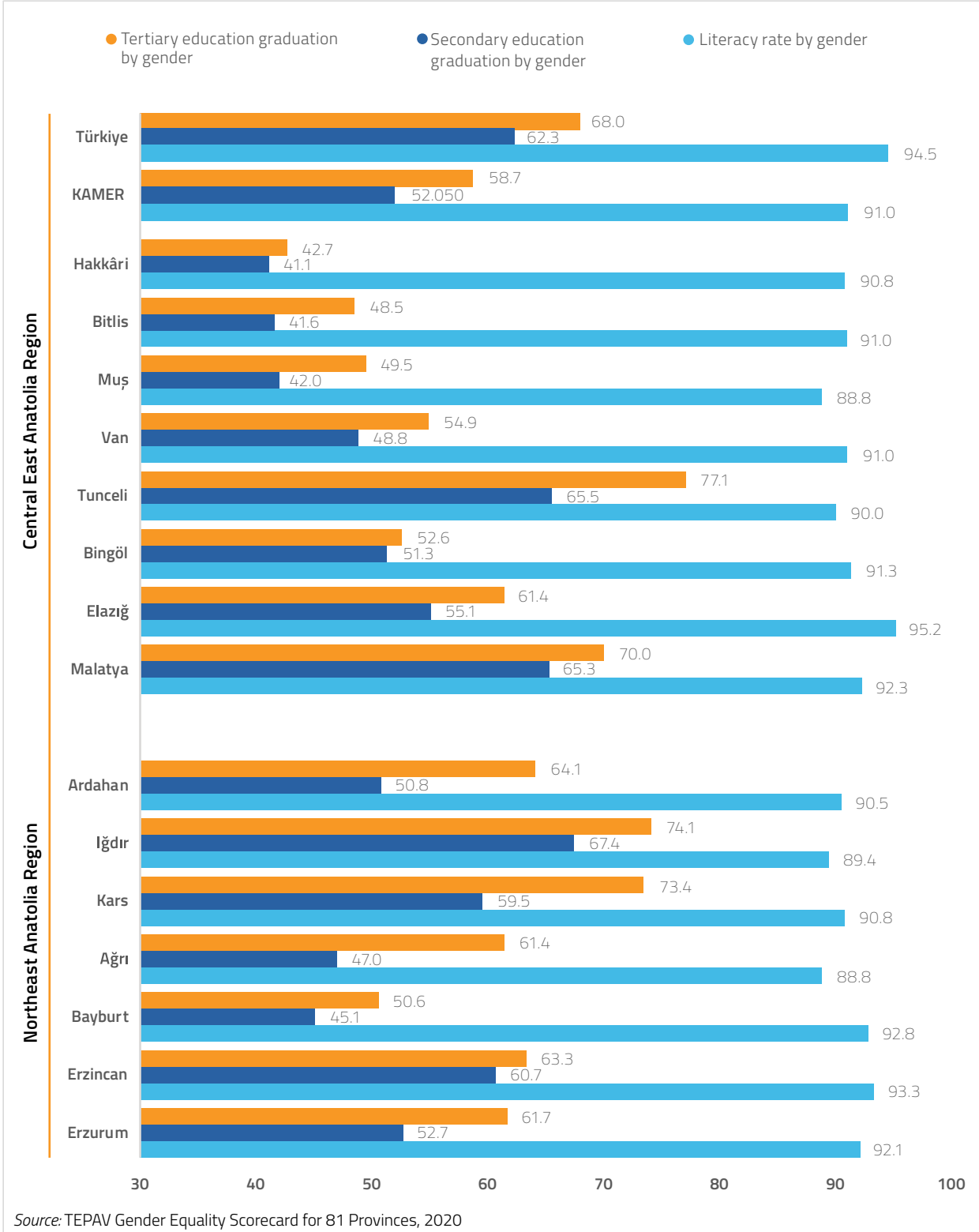


Figure 1 represents the data of literacy rate indicator, which is calculated by taking into consideration of literacy status of the population (ages 6+). The relevant data were collected by TEPAV using 2018 TÜİK provincial-level statistics, and the it was calculated separately for men and women. The graph above shows that gender disparities become more visible for the secondary and tertiary education levels for KAMER provinces. For instance, every 4 females out of 10 people having secondary education graduation degree against 6 males out of 10 people living in the provinces like Hakkari (41%), Bitlis (42%), Muş (42%), Şırnak (34%). On the other hand, the rate is higher above country average (62%) in the provinces Tunceli (66%), Gaziantep (66%), Malatya (65%) and Iğdır (67%).

Similarly, the Ministry of Health of Türkiye annually publishes statistics compiled from their registry systems and databases which derives the data from the health institutions and organizations that is within its structure. Likewise, other public institutions and organizations, such as the Presidency of Religious Affairs, the Council of Higher Education, and Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), regularly publish the data they keep in their records.

Register-based administrative data that is published as a part of TURKSTAT's Official Statistics Program and becomes disaggregated by gender under the levels of statistical region, province and district is obtained through;

- Vital Statistics (*birth, death, marriage, divorce, suicide*)
- Causes of Death Statistics
- National Education Statistics
- Penal Institution Statistics
- Statistics of Ministry of Health, Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Justice
- Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, Central Bank, Council of Higher Education (YÖK)
- General Directorate of Land Registry and Cadastre

Gender-sensitive data can also be compiled from the following administrative records that is produced locally:

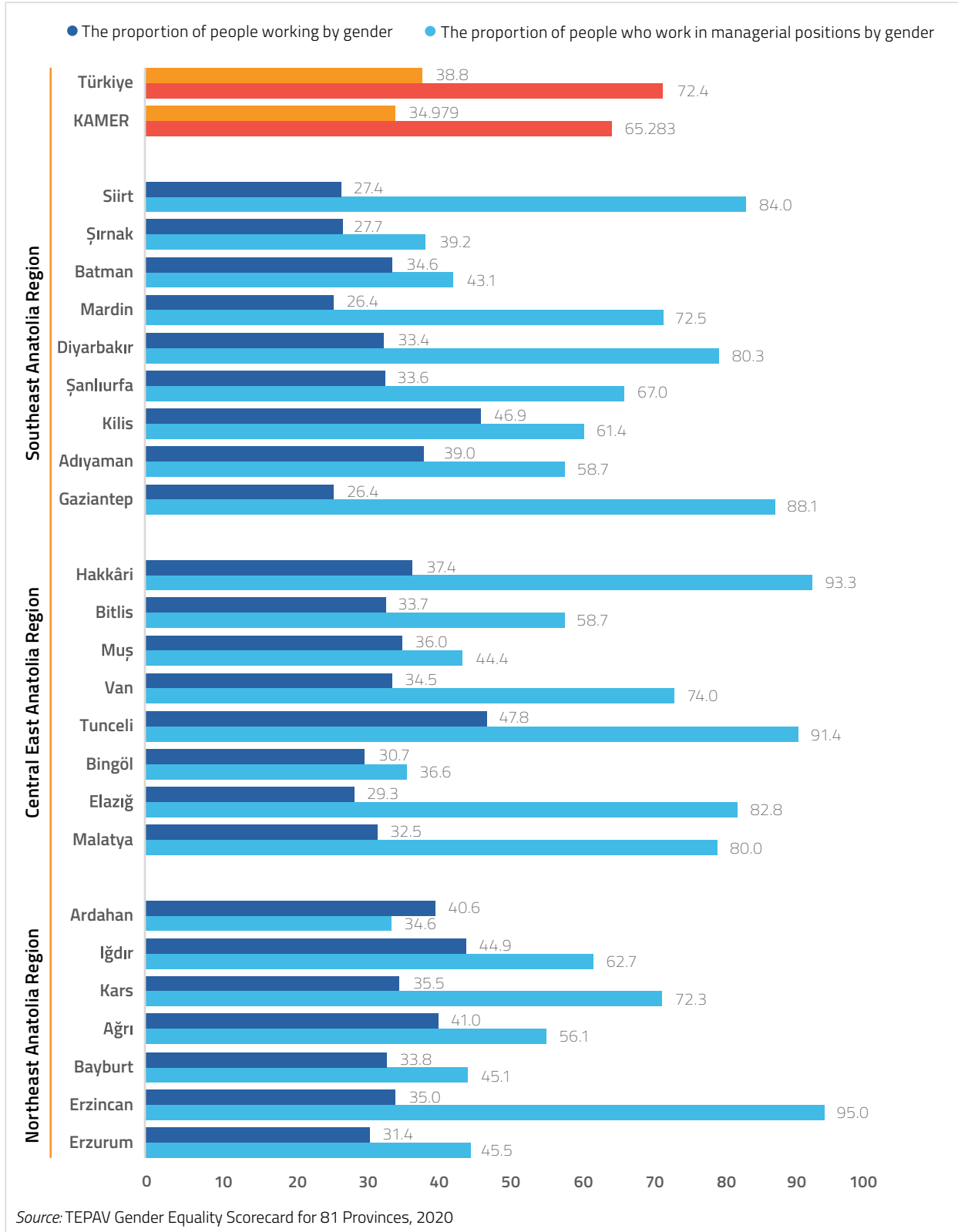
- Studies on gender sensitive data compilation at regional, provincial and district levels from strategy documents, annual reports, budget performance reports and other related studies of central public institutions
- The Ministry of Family and Social Services of Türkiye
- The Ministry of Labor and Social Security of Türkiye
- The Ministry of Education of Türkiye
- The Ministry of Health of Türkiye
- The Ministry of Justice of Türkiye
- Higher Education Institution (YÖK National Thesis Database, YÖK Statistics)
- Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR)
- Directorate of Religious Affairs of Türkiye
- Ministry of Internal Affairs of Türkiye
- Scanning for available data on gender equality produced by the Provincial and District Directorates, Development Agencies, Universities of the existing public institutions at the provincial level
- Regional Development Agencies
- Women's Problems Application and Research Center

As being examples for gender sensitive indicators whose data is based on the administrative registered data of The Ministry of Labour and Social Security of Türkiye are the proportion of people working by gender and the proportion of people who work in managerial positions by gender. Figure 2 shows the data of these indicators for KAMER region in a comparative manner. The gender distribution for the working population is compiled by TEPAV by considering the number of private sector employees by gender at the provincial level as of October 14-16, 2019, through the SGK; and calculated the gender distribution of the working population at the provincial level by dividing the compiled numbers for women and men by the TÜİK data on populations ages

15+ in 2018. According to Figure 2, number of women actively employed is relatively higher in Tunceli and Kilis in comparison to other provinces in the KAMER regions. Yet, the proportion is males working in managerial positions is radically higher in Tunceli in contrast to having higher labour market participation of women. Overall, among the people nearly 7 males are working in managerial position against 3 women in KAMER region which shows clearly the gender-based discrimination in participation to economic decision at working places.



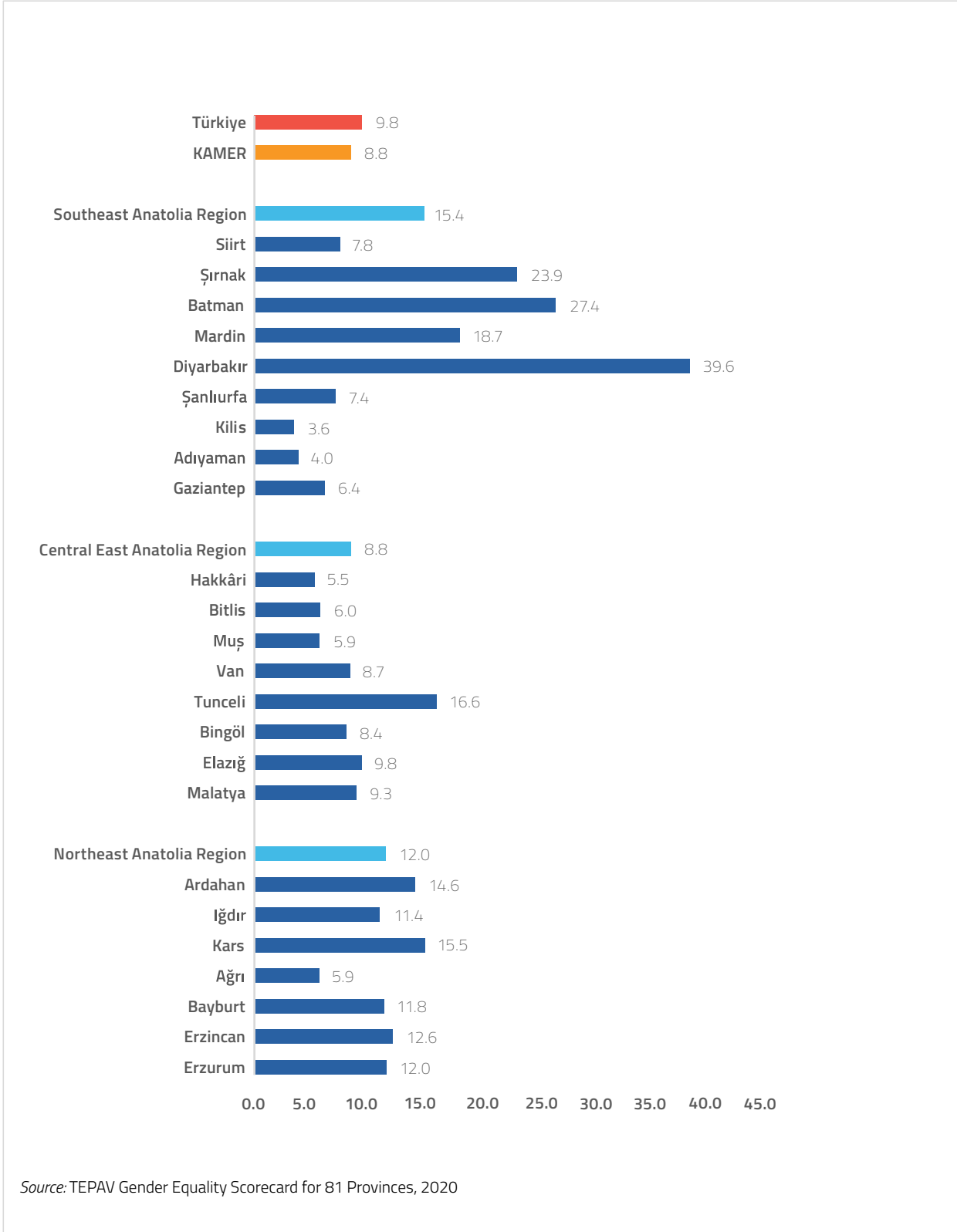
Figure 2: "Gender Equality in Employment" in KAMER Provinces, 2020



The unionization rate by gender, which is known to be one of the most used gender equality indicators in evaluating equal participation within decision-making mechanisms in the field of employment, is obtained from the register-based administrative database of the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services in 2019 by TEPAV. The unionization rate by gender was calculated by dividing the number of unionized workers for each gender by the total number of workers. Figure 3 shows the ratio of male and female employees in KAMER provinces who are members of trade unions, with the data compiled by TEPAV within the scope of the 2020 Provincial Report of Gender Equality study. The indicator mentioned is calculated by dividing the number of female and male unionized workers individually by the total number of workers. When we examine the distribution of union membership by gender, we observe that union membership in Northeast Anatolia Region and Southeast Anatolia regions is higher than the average union membership rate of working women in Turkey and the province with the highest number of unionized female workers is Diyarbakır with a rate of 39.6%. Diyarbakır is followed by Batman (27.4%) and Şırnak (23.9%), respectively.



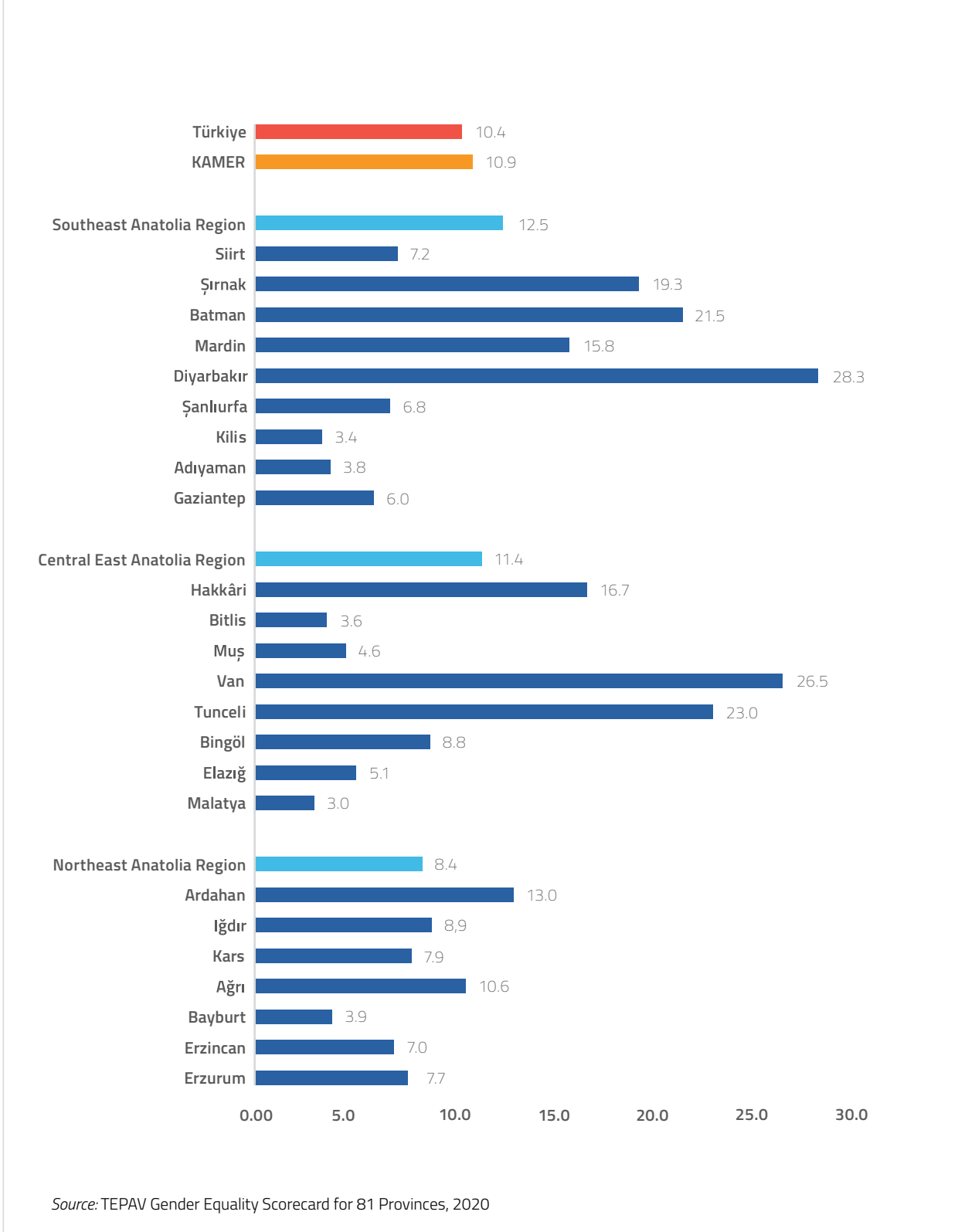
Figure 3: "Unionization Rate by Sex" in KAMER Provinces, 2020



In addition to public institutions and organizations, existing local governments in the project provinces can come into focus, and gender-sensitive data can be compiled from the strategy documents, activity reports, budget performance reports, and other related studies of the municipalities at the regional, provincial and district levels. For example, the data for gender distribution of municipal council members can be obtained by monitoring gender equality in participation in politics and decision-making mechanisms from these reports. Figure 4 shows the ratio of women to men among municipal council members compiled by TEPAV for the Gender Equality Report of 2020. When we examine the distribution of the members of the municipal council by gender, we observe that the province with the highest representation rate of women in the municipal council is Diyarbakır with a female representation rate of 28.3%. Diyarbakır is followed by Van (26.5%), Tunceli (23%), Batman (21.5%), and Şırnak (19.3%), respectively. At the same time, the representation rate of women in the municipal councils in these provinces is more than twice of the average rate in Türkiye.



Figure 4: Distribution of Municipal Council Members by Gender in KAMER Provinces



Alongside administrative data produced from the registry systems of public institutions, non-governmental organizations are also an important reference source for gender statistics. For example, Mor Çatı Women's Shelter Foundation, which has been known to be operating in the field of violence against women and girls for many years, regularly records the application data of violence cases, and also, as being one of the leading organizations in this field, works actively to improve the data recording systems of other CSOs in the field of violence monitoring.

In addition to state institutions and local governments, the important data produced by non-governmental and civil society organizations within the scope of the study of gender data collection at the local level are as follows:

- Gender-sensitive data compilation work of CSOs, which is known to be operating on a national level, at regional, provincial, and district levels
- Comparative Gender Equality Scorecard for 81 Provinces in Turkey of TEPAV
- Gender Equality Index of YANINDAYIZ Association

Index studies on gender equality of Turkey started for the first time in 2014 with TEPAV's study titled "Gender Equality Scorecard for 81 Provinces". The values of gender inequality index by provinces were last updated in 2020, and the gender inequality index and women's empowerment index on a provincial basis were calculated based on 2015 data. In the latest version of the TEPAV Gender Equality Index, which previously consisted of health, employment, education, and representation sub-domains, the health component was not included. The index consists of sub-components of representation in politics and economy, and participation in production activities and education. Representation scores for representation in politics and representation in the economy are calculated through data collected from indicators such as (1) the distribution of the members of the municipal council by gender, (2) the distribution of the district heads of the political parties according to the genders, (3) the chairman, the chairman of the council, the general secretary,

the members of the board of directors in the chambers and commodity exchanges affiliated with TOBB and the average of the distribution of members and members of their professional committee by gender, (4) the rate of unionization by gender, (5) the distribution of the signatory powers of companies by gender. While the score for participation in production activities is calculated on the basis of (6) the ratio of the working population by gender, (7) the ratio of working in managerial positions by gender, (8) gender wage equality indicators for similar jobs, the participation in education rate is calculated through (9) literacy rate by gender, (10) the high school status completion rate by gender, (11) undergraduate graduation rate by gender.¹²³

Türkiye Gender Equality Index calculated by TEPAV ranges from 0 (zero) to 1 (one), and closeness to 1 indicates that the female-male ratio is equal according to the selected indicators and in contrast, a value close to zero reflects absolute inequality. According to the Gender Equality Index of 2020, the average index score of 81 provinces is 0.471 and the most gender-egalitarian province is Muğla, followed by İzmir, Yalova, and İstanbul. On the other hand, the provinces with the highest gender inequality are listed as Muş, Bingöl, Bayburt, and Şırnak.

Gender Equality Scorecard of TEPAV for KAMER Provinces

When the TEPAV Gender Equality scorecard is examined specifically for KAMER provinces, Tunceli, Iğdır, and Diyarbakır, which have a higher score than the average of Türkiye, draw our attention (See Figure 5). On the other hand, Figure 6 shows the distribution of these scores on the region map, and provides an opportunity to compare provinces and regions to the province of Muğla, which is the most gender-equal province in Turkey, and observe how they differentiate.

¹²³ https://www.tepav.org.tr/upload/mce/2020/haberler/tobb_tskb_tepav_81_il_de_turkiyenin_toplumsal_cinsiyet_esitligi_karnesi.pdf

Figure 5: "Gender Equality Scorecard" for KAMER Provinces

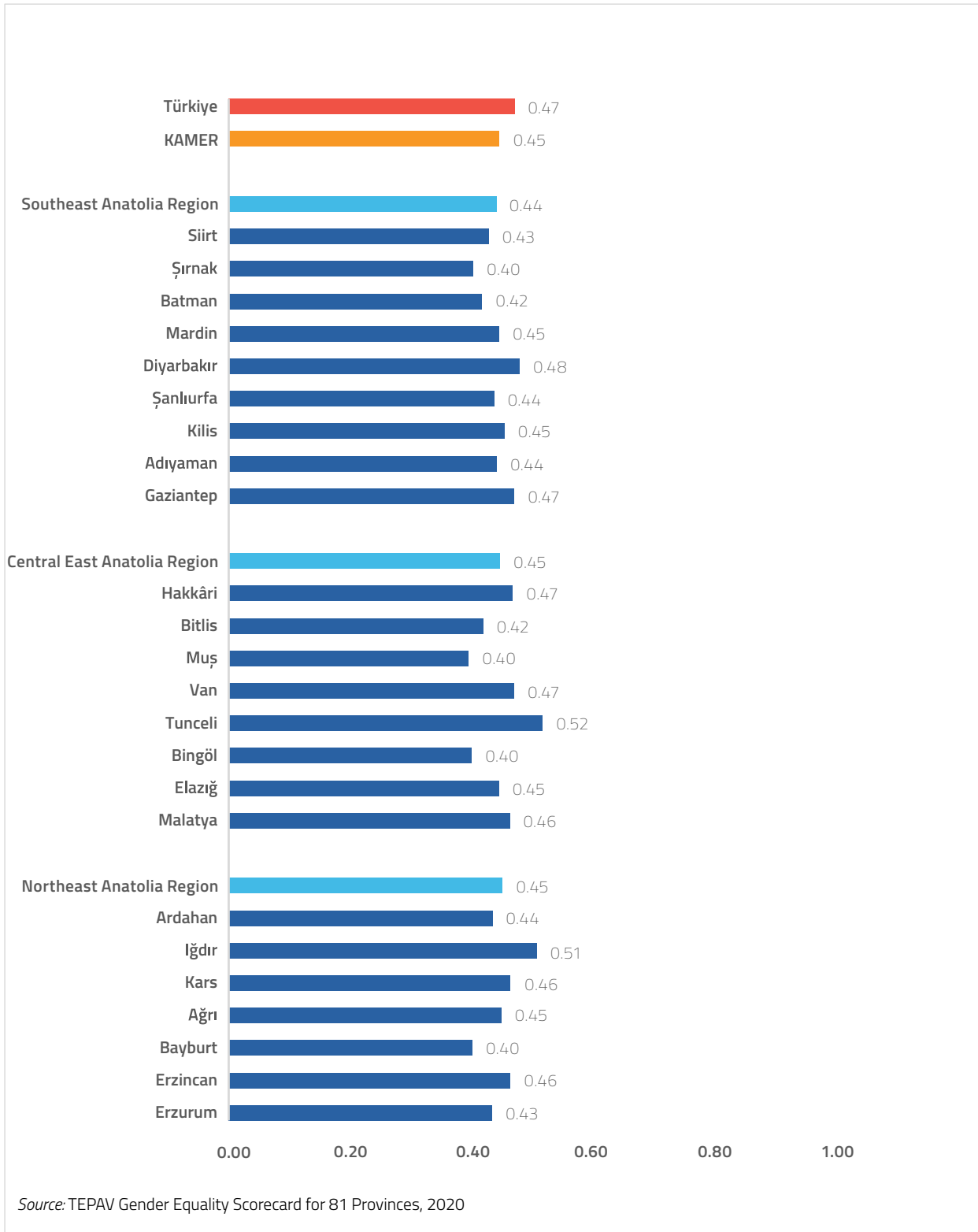
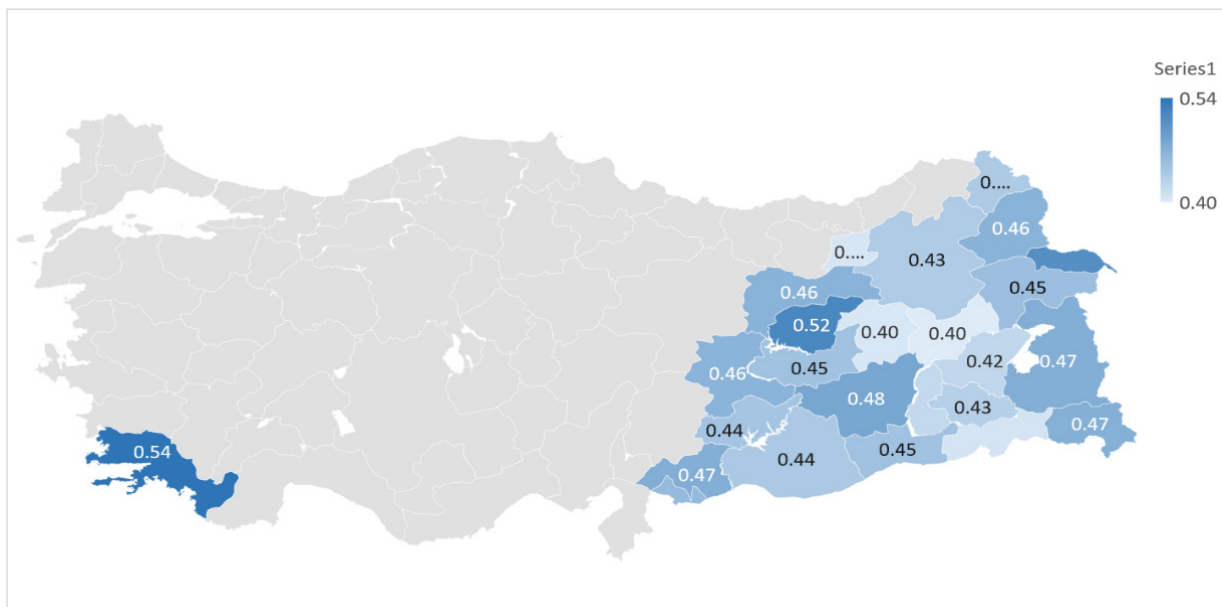


Figure 6: “Gender Equality Scorecard” for KAMER Provinces



Source: TEPAV Gender Equality Scorecard for 81 Provinces, 2020

- Gender-sensitive data compilation study at the regional, provincial, and district levels by NGOs operating at the local level
- Gender-sensitive data compilation study at the regional, provincial, and district levels from the studies carried out by KAMER branches
- Compilation of gender-sensitive data at the regional, provincial, and district levels from the work of other rights-based and gender equality-based civil society organizations

When the population censuses and administrative registration system become insufficient to deal with the deficiencies in quantitative and qualitative data that are obtained from them, household surveys become an important data source. Qualitative and/or quantitative studies are rich data sources on gender because they produce more up-to-date and detailed information on the gender dynamics of society. Household sample surveys, which are conducted in accordance with international standards and are

representative at the country level, are also used to compare gender statistics between countries. For example, the demographic research series carried out in Türkiye at five-year intervals since 1968 has been covered by Macro DHS since 1993. Turkey Demographic and Health Research (DHS) is carried out by the Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies (HIPS). While in the Turkish case, the module on violence against women was not applied, in the general studies, there are various sections that collect information on women's basic demographic characteristics, marriage history, employment history, reproductive health, maternal and child health, the status of women, and attitudes towards gender. DHS provides detailed information on marriages and reproductive health; however, this information is only collected for women of reproductive age. Reflecting the inequalities in accessing sexual and reproductive health services in Türkiye, according to the TDHS-2018, family planning needs are unmet in 12% of currently married women between the ages 15 and 49 years. In other words, women do not use

any family planning method even though they want to terminate their pregnancy or hold off the idea of being a parent for a while. When the proportion of women with unmet family planning needs is analyzed by regions, we are fronted with numbers such as 16% in the Northeast Anatolian Region and 14% in the Southeast Anatolian Region.

Within the scope of the research, for its quantitative part, it is possible to obtain data from the following sources, as they are known to be the household sample surveys representing Türkiye, in order to produce gender data in the local area:

- Türkiye Life Satisfaction Survey
- Research on Domestic Violence Against Women in Türkiye
- Türkiye Family Structure Research
- Türkiye Demographic and Health Survey
- Türkiye Health Survey
- Income and Living Conditions Survey
- Household Labor Force Survey

Digital Data and Big Data

Digital data – especially cell phone records, social media posts (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube), and satellite data – serve greatly to fill the gender data gap on women's participation in social, political, and economic life in low-income countries. Addressing these data gaps makes inequality and discrimination visible, enabling public institutions, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations to implement and advocate for reforms that bring them closer to the ideals of equality and justice in terms of gender equality. The role of "big data" in bridging the gender data gap is becoming more evident day by day. Although there is no consensus on the definition and content, big data provides new possibilities in the production of sex-disaggregated data when used together with traditional data acquisition methods, taking differentiation in time and space into account. Especially in the last few years, we observe how some gendered issues such as mobility, health, and social norms are increasingly being studied through a combination of big data

and traditional data. However, alarming data gaps remain, particularly on economic opportunity, human security, and participation in the public sphere. Working with gender-representative samples using big data remains challenging, but progress is being made. Big tech firms are generating an enormous amount of gender data that is critical for policymaking mechanisms, and researchers are finding ways to safely reuse that data. In this context, data collaborations that bring private sector data owners, researchers, and public policy makers together in a formal but lasting relationship can help big data make a practical difference in the lives of women and girls.



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