

**GENDER
EQUALITY
IN THE
WORLD OF
ARTS AND
CULTURE**

APRIL 2022



**GENDER EQUALITY IN THE WORLD
OF ARTS AND CULTURE: CONTESTED
ISSUES, STRUCTURAL PROBLEMS,
SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS**
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This report has been prepared by Prof. Dr. Itr Erhart in scope of the cultural policy studies of Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts.



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FOREWORD

In this special year when we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV) with Istanbulites, we are pleased to share with you the 10th report of our Cultural Policy Studies department. Our cultural policy report this year focuses on gender equality which is also at the heart of İKSV's three-year strategic plan, and this of course is no coincidence. The year 2022, when we have begun to hear ever more loudly the voices rising in the field of women's rights both in Turkey and across the world, also marks the 45th anniversary of United Nations' declaration of an international women's day back in 1977.

As a cultural institution operating for half a century, we believe in the ideal of a world where the rights of women and girls, who constitute half of the world's population, are protected and equality is ensured. With the communication potential we hold as constituent members of the creative sector, we now have the opportunity to hearten the momentum created by women in all corners of the world, build upon their achievements, and develop a future where gender equality is possible.

Therefore, in its 10th report, İKSV Cultural Policy Studies department is focusing on the subject of "Gender Equality in the World of Arts and Culture". In this study where we had the opportunity to benefit from dear İtir Erhat's long years of experience in academia and civil society, we are contemplating together with artists and cultural professionals in Istanbul how the creative sectors in Turkey can become more equal, democratic, and inclusive. We are meticulously bringing the contested issues and structural problems to the agenda and presenting suggested solutions.

Gender equality in creative sectors is an important subject of research in many countries. This report has been prepared to meet the need for data-driven studies in this field in Turkey and to take a snapshot of the current situation through a comprehensive research conducted with the women working in the creative sectors in Istanbul. In line with all its findings and suggestions, we aim for this report to facilitate the following steps for the development of gender equality in the arts and culture sector:

- Increasing the visibility of gender inequality,
- Realisation of mentorship and training programs geared towards increasing women's employment,
- Generating new sources of funding in this field and increasing means of access to financing,
- Instituting inclusive and sustainable communication mechanisms among the stakeholders of the field,
- Strengthening the dialogue between public institutions, NGOs operating in the field, and the Art World to develop new strategies and policies.

The findings of this report, which emerged from a field research conducted in Istanbul with the support of GfK research company, were presented for the first time at WOW Women of the World Festival Istanbul. In collaboration with British Council Turkey, who gave us their invaluable support during the report's research process, we organised a panel titled "Equality in the Creative Domain" in scope of this festival to shed light on the power of creative women to lead the change and the ways in which the domain of arts and culture can be carried into the future with an egalitarian approach.

We firmly believe that the equality to be instituted in the creative domain will also form the basis of the balance between nature, human and society. Therefore, we see this report as part of the quest for transformation towards the rights-based reconstruction of cultural policies. And we invite you to discover the stories you will encounter in light of the data presented throughout the study and join us in creating a just and equal world of arts and culture. As the women's rights advocate, feminist writer and activist Şirin Tekeli said: "The 21st century will be the century of women!"

ÖZLEM ECE

İKSV CULTURAL POLICY
STUDIES DIRECTOR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For their valuable contributions, I extend my heartfelt thanks to İKSV General Director Görgün Taner and Cultural Study Policies Director Özlem Ece who entrusted me with the foundation's 10th cultural policy report,

To the Cultural Study Policies Department' Research Coordinator Dr. Can Sezgin whom I worked with from the day we began to envision and conceptualize the research until the day we finalised it; I have learned a lot from Sezgin who caught every detail that I missed and kindly communicated them to me,

To Hande Diker and Berçem Demirel, the enthusiastic, dedicated, and meticulous team members of GfK research company which supported us in scope of our collaboration during the data collection process of the field research,

To all artists and cultural professionals who participated in the interviews, focus group studies and the survey, earnestly sharing their experiences and suggestions with us,

To Mert Ofloğlu who assisted us in the writing process of the report,

To Dilara Böke, Gökçenur Aksu, Oya Berru Cihan, Sıla Göçer, Didenur Kapucu, Ayperi Eyiakar, Şevkican Eren, İdil Su Yonat and Berfu Çopur who contributed to the collection of data from the desk research and the stories from the field,

To Prof. Dr. Hande Eslen-Ziya who shared with us her valuable feedback and opinions on the report,

And of course, to all professionals and organisations working in the fields of theatre, cinema and music in Istanbul who supported us in the processes of data collection and dissemination of our survey!

It would not have been possible to create such a comprehensive report without your contributions. It has been a privilege to work with you.

ITIR ERHART

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research on gender equality in the world of arts and culture has chosen as its sample the three disciplines of *theatre, cinema and music* that provide the most employment in the *arts and culture sector of Istanbul* and has been carried out with a mixed research design. The data collection process of the study, starting in the second week of January 2022 and lasting through the end of February, was comprised of 18 semi-structured interviews with women professionals in the sector, one focus group interview with LGBTQI+ artists, and an intensive four-weeks long online survey study with women professionals again in the fields of theatre, cinema, and music across Istanbul. The prominent findings of the research are as follows:

- 1) 49% of the survey participants work in the sector of theatre, 34% in cinema and 26% in music. 48% of the participants are artists while 38% have administrative and 12% have technical jobs. The most prevalent form of employment (44%) is project-based and 62% of the participants have social security and health insurance.
- 2) The rate of those who think gender equality has been ensured in Turkey is quite low in all the aforesaid disciplines. The realm considered to have relatively higher gender equality is the family (13%). That said, the rate of women who do all or most of the housework is 65%, while this rate rises to 74% in shopping. Almost one in every two women thinks that her responsibilities outside of work adversely affect her career development.
- 3) 18 professionals who participated in the interviews describe the condition of being a woman in Turkey with the following expressions: “exclusion”, “segregation”, “subjection to male language, male domination, male oppression”, “inability to walk freely on the street”, “not being taken seriously”, “having to work more than men”, “being silenced”, “feeling the pressure to hide one’s sexual life”, and “being in a ceaseless struggle”.

- 4) The sector’s professionals state that LGBTQI+ experience the gender inequality and discrimination faced by women more severely.
- 5) Of the survey participants, 15% believe that there is equal opportunity in their sector of employment, 13% think that the principle of equal pay for equal work is being implemented.
- 6) While 53% of the participants think that being a woman adversely affects their career, 63% indicate that they experience disadvantages because they are not men. In all three disciplines, there are gender-based distributions of roles and tasks; fields like sound, lighting design, cinematography, and editing are dominated by men.
- 7) Only 19% of the participants say that there are support mechanisms geared towards the professional development of women in the sector. The trainings and workshops organised by non-governmental organisations and solidarity networks are being attended. Along with their occupational skills, the fields in which participants wish to improve themselves most are legal literacy, financial literacy, and digitalisation.
- 8) 7 of every 10 participants think that women are not equal among themselves in their sector of employment. Ranking first among the sources of inequality is occupational hierarchy (72%), followed by socioeconomic inequalities (52%) and physical characteristics (51%).
- 9) 52% of the women professionals who participated in the survey state that they have experienced gender-based discrimination and underline the low number of women directors and roles written for women in the cinema and theatre sectors. Foremost among the ways of struggling against discriminatory behaviours is to confront the perpetrator of the discrimination.

10) Ranking first among the measures participants think should be taken against gender-based discrimination are “legal regulations” (23%) and “incorporation of gender equality in the school curriculum” (23%). The rate of people who assert the necessity of organising in this field is 20%.

11) 6 out of 10 participants state that they have experienced harassment/mobbing in their sector of employment and 62% of those who experienced harassment/mobbing say that they know what should be done in this situation. Most of the participants prefer to get in contact with professional organisations and labour unions and apply to solidarity networks. Even though it is predominantly women and LGBTQI+ who are subjected to harassment and mobbing, it is stated that men may also have similar experiences.

12) 40% of the participants state that the pandemic has had adverse effects on gender equality in their sectors of employment.

1 INTRODUCTION

Gender is constructed within historical, social, and cultural power relations; it is learned and absorbed through the role models, teachings, traditions, books, television series, movies, commercials, songs, sayings, plays that one is subjected to. The roles, values, behaviours attributed to women and men¹ are reinforced and internalised through a discourse that places emphasis on natural differences. This discourse narrates the women and girls as the fragile, maternal, frail, passive, delicate, domestic, loyal, and more emotional sex (Butler, 1989). Meanwhile the men and boys are ascribed with adjectives like brave, sportive, active, tough, strong, angry, rational, and competitive. Women are given responsibility for the home and children—the private sphere—while men are defined in the political, economic, technological, cultural, financial, social—the public—sphere.

The impacts of the attributes and social roles ascribed to women and girls become manifest in their exclusion from the public sphere, discrimination, forced and early marriage; lack of access to rights to education, health, employment, and culture; subjection to physical, psychological, economic, and sexual violence; glass ceiling in business life; otherization and humiliation in cultural products such as television series, movies, comic strips, video games, songs, and commercials.

To give a few figures, women worldwide earn 40% less in salaries than men and women’s annual income is 50% lower than that of men. Women, who constitute 39% of the global labour force, have 27% representation in administrative positions and 25% in parliaments. An estimated 736 million women and girls aged 15 years and older experience physical or sexual violence by a partner at least once in their lifetime (UNWOMEN, 2021).

¹ Discussions around the concept of gender have moved beyond the binary system of sexuality (girl and boy / woman and man). The questions that constitute the subject matter of this report’s research and the data collected to this end focus predominantly on the hierarchies and inequality established within the gender binary system.

We see that in 2021, the employment rate of women in Turkey was 28% while that of men was 62.8%. In 2020, the employment rate in the age group 25-49 of women with a child under the age of 3 in their household was 25.2% while that of men was 85.5%. Meanwhile, the rate of women members of parliament is 17.4% (TÜİK, 2021).

It is still possible to come across the concept of “natural” as the justification of such gender-based inequalities, discrimination and violence, while this concept continues to be used by the power holders to protect and legitimise their advantageous positions and the existing social structures (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). On the other hand, the feminist movement across the world is working to transform these social structures that create, sustain, and legitimise inequalities to achieve gender equality by ensuring women and girls’ full and equal access to rights and equal participation in the economy and cultural and social life.

At this point, the importance of systematic data collection and analysis of these data to comprehend the structural and social reasons underlying these inequalities becomes evident. Subsequently, all the institutions and individuals comprising the society should engage in dialogue, work together, and develop and implement policies and strategies to remove the obstacles to gender equality.

1 | 1 | GENDER EQUALITY IN ARTS AND CULTURE

Throughout history, art has facilitated the invisible, unheeded, otherised, marginalised, and socially and economically disadvantaged individuals and groups to be heard. For instance, gospel, blues, and jazz have reflected Afro-American values, life, and history in the twentieth century (Daniels, 1985, 14). In her works titled “feminist visual parodies”, Peg Brand has reproduced famous paintings to satirise the male perspective and the artistic conventions established by men (2006, 166). Mario Puzo, Halit Hüseyini, Gene Luen Yang, and Nora Okja Keller have narrated the migrant experience in America with their novels that have been translated into tens of languages reaching millions of readers. With his cult movies like *Talk to Her* (2002) and *All About My Mother* (1999), Pedro Almodóvar has brought the queer² experience to the masses. Gregg Mozgala has aimed for people to question the prejudices about disability and art through the plays he stages in Brooklyn at *The Apothetae*³ founded and directed by him.

² Even though the word “queer” is generally used in the sense of “not heterosexual”, it is a concept that questions all traditional categories and identities pertaining to gender and sexuality, and contains all the “other”s. For a detailed discussion on the concept of queer and queer theory, see: Jagose, 1996.

³ At the theatre where actors with disabilities and non-disabled actors perform together, the Disabled Experience is staged both with newly commissioned plays and also the classics featuring characters with disabilities or dealing with themes on disability, such as *Oedipus*, *Richard III* and *The Elephant Man*.

The realm of arts and culture which harbours great opportunities for the mitigation of inequalities and the empowerment of disadvantaged individuals and groups has, on the other hand, been instrumental in the reproduction of inequalities. A case in point is the reference to women painters with their first name (Frida, Charlotte), while men are called with their surname (Picasso, Dali, Gauguin). In a similar vein, documentaries narrating women artists' lives focus more on their private lives rather than their works and contributions to art history; art history lessons make almost no mention of women artists; virtually all orchestra conductors are white men; the cinema is dominated by the visual hierarchy wherein men are ascribed the position of the "bearer of the look", while women are ascribed that of the "looked-at image", "the other"...⁴

Meanwhile, the gender-based division of labour is a manifestation of the gender role expectations and by extension the inequality of opportunities. According to the data (2019) collected by ILO (International Labour Organisation) in 70 countries, women constitute only 29% of a total of 12,940 arts-culture entrepreneurs. Yet another research shows that only one fourth of the film directors and a mere 7% of the executives in the 100 leading arts and culture institutions in France are women (Ministère Français de la Culture, 2014).

Looking from the gender perspective, it is not difficult to surmise how the power dynamics and the gender-based division of labour are shaped in Turkey and around the globe. Creating awareness, rallying public opinion, developing effective campaigns, programs, policies, and participatory processes require systematic data collection geared towards understanding the dimension of the inequalities, their root causes, and origins. And that is precisely what this report in your hands, on your screens aims to achieve.

⁴ Mulvey (1975) emphasises how the woman presented to the gaze of men is trivialised or saved in this hierarchy as she is displayed to give men pleasure. It is possible to see that there is a similar relationship between other power dynamics (race, class, nationality, belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity...) and their position in the hierarchies of the gaze.

We can see its reflections when we look at the grand prizes awarded in the realm of cinema in Turkey⁵ as well. When we look at the distribution of awards at the Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival between the years 2011 and 2021, for instance ... The festival has two separate award categories titled Best Film and Best Director. In 2020, Azra Deniz Okyay received both awards with her film *Ghosts*. In 2011, the Best Director award was given to Çiğdem Vitrinel for her film *Left Behind*. Except for these two years, all the awards in this category were picked up by men. In 2013, the award for the Best Screenplay was given to Zeynep Dadak and Merve Kayan (*The Blue Wave*). In 2016, Nursen Çetin Köreken and her husband Ümit Köreken (*Blue Bicycle*) received this award. And in 2021, this award was presented to Ferit Karahan and Gülistan Acet for the film *Brother's Keeper*. Except for these three years, the award again went only to men. The award for the Best Cinematography, without exception, was always given to men.

The Best Music award was always picked up by men as well, except in 2015 when Eleonore Fourniau won this award for the film *Cold of Kalandar*. The Best Editing award was given to Ayris Alptekin for *Ghosts* in 2020 and to Çiçek Kahraman for *The Blue Wave* in 2014. Except for these two years, it was always male film editors who received this award.

In the Istanbul Film Festival as well we come across a similar picture between the years 2011 and 2021. The Golden Tulip presents awards in categories such as Best Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Director of Photography, Best Editing, and Best Original Music. In 2016, the Golden Tulip Best Film Award went to Ahu Öztürk for *Dust Cloth*. Except for that year, it was always the male directors who received the award. The Best Director Award went to Yeşim Ustaoglu in 2017 for *Clair Obscure*, and to Aslı Özge in 2013 for *Lifelong*. Except for these two names, it was always male directors who received this award...

⁵ We come across a similar picture in theatre awards as well. These data are featured in the third section of this study titled *Inequality*.

The Best Screenplay award went to Ahu Öztürk (*Dust Cloth*) in 2016, and to Belma Baş (*Zephyr*) in 2011. The Best Director of Photography award, without exception, always went to men. Same with the Best Editing award... In 2018, Canset Özge Can received the Best Original Music award with the film *The Pigeon*, barring that year, this award was always given to male composers.

Lastly, when we look at the distribution of awards at the International Adana Golden Boll Film Festival between 2011 and 2021, we again see the reflection of gender-based division of labour in the sector. We see that the Best Director award was always given to male directors except in 2021 (Nisan Dağ, *When I'm Done Dying*), in 2020 (Leyla Yılmaz, *Not Knowing*), in 2014 (Nisan Dağ and Esra Saydam, *Things I Cannot Tell*) and in 2012 (Pelın Esmer, *Watchtower*).

The Best Film award in 2018 went to *Sibel* shot by the woman director Çağla Zencirci and male director Guillaume Giovanetti. Barring that, between 2011 and 2021 this award was always picked up by men. It was always male screenwriters who received the Best Screenplay award except for Nisan Dağ (*When I'm Done Dying*) in 2021, Pelın Esmer and Barış Bıçakçı (*Something Useful*) in 2017, and Senem Tüzen (*Motherland*) in 2015.

The Best Music award, without exception, was always picked up by male composers. In 2016, a group named Baraj received this award for the film *My Father's Wings*. The Best Cinematography award, without exception, always went to men.

The Ayhan Ergürsel Best Editing award was picked up by *Naughty Children* in 2021 (editors: Mathilde Van De Moortel & Elif Uluengin & Nicolas Suburlatı) and by Ayris Alptekin with *Snow* in 2017. Barring those two years, the award always went to men.

1 2 RESEARCH SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

We devised this research on gender equality in the world of arts and culture firstly by considering the available time and resources, like in every research process. As we set out, the first question we asked ourselves was: To analyse it in the context of gender equality, how should we tackle this vast universe of arts and culture spread out to every corner of a metropolis like Istanbul? In other words, how can we take a representative photograph of this dynamic sector with multiple variables and multiple stakeholders during the months of our research in the most effective way?

In line with these questions, we determined three disciplines- *theatre, cinema, music*- as the *sample* to present us with the correct insight, seeing as they provide the highest employment within the *arts and culture sector of Istanbul* which was our *research universe*.

Following the sample selection, we developed the research strategy to ensure that this research on gender equality in the world of arts and culture uses *valid* methods, assembles and analyses *reliable* and *plausible* amount of data and attains *generalisable* results for future evaluations.

We adopted a mixed-method research design that analyses qualitative and quantitative data together and looks at the phenomenon of gender equality from different perspectives. In the data analysis process of the research design, we carried out a comparative inquiry of the qualitative and quantitative data we obtained from the sample and attained the results through a research strategy that tests the reliability of the outcomes (*concurrent triangulation*).⁶

⁶ For detailed information, see: Creswell, J.W. & Plano Clark, V.L. (2011). *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage / Flick, U. et al. (2012). "I Can't Prescribe Something Just Because Someone Asks for It...: Using Mixed Methods in the Framework of Triangulation". *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 6(2), pp. 97-110.

Preparation and Desk Research

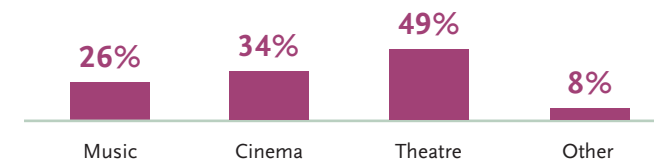
In the preparation phase of this study, which uses original data to address gender equality in the sphere of arts and culture, we took into consideration the important international studies that have researched the phenomenon of gender equality in the realm of arts and culture. We examined the indicators addressed and tested in the reports and other publications on creative industries produced by several international institutions and organisations such as UNESCO (2014, 2022), UNDP (2020), British Council (2018), European Union (2016; 2021), and Culture Action Europe (2016). In light of numerous indicators such as “job security”, “access to support mechanisms and funds”, “sharing of domestic work”, and “the effect of gender roles on artistic production”, we designed this study with its new findings to help bridge the existing knowledge gap both in Istanbul and across Turkey and on the international scale.

As part of the desk research, which is another pillar of the preparation process, we investigated whether the arts and culture institutions in Istanbul have policy documents on gender equality, inclusivity, and anti-discrimination declared on their official websites. Additionally, we examined the gender breakdown of prestigious awards given over the last decade in the fields of theatre, music, and cinema. Similarly, we enumerated the male-female ratio of the funds and grants offered in these three sectors over the past ten years.

Field Research and Data Collection Process

The field research and data collection process, which began in the second week of January 2022 and continued through the end of February, comprised of eighteen 60-90 minutes long semi-structured interviews conducted with women professionals in the sector; one 70 minutes long focus group interview with LGBTQI+ artists; and an intense online survey study disseminated (via the *snowball method*) for four weeks through the arts and culture institutions, labour unions, and nongovernmental organisations working in the fields of theatre, cinema, and music across Istanbul.

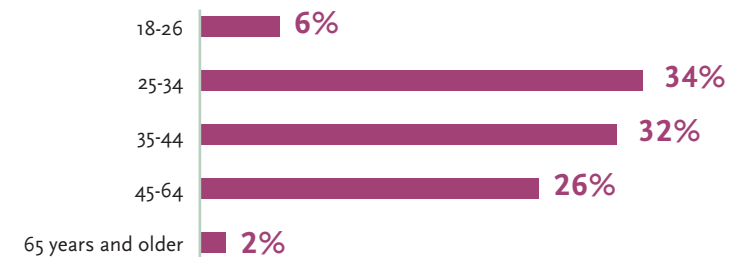
SECTOR*



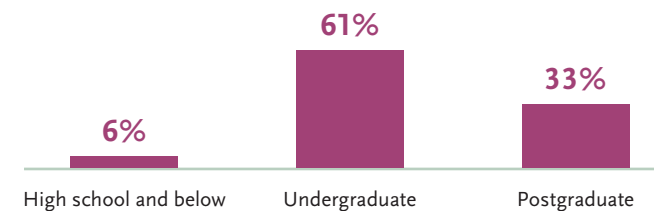
A total of 157 women, who work in the theatre, cinema, and music sectors as artists or with administrative or technical duties, took part in the survey.

* Multiple choice question, thus the total exceeds 100%.

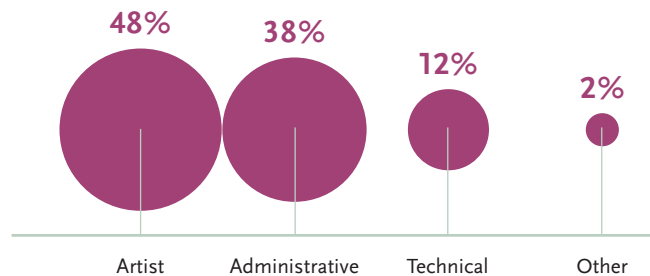
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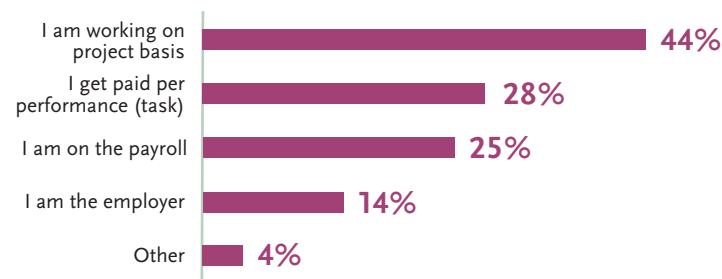
EDUCATION



DUTY

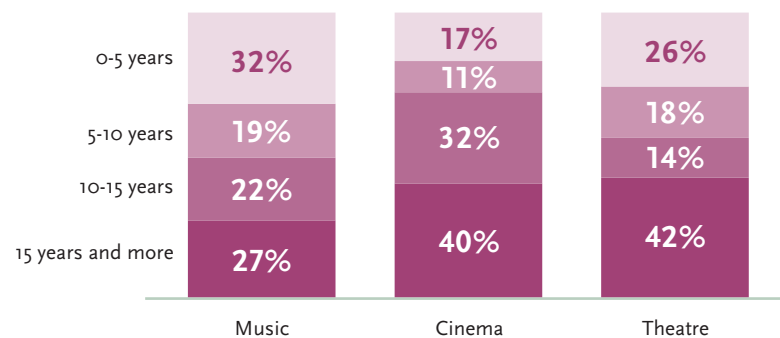


FORM OF EMPLOYMENT*

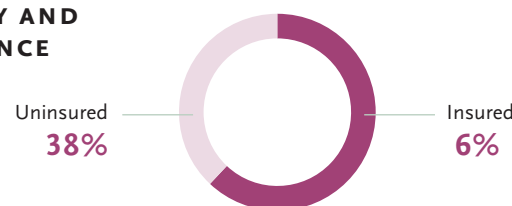


* Multiple Choice Question, thus the total exceeds 100%.

EXPERIENCE



SOCIAL SECURITY AND HEALTH INSURANCE



We asked the artists and cultural professionals, who participated in the qualitative or quantitative part of the research, how they evaluate gender equality in Turkey in general and in their sector of employment in particular; the dimensions of the discrimination and inequality they encounter; whether there are support mechanisms they have recourse to when subjected to violence and/or discrimination; and their suggestions for ensuring equality. In addition to these questions, we aimed to expand the perspective of the study by also asking about factors such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration, experience, education, and disability.

Alongside the empirical part of the study, we also made visits to art events such as exhibitions and stage performances organised during this period in Istanbul, which we thought would shed light on the investigated dimensions of the gender phenomenon from distinctive angles. During these visits we interacted with women artists from different disciplines and strived to incorporate their unique vision into the study. These stories collected from the field are presented to the reader in separate boxes throughout the report.

Analysis and Evaluation

The emerging qualitative and quantitative data in this study were analysed with the abovementioned comparative approach (*concurrent triangulation*) to understand and explain the phenomenon of gender equality in the world of arts and culture with its different dimensions. In light of this approach, we concurrently implemented the parallel sets of qualitative and quantitative questions, which you may find in the *Annex*, and conducted a comparative analysis of the emerging data. We included our findings, which cross-validate (*verification*) one another from two different sources, among the results of the study.

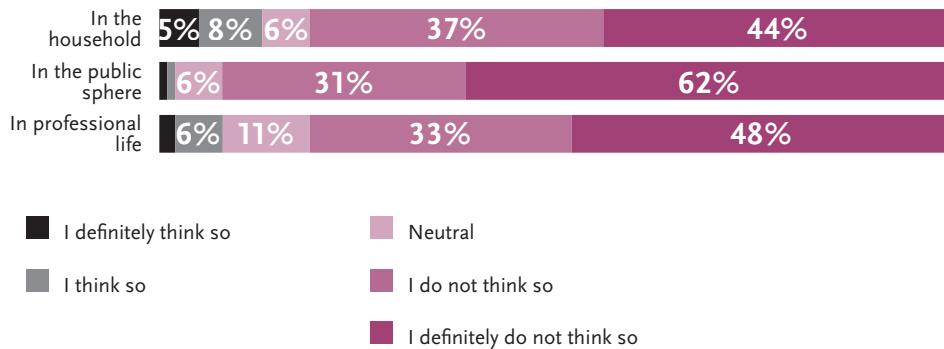
This gender equality research conducted by İKSV with the technical and personnel assistance of GfK research company was finalised with British Council Turkey’s financial support for the field research and the visualisation of its findings.

2 NOT BEING A MAN IN THE ARTS AND CULTURE SECTOR

The reason why the question in the interviews and the survey was posed as “not being a heterosexual man” rather than “being a woman” or “being LGBTQI+” was to enable the participants to look at the oftentimes multiple disadvantages that they experienced or witnessed from a different place. We wanted to understand how the employees of the arts and culture sector viewed and experienced gender equality within the family, in the public sphere, and in professional life.

The participants predominantly think that equality is ensured in none of these three spheres. The realm with the highest inequality is the public sphere. It is also possible to observe that the gendered division of domestic labour and the inequality we encounter in the public sphere and in professional life are parallel to one another.

Do you think that there is gender equality in the following spheres in Turkey?



2 1 BEING A WOMAN

Womanhood is associated with the sense of being an individual excluded from the mainstream, struggling outside the circle; and at the same time with the need to constantly protect and prove oneself within her social environment. This need results in the inability to freely be oneself and act like oneself and the necessity to constantly develop shields and defence mechanisms.

In reference to Simone de Beauvoir’s book (1953), where she defines woman as the “Second Sex” and womanhood as “Otherness”, not being a heterosexual man is described with expressions like “alternative to the main thing”, “subsidiary”, “auxiliary”, “secondary”.

It is emphasised that gender discrimination and the sense of being different are felt as of the young ages and therefore various defence mechanisms are developed; and one suffers until she learns to exist in life as a woman.

It is expressed that there is a constant state of rowing against the tide, an endless struggle and conflict due to the exclusion, segregation, subjection to male language, male domination, and oppression; the inability to walk comfortably on the street, being silenced, and feeling the pressure to hide one’s sexual life.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD: *BI-You-They: A Century of Artist Women Exhibition*

Meşher, 09.10.2021 – 27.03.2022

I-You-They: A Century of Artist Women exhibition derives its name from Şükran Aziz's artwork that emphasises the fragility of social identities. The exhibition is the product of a research initiated to recognise and unveil the women artists who have been overlooked and neglected in the evolution of art history and remained outside the generally accepted lines. Constructed primarily on plastic arts, *I-You-They* exhibition features works by over a hundred women artists. The exhibited works touch upon numerous subjects ranging from gender roles to the otherization of women, from the sanctification of motherhood to the communalisation of nudity, from the association of flowers with women to the difficulties women experience whilst asserting their own individuality.

Through the mirrors placed in hidden corners of the exhibition space, "I" tries to capture the multidimensionality of a woman. While "You" conveys the experience of being or not being a mother, "They" looks at women through the eyes of others.

The exhibition also casts a critical view on the acceptance of the flower as the most "feminine" theme seeing as it evokes all adjectives—emotional, vulnerable, ordinary, decorative—attributed to women. Emphasising the fact that a large number of women painted flowers in vases in order to stay away from themes that might seem "dangerous" and remain in the safe, "innocent" space, the exhibition also features the women who could only draw flowers. By juxtaposing sanctity and nudity, it also criticises the sanctity of motherhood.

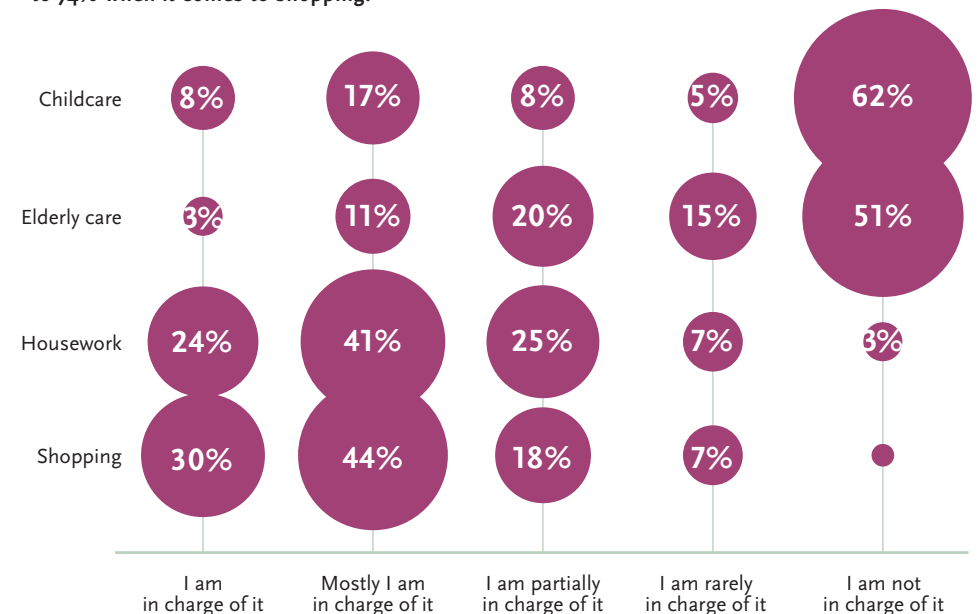
2.1.1. *The Writer's Room*

The gendered division of labour in the household adversely affects artistic production. While it is considered natural for a male screenwriter or playwright not to have domestic responsibilities, if the writer is a woman, it is not possible for her to withdraw herself to work and produce in "A Room of One's Own"⁷ as Virginia Woolf put it. Whether she is an artist or a manager in the sector, domestic responsibilities are predominantly placed on the woman.

Due to gender roles and stereotypes, the tasks of shopping, cooking, cleaning, and the planning of the private sphere are not equally shared between the partners. While the woman assumes almost the entire responsibility, the man helps out when asked, shows affection to the children, plays with them.

RESPONSIBILITIES OUTSIDE OF WORK

While the rate of women who main or sole party responsible of the housework is 65%, this rate rises to 74% when it comes to shopping.



⁷ Virginia Woolf compiled the notes of her lectures, which she delivered in 1928 at the University of Cambridge, in the form of a long essay and published it as a book titled *A Room of One's Own* in 1929.

Since the woman is considered responsible also for childcare, even if the burden of care is shared equally, the women with children have difficulty accessing career opportunities due to preconceptions.⁸

“Since I had a child, I rarely received project offers that would keep me away from home.” (Sector: Cinema)

Due to gender expectations, men are seen as the “breadwinner” who must cover the expenses of the household and the children. The woman to earn more or to work in managerial positions may have adverse effects on the relationship. Yet another finding of the study indicates that the increased awareness of gender equality becomes a reason for separation or divorce due to the unequally shared responsibilities.

Do you think that your responsibilities outside of work adversely affect your career development?



One out of 2 professional women in the sector thinks that her responsibilities outside of work adversely affect her career development.



⁸ Quantitative findings of the study reflect the responses of the women professionals in the sector working in Istanbul who participated in the research. These findings do not include women who could not continue their professional lives after having children or due to other responsibilities outside of work.

Be Young, Be Pretty, Do Not Swear

Women are subjected to the intervention of both men and other women. Women with low-cut collars or bra straps showing in the private sphere or at the workplace are generally admonished by their fellow women:

“When a man’s shirt collar is a little more open no one says why did you unbutton your shirt... Men are always accredited with their attire, clothing, all the roles in their lives... Unfortunately, no woman has that chance.” (Sector: Music)

Being “well-groomed” and “ready for auditions” have different meanings for women and men. While the man is ready with a white shirt or t-shirt, the women in the sector are still expected to put on make-up and dress in a manner that accentuates their sexuality.

“...of course, we are told things like ‘let’s underline your beauty as well’ or sometimes we come across such attitudes of our actress friends too...” (Sector: Theatre)

The audience also has similar expectations. Both in the private sphere and onstage, women can meet these expectations if she is pretty, young, “well-groomed” and does not swear:

“It’s like, women cannot do that, cannot say that (...) When we swear in the play, we hear the audience murmur ‘what is that woman saying’...” (Sector: Theatre)

Due to the reactions they receive, some women resort to self-censorship in choosing their costumes and the language they use. Being put in a position of having to make these choices is considered by some as an intervention to art.

I Know What I Am Doing

The expression used by a woman professional who participated in the interviews is quite striking: “being someone who is difficult to take seriously”. Women have to try much harder and spend more time, effort, and sometimes money in order to be taken seriously. Yet on the other hand, they feel the pressure to be pretty, attractive, charming; thus, this seemingly contradictory situation puts them in a constant state of self-negotiation. Irrespective of whether they are directors, writers or teachers, women must present more evidence of their command of the subject to convince people that they know what they are doing. And due to the struggle to show and prove their existence, the woman feels herself “in a constant battlefield”. (Sector: Music)

In professional life in particular, women are obliged to make a late start with the burden on their shoulder, work more than men, and answer to discriminatory questions during recruitment processes such as “Will you get married?”, “Will you have children?”, “Will you take six months leave of absence?”. They encounter difficulties in accessing resources and rising to managerial positions and hit the glass ceiling:

“Ranging from not being informed of career opportunities to struggling against discrimination when you try to access existing career opportunities... This actually happens in different ways at different levels such as not being able to get promoted when you succeed in fighting the discrimination, and then not being able to attain better positions when you do succeed in getting promoted. Each time there are more obstacles...” (Sector: Music)

When they are successful, when they complete a job or a project, they receive different reactions as compared to their male colleagues. At times, these reactions are reflected in the language as well:

“When a young man does this, they say, ‘Bravo my man’ but when I do it, they say ‘Wow, this sister knows how it’s done too’, then you suddenly become a ‘sister’.” (Sector: Music)

They are in a perpetual state of negotiation with their circles and themselves, having their competency and experience constantly questioned; therefore, they feel pressure not to make a mistake and may experience loss of self-confidence when they fail to be successful:

“There is a loss of self-confidence, wondering if I did a job well or if I am doing it right, in the best possible way...” (Sector: Music)

2 2 BEING LGBTQI+

Interviewed professionals of the sector state that LGBTQI+ experience the gender inequality and discrimination faced by women more severely. LGBTQI+ sometimes hide their gender identity and sexual orientation due to concerns of being belittled, lack of access to fundamental rights, not being allowed to exist outside of certain sectors and districts, being viewed as deviant or sick, and being subjected to violence. As a result of being ignored and silenced, they have a difficult time finding a space to express themselves in the field of arts and culture as well.

“Apart from ‘woman and man come together, build a family, reproduce’, there is actually another form of life that we call LGBTQI+. And this life needs to be identified and recognised. Actually, it is identified but not recognised.” (Sector: Theatre)

“There is woman and man. They don’t accept the ones outside of that. It is so difficult to be LGBTQI+... They give such an uphill battle, I think that they are never accepted, they are very belittled and subjected to violence. I think that they are the ones who experience the real nightmare.” (Sector: Cinema)

However, there are hierarchies among LGBTQI+ as well. For instance, male homosexuals are more readily accepted as compared to women:

“It is more likely for a gay man to gain recognition, but it is somewhat more difficult if you are a lesbian.” (Sector: Music)

Romeo or Juliet?

Yet another outcome of the focus group interview is the subjection of conservatory students and professional actors to reactions like “you cannot perform Romeo”, “you cannot perform Juliet” based on their physical appearance. These students and actors, who question the binary gender regime limited to man and woman, have a difficult time even auditioning for the roles they wish to perform. This situation applies both to academia and theatre companies.

To Come Out or Not to Come Out

Among the reasons why the sector’s employees keep their gender identities and sexual orientations under wraps are fears of being discriminated against and targeted and not being able to find employment in the mainstream to make a living. Nevertheless, it is stated that those who truly come out, that is, voice their LGBTQI+ identities loudly, will enable the sector to become more inclusive; and consequently, especially the young LGBTQI+ will not feel alone:

“A youth reaches out to me on Instagram and says that my existence legitimises their existence. It was the same with me... As the number of those who say, ‘I exist’ increases, there will be those who say, ‘I too exist’.” (Focus Group, Sector: Theatre)

STORIES FROM THE FIELD: Being an LGBTQI+ Theatre Actor & Producing Queer Art

Focus Group Interview, 31.01.2021

In her work titled *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler (1989, 151) says: “Those bodily figures who do not fit into either gender fall outside the human, indeed, constitute the domain of the dehumanized and the abject against which the human itself is constituted.”

This quote that one of the participants borrowed from Butler, in a sense, summarises the findings of the focus group meeting held with LGBTQI+ artists and cultural professionals. It is not difficult to write, or stage plays with LGBTQI+ themes; and they mostly receive positive reactions since the audience selects the plays they will see. Nevertheless, both those onstage and backstage sometimes self-censor themselves for fear of reactions, or at times, of falling short of expectations.

“Since there is a system that victimises or targets the LGBTQI+, when the writers sit down to write they cannot be completely free either. They cannot use their liberty to write even to narrate something that has one or several queer characters who are not very central to the story at all. Because if there is a queer character this has to be constructed as the subject of victimhood. This causes the writer to censor their own freedom.” (Sector: Theatre)

“The employees of a company had come to the play. There were men, and women with headscarves in the front row... I was dressed quite immodestly; the play was bawdy... I performed the entire play by self-censoring. Then the play was over, and as I was thinking, ‘They hated it anyways’, they gave a standing ovation. I was so ashamed of myself...” (Sector: Theatre)

This anecdote relayed in the context of self-censorship, also draws attention to prejudices and the critical role that spaces of contact and dialogue such as the theatre stage play in reducing polarisation.

Primary Questions

- Censorship and self-censorship
- Heteronormative, homophobic jokes, transphobic contents that trigger discrimination
- Out LGBTQI+ actors constantly being offered similar roles
- Difficulties in reaching the masses
- Predefined roles
- Some art producers who define themselves as LGBTQI+ to also reproduce the gender roles and norms

Personal Solutions

- Establishing their own theatre companies, groups
- Writing their own plays, scripts
- Studying / working abroad
- Working in alternative media

3 INEQUALITY

3 1 GENDER INEQUALITY BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

A large part of the women artists and cultural professionals who participated in the research think that being a woman has adverse effects on their careers and that they experience disadvantages because they are not men.

“Awareness of gender equality is very low. In spaces like the conservatory and arts there is a gender equality blindness.”
(Sector: Music)

Do you think that being a woman in your sector has adverse effects on your career?

The rate of those who say that being a woman in their sector has adverse effects on their career is 53%.



Do you think that you experience disadvantages in your sector because you are not a man?

The rate of those who experience disadvantages in their sector because they are not men is 63%.



- I definitely think so
- I think so
- Neutral
- I do not think so
- I definitely do not think so

It is seen that in all three sectors, there is a gender-based division of labour among women and men. Women who step outside the traditional allocation of tasks end up having to work more than their male colleagues in order to be successful. Additionally, this sexist attitude is determinant also in the distribution of roles in the artists’ performances. It is very difficult to come across women in tasks that could be called “technical” such as sound, lighting design, cinematography, or editing. As for directors and writers, the number of women in these roles is very little compared to that of men.

“You know how difficult it is for a woman to become a computer engineer, it is the same thing today with becoming a music producer or engaging in music, unless you are a vocalist.” (Sector: Music)

“I have been in this profession for 22 years; the preconception of technical tasks as male jobs is still very much in place. The tasks for women in this sector are limited to titles like costume and make-up. Lighting, camera, and film set are usually male jobs.” (Sector: Cinema)

“In cinema, how many women are there working behind the camera? Very few.” (Sector: Theatre)

“The number of women directors or playwrights in theatre is incomparably less than that of male directors and playwrights.”
(Sector: Theatre)

The distribution by years of the awards given in fields that could be considered technical also supports the findings. When we look at the Afife Jale Theatre Awards between 2009 and 2019 for instance, we see that the award for lighting design has always been given to men for ten years in a row. The stage design award was always picked up by men as well, except in 2010. Meanwhile, the award for the Most Successful Costume Designer was without exception always given to women throughout this ten-year period. At the Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival, the Best Cinematography award was invariably won by men. At the Istanbul Film Festival as well, between 2011 and 2021, the Best Editing and the Best Cinematographer awards were always given to men, without exception.

“On the set as well, you look around and see that only the make-up artist and the hair designers are women. Sometimes there may be women assistant directors, but other than that it is predominantly men...” (Sector: Theatre)

Gender roles and stereotypical conceptions are indicated as the reasons for this gendered distribution of tasks. For instance, due to assumptions like “women are more emotional”, men are preferred for administrative positions. Men tend to develop themselves in the field of technical tasks because it is thought that technical issues are more appropriate for men. Directors prefer working with women costume designers due to the prejudice that dictates women “understand” costumes better. The fear of being assumed homosexual can also influence the choices made:

“What happens with harp is what a male ballet dancer experiences. They think, ‘this instrument is feminine; if I play it, people may think I am gay’.” (Sector: Music)

As a result of all these impositions and expectations, with every passing day some fields end up employing mostly women while others employ mostly men. This, in turn, causes those who want to exist “on the other side” to have to exert themselves and work much harder to be able to prove themselves. In this context, women in the sector criticise their women colleagues who favour men in their selection of technical staff:

“A woman has written it, a woman is acting, a woman is directing, a woman is editing but the director of photography is again a man! What then is the point? What about women’s solidarity?” (Sector: Cinema)

Women are uncomfortable with the specifications of “female job” or “male job” and other categorical divisions in the sector. This includes expectations and preconceptions pertaining to the ability of a woman, a man, a trans woman, or a trans man to perform a specific role most properly.

“A play I wrote was the story of a woman who became a diva in the music industry. Then there was a change in cast, and we preferred a trans person to convey this story. We clearly saw that it made no difference whether the text was performed by a trans person or a man or a woman. Because you do not write or do something on the basis of genders.” (Sector: Theatre)

Participants remark that one may come across inequalities also in the number of characters that have been written. It is mostly male characters that are written; in solo-performances as well, we predominantly see men:

“There are five one-man plays but only a single one-woman play, I think that’s a problem too.” (Sector: Theatre)

Meanwhile, the relatively small number of woman characters seem to be stuck in gender roles and expectations—they are not employed, spend most of their time at home, prioritise motherhood, deprive themselves to save their child—and age much earlier than men and become genderless:

“There is a lot of ageism. After the age of 40-45, women both behind and on camera may receive a message like ‘you should not work anymore’... Past the age of 55, an actress can only be offered the role of the grandmother. Whereas that woman may fall in love, make love, she can be or do anything.” (Sector: Cinema)

STORIES FROM THE FIELD: Kadının Sözü Var [The Woman Has a Say]

Gedik Sanat [Gedik Art], 2021-2022

“I think the most beautiful world we can imagine should be one where a differentiation like woman-man cannot define the good or the bad, where the poles are not drawn across these lines... I thought that this should be seen on stage too.” This is how Nilay Erdönmez, the director of the play *Kadının Sözü Var* [The Woman Has a Say], describes the point of departure of her three-act play which she adapted from Adalet Ağaoğlu’s novel *Evcilik Oyunu* [Playing House] and Gaye Boralıoğlu’s story *Ömrüm Oldukça* [So Long As I Live].

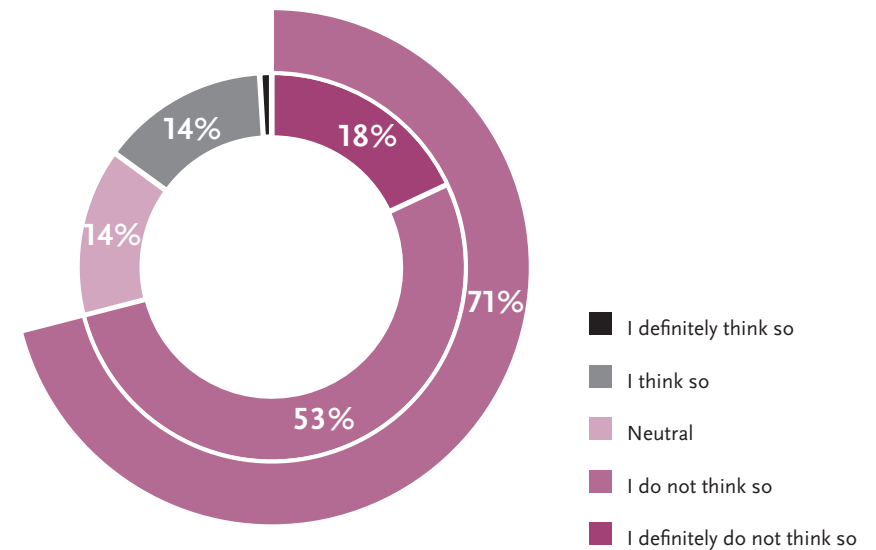
In the project it realised last season with the title *Kadının Sözü Var*, Gedik Art brought literature together with the unifying aspect of chorus music and enabled the creation of three artworks. During the 2021-2022 season, a theatre adaptation was brought to life as a continuation of the project which invites women to say their unsaid words, complete their unfinished words.

In the text, the characters of Adalet Ağaoğlu and Gaye Boralıoğlu cross paths at a women’s tea party and the play begins with the women’s jovial gossips. However, before long, the women’s party and good cheer is overshadowed by the news of gender-based violence on newspapers. The story in the play evolves around Nurhayat, the character in Gaye Boralıoğlu’s *Ömrüm Oldukça* [So Long As I Live]. She is but one of many women subjected to male violence and in her story this violence ends with an act of self-defence that steers her entire life into a completely different bend. “In this work, we also see that there can be a man who espouses the pain she suffers and its discussion as well”, says Erdönmez and adds, “(...) unless we, all of us, see that this problem is not only a woman’s issue, that it is a problem of the society, of becoming civilised, and unless we stand together against this situation just like in the play without separating into women and men, unfortunately neither this fear nor this issue will become something of the past”.

3 2 INEQUALITIES AMONG WOMEN

Seven out of 10 survey participants think that women in their sector of employment are not equal among themselves. Foremost among the sources of inequality is professional hierarchy (72%) followed by socioeconomic inequalities (52%) and physical characteristics (51%). Inequalities based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and ethnicity are further down the list.

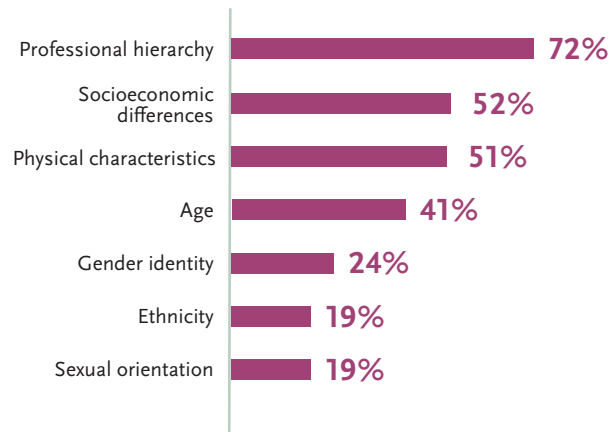
Do you think that women in your sector are equal among themselves?



In the interviews, it has been emphasised that Kurdish women musicians and artists with headscarves experience multiple disadvantages and that in addition to the factors included in the survey questions, there are also hierarchies among the women onstage or on-camera and those backstage or behind the camera.

“I have been subjected to discrimination not only because I am a woman but also because of my headscarf.” (Sector: Music)

What do you think are the sources of inequality among women?*



72% of the participants indicate that the inequality among women in the sector is rooted in professional hierarchy. This rate is followed by socioeconomic differences (52%) and physical characteristics (51%).

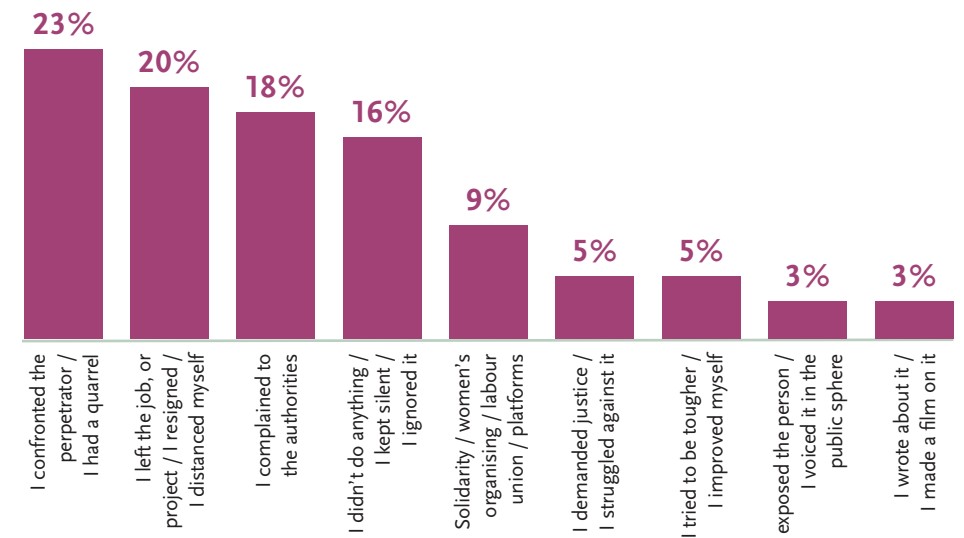
* Multiple choice question, thus the total exceeds 100%.

4 GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND MOBBING

Six out of 10 survey participants state that they have experienced harassment/mobbing in the sector of their employment and know what they should do in such situations. The rate of people who experience gender-based discrimination in the sector is 52%. Foremost among the actions taken against discriminatory behaviours is to confront the perpetrator. Within the existing structures, harassment is not perceived as a form of violence that can be struggled against alone. It is thought that women can make their voices heard and deal with different forms of violence only collectively.

It is stated that women have gradually escalating trust issues against men due to the ongoing harassment and gender-based discrimination. Therefore, when subjected to mobbing, harassment, or gender-based discrimination, women tend to resort to organisations (solidarities) formed among themselves rather than seek recourse in a central, institutional system of dispensing justice. Violence against violence (like exposure) is not a method approved by all women. Rather, women talk about the importance of a just system for all.

What course of action did you take against these discriminatory attitudes and behaviours?



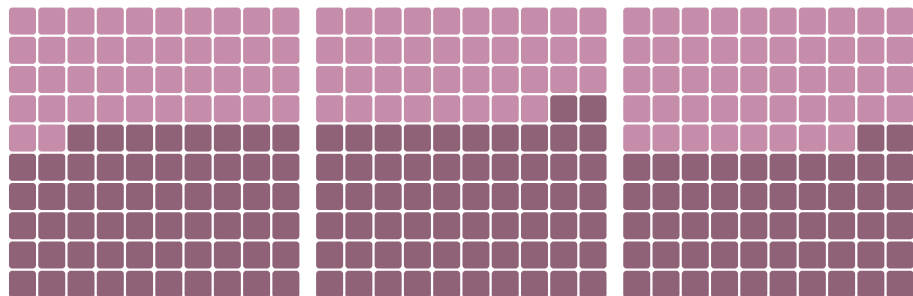
* Open-ended question

The comments of some participants, who said that they experienced psychological violence, underline that the sexist and homophobic expressions, slangs continue to be used despite the increased awareness of discriminatory language:

“Homophobic discourses or sexist discourses targeting a woman... These are things we encounter time to time...” (Sector: Cinema)

“Sometimes, even trying not to take a sexist slur personally can in fact become a psychological violence. Women experience this and it affects the quality of our life in no small measure.” (Sector: Cinema)

“It was a theatre audition, the director had started yelling at me, and I had told him, ‘thank you, I do not wish to continue an audition in this way’ (...).” (Sector: Theatre)



I experienced harassment /
mobbing
58%

I know what I should do
when I experience it
62%

I was subjected to gender-based
discrimination
52%

Women say that they must put in more effort than men in order to be heard, taken seriously, and appreciated:

“As a woman you have the right to speak but it can be difficult to convince someone to listen to you. When any man says, ‘pull the car over there’ they do as he says but when I say the same thing I might be told ‘no, it is better over here’.” (Sector: Cinema)

“(...) I was told, ‘if you were a man, you would have been much more appreciated for delivering such a project’. When you stand side by side with a male playwright, a woman who knows you can point at him and tell you, ‘you should take a leaf from him’.” (Sector: Theatre)

“In the past, two married people had had an affair and it was the woman who resigned. I had reacted strongly to that... Either they both should have stayed on, or both should have left.” (Sector: Cinema)

Even though it is predominantly the women and LGBTQI+ who are subjected to harassment and mobbing, everyone can have similar experiences particularly when it is a matter of hierarchical relations:

“A fellow actress was harassed by a male castmate who tried to initiate a sexual relationship even though she did not want it... Let’s not generalise but if you are a beautiful woman such things happen. It is as if there absolutely must be a sexual relationship or something... That’s how the man views the woman.” (Sector: Theatre)

“I had actress friends whom the directors were falling all over; later, some of them quit... Even the extremes of comments like ‘You can’t make the role come alive’ can amount to mobbing, I think... There have been stories of actresses who were subjected to this situation not only by men but also by women directors or women producers. We also had male actor friends who had such experiences with male directors...” (Sector: Theatre)

STORIES FROM THE FIELD: *The Skin, Body and I*

Salt Beyoğlu, 9.12.2021 – 3.04.2022

The Skin, Body and I is a comprehensive exhibition of İpek Duben’s oeuvre spanning over forty years. This exhibition, which Duben named with inspiration from her own body images, aims to discuss and create an awareness on various themes and bring to the agenda the subjects that have been, or were tried to be, ignored.

The series titled *Şerife* (1980-1982) tackles the issues of gender, migration, and the perception of the “other” within a local context. This series was inspired by the cleaning woman named Şerife who worked in Duben’s sister’s home. These headless and bodiless portraits draw attention to the women whose social presence and labour have been rendered invisible... The *Şerife* portraits, depicted merely as a piece of dress, aim to criticise the social existence and position of the woman.

The triptych *Muscle Man* (1988) displays the male figures proud of their muscles and physical power. The nude and strong depiction of the male figures in contrast to that of the female figures gives more meaning to this series and renders visible the subject of gender inequality. The more the male figure in *Muscle Man* is in the foreground with his body and posture, the more the female figure in the series *Şerife* is absent.

Meanwhile, *Lovebook* (1998-2000) and *Lovegame* (1998-2001) focus on male violence. This twin installation sets out from love and touches upon the women's experiences. Portraying the theme of love as a gamble, Duben treats the subjects of violence and love in a most striking manner. The work *Lovebook* complements the installation *Lovegame*. The painting series *Traces* (1990-2021) and *Register* (1991-1992) are works where Duben concentrates on the East-West dichotomy. Through bodily images, she aims to represent her own experiences and the inner world of other women.

The *Monument Counter* which is present on every floor of the exhibition is a digital monument dedicated to the women killed by gender-based violence. It shows the number of women who have lost their lives due to violence against women in Turkey since 2008 to date. This work can be visited online as a website as well. On the website women are presented with their names. Clicking on the names opens a new window with more detailed information.

When it comes to acting, some participants also mention that not being able to touch someone for fear of being perceived as a harasser, and the castmates to regard each other as potential threats may also jeopardise the execution of the profession:

"(...) if the manner our fellow actor touches us is going to be perceived as harassment, then we will turn into machines that can never touch one another... we risk losing the feeling of the job we do, its aesthetics and the skills... In the past, it was not like this; when you fell down and someone gave you their hand to help you up you would thank them and get up, but now you might say, 'they are harassing me'." (Sector: Theatre)

While 23% of the women who participated in the survey prefer to confront or quarrel with the person who subjected them to discrimination, harassment, or mobbing, 20% quit, resign from the project, job, or the institution. If the event took place within an institution or production, they prefer to report the situation first of all to the authorities, and if they cannot get any results then they resort to professional associations, labour unions, platforms, and relevant nongovernmental organisations. For legal support as well, they go to labour unions and lawyers who provide voluntary assistance on this subject. Simultaneously, they may seek support from their close friends and solidarity networks. Meanwhile, 16% of the participants have said that they prefer to remain silent about the event and ignore it:

"I am a member of SE-YAP, the Film Producers' Association of Turkey. You ask for help from them..." (Sector: Cinema)

"If I were to encounter mobbing or harassment I would definitely talk to #SusmaBitsin [#Speak Out to End It]. They truly follow up with the cases, they don't let it go." (Sector: Cinema)

"If I were faced with discrimination I would talk to my friends or consult with the labour union. The Cinema and Television Union has been very active these past 4-5 years. I have friends there; I would consult with lawyers." (Sector: Cinema)

In unregulated fields with relatively few support mechanisms and organised structures, it is difficult to find somewhere to turn to:

"[Let's say] a musician is working in a bar, and she was harassed by her boss. There is nothing she can do. She can share it with her band members, who are usually all men. They might say, 'just let it go, drop it'. The harassment might remain invisible. It is utterly unregulated, male dominant; there is no monitoring, no system of registration. The most you can do is not go to work and lose your job." (Sector: Music)

Among the effective measures to prevent discrimination, harassment, and mobbing, participants mention deterrent methods such as expulsion from the labour union, exclusion from the group; solidarity platforms; organised struggle; establishment of units to combat harassment; group members to warn one another; informative, consciousness raising trainings to increase awareness; establishing and declaring the rules of the set and the institution from the start, and conducting effective follow up.

“Some defend themselves saying, ‘What I did is not mobbing or harassment’. In order to eliminate such arguments, it is very valuable to be able to say, ‘This cannot be news to you, you were told from the very beginning’.” (Sector: Cinema)

The rate of survey participants who say that they have exposed or would prefer to expose the culprits is only 3%. The interviewees, who stated that exposure is a preventive and effective method, emphasize the difficulties of proving harassment through judicial means, and the long and taxing lawsuit processes which have the risk of producing no results.

There are those who say that exposure is also problematic in its own right:

“Somebody’s name gets exposed. If we say let’s solve it among ourselves, then we would be back in the stone age! Twitter is not the right place for this... One must go to court, press charges. The case should be tried there. One must act in line with the court decision.” (Sector: Cinema)

STORIES FROM THE FIELD: #Susma Bitsin [#Speak Out to End It]

Two events that took place in the television series industry in 2018 were the last drops in the already overflowing problem of sexual harassment and assault against women, and led to the founding of the platform #SusmaBitsin. #SusmaBitsin is a horizontal organisation established by women working independently in the sectors of cinema, television, and theatre, behind and on camera. Thanks to this platform, since 4 November 2018 to date, the women in the sector of cinema are constantly acting together and taking a stand perhaps stronger than ever before.

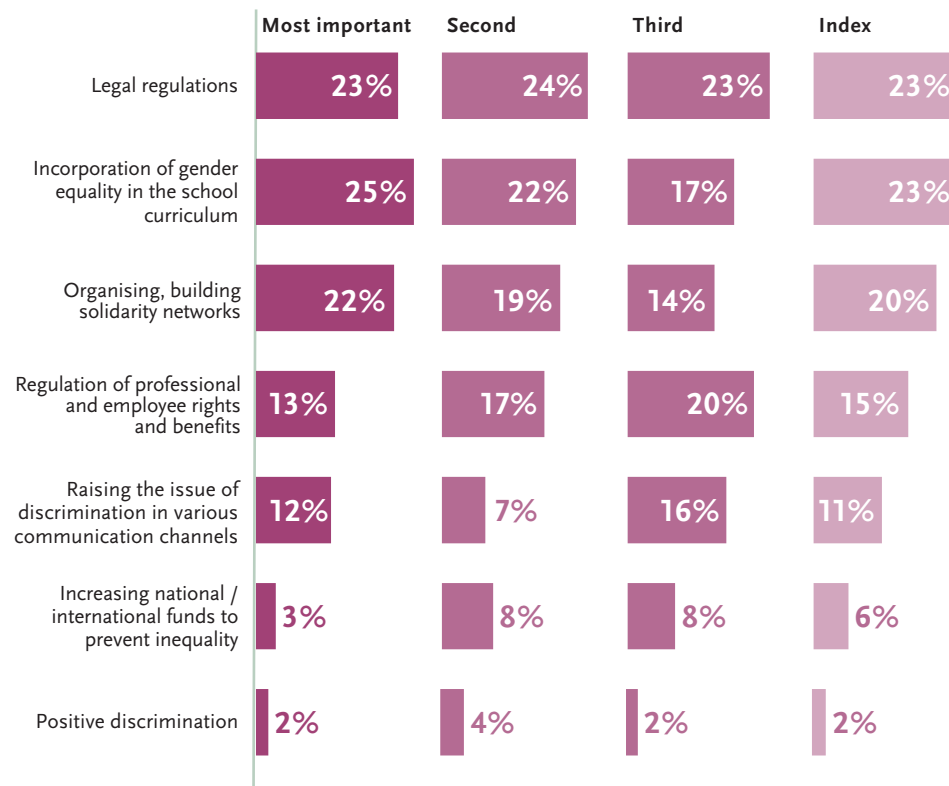
It would not be wrong to describe #SusmaBitsin as the Turkey arm of the #MeToo movement which began in 2017 in the USA with a chain of exposures. The women of #SusmaBitsin say: “We were sure that such a movement would be welcomed in Turkey, but we would never dream of reaching such a high number of women. #SusmaBitsin created a safe environment where close to 300 women express themselves. This environment created both a chain of confidence within itself and also the power to make our voice heard and a leverage in the public opinion, which helped establish a recognised and trustworthy structure in the sector.” The founders of the platform state that “it is very heartening to see that in any given case of harassment, mobbing, or attack the say of #SusmaBitsin is heard and taken seriously” and they take justified pride in the awareness and influence they have created over the course of a considerably short time.

Following the cases of mobbing, sexual harassment, and sexual assault in the sector, doing advocacy in this field, making its voice heard through social media, and standing beside the victims in the ever-increasing number of court cases, #SusmaBitsin also paves the way for its participants to talk, share their troubles, and learn together through the open panels and workshops it organises. With more than six thousand followers on Instagram and three thousand on Twitter at the time of writing this report during the first months of 2022, #SusmaBitsin aims to continue its existence in the sector making its voice heard with ever growing numbers.

5 CREATING A MORE EQUAL ECOSYSTEM OF ARTS AND CULTURE

According to the survey participants, foremost among the steps to be taken against gender-based discrimination is “legal regulations” (23%) and “incorporation of gender equality in the school curriculum”. The rate of women who underline the necessity of organising among women is 20%.

In your opinion, what sort of actions should be taken against gender-based discrimination in your sector?*



* Multiple choice question, thus the total exceeds 100%.

5 1 ORGANISATIONS & LEGAL REGULATIONS

Employees of the sector have demands for legislative reform and legal regulations to clarify their job descriptions, facilitate the conditions of receiving public health and employment insurance, and guarantee their rights. They think that the responsibility on this issue lies with the professional organisations that they are members of:

“The musicians and their agents... A job description that can never be clarified... ranging from being their assistant to meddling with their psychology... I think here there is a form of relationship where it is not very possible to draw the boundaries.” (Sector: Music)

The women who participated in the interviews state that organised structures such as labour unions and cooperatives play a critical role in creating a more inclusive, equal, and just working environment, improving the prestige of the sector, and preventing harassment and mobbing. Moreover, they emphasise that these structures should be transparent, accountable, reliable, and inclusive. They think that the unions to give trainings for their members on their professional and employee rights and benefits would be influential in preventing rights violations and reducing discrimination. It is deemed necessary to establish gender equality units or working groups within the labour unions.

While the employees of the cinema and theatre sectors say that there are organised structures that they have recourse to, the employees of the music sector express the need for a professional and inclusive organisation:

“When something happens, women ask, ‘whom should I get help from’... There is no organised structure that can directly respond to this need. Or at least I do not know about it... There is need for some experience sharing. For instance, time to time I discuss these issues that you are asking about with the people I know.” (Sector: Music)

“When you become unionised, if you have to give two thirds of what little you make to the union or for insurance, then no one will join the union. Claims like, ‘I am one of 100 guitarists, people look at the union when they are recruiting’ are very utopic. Unless I myself shout on social media they are not going to take me into their own band for instance. There is no such network. There is no such access...” (Sector: Music)

5 2 GENDER TRAINING

Both in the survey and the interview data, we come across the importance of incorporating gender equality training in all curricula as of primary school and in the curriculum of art schools.

It is thought that developing sector specific contents and giving trainings together with nongovernmental organisations and university centres working in the field such as AÇEV (Mother Child Education Foundation) and SU Gender (Sabancı University Gender and Women’s Studies Centre for Excellence) will be influential in creating a more inclusive ecosystem.

Yet another suggestion is to give gender training to the teams before the film sets and prior to rehearsals.

“(...) this is obligatory in a number of platforms with foreign funding... At #SusmaBitsin, we had drafted this on paper like a guideline and distributed it to the team, but we have no way of knowing who has read this or not. Therefore, if it is given under the title of a training, I find it important for people to participate and put their signature.” (Sector: Cinema)

5 3 POSITIVE DISCRIMINATION

Positive discrimination is a practice favoured only by 2% of the survey participants. Meanwhile, the findings of the interviews indicate that not everyone has the same understanding of 'positive discrimination'. For instance, one participant says she is against it because she thinks that equality should not be defined on paper and turned into a series of rules. There are also some who are uncomfortable with the practice of quotas due to its connotations of "favour", "depreciation", and "condescension". It is stated that giving the floor first to women in meetings is problematic for similar reasons. There are also those who say that they do not support positive discrimination because they think it is problematic to reduce people to their genders and categorise them as such:

"Truth be told, having a 'certain quota for women employees' seems insulting to me... Because the ones writing this rule are anyways men. It is as if they are doing a favour... If someone is equal to the task, it should not matter in the least which of these adjectives that person has." (Sector: Theatre)

"I do not even like the phrase itself. It is offensive." (Sector: Music)

"I have a very genderless view of the world. I see people as genderless. When I look at you, I do not see a woman, I see you." (Sector: Cinema)

That said, there are also opinions on the necessity of developing and spreading the practice of quotas and support mechanisms to reduce the existing, systematic inequalities that have become virtually natural. Foremost among the suggested practices are to prioritise working with women directors and playwrights and developing incentive, support and grant programs geared towards women artists and institutions working with women:

"(...) I believe in positive discrimination in this field. Because there is a lack; I think that women directors, institutions, and women playwrights and directors in municipal and also major theatres should be supported to close that gap." (Sector: Theatre)

"At DasDas (www.dasdas.com.tr), women directors and women playwrights are definitely being supported. I observe a positive discrimination on this subject." (Sector: Theatre)

"(...) you look and see that the number of women employees is low, there has not been a world that was opened to them... Then how will we change this systematic thing? Perhaps, relevant scholarships will be awarded, incentive programs will be developed; every institution, company will have a certain quota that they must employ. These are practices that have been proven to work." (Sector: Music)

"Recently... I have been asking myself whether we have enough women musicians in our program. (...) Are 50% of your employees women? How many of them are administrators? There must be an equal distribution. The implementation will begin from there." (Sector: Theatre)

"I think gender equality means a world where there is no longer any need even for positive discrimination." (Sector: Music)

5 | 4 FUNDS, INCENTIVES, FESTIVALS

Although it does not seem like a prominent issue in the survey results, some of the interviewees have underlined the importance of empowering women who produce art and of creating incentive mechanisms and funds to bring them into different vocational groups. They express demands for increasing the number and prevalence of practices such as the Istanbul Music Festival's Women Stars of Tomorrow project and the İyilik İçin Sanat Association's program targeting young women artists and art directors:

"I believe that an extra incentive and fund should definitely be implemented in Turkey to expand the women's space in the sector and bring women into different vocational groups." (Sector: Cinema)

Among the suggestions are organising festivals the revenues of which would be transferred to projects geared towards enabling equality in the sector, and opening spaces for women in the festivals:

"Istanbul Theatre Festival opened a space for women playwrights and directors and gave them support. Istanbul Film Festival has a section titled 'No More Flowers' which only features films directed by women ..." (Sector: Music)

STORIES FROM THE FIELD: *Düşenler* [The Fallen]

K! Kültürel Performing Arts, 22.11.2021

Düşenler [The Fallen] met the audiences in scope of the 10th New Text New Theatre Festival of GalataPerform founded by Yeşim Özsoy and continues to be staged by director Yağmur Yağmur at Kültürel Performing Arts at the time of writing this report.

Aspiring to be the voice on stage of especially the outcasted, otherized characters who do not enjoy equal rights, *Düşenler* also brings digital elements to the stage through a modern perspective. Employing different metaphors, *Düşenler* aims to narrate the people who cannot breathe on earth today and bring an unreal world closer to reality. The play *Düşenler* takes place in a psychiatric hospital. The hospital has been depicted as a place where the residents can be equal and breathe by sharing the insanity.

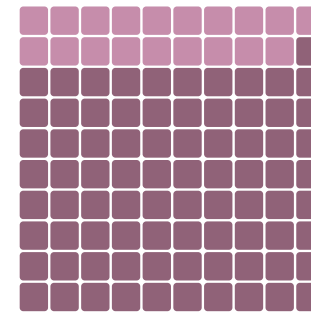
The character of Creature finds life in *Düşenler* as the representation of a woman who is always left behind. She represents a woman who is freed from her father, husband, lover, male boss, and the male hegemony that she comes across in every field of her life. Running after her accustomed order albeit she is left behind and not wanted, this woman tags along after this system, which she cannot catch up with and is hindered in, in hopes of building a world for herself even if at its very bottom. The character of Fish finds life as a representation of LGBTQI+ people. The Fish, who constantly forgets things and can live by forgetting, tries to describe social hypocrisy with the Diver who comes to visit him. The Diver's costume that enables him to breathe underwater indicates the mask of heterosexuality which is more readily accepted by the society. Meanwhile, the Fish impersonates the group who cannot or does not "escape" their own reality and is "pushed to the bottom" for courageously declaring themselves. The Mannequin is a migrant's story. Bearing the reality of different inequalities suffered by both genders in times of war, the Mannequin performs a character who refused his male duty of "fighting" and ran away.

"I was not taken aboard Noah's ark. Perhaps I was forgotten, perhaps I was not wanted and deliberately left behind... The waters were rising, everyone was running around in panic. The ark was filled, everyone was aboard! That is, according to them... And then it left. Noah was probably sure that he had taken everything, everyone that he had to take from the shore. Yet I was left behind. All by myself. I was the only species left ashore... They came, came, came. The ones on shore did not care for any of them either. Neither on shore nor here... For the ones on the shore, they were the fallen ... And those who had 'fallen here' learned to live here. We built ourselves a life here. Perhaps we were no Noah but still..."

5 | 5 | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The rate of women who participated in the survey and stated that there are no support mechanisms geared towards their professional development in their sector of employment is 81%.

Are there support mechanisms geared towards your professional development in your sector?



No
81%

The rate of women who said that there are support mechanisms geared towards their professional development in the sector is only 19%.

Nevertheless, women are not worried about not being able to find trainings for professional development. If the institutions that they are part of, or work in, do not have an initiative or incentive in this field then they hear about trainings or workshops through their own connections and cover their own costs if there is a fee. However, they say that the fees of the programs or trainings, which they wish to participate in to advance in the sector as managers or for higher artistic development, strain their budgets.

Some prefer İSMEK (Institute Istanbul) for introductory level trainings. They find the trainings and workshops offered by arts and culture institutions for professional and personal development very useful:

"Before *Romeo and Juliet*, our movement teacher Dicle Doğan conducted a 10-12 day long workshop. I personally saw this training's contribution to me and all my actor friends. I can call this an actual education because there was a huge difference between the day we went in and the day we came out..." (Sector: Theatre)

“(…) I did a couple of things on body and expressivity at Salt Galata for a few days… One must be open to constantly activating the body, voice, speech, and the mind.” (Sector: Theatre)

They see the free trainings, mentorship and artist residency programs of nongovernmental organisations and international networks as opportunities:

“I got involved in various platforms like organisations of festival and jazz networks. Especially abroad, I got involved in networks like workshops, meetings, symposiums where there were vocational discussions. These were free of charge.” (Sector: Music)

“I participated in a training. It was in Berlin. I was accepted to a two-months long residency there. It was about film production. I had applied with a project but there were also various one-on-one trainings, seminars, workshops.” (Sector: Cinema)

“There are conferences, panels, activities that I try to participate in. Their costs are usually covered by my organisation.” (Sector: Music)

“European Women’s Audiovisual Network is a nongovernmental organisation. Every year they open a mentorship program. This year for example I am mentoring 2 women filmmakers.” (Sector: Cinema)

“I had been accepted to the Theatre Olympics. There was a very important Japanese director there. People had come from numerous different countries. It was magnificent.” (Sector: Theatre)

“For production, there is EAV abroad, one of Europe’s biggest, most advanced workshops. There is the TRT [Turkish Radio and Television Corporation] scholarship.” (Sector: Cinema)

Fields like accounting and legal literacy, the ability to make art in different languages, digitalisation, metaverse, and NFT art are also areas where the women working in the sector wish to improve themselves:

“I received trainings on branding in the digital world; social media; mindfulness; art therapy; and graphic design. Currently I am getting a training on NFT and Metaverse, etc., on those subjects.” (Sector: Cinema)

“I had participated in an event in Berlin. There was a computer program, a music production program… I saw a world where music is tackled in a very creative, scientific, and more visionary manner.” (Sector: Music)

“(…) one must improve oneself in the digital field. The digital has opened a new space for women, for everyone, all musicians. In this sense, there are certain trainings geared specifically to women.” (Sector: Music)

“(…) I participated in a month-long training program in London called *Acting in English*.” (Sector: Theatre)

The participants say that during the COVID-19 pandemic, they benefited from trainings on wellbeing:

“There was a group created by women directors during the COVID pandemic. It was a beautiful initiative that came out of questions like: what can we do, what sort of a roadmap can we draw for theatre workers, what can we do morally and materially for them to be less worn-down in this process.” (Sector: Theatre)

“We came together as women playwrights and directors. This group was started during the pandemic. It was truly something underground. It turned into a WhatsApp group. Our goal is to increase solidarity.” (Sector: Theatre)

The diversity and prevalence of the trainings received, participated in, and contributed to indicate that the women working in the sector wish to continue lifelong learning in fields that spread across a rather wide range.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD: A Musical: Ben Varım [I Exist]

DasDas, Premier: 23 January 2020

DasDas adaptation of the text “Das Wunder von Neukölln” (The Miracle of Neukölln) written by Peter Lund, *Ben Varım* is shaped around the difficult life and struggle for existence of the character Jasmine who works as cashier at a supermarket and lives with the dream of a miracle. Unlike the usual representation of women, Jasmine is the “breadwinner of the household”. Neither her husband, nor her brother, or her parents work; in this context, everyone at home, so to speak, lives off Jasmine.

Jasmine’s story actually begins with an unintended pregnancy. She starts to become lonely as of the moment she decides to have the child, and despite her husband, who is dependent on her in every sense, Jasmine gives birth to the baby. One of the actors, Alper Baytekin underlines that in the birth scene Jasmine is all alone delivering the child and everyone whom she thought could have been by her side is not with her, either deliberately or for no good reason at all. The birth of Jasmine’s disabled baby is constructed as a “miracle”. Everything starts to change when the experienced media worker Johannes enters Jasmine’s life, and people exploit and profit off her life by turning it into a television program.

According to Didem Balçın, who plays Jasmine, the play is in fact about the modern individual’s loss and struggle for existence. Through this struggle, the play also evaluates the relationships between women and men. Balçın mentions that yet another main element of the story is conscience. In this context, through the concept of “motherhood” and Jasmine’s pregnancy, we see a more intense emphasis placed on the element of conscience. This, in turn, may be a reckoning with the sanctity of the “motherhood” role that gender attributes to women. The play is primarily a criticism of the system and of the media but at the same time it lays bare the woman’s struggle. It leaves the following question in the minds: If it was Jasmine’s husband (Karl) who was experiencing all this victimisation, how would his life and struggle for existence take shape?

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our objective in realising this research was to learn about the dimensions and reasons of gender inequality in the realm of arts and culture as told by the professionals of the sector who experience all these inequalities; to analyse the emerging results in light of different types of findings; and make suggestions for a more equal and inclusive ecosystem of arts and culture by blending these results with the good examples and practices relayed again by the participants of our research. In doing this, we also wanted to hear how the women working in the sector view and experience gender inequality in the broader sense. To this end, we asked the participants questions pertaining to housework and caregiving as well as the public sphere. Therefore, in scope of the survey, based on the conducted interviews and the focus group study, we also obtained general suggestions for a more just arts and culture sector. The general suggestions underlined numerous subjects such as the incorporation of gender equality training in the school curricula, education in the family, and the employment of an inclusive language. The general suggestions geared towards different stakeholders of the sector are summarised below.

Screenplays & Plays

- Writing screenplays and plays with women as the main characters,
- Removing women characters from one-dimensional, submissive, secondary roles that complement the man, and constructing them in eye-opening frameworks that break the internalised patterns,
- Writing stories that narrate different states of womanhood and manhood instead of contents that pigeonhole people into a single type of person, a single model of life or a single truth and reproduce the stereotypes and prejudices,
- Walking away from patriarchal themes,

- Including contents that will diversify our minds and break the patterns of gender stereotypes,
- Producing children's plays with no gender identities,
- Consulting experts who can view and evaluate the texts through a gender equality lens,
- Narrating the others' stories, the LGBTQI+, migrant, elderly, and disabled experiences by going beyond the one-dimensional representations, without reproducing the prejudices.

Film Sets, Theatres, Orchestras

- Ensuring the gender balance in the composition of the teams,
- Designing trainings to raise the teams' awareness of discrimination, harassment, mobbing, and their employee rights and benefits,
- Establishing anti-discrimination rules from the very start.

Producers

- Financing projects that respect gender equality,
- Prioritizing working with women directors.

Festivals

- Developing work, performance, and exhibition spaces that respect the equal representation and participation of women art professionals,
- Conducting projects that will diversify content and participation and eliminate the obstacles before the participation of disadvantaged groups.

Arts and Culture Institutions

- Developing, implementing, and evaluating gender equality and inclusivity policies,
- Respecting gender equality in all artistic and administrative processes,
- Respecting gender equality in all activities and recruitment and promotion processes,
- Opening spaces and creating opportunities for women directors, playwrights, orchestra conductors, and administrators,
- Proactively creating participatory processes and inclusive environments,
- Adopting a gender-sensitive approach in the evaluations of all the works and projects that have been produced and realised,
- Designing free trainings and workshops geared towards ensuring gender equality and personal and professional development

Art High Schools, Fine Arts Academies & Conservatories

- Adding gender equality to the curriculum,
- Safeguarding the equality of every student in the academic environment regardless of their gender, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation and ensuring that no discriminatory language is used in the classes,
- Developing support mechanisms to prevent gender-based selection of artistic disciplines and musical instruments,
- Opening spaces to enable the students to read and perform the characters of their choice irrespective of physical appearance or gender.

Labour Unions & Professional Organisations

- Establishing gender equality follow-up commissions, encouraging these commissions to draft regular reports, and publishing these reports,
- Organising awareness raising trainings on issues of gender equality and inclusivity,
- Developing projects geared towards eradicating inequality in the language,
- Conducting long-term studies for legislative reform and legal regulations, developing suggestions, and demanding state support.

Public Institutions

- Founding units to prevent discrimination and ensure gender equality,
- Improving the employee benefits and rights of artists,
- Conducting awareness raising activities geared towards gender equality, and producing and disseminating knowledge,
- Developing, implementing, evaluating, and following-up with gender equality and inclusivity policies,
- Developing awareness raising projects and practices for equal opportunities in all fields of art,
- Giving support and grants to women artists and organisations with women-focused projects,
- Developing special grant programs for women artists and cultural professionals living outside the big cities.

We would have wished to reach and listen to the women and men producing in all fields of art, working in all branches of the sector across Turkey. However, like every research, this study too had its constraints. We hope that in yet another project we will be able to lend an ear to all the other voices in the world of arts and culture that cannot find themselves a space, and that this report contributes to the creation of a more equal and inclusive ecosystem of arts and culture.

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8 THE AUTHOR

Prof. Dr. İtir Erhart studied English Language and Literature, and Philosophy at Boğaziçi University; completed her M. Phil. Degree at the University of Cambridge, and her doctorate at Boğaziçi University. Since 2001, she has been lecturing on gender, human rights, civil society, and fundraising for arts at Istanbul Bilgi University. She has participated as faculty in the Spaces of Culture: Cultural Management Training Program and Sahne [Stage] 2.0 projects.

In 2004 she started to run marathons for social causes; in 2008, together with 5 friends she founded the social enterprise Adım Adım [Step by Step] which today has 100,000 members and has raised 100 million TL for 120 NGOs through sports. She is also among the founders of the transparency and accountability platform Açık Açık [Openly] and Açık Açık Social Initiative. She has taken part in the team that organised Turkey's first sustainable music festival the Festtogether.

In 2014 she was elected an Ashoka Fellow. She serves on the Executive Board of Ashoka Turkey, the Advisory Boards of Theatre Cooperative and Yanındayız Association, the Executive Boards of Inogar Cooperative and Bego Jeans, and the Board of Trustees of TEGV (The Educational Volunteers Foundation of Turkey).

Projects she has been involved in:

2020-2021 UK, AHRC, Exploring the Potential of 5G for the Game and Performing Arts Sector

2018-2019 Turkey, British Council, Social Entrepreneurship in Turkey

2016-2017 UK, AHRC, The Aesthetics of Protest

ANNEX 1 QUESTIONS GUIDING THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS AND THE SURVEY

- In your opinion, what is gender equality?
- Where do you see Turkey in terms of gender equality?
- What do you think it means to not be a man in Turkey?
- What do you occupy yourself with outside of your paid employment and professional life? How do these other responsibilities affect your work life?
- Are there disadvantages in your sector of employment that you think you experience because you are not a man?
- Do you think that all women in your sector of employment are equal among themselves?
- Over the past five years, have you received any support for your professional development?
- In the institution/sector you work, are there support mechanisms geared towards the professional development of women?
- Have you been involved in any support networks/NGOs working towards the professional development of women?
- In the institution/sector you work, do you encounter sexist attitudes and behaviours?
- In the institution/sector you work, have you experienced gender-based discrimination?
- If you encounter such a situation, do you know what you must do, where/to whom you must apply?
- What should be done against the gender-based discrimination you have experienced and/or witnessed in the institution/sector you work? Are there good practices that come to your mind?

ANNEX 2 QUESTIONS GUIDING THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

- Would you tell us a little about yourself?
- What do you think about the situation of LGBTQI+ artists in Turkey?
- What would you like to say about social prejudices, preconceptions, and hierarches?
- Where is discrimination experienced the most and how?
- What are the challenges of producing queer art in Turkey?
- What have you experienced?
- Do you receive negative reactions due to the characters you perform or the plays you write?
- What are the things that you would like to see changed?
- What are your suggestions for a more inclusive ecosystem of arts and culture?

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İKSV Cultural Policy Studies department conducts research with a rights-based approach aiming to enable the individuals to access, participate in and contribute to cultural life and supports all activities of the foundation through data-driven studies. To this end, it publishes reports and policy documents to generate discussion among artists and cultural actors; develops İKSV's three-year strategic plans; offers a creative activity program at İKSV Alt Kat geared towards all disadvantaged groups and primarily the youth and children; and provides coordination for the international projects run simultaneously by different İKSV departments to be devised in line with the strategic plans. Over the recent years, to create an active discussion environment in the field of cultural management, it has continued to organise training programs, conferences, and workshops in collaboration with national and international institutions.

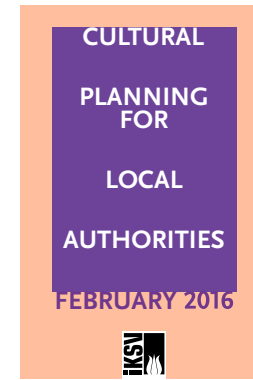
Collaborating with numerous institutions and organisations that play role in the field of cultural policies within the European Union, İKSV has also served on the 28th General Assembly of Turkish National Commission for UNESCO and been active in ICCRA (International Cultural Relations Research Alliance) since its foundation in 2019. Through such networks, the foundation carries its efforts in the field of cultural policy studies to the international level.

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