

July 2024

# Empowered Girls Empowered Future Needs Analysis

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**1. Purpose and Scope:** This needs analysis has been prepared as part of the "Empowered Girls, Empowered Future" project, funded by the European Union (IPA III/2023/450-059) and implemented by the Aydın Doğan Foundation. It aims to comprehensively examine the empowerment processes of young women and girls in Turkey, identifying the challenges and opportunities they face in areas such as gender equality, (economic, social, political) empowerment, and leadership. Additionally, the analysis seeks to identify gaps that present potential for collaboration and capacity development with civil society organizations (CSOs) working in this field. This analysis serves as an essential guide for taking strategic steps towards the empowerment of women in Turkey.

**2. Methodology:** The needs analysis began with a literature review that compiled desk research on current efforts to empower girls and young women and develop their leadership skills, both globally and in Turkey. Following this, the analysis was completed through an assessment based on findings from fieldwork conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The field research included data collection from the following groups and methods:

- **Surveys:** A total of 2,614 surveys were conducted with young women aged 18 and over, and with CSOs in Turkey. Of these, 2,304 were with young women, and 310 were with CSOs.
- **Focus Group Discussions:** Focus group discussions were conducted once with girls under 18, young women aged 18 and over, and CSO representatives.
- **In-depth Interviews:** Four in-depth interviews were conducted with girls under 18, six with young women aged 18 and over, and ten with CSO representatives.

**3. Desk Research:** Globally, the empowerment of girls and young women and the development of their leadership skills are seen as critical components of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG 5, as outlined in the United Nations 2030 Agenda, aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. In this context, many countries worldwide have developed policies and programs to support gender equality, particularly in the areas of education, health, economic participation, and political representation.

- **Education:** According to UNESCO's 2023 data, 89% of girls at the primary education level worldwide are enrolled in school, but this rate drops to 77% at the secondary level. At the higher education level, the proportion of female students is 39%. In many developing countries, girls' duration of education is shorter, and the dropout rate is high due to factors such as early marriage.
- **Economic Participation:** According to the World Bank's 2022 report, the global labor force participation rate for women is 48%, compared to 75% for men. Additionally, the rate of women working in paid jobs is 58%, compared to 78% for men. These figures highlight the gender gap in economic participation.
- **Leadership:** According to the World Economic Forum's 2023 Global Gender Gap Report, the proportion of women in senior executive positions worldwide is 27%. While this rate is higher in developed countries, it is quite low in many developing countries. For instance, in Scandinavian countries, the rate is around 40%, while in South Asia, it drops to 15%.

In Turkey, significant progress has been made in recent years regarding the empowerment of girls and young women and the development of their leadership skills, but considerable challenges remain.

- **Education:** According to the 2022 data from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜİK), the enrollment rate of girls in primary education is 99%, while it is 87% in secondary education. However, the proportion of women in higher education is 44%, slightly above the global average. Nevertheless, these rates are lower in rural areas and among low-income families.
- **Economic Participation:** According to TÜİK's 2023 data, the labor force participation rate for women in Turkey is 34%, well below the global average. Notably, the unemployment rate among young women is 29%. This situation reflects the barriers women face in the economic domain.

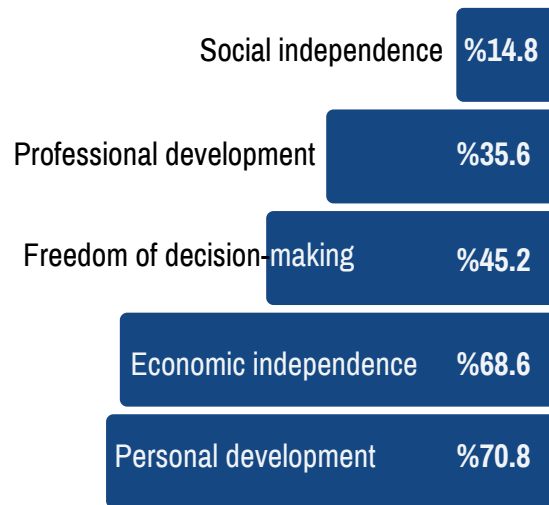
- **Leadership:** In Turkey, according to a 2023 study, the proportion of women in senior executive positions is 19%. This figure is below the European average of 27%. Additionally, the percentage of women in the Turkish Grand National Assembly is 17%, which is also below the global average of 25%.

When comparing global and Turkish data, it is evident that Turkey lags behind the global average, particularly in the areas of economic participation and leadership. In the field of education, although there is relatively good performance at the higher education level, significant inequalities persist in rural areas and among certain socioeconomic groups.

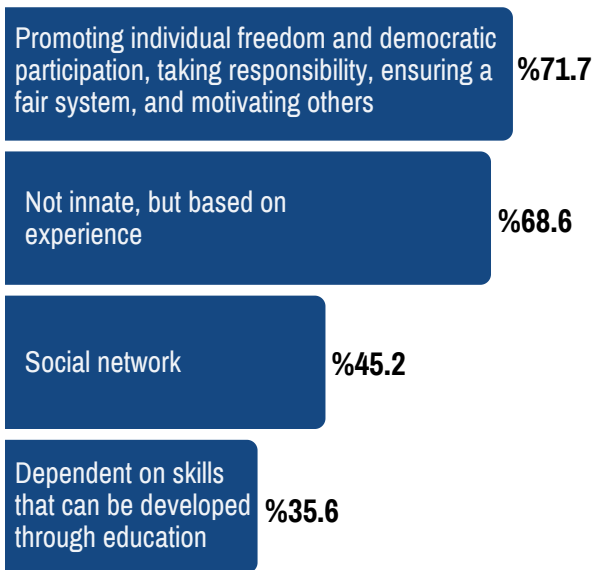
In the field of empowering girls and young women, efforts in Turkey are observed to be quite parallel to global examples. The main reasons why these efforts have not reached the desired level in Turkey are observed to be the insufficient collaborations between the public, private, and civil society sectors. Compared to global examples, there is a need for the public sector to be more effective in providing access to resources and services, particularly in the relationship between civil society and the government. It is also important for civil society to engage in greater collaboration in the distribution and delivery of these resources and services to local communities. The earthquakes in February 2023 have necessitated the creation of new areas for establishing these collaborations.

- **3. Field Research Findings / Empowerment and Leadership:** Empowerment refers to individuals discovering their own potential and gaining access to the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to realize that potential. Empowerment encompasses various dimensions, including economic independence, social participation, cultural freedom of expression, and involvement in political decision-making processes. It is viewed not only as an individual process but also as a societal change process. Participants have evaluated empowerment as an essential acquisition for achieving social equality and justice.

**Empowerment is a prerequisite for leadership** for young women. The transition from empowerment to leadership enables individuals to positively impact not only their own lives but also the lives of others.



**Figure 1: Conditions Young Women Associate with the Concept of Empowerment**



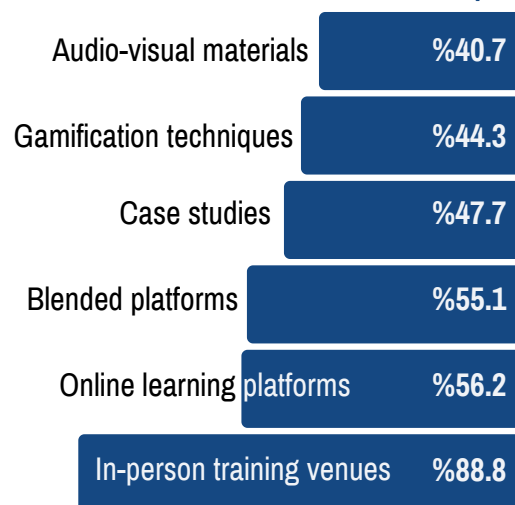
**Figure 2: Conditions Young Women Associate with the Concept of Leadership**

- **Leadership** is the competence to influence, guide, and make decisions that direct individuals and groups toward a specific goal. For young women, empowerment primarily involves having control over one's own life and access to the necessary resources to achieve this control. Leadership, on the other hand, manifests as the ability to use this acquired power to guide others, address social issues, and create change. Leaders should consider the opinions of others, think and act together with them, and share responsibility.

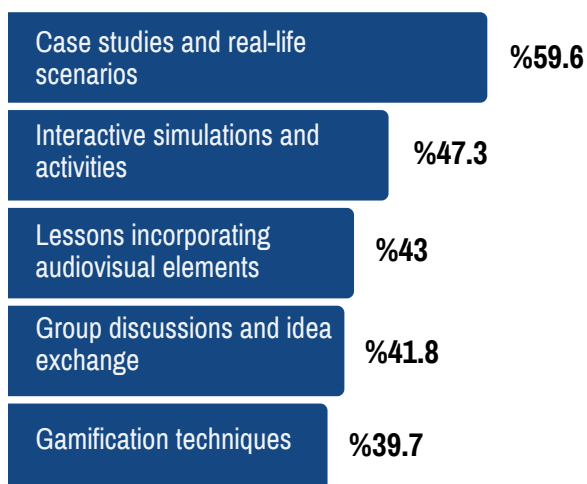
Qualitative field research findings also indicate that girls and young women perceive leadership in a more democratic and inclusive way rather than through traditional hierarchical models. In the quantitative field research, 42% of the young women surveyed stated that they were unable to take on leadership roles despite wanting to, and 66% reported facing challenges related to leadership due to their gender.

- Among the activities carried out by NGOs addressing social issues, "advocacy" stands out as the most prevalent, with 78.1% of NGOs highlighting it as a primary focus. These activities are concentrated in areas such as defending rights, participating in policy-making processes, and promoting social change. Additionally, 66.7% of the NGOs identified "education" as one of their main areas of activity, and 84.8% of the surveyed NGOs reported having previously conducted educational activities. These activities include educational programs aimed at enhancing individuals' knowledge and skills, covering a variety of topics such as gender equality, legal processes, self-awareness, communication, and entrepreneurship. Following education, the most common activities undertaken by NGOs are monitoring (41%), psycho-social support (40%), and counseling (39%). Moreover, 91.4% of the NGOs believe they are effective in their efforts to empower women through these activities.

**Figure 3: Platforms Most Frequently Used by NGOs in Trainings and Preferred Training Techniques**



**Figure 4: Training Techniques Preferred by Girls and Young Women**



- Among the groups targeted by NGOs, young women and girls are a top priority. While meetings with young women are frequent and regular (26.7% always, 39% often), meetings with girls are more irregular (31.4% sometimes, 24.8% often). This suggests that NGOs focus more on programs for young women, but there is a need to strengthen efforts aimed at girls.
- Among the young women who participated in the survey, the most popular topic for developing leadership skills is self-awareness, with 50.9% expressing interest in this area, indicating that individuals place great importance on personal development. Communication skills development was the second most preferred topic at 39%, highlighting the critical role of effective communication in both professional and personal life.

Entrepreneurship emerged as a prominent topic with 37.1% interest, while creativity and productivity attracted 33.1% and 32.2% interest, respectively. This reveals a strong inclination toward innovative thinking and effective working methods. Gender equality and the development of critical thinking skills were each preferred by 27% of participants, reflecting a desire to adopt egalitarian approaches and enhance the ability to solve complex problems.

**4. Field Research Findings / Volunteering, Social Entrepreneurship, Social and Political Participation:** According to the survey data, approximately 65% of young women have participated in volunteering activities. The proportion of young women involved in social responsibility projects is 80%, indicating that such participation has been effective in raising their level of social awareness. Among those who engaged in volunteering activities, 74.2% reported having a higher level of awareness regarding gender equality. Participants volunteered in student clubs (23.4%), educational institutions (11.7%), and cultural and arts organizations (10.2%). However, this limited volunteer participation may further decline due to factors such as the lack of available opportunities (56.7%), time constraints (39.6%), and domestic caregiving responsibilities (39.8%).

In terms of social and political participation, 57.2% of the young women surveyed always vote in local and national elections, but 95.7% have never joined political parties or movements, 94% have never volunteered in political campaigns, and 95.3% have not participated in any political community work as volunteers. Additionally, participation in political rallies or demonstrations (77.1% never attended) and involvement in political discussions (65.2% never participated) are also low. This points to a generally passive political participation profile.

27.6% of NGOs run volunteer programs aimed at supporting the participation of young people in social and civic spaces. Volunteer management facilitates the work of 62.9% of NGOs by enabling more efficient use of human resources and improving the effectiveness of their activities. 87.6% of NGOs collaborate with other NGOs working in similar fields. The most common form of collaboration, at 87%, is 'joint projects,' followed by dissemination (66.3%) and advocacy (54.3%) as the most frequent areas of cooperation among NGOs. These collaborations help projects reach broader audiences and enhance their sustainability. Partnerships with academic institutions bring a scientific framework to projects and raise awareness of social responsibility. Collaborations with municipalities contribute to the adoption and sustainability of gender equality projects at the local level. Cooperation with international organizations and various stakeholders has the potential to provide broad-based support and resources, enabling projects to be conducted according to international standards.

67.6% of NGOs are members of at least one civil society network. This indicates that networks are widely recognized and that participation is high in the sector. Among those who avoid joining networks, the most common reason, cited by 26.7%, is the perceived ineffectiveness of these networks. Other concerns include effectiveness, compatibility, time, effort, and perception.

**5. Field Research Findings / Barriers, Challenges, Needs:** Economic barriers complicate the educational and personal development processes of young women, while social norms and gender-based expectations limit their ability to express themselves freely and access leadership roles. Educational challenges stem from inadequate access to quality education, hindering the development of leadership skills. Family pressures make it difficult for young women to make independent decisions, and gender-based discrimination further obstructs their path to leadership positions.

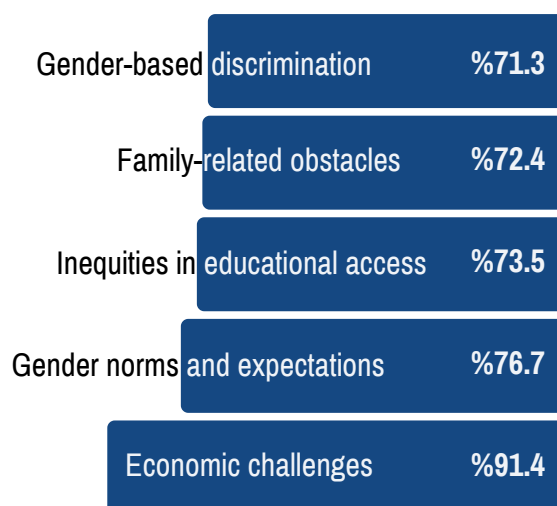
Effective communication (97.5%), healthy living environments (95.9%), and foreign language proficiency (94.7%) are essential conditions needed for girls and young women to achieve their leadership goals. Additionally, technology use (94.6%) and economic support (93.7%) are other crucial factors that equip young women with the confidence and skills necessary for their leadership journey.

Although young women have high access to basic education and diploma opportunities to fully realize their leadership potential, there are significant limitations in areas such as professional qualifications (44.5%) and technology use (47.8%). It is also noteworthy that access to support such as career counseling (19.2%) and participation in international programs (10.8%) is relatively low.



**Figure 6: Factors Facilitating NGOs' Activities**

**Figure 5: Barriers Faced by Girls and Young Women in Developing Empowerment and Leadership Skills**



**The most significant challenge NGOs face** in sustaining their activities is the lack of financial resources, cited by 75.2% of organizations. Administrative and financial practices are also mentioned as a major obstacle by 68.6%, highlighting the difficulties in managing projects and ensuring financial compliance. The shortage of human resources (30.9%) and the insufficient knowledge and training of staff on gender equality (27.3%) are identified as key needs for NGOs. Collaboration and knowledge sharing with other NGOs or sectors are listed as the third priority by 31.4%, indicating that cooperation and networking play a crucial role in enhancing organizational capacities. Advocacy skills and activities (27.6%) and human resources and volunteer management (22.9%) are other important capacity gaps that NGOs need to address. Training and professional development programs for team members are noted by 19%, showing that enhancing staff competencies supports the overall success of the organizations. Additionally, the socio-political structure is highlighted as another challenge affecting 61% of NGOs.

## 6. Findings and Solution Proposals:

- **Finding 1:** In Turkey, there are various civil society initiatives aimed at empowering women economically. For example, the Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (KEDV) runs projects such as the Simurg Women's Cooperatives Network and micro-entrepreneurship programs to support the economic and social empowerment of women. On a global scale, organizations like the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India help women achieve economic independence through comprehensive microfinance and leadership training programs.
- **Solution Proposal 1:** In Turkey, alongside programs by organizations like KEDV, similar approaches to SEWA's leadership and comprehensive training programs should be developed. The Aydın Doğan Foundation can collaborate with local women's cooperatives and social entrepreneurship networks to enhance the content of social and economic entrepreneurship training for young women within their scholarship and alumni networks. Additionally, the Foundation could establish communication bridges with these entities to help young women transform their social benefit-focused project ideas into entrepreneurial ventures.
- **Finding 2:** NGOs in Turkey face challenges related to financial sustainability and long-term planning. These organizations play a critical role in empowering women and girls, but their limited capacities restrict their impact.
- **Solution Proposal 2:** The Aydın Doğan Foundation can support local NGOs by providing training and resources to enhance their capacities and expand the scope of existing support and collaboration activities. By developing a collaboration model similar to Germany's Dual Vocational Training System, NGOs can play a leading role in the vocational development of young women, particularly in the transition from education to employment.
- **Finding 3:** In Turkey, there are various volunteering and social responsibility programs aimed at increasing the social participation of young women. However, the scope and impact of these programs are more limited compared to global examples.
- **Solution Proposal 3:** The Aydın Doğan Foundation can promote volunteering and social responsibility programs that increase the social participation of young women by collaborating with local NGOs. The Foundation could encourage young women from its scholarship and alumni network to engage in volunteer work with these NGOs. To this end, the Foundation could work with local NGOs to create institutional policy documents on topics such as volunteer definition, volunteer responsibility, volunteer commitment, and volunteer management, and support the capacities of these NGOs. Digital community-building tools could be used to bring together girls, young women, and local NGOs, making these tools accessible to all stakeholders.
- **Finding 4:** Field interviews with girls under 18, young women aged 18 and over, and representatives of civil society organizations revealed that effective methods are needed to develop leadership skills and increase social participation among young women. In this context, approaches such as active learning methods, blended learning strategies, long-term mentorship programs, community-focused projects, and scenario-based learning are highlighted.
- **Solution Proposal 4:** The Aydın Doğan Foundation should use active learning methods in its programs to develop participants' leadership and decision-making skills. Group work, case studies, and simulations can play an effective role in these processes. Additionally, supporting in-person training with online modules (blended learning) can make the training more accessible by allowing participants to learn at their own pace. By increasing the capacity of existing mentorship programs and social responsibility-focused project development training, the Foundation can reach girls and young women beyond its scholarship and alumni network. The Foundation can apply scenario-based learning techniques in workshops, camps, and excursions with girls and young women by collaborating with expert teams and NGOs in this field, updating existing content, or expanding the target audience. This approach will enable girls and young women to develop complex problem-solving, decision-making, and critical thinking skills, increasing the impact of the Foundation's support in integrating these skills into professional and social life.

- **Finding 5:** Girls and young women often lack the necessary knowledge and skills to transform their ideas into projects focused on social benefit, community-centered, and rights-based work, and to manage these projects effectively.
- **Solution Proposal 5:** The Aydın Doğan Foundation can deepen the content of its existing training programs on project cycle management, offered to girls and young women, by incorporating themes such as gender-sensitive budgeting, planning, procurement, team management, communication strategy, and feminist leadership. The Foundation can organize events where girls and young women present the project cycles they develop to relevant stakeholders (local governments, private sector organizations, and NGOs operating in related fields). This approach will not only provide an interactive platform for girls and young women to refine their project ideas but also facilitate a communication network between young women and institutions that can help bring ideas with the potential to become social enterprises to life.

## 7. Tools and Guides:

Guides and reference works to be used in determining monitoring and evaluation tools and methods for working with girls and young women:

- Women's Empowerment Index (WEI), Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs), and Global Gender Gap Index (GGPI): These are global reference tools used to monitor, measure, and promote women's empowerment and gender equality. The WEI evaluates women's power to make choices in social and economic life; the WEPs provide guidance on ensuring gender equality in the business world. The GGPI analyzes gender inequalities in key dimensions of human development, contributing to policymakers' efforts to develop gender equality policies.
- CEID's Gender Equality Monitoring and Reporting Guide: This guide offers methods on how to monitor gender equality in various fields such as education, health, and the economy. It provides detailed explanations of various indicators and monitoring techniques that NGOs and initiatives can use. Thus, the guide aims to support NGOs in integrating a gender equality perspective into their work and provides practical knowledge and tools for use in strategic planning processes. CEID has also developed various educational materials aimed at helping NGOs more effectively integrate a gender equality perspective into their work, particularly designed for use in workshops.
- Sabancı University's Purple Certificate Program: This program stands out as a guide for educators on integrating gender equality into all educational fields. The program aims to increase educators' awareness of gender equality, allowing them to reflect this awareness in their course content and create gender-sensitive materials. By combining theoretical knowledge and practical workshops, it equips participants with the skills to implement a gender equality perspective in classroom practices. The program has made significant contributions to the dissemination of gender equality in education by reaching a wide audience of educators across Turkey.
- Harvard University's Making Caring Common Initiative: This initiative provides a comprehensive e-checklist for developing leadership skills in girls. The checklist outlines the key elements of leadership training and offers step-by-step guidance on how to implement this training. The program aims to help girls develop skills in areas such as empathy, responsibility, and ethical leadership.
- Fearlessly Girl: This e-guide is designed for organizing empowerment workshops for young girls. The guide includes educational programs and workshops that help young girls understand their roles in society and realize their potential. It also provides detailed plans and implementation methods on how to organize these workshops within local communities.
- GLOW Programs: This program offers a comprehensive leadership training program focused on developing self-awareness, self-confidence, and leadership skills in girls. The program is designed with flexibility to adapt to local conditions and includes practical guidelines and checklists on how to implement leadership training.



Avrupa Birliđi tarafından  
finanse edilmektedir.

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Bu ihtiya analizi, Avrupa Birliđi’nin “Sosyal Dahil Etme ve Genlik Üzerine alıřan Hak Temelli STK’lara Destek” ađrısı kapsamında eř-finanse edilen IPA III/2023/450-059 “Gülü Kızlar, Gülü Yarınlar” projesi kapsamında Aydın Dođan Vakfı için Dissensus Research tarafından gerekleřtirilmiřtir. Proje kapsamında hazırlanan bu raporun ieriđi yalnızca Aydın Dođan Vakfı’nın sorumluluđundadır ve her zaman Avrupa Birliđi’nin görüřlerini yansıtmaz.

