

Strategic objective 1: Combating gender stereotypes and sexism

The National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2008-2013) is being updated.

“Gender Equality and Media Workshops” held for the students of the communication faculties had 434 participants. 198 media professionals participated in “The Role of the Local Media Professionals in Combating Violence against Women and News Writing Workshops” held for the local media professionals.

On the other hand, the subject of “gender equality” was included in the in-service training programs for the personnel of the Ministry of National Education (MEB) and the personnel working at the central and provincial organizations of ASPB.

A number of gender equality oriented training activities, role model meetings and seminars will be carried out for teachers working at girl’s technical and vocational high schools, students and the families within the framework of the Projects launched in 10 pilot cities in cooperation with the ASPB, the MEB and the NGOs in 2013.

Within the framework of the Protocol signed between the KSGM and UNFPA, a team of 100 trainers was formed up to develop the institutional capacity of both central and provincial organization of the Ministry in terms of gender equality and combating violence against women and deliver trainings in provinces.

The “Family Training Program (AEP)” was introduced by the ASPB in 5 fields (including intra-familial communication, health, economics, justice and media). The intra-familial communication puts a significant emphasis on the equal distribution of household duties and sharing of the child care responsibilities. A similar training program is organized for the prospective spouses within the framework of the “Pre-Marriage Training” program. Both trainings are carried out in all of the 81 provinces. The training programs received nearly 180.000 participants. The “Project on the Implementation and Dissemination of Family Training Project”, which was launched in 2012, aim to get more couples who are planning to get married and married couples to benefit from the Family Training Programs; and to spread the program countrywide through local administrations, non-governmental organizations and the relevant public institutions and agencies.

The objective of “The Family Training Program for 0-18 Age Group” by the MEB is to develop the “parenthood skills” of the parents with children at the age of 0 and 18 and thus enable the children or the adolescents to fulfill their potential. As a part of the program, Father Support Trainings and Mother Support Trainings are organized. The father support program aims to inform the fathers about the needs of a child, adopt a democratic and equal approach in distribution of the household responsibilities, develop and enhance intra-familial and marital communication and employ the skills and approach they have acquired as a result of the program, in their close environments.

Strategic objective 2: Preventing and combating violence against women

In accordance with the Law No:6284 on Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women, which was built on the Istanbul Convention and came into force in 2012, all women, children and other family members, as well as the victims of unilateral persistent stalking are included within the scope of the Law.

The Law broadens the concept of gender based violence and defines the concepts of “violence”, “domestic violence” and “violence against women” in such a way as to comprise physical, verbal, sexual, economic and psychological violence. Preventive and protective measures regarding the protected person, perpetrator and potential perpetrator are established in the Law in detail. Local authorities and chief law enforcement officers are also entitled to rule preventive orders along with the family court judge within the boundaries of the provisions established by the Law. Thus, it enabled ruling of protective and preventive orders both at weekends and on holidays. The Law also provides for confidentiality and security of the victim and it is specified that where necessary, identity information of the persons and other family members under protection or other details which could disclose their identity shall be concealed in all official records upon request or ex officio along with the protection orders. The Law also establishes in detail the sanctions to be imposed on the perpetrator so as to increase efficiency and deterrent power of the protection orders in the event that the perpetrator acts in violation of them. In this context, the law envisages sentencing the perpetrator to coercive imprisonment for a period of three days to ten days and a 15–30 day-period for each repetitive contradictory act. The Law sets

forth the establishment of “Violence Prevention and Monitoring Centers (ŞÖNİM)”, which provide support and monitoring services to actively monitor the implementation of preventive and protective orders to prevent violence and establishes the services to be offered by these centers. It is envisaged in the provisions of the Law that implementation of the protection orders shall be prosecutable using the technical tools and methods with a judicial decision.

An impact analysis will be conducted in 2014 to make out to which extent the provisions of the Law No: 6284 are being implemented and the preventive and protective orders ruled within the scope of the Law are instrumental in preventing the incidences of violence against women.

Currently, there are 129 women shelters in total with a capacity of 3.365 (92 owned by KSGM, 3 affiliated to the NGOs and 34 affiliated to the local government). There are only five provinces without a shelter, efforts have been accelerated to open shelters in the provinces without any. As of May 2014, a total of 39.352 people, 26.980 of whom are women and 12.372 are children, have benefitted from the shelters affiliated to the Ministry.

First step stations, which function under the women’s shelters, are the service units where women victims of violence seeking shelter are observed preliminarily, their psychological and economic states are examined and they can stay up to two weeks after their provisional acceptance. Three first step stations were opened in July, 2011 and 25 first step stations are currently available in service throughout Turkey as of May, 2014. There are ongoing activities regarding the opening of first step stations in provinces where needed in accordance with the magnitude of the province and the amount of the applications made to the provinces.

The “Women’s Shelter Project for Combating Violence against Women” with a budget of 9.601.000 €, which will be financed within the framework of the IPA and conducted between 2014 and 2016, is being implemented. The activities which are to be launched in 26 provinces aim to enhance the cooperation among the central and local government and the local NGOs aside from the support services for women victims of violence. Within the context of the Project, it is envisaged to prepare provincial action plans and develop work-flow and standards of the service units as well as to deliver trainings on violence against women and gender equality for the

personnel working at the ŞÖNİMs, women's shelters, General Directorate for Security, domestic violence bureaus, health personnel and the Ministry of Justice personnel. It is aimed to reach out to 175.000 health and security personnel through trainings to be delivered to 1550 trainees in total including 700 trainings of trainees. 19 projects designed by the NGOs were provided with grants amounting to 3.000.000 € roughly.

The National Action Plan on Combating Domestic Violence against Women implemented between 2007-2010 and was updated for the years 2012 and 2015; put into practice.

There are now an increased number of training programs, which are offered to all segments of society including especially the service providers and policy makers for gender mainstreaming, translating the available legal framework into practice in prevention of violence against women and achieving mental transformation. In the training programs, participants are mostly provided with information particularly on CEDAW (as recommended in the 13rd paragraph of the Concluding Observations) and Istanbul Convention, the Law No: 6284 on as well as all existing relevant legislation in Turkey.

The National Research on Domestic Violence against Women in Turkey (2008) is the most comprehensive one conducted nationwide so far, in terms of making out the prevalence of domestic violence against women, forms, causes and results of violence as well as the risk factors. The updating activities of the Research were started in 2013 and the results of the research are planned to be publicized in late 2014.

Furthermore, the "Humanitarian Assistance Program for Combating and Responding to Gender-Based Violence" has been run for the Syrian citizens arriving in Turkey and the personnel in their service, since April, 2013 in cooperation with the KSGM, Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) and UNFPA. In addition, meetings have been held with the Syrian women to exchange information on early and forced marriages and build solidarity among women and around 400.000 of information brochures were printed in Arabic and Turkish and distributed

Strategic objective 3: Guaranteeing Equal Access of Women to Justice

Turkey increased the number of referral mechanisms which function to protect women's human rights. With an amendment made to the Constitution in 2010, the provision that "each person shall be able to resort to Constitutional Court if she/he claims that any of the constitutionally guaranteed rights and freedoms covered by the European Convention on Human Rights is violated by the public authority" was re-regulated. In parallel with the abovementioned amendment, another regulation was introduced in 2011 to make the individual applications more tangible and practicable. With the recent amendments, the person who has been subjected to gender-based discrimination shall also be able to make an individual application to the Constitutional Court.

Ombudsman, affiliated to the TBMM, was established in 2012 with a public entity and a special budget. The Ombudsman works to supervise and screen out all acts, deeds and approaches of administration in terms of law and equity and to research and provide recommendations by a human rights-based justice understanding. The institution has a woman Ombudsperson specially charged with the issues of "women's and children's rights". The institution started accepting application of complaints as of March, 2013. Both real and legal persons whose interest has been violated can apply to the Ombudsman. No violation of interest is sought in the event that the complaint is about the violation of human rights, fundamental rights and freedoms, public issues, child rights and women's rights and on-site examinations and investigation are carried out. Likewise, in cases of withdrawal of the complaint, fulfillment of the demand by the administration, death of the complainant or termination of the legal personality, the examination and investigation can still continue.

Moreover the Human Rights Institution of Turkey is another institution which can investigate violation of women's rights.

Strategic objective 4: Achieving balanced participation of women and men in political and public decision-making

While the parliamentary representation rate of women stood at 4,4 percent in 2002 general elections, it rose to 9,1 percent in 2007 general elections and the highest representation rate reached to 14,4 percent in 2011.

Considering the organizational structure of the TBMM, 3 out of 4 parliamentary deputy speakers are women. In addition, women chair 3 out of 17 parliamentary specialized committees under the roof of TBMM.

There has been an increase in the number of women who stood as a candidate for nomination both in the general elections and local administration elections as well as those who have been nominated as a candidate by the party. It is considered that the increase achieved in the number of women's representation in the recent elections is a fruit of social expectation with regard to women's involvement in politics, women's positive attitudes and approaches towards politics as well as the special measures introduced by the parties to increase women's representation (women's exemption from nomination fee, women' inclusion in the top of the candidate lists).

There has been a significant increase in the number of women as a result of the local elections held on 30 March, 2014 when compared to 2009 elections. Although there was no female metropolitan municipality mayor in 2009, women comprised of 10 percent of 30 metropolitan municipality mayors elected as a result of the 2014 local elections. As a result of the 2014 local elections, women comprised of 2,73 percent of mayors, 10,72 percent of members of local council, 4,79 percent of provincial council members.

Even though the number of female candidates and representatives in local and national politics is on the rise, the numbers are still far from satisfactory. Increasing the social awareness on women's increased involvement in the decision-making mechanisms is vital. The activities launched by the NGOs during the pre-election periods raised social awareness on the involvement of more women in decision-making and power mechanisms. "The Academies/Schools of Politics" founded by various NGOs and political parties particularly in the election terms have been instrumental in increasing women's level of information as to the politics and "political preparation" activities carried out.

Strategic objective 5: Achieving Gender Mainstreaming in all policies and measures

The 10th Development Plan, covering the years 2014 and 2018 and of great importance in terms of translating de jure gender equality into practice in all spheres of life. The Plan includes a number of objectives relating to achieve gender equality as follows: Enhancing women's participation further in decision-making mechanisms, increasing women's employment, enhancing the educational level and skills of women, extending easily accessible secured flexible working facilities, crèches and child care services to reconcile work and family life, adopting more flexible alternative models, raising awareness beginning from the early childhood periods through formal and non-formal education to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and raising awareness on gender-responsive budgeting.

In scope of the preparatory work of the 10th Development Plan, The Gender Equality Working Group drafted a detailed report covering the problematic aspects and proposals of solutions relating to five basic fields which are "education and training, health care, violence against women, employment and decision-making and political participation".

The National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2008-2013) and National Action Plan on Combating Domestic Violence Against Women (2007-2010) was implemented to ensure that the current legislation is effectively translated into the practice and mobilize the relevant institutions and agencies with regard to their missions in achieving gender equality. National Action Plan on Combating Domestic Violence Against Women updated for the years between 2012-2015 and National Action Plan on Gender Equality is being updated these days.