EVALUATION OF TURKEY’S LOCAL AGENDA 21 PROGRAM WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL DECISION MAKING

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Introduction

This assessment focuses on Local Agenda 21, which has been implemented in Turkey since 1997. It aims to understand if the Local Agenda 21 will provide new horizons and participation opportunities for women. The role of Local Agenda 21 in encouraging women to participate, the effect of current participation methods in providing an alternative public sphere are thoroughly discussed. The necessary approaches, strategies and programmes needed for the realization of this opportunity for women are also included in this evaluation of Local Agenda 21.

With this purpose, seven Local Agenda 21 implementations have been examined on spot, meetings have been held with related parties, documents related to the general programme and LA 21 councils of women have been scanned. The method in the penning of the report is to progress from the general to particulars. Consequently, we have started with the approach of LA 21 documents that call for an increase in women’s participation; continued with the legal and institutional framework which constitute the context of LA 21 in Turkey; and the report is completed with an assessment of LA 21 implementations in view of women’s participation and suggestions for the next period.

LA 21 handbook states that “LA 21 cannot be regarded as a local program or project, which albeit important, is one amongst the elongated list of ongoing activities. On the contrary, Local Agenda 21 should be conceived as the mainstream process, perforating and embracing all aspects of local governance, and all activities of local government and local stakeholders.” Thus, it is a main process that embraces all fields and actors of local governance horizontally and vertically, and aims to develop a new mentality and a new administration morality, within this scope. Therefore, the implementation of this programme is expected to make an impact that will transform the political culture. Resolving local issues with the help of local actors and local resources are pivots of this transformation. Besides resolving issues, such transformation aims at local democracy and governance; furthermore, it should include ways of increasing the participation of women, and a change in the quality of such transformation.

1. The General Scope of Local Agenda 21

International Scope

Agenda 21 is a global action plan drawn after the UN Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992; it is an international document approved by many nations including Turkey, whose purpose may be defined shortly as to ensure "sustainable development", in other words, to “cope with environmental and developmental issues in the 21\textsuperscript{st} century.”

Agenda 21 consists of 40 chapters, with such titles as “international cooperation to accelerate sustainable development in developing countries and related domestic policies”; “integrating environment and development in decision-making processes”; “global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development”; “children and youth in sustainable development”;
“strengthening the role of non-governmental organizations”. Chapter 28, titled “Local authorities’ initiatives in support of Agenda 21” states that local authorities should start a participatory process, determine their own environmental and developmental problems with the participation of all actors, and develop a local agenda of the 21st century for their communities.

After 1992, this process known as Local Agenda 21 Program, was endorsed by local authorities throughout Europe. Consequently, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) owned the program at the Habitat II Conference as an international project. Experience gained by implementations practiced in Europe set the basis of the project, which was launched in 85 countries, including Turkey.

Local Agenda 21 Program emphasises “sustainable development” and “good governance” concepts. It defines the field of work as “local”; the program is carried out by “local authorities” and “non-governmental organizations”; and “women” are included in the program as vital local key stakeholders.

On the other hand, 8 goals towards development and eradication of poverty were defined in the United Nations Millennium Declaration (September 2000), to be realized until 2015.

Millennium development goals are: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; develop a global partnership for development.

In addition to these goals, which aim for development and eradication of poverty, global goals such as protection of environment, human rights and good governance are also a part of the Local Agenda 21 processes.

United Nations World Sustainable Development Summit (Johannesburg Summit, 2002) emphasized the importance of the “local”, and consequently of the Local Agenda 21, in reaching global goals.

**Turkey’s Program**

The first and second phases of Turkey Local Agenda 21 Program, “Promotion and Development of Local Agenda 21’s in Turkey” Project and “Implementing Local Agenda 21’s in Turkey” Project which had started at the end of 1997 with the support and coordination of UNDP and IULA-EMME, have been completed.

The main goal of the program is defined as: “Developing a vision towards a sustainable future of the city, and preparing and implementing a long range local action plan-strategic plan for the realization of this vision.”

The third phase of the program, which is still in progress, includes 3 projects:

“Establishing a Sustainable Network to Promote Local Democratic Governance In Turkey”
“Enforcing the Role of Women and Youth in Forming Local Partnerships and Cooperation for Transparency”:

“Localizing the Millennium Development Goals and WSDS Plan of Implementation through the Turkey Local Agenda 21 Governance Network”

**National LA 21 Steering Committee** – comprises of the representatives of the Undersecretary of the Prime Ministry, State Planning Organization (DPT), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, EU General Secretary, General Directory of Women’s Status, supporting institutions (Habitat, Agenda 21 Youth Association, municipality associations, etc.) UNDP, IULA-EMME and other institutions invited by the Council (Representative of the General Directory of Women’s Status has attended only one meeting).

Participation of all local authorities, with the exception of villages, is voluntary; however, the positive effect of two circulars issued by the Ministry of Interior on March 19, 1998 and November 7, 2000 is important.

Today, 62 local government units all over Turkey are in the scope of this program. The number of women’s councils, women’s commissions, women’s platforms etc. is 36. Participation to the program is generally made possible by the decision of the municipal council; after this decision, the city is included in the program after submitting a participation fee to be spent for LA 21 General Secretariat, by the LA 21 Coordination Board.

(11 Metropolitan municipalities, 23 province municipalities, 25 district municipalities and 3 provincial administrations are in the scope of the program).

Local Agenda 21 Program may be defined as a participatory process aiming to reach Agenda 21 targets at the local level, by preparing and implementing a long range strategic action plan towards the resolution of local “sustainable development” problems.

In the Local Agenda 21 process, what will be done is complemented by how and by whom it will be done; who will decide about the future of the city and how and in what ways a social agreement will be reached are also important.

In the scope of Local Agenda 21 Program, city councils, city assemblies, city committees, various working groups, women and youth councils, commissions, platforms, etc. are observed. In the past, approval of the local councils was needed in forming city councils; with the new arrangement (Municipality Law 5393, article 76) City Council formation has won a legal status. The regulations of the city council, which are not yet official, include arrangements for Women’s Council formation.

Working groups are formed by the participation of volunteers with different backgrounds, and they are generally regarded as social group oriented or problem oriented (education groups, environment groups, health groups, women’s groups, youth groups, retirement groups, etc.)
The coordination of LA 21 activities in each partner city is undertaken by respective Local Agenda 21 General Secretariat units, headed by administrators who are generally appointed by city mayors.

2. Local Agenda 21 Political and Social Context

Agenda 21 is a global action plan; however, in each country it is implemented with a different historical and social context and therefore it should be re-shaped and rearranged according to that country’s needs. Otherwise, it may turn into a bureaucratic structure unable to form a transforming relation with the local. Consequently, it will be of great convenience to keep in mind this context, which may have its hazards and its benefits.

Şerif Mardin (1990), who has examined the relations between the centre and the local in depth, considers this duality, which has put its mark on the politics of our country from the 19th century up to now, as a ‘discontinuity’. In spite of more than a hundred years of modernization process in administrative matters, relations between the centre and the periphery have always remained at one level; and bureaucratic mentality and behaviour has prevailed. According to Mardin, this mentality, whose tendency is to reinforce the centre, demonstrates the difference of Turkish power politics from “Western modernism”. This power is unable to perceive the society as a whole and administer it accordingly; because it lacks integrating intermediary mechanisms. The only effort to compensate this lack of administrative technologies and mechanisms is by symbols and “speeches”.

It may be said that, with the permeation of modernization into the society, not by the centre but via market mechanisms which we will not go into detail here, and by the re-shaping of centre/periphery relations in an axis of protection/makeshift, various integrating intermediary mechanisms (such as employment of the TV or the party organizations as “business” mechanisms) have emerged; however, it can be argued that from the perspective of “public administration” the centre/periphery problematic is still continuing.

Consequently, the context we are in today is an ongoing process, with the continuing effect of a strong centralist mentality and culture on one hand, and the improvement of various mechanisms of the centre/periphery on the other hand. An important component of this context is, of course, public administration reform. This reform can also be seen as an effort for the control and supervision of the above process, which we have briefly explained. Another component of the public administration reform is the new Municipality Law, which enhances the authorities and responsibilities of local administrations, and also aims to create the means for local democracy with new concepts like “voluntary participation” and “city councils”

Local Agenda 21 aims to be a part of this process, and furthermore, to transform it into a democratisation process. Centralism, whose basis are not only institutional and legal, but also mental as well, is an important hindrance in reaching this aim. Also, after the centre/periphery relations are re-defined, the local actors who maintain relations with the centre through “their own means”, and who
manage to have a degree of control over the centre, will not easily give up the status and the profits they acquired before. On the other hand, the fact that the “centre can no longer administer effectively” (the main reason for the public administration reform), the demand for democracy loudly expressed by various sections of the society and Turkey’s EU membership process, necessitate the need to overcome all hindrances and obstacles in one way or the other.

As progress is made in this context and strategies are formed, women inevitably emerge as a major social group. They are the most dynamic and active group in Turkey, and have rapidly organized, especially in the last decade. It is a fact that a democratisation process can not progress without the participation of women; however, in Turkey this matter has a special importance. We already said that local actors may hinder local democratisation efforts; the common characteristic of these actors is that they are dominantly male. They manipulate the centre/periphery duality of the political system for their own interests; they have succeeded in forming their own relations between the centre and the local and they reap the benefits of such relations. It is very possible that they perceive the democratisation and re-arrangement processes as a threat to their interests. In this context, it can be said that the “centre” is re-created in the “local” by these actors with more power and with a bonus benefit of having no rivals; and that this type of “centralization” is the biggest obstacle to local democracy and participation of women.

Women are categorically not included in this group of local actors. They continue to relate to the centre in symbolic terms. As a matter of fact, the language and symbols of women who have somehow managed to rise to the public sphere shows that this type of relation is still valid. Local Agenda 21 emphasizes the participation of women worldwide; however, in Turkey participation of women to the Agenda 21 process is of special importance, because of their potential for “partiality” to the centre.

3. Local Agenda 21 Participation of Women / Women’s Councils

Local Agenda 21 Program has endorsed increasing and urging women’s participation as an important goal. A local governance model which cares for the urban needs of women (women comprise half of the urban population), which heeds their calls and utilizes their problem-solving skills will be more successful in reaching sustainable development goals, and at the same time will be an important step towards establishing local democracy.

The suggested model for reaching this goal is the “women’s councils”. Local Agenda 21 implementations may differ in each region; still, women’s councils or similar formations (as in the Çanakkale case) are considered an important instrument for the participation of women and women’s organizations. However, it is also observed that Local Agenda 21 Turkey Coordination is aware of the

1 In many instances, these local actors are among the first to object to democratisation demands.
2 LA 21 Program has drawn a special work field for women in local administrations. Both the Millenium Development Goals and Agenda 21 Goals require the Local administrations who participate in the program (program partners) to develop and implement programs that facilitate the active participation of organized (in NGO’s) and unorganized (individual) women.
drawbacks of directing women to a separate platform, which may lead to the isolation of women; and that it gives a special importance to representation of women in city councils.

Women’s councils are established with the participation of the representatives of women’s organizations; however, women who are “leaders” of their local society are also urged to participate.

Another important point is the fact that women’s councils are open to not only members of women’s organizations, but to all women. This is important, because a very large portion of urban women are unorganised, and the only way they can participate in local democracy is by voting at elections.

However, as mentioned by the Local Agenda 21 Coordination, there are important problems both in city councils and women’s councils regarding the representation of women and it is clear that we are still a long way from overcoming these problems. We think that in order to determine, argue and propose solutions to these problems, it will be useful to remember the context in which they arise.

**Women’s Publicity**

Egalitarian politics have supported the removal of obstacles to the participation of woman in the public sphere as a primary goal, right from the beginning. Especially education, work and the right to engage in active politics are the most important strategic targets for increasing the participation of women in public sphere.

The idea behind these policies is that women are in a secondary position because they are kept apart in private quarters. That is why so much effort is put to opening participatory channels. This theory has been criticized by feminists all over the world as well as Turkey, who claim that women will not be treated as equals in their participation in the public sphere, as long as there is inequality in the private sphere (i.e. in the family). In fact, after a hundred years of modernization, the public sphere has become available only to certain women under certain conditions; it is not available to a great majority of women. Educated middle class and upper middle class women may start a business – even enter into politics, if only within limits; women who are bereft of such means are unable to be a part of the “public sphere” even if they work under wage.  

The fact that in the private sphere egalitarian politics is not developed has limited the public participation of women, making it possible only for some of them. It has shaped the public image of women as a “natural” consequence of sex relations. When we consider the modernization process in Turkey, we see that the publicity form for upper and middle class women is essentially about attending associations. This unique component of hegemonic publicity is shaped quite like the reflection of

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3 The majority of working women are farm workers with no pay. More and more women are recruited in the informal sector; i.e. they have no security and are unorganised. Those women who work in the formal sector are kept out of professional organisations; and consequently, for them the concept of work is not a participation, a public existence, but a way to “bring bread to the home.”

4 The women’s branches of political parties are not different than women’s associations. Therefore, except for a limited number of women, for a vast majority public existence does not go beyond association meetings.
sexist division of labour in the public sphere: providing public services when the state is not functional, rehabilitating social groups whose social participation are impeded for various reasons (foremost being poverty).⁵

This form, which we may call “traditional woman’s publicity” does not provide right of speech to women in the hegemonic public sphere (in politics and public administration); quite the contrary, it provides them a separate public existence, impeding their entrance to the public sphere on one hand, and ensuring their support for this publicity with the social work and services they provide. Consequently, the role of “assistant and consultant”, as put by our previous Civil Law, continues in the public sphere and shapes women’s public existence.

Demands for increasing the political participation of women and temporary and very limited measures put into force by political parties are barely echoed in politics; they carry no sign of a significant transformation. This fact is due to the prevalence and depth of “traditional women’s publicity”. When we look at the working programs of “women’s branch” of political parties and organizations, we see a structure closed to main decision-making mechanisms, which supports such mechanisms but is inhibited from any decision-making process.⁶

When Local Agenda 21 Turkey was initiated in 1997, it had to be set within this framework and after nearly ten years, when we evaluate Local Agenda 21 from the perspective of women’s participation, we have to keep in mind this framework.

**Traditional Women’s Publicity and Implementation of Local Agenda 21**

Local Agenda 21 carries an important potential for enabling women to have a say in city administration as citizens, with their special experiences and needs, specific problems and perspectives. However, due to the context mentioned above, this potential seems far from being realized. Comments have been made both in the project design and the reports of LA 21 Program Coordination Unit, about the awareness to this problem. But effective instruments have not been developed; after scanning documents, field observations and interviews, problems that occur in the current implementations have been defined in three categories:

a) **Characteristics of the “Women’s studies” field**

b) **The manner of developing relations with local and central administrations**

c) **Defects in the perception of the “local”**

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⁵ As mentioned above, symbols still have a strong bonding function in the relations of women with the “centre”; we would like to stress the importance of this function, in the establishment of local “woman publicity” as an extension of the “state” (and the centre).

⁶ Administrators of political parties may be right when they say “it is not our fault, we can’t find any women candidates) as an excuse to not filling their quotas. It is obvious that quotas and other temporary measures are not functional just by themselves, and must be considered along with supporting mechanisms.
a) Characteristics of the “Women’s studies” field

As mentioned above, women and women’s organizations are working in a field that may traditionally be defined as “charity work” or “social service”. When we consider that “social services” are more a “state sponsored charity work” rather than a component of the social policies of the state, it can be said that the public characteristic of this field is very low.

Activities towards meeting the needs of the poor, uneducated and socially isolated sections of the society, especially women and children, are based on the notion that they are not a subject/citizen but the “needy”. Therefore, the “participation of unorganised sections” perspective is nothing but wishful thinking. Unorganised sections of the society, in other words, those who are isolated from social/political participation facilities are, just like in the case of the activities of women’s associations, are not participants but receivers of services in Local Agenda 21 works. Thus, women working with Local Agenda 21 try to meet those needs that can’t be satisfied by local administrations and public institutions. Courses for illiterates, various informative/instructive activities, skill courses, helping the needy are all realized within this perspective.

During the interviews the question: “What is the difference between Local Agenda 21 and Associations?” was asked, and most of the answers centred around “benefiting from Municipality’s facilities” and “having a platform where all associations work together”. It is plain that Local Agenda 21’s targets of increasing participation and improving local democracy have not yet been endorsed.

Likewise, it is apparent that there is no systematic and regular contact with female members of the municipality council (in some cases nobody knew how many female members were in the municipality council) and that the agenda of the municipality is not monitored. Many members of the women’s council regarded these questions as out of context. It is apparent that many participants regard Local Agenda 21 as another form of women’s associations, rather than a component of local administrations.

b) The manner of developing relations with local and central administrations

Pursuant to the problematic in the first category, this second category is about the relations of women and women’s associations working under Local Agenda 21, with local administrations (municipalities and local officials of the central administration), their zeal for and endorsement of an “assistant and consultant” position. They are in a position of subjects who are being helped, supported and appreciated, instead demanding, participating and monitoring. The signs of this position can be traced in the language of various reports, and the way they talk about local power holders.

A historical reality of Turkey is the fact that state/citizen relations are essentially built on subservience. When we consider woman citizens, we observe that this subservience has a specific dimension. This type of relation renders women’s organizations to be perceived as the face of/hand of the local administration reaching out to unorganised women, instead of representing them and speaking for
them. This position has an effect that makes it hard to determine and perceive local needs/problems and experiences of unorganised women

c) Defects in the perception of the “Local”

“Women’s problems” has been defined and categorized in detail, especially in the last decade. On one hand, this fact facilitates improvement and makes inter-disciplinary interaction possible; however on the other hand, it also paves the way to turn field information into reiterating codes. Basic data on fields categorized as Education/Health/Employment/Violence/Politics have been collected and most of the problems defined. However, this sense of “completeness” and vividness almost completely hinders perception of problems outside this framework. For example, Violence, a topic of one of the categories, almost completely focuses on inter-marriage violence and family murders; other types of violence become invisible (economic violence is almost never mentioned). In short, categorization may render specific local problems invisible; an example for this is the perception that, in a city where planning processes have become dysfunctional, poverty of women who have migrated to the city is solely regarded as an “employment issue”, and consequently, courses for teaching skills are initiated. However, the process that leads to poverty is mixed with all kinds of isolation mechanisms and when no social component besides employment is envisaged, it is impossible to get a result from such measures. It follows that the issue is multi-faceted and demands solutions from a broader perspective. In substantiating this perspective, it is imperative to make it possible for the “target population” to participate in policy-making processes, and to urge the public administration (both the municipality and local units of public administration) to become a component of the solution.

Another example is the exclusion of women’s associations working with LA 21 from the process of public participation to the re-arrangement of neighbourhood bazaars (which in fact is a very positive development). Another example: in rapidly growing cities, where the urban environment is in fast degeneration, because of the one-way direction (from the centre to the periphery) of the relations of women who live in the suburbs, they are subject to a series of educational and awareness-raising activities, which they find hard to relate to; i.e. instead of discussing the access problems of these suburban women to the city centre, because of the fact that the access is from the centre to the periphery, this problem is “by-passed”.

This fact has an obstructing effect on the “locality” claim of the Local Agenda 21 program from the perspective of women’s activities. When the agendas of women’s councils, the themes of Women’s Festivals and final reports are examined, it is seen in all these activities the women’s agenda of Local Agenda 21 is defined not in a local, but in a general framework, encompassing categorized problems. For example, when festival themes are discussed by academic guests under titles like “Globalisation”, even “Governance”, even though festivals have an “informative” and “cultural journey” function, it can be said that they are not used effectively from the perspective of Local Agenda 21’s targets and improvement of the perception of locality.
In short, local problems are not perceived; and when they are perceived, they are defined in categories and lose their originality; another reason for this is the lack of participation of the majority of urban women. As in the above example, when poverty is defined as something more than an employment issue, we must hear the voices of those who live in poverty to make connections with social exclusion mechanisms. Otherwise, all kinds of intervention will re-create social exclusion.7

4. Suggestions for the Local Agenda 21 Program

In the general program assessment of Turkey’s Program with EU criteria, “desire for participating in the local decision making process” is described as the strong side of the program, “directing participation towards action and safeguarding its sustainability” as the weak side. When the words-undertaking of the project management on gender equality are considered, it is seen that they include the words of international documents in regard to national cooperation and communication network. Furthermore, in the context of forming an international solidarity network: information and experience is generally shared through the web site with an announcement; and in meetings, there is the risk of not being able to develop a language much needed for sharing local experiences.8

The majority of the problems of Local Agenda 21 Program are related with social and historical contexts. Analysing this context, and deriving strategies on these analysis seems to be of special import.

As a new initiative,

- Creating perspectives towards development of woman-friendly local administration politics
- Improving cooperation between local administrations and local women’s organizations

must be regarded in the short and middle term objectives of the program, in the context of assessment of the new arrangements brought by new Laws, responsibilities and obligations of local administrations towards women and the rights of women (See Annex 1)

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7 “Hearing the voices...” surely requires a greater perspective than saying “tell me about your troubles”. As is well known, social exclusion is a process that leads to the distortion of the self-image of the individual, and his perception of his basic needs, by hegemonic codes. For this reason, social inclusion approaches must be developed in a perspective that envisages this distortion and constructs the instruments to win over it.

8 “the LA21 women’s council is currently most suitable platform for realizing at local level the provisions concerning women delineated in action plans adopted in global summits extending from Rio to Johannesburg in particular Agenda 21 and Beijing Platform of Action as well as in other international documents, in particular the UN Millennium Declaration and CEDAW” “... built upon the local networks constituted by women’s councils, the nation-wide cooperation and collaboration network plays a crucial role in the development of local capacities and in this respect, the enablement of women for strengthening of democratic local governance ”LA 21 handbook, p.84-89 .
It is understood that IULA-EMME, which works with great devotion as the Coordination committee, does not direct women’s councils, but plays a “facilitating role.” (See Annex 2) This preference must be re-considered and **UNDP must establish strategies for the qualitative and quantitative transformation of women’s participation in Turkey, with Local Agenda 21 playing an active role in the implementation of this strategy.** The main starting points of the Local Agenda 21 strategy for the quantitative and qualitative transformation of women’s participation will be the following activities:

- Promoting “**women’s strategic plan**” as a primary initiative for the active participation of women in the preparation of urban strategic plan,

- Planning a workshop that will remind the participants that the strategic plan-action plan is an activity towards defining themselves as public subjects, rather than a list of demands.

- Turning annual women’s festivals into a platform for discussion rather than a cultural journey (a good start would be to let the participants talk instead of specialists and celebrities).

- Developing strategies for a wider participation of urban women

- Regular monitoring of municipality councils by women’s councils; informing urban women on decisions about women; establishing discussion platforms

In addition to the endorsement of the above activities as a gender equality strategy, in the context of the program for localization of Millennium Development Goals by Local Agenda 21 the program has also been evaluated in this context and other suggestions have been made, after the assessment of possible basic outputs. (See Annex 3)
Annex 1: Assessment of New Legal Arrangements

It is suggested that the related articles of the new local administration laws\(^9\) be interpreted and applied thus:

5393/Article 13

“Women citizens” have the right to participate in municipal decisions and services, and to be informed about the municipality’s activities.”

The phrasing of “the right” can include women in a real sense, only when conditions for their participation and services are arranged with an acknowledgement of their living conditions. Therefore, special care must be given to determine the living conditions and needs of women who will have access to municipal services; approaches like using public places (i.e. markets, bus stops) as announcement centres must be utilized to secure the rights of women in being informed of municipal activities.

To understand the local needs of women:

5393/Article 15, 5302/Article 7

Public surveys and researches must be made not with the traditional method of meeting with the ‘head of the household’ but face to face with women.

Action-oriented research must be made in “women’s places” like community centres-women’s support centres.

Cooperation must be established with universities and women’s organizations.

For safe and easy transport in the city

5393/Article 15, 51, 5216/Article 7,9

Special care must be given to lightning and police measures, for access to public spaces especially after certain hours (after dark).

Conveniences such as environmental arrangements to ease pedestrian traffic, special bus hours, one type of ticket in public transport, etc. should be brought.

Measures that will strengthen women with concessions in renting and buying services must be taken, alongside sub-arrangements in privatisation of services.

Establishing City Councils and Women’s Councils

5393/Article 76

\(^9\) Municipality Law No. 5393 (Published in Official Gazette no. 25874, dated 13.07.2005)

Metropolitan Municipalities Law No. 5216 (Published in Official Gazette no. 25531, dated 23.07.2004)

Special Provincial Administration Law No. 5302 ((Published in Official Gazette no. 25745, dated 04.03.2005)

Regulations for Voluntary Participation to the Services of Special Provincial Administrations and Municipalities which was prepared by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in the framework of Law no. 5302, article 65 and Law no. 5393 Article 77. ((Published in Official Gazette no. 25981, dated 09.10.2005)
Women’s councils must be established and participation of women’s organizations to city councils under the supervision of women’s councils must be supported. Decisions taken in women’s councils must be evaluated at local councils (municipality council and city council); furthermore legal measures must be introduced to reflect these in council decisions (According to Article 5393/76 ‘decisions of city councils will be evaluated in municipal councils’; however, according to the draft statute of city councils, ‘decisions taken at women’s councils can only be evaluated in the municipal councils via city councils.’)

Strategic Plan
5393/ Md.41, 5302/ Md.31

During the preparation and launching of the strategic plan, women’s councils and women’s organizations must convey their opinions about the priorities of local services for women, and must make sure that a “gender-sensitive strategic plan” and “gender-sensitive budget” is devised.

Monitoring council meetings
5393 /Article 20,21,23,24 , 5216/ Article15,20, 5302/ Article12,13,15,16

Regular monitoring of the meetings of local councils (municipality and city councils), participation in local special committees must be promoted.

Shelter Houses
5393/Article 14

Metropolitan municipalities and district municipalities with a population of more than 50,000 must open shelter houses for women and children, rules and regulations must be arranged with the participation of women, the expressions “social service” and “social help” must be interpreted as measures for protection against family violence, in Community Centres, Women’s Counselling and Solidarity Centres, women’s organizations must cooperate with local administrations especially about violence against women.

Institutional arrangements towards the establishment of equality
5393/ Article 24, 40, 48, 5216/ Article15,20,21, 5302/ Article 16,35

“Equality units” must be formed by the decision of local councils, A “monitoring-evaluating-policy making committee for social gender equality” must be established under the name “support politics for women committee” or “gender equality committee”.

An advisor responsible for support politics for women and social gender equality must be appointed, vice presidents must be chosen from among the women council members.
Voluntary participation to local services

5393/ Article 77, 5302/ Article 65

The management of local services must be open to local administration-NGO cooperation, even though this may carry the danger of annulling the legal rights of disadvantaged groups and giving the initiative to (individual or organized) volunteers, which may lead to the assumption that all local services will be provided on a volunteer basis.
Annex 2: Evaluation of Project Outputs

When the program is assessed within the framework of the basic outputs and their goals put forth in “UN Millennium Development Goals through Turkey LA 21 Governance Network and Localization of Johannesburg Implementation Plan”:

Output 1: In the context of institutionalisation of LA 21 processes and mechanisms at local and national level

1.1 Articles that will increase Government support and the effect of LA 21 in the implementation of the new legislation:

The new legislation includes only one article towards women; however, it has the potential to facilitate a participatory administration model, and consequently, participation of women (examined in detail in Annex 1)

In the preparation of the Development Plan, it is a well-known fact that no special committee for women was formed. However, it is said that the LA 21 program is incorporated to certain components of the Development Plan, as the primary model for the localization of sustainable development.

1.2 Awareness-raising and Campaign for LA 21 and promotion campaign

There is a Youth Council for relations with the parliament, but the visibility of women is very low. In promoting Local Agenda 21, National Youth Parliament plays a crucial role.

Including women in promotion activities and campaigns will allow women to get an amount of visibility, and at the same time it will be very useful for a widespread recognition of LA 21.

1.3 Promotion of the institutionalisation of women and youth councils

Arrangements have been made in the draft City Council Regulations for establishing women councils. This arrangement will encourage LA 21 partners to establish women councils. However, at the establishment phase, their duties and responsibilities must be clearly defined to increase the zeal and tendencies of women in participating in city administration and becoming a part of local governance, rather that perceiving themselves as a part of women’s organizations (example: participation in the preparation of a budget for the strategic plan).

1.3.1. Training and capacity building activities directed by LA 21 Women’s Councils Network

Special activities for women in the framework of the program include:

- Women’s Festivals (annual)
- Women’s Councils National Coordination Meetings (four times a year)

General activities that include women are:

- Project preparation and management training
- Governance network and web site training
The agendas of women’s festivals and national coordination meetings include general topics towards women. However, these topics are too general and do not facilitate any talks on women’s local issues. (example: the agenda of Mersin Women Councils National Coordination Meeting includes: representation of women in politics-quotas for women; MDG briefing; CEDAW training; 2006 women’s activities action plan; assessment of Zonguldak festival; the subjects of work groups are quota campaign for women in elections and national communication network. The meeting could be held in Mersin or any other city; it does not provide any input to the agenda about local issues.)

1.4 Structured training on EU accession process for the establishment of good governance principles
Training was given to LA 21 General Secretaries, city councils, representatives of women and youth councils and local administrators.
This training is the subject of the national coordination meetings of some women’s councils. The prepared books (“EU, Turkey and locality”; “The place and function of Local Administrations in EU”) should be comprehensible and well suited for training.
Such training must cover practices that convey the meaning of European Urban Rights Declaration (1992) from the perspective of women and the priorities of European Union Social Gender Equality Chart (2006-2010). (priorities: equal economic independence, harmonization of private life with professional life, equal representation in decision-making mechanisms, erasing gender oriented violence, erosion of traditional sexist roles, development with gender equality, support for external politics)

1.4.2. LA 21’s key role for the localisation of MDGs:
In drawing the framework of the new project, the evaluation report suggestions should be assessed with a view towards the goal of “strengthening women’s conditions and providing social gender equality.”

1.4.3. Participatory planning and budget training to pilot municipalities
The potential of the “support for local administration project”, which covers 6 pilot municipalities, must be evaluated with a view towards a participatory budget mentality, establishment of a social gender approach and effects of budget implementations on women; in the context of important activities such as preparation of an improving budget and workshops on strategic planning.

1.4.4 Project preparation and management training
Most of those who benefit from the training are men (only 12 of 62 LA 21 general secretaries are women); it is observed that more than 40 SRAP projects are being prepared and the so-called “women’s projects” are given special emphasis.

1.4.5 LA 21 governance network web site training
The site is not user friendly; new methods that will enforce women’s network must be established.
Output 2: Launching LA 21 – LPSP for local promotion and realization of MDG

The structure of Local Projects Support Program, which gives priority to the so-called women projects, provides a new approach to the workings of local women councils (example: 9 of 16 projects selected in the 2nd phase are women projects); this emphasis on women projects has the danger of leading local administrators to the illusion that issues may be solved with projects, instead of permeating social gender approach at all levels.
Annex 3: Suggestions for the project “Localizing the Millennium Development Goals and WSSD plan implementation through the Local Agenda 21 Governance Network” and its intended outputs:

**General assessment**
In addition to the “3rd goal; strengthening women’s position and providing social gender equality” in the context of MDG, other goals must also be considered from the perspective of women, who naturally comprise half of the population.
For example: In addition to goals “reducing child mortality rate” and “improving maternal health”; its is just as important to consider “eradication of extreme poverty and hunger” and “basic education for everyone” with a view of the education of girls and poverty of women; “provision of environmental sustainability” and “establishing global partnerships for development” with a view of the role of women in social development.

**Project Outputs**

Output 1: Launching “Our City Supports MDG” campaign at national and local level
The target group of the campaign at the local level are mayors and members of municipal and city councils. The rate of selected women in this group is very low (0.6% women mayors, 2.5% women municipality council members, 1.7% women city council members).
At all local administrative levels, representation of women and women’s issues is low; therefore, special care must be given to the evaluation of the “MDG’s impact on the budgets and strategic plans of 200 cities” in a social gender context, and the provision of a “gender-sensitive budget and strategic plan”.
It is a fact that in the LA 21 governance network, 36 of 62 local units (out of 3234 municipalities and 81 special provincial administrations) have women councils or similar organizations; it is also obvious that effort must be made for these councils to endorse the subject.

Output 2: Capacity building at Local Administrations and city councils for the realisation of MDG
Even though the target of forming 150 city councils has been reached with the support of article 5393/76, this is not true for women’s councils (women’s councils are mentioned in the draft regulation of city councils, but they are not compulsory). It will be men mostly who benefit from training programs, unless special arrangements are made.
A gender-sensitive action plan must be devised with the participation of the representatives of women’s organisations, as an alternative to women’s councils who already lag behind in the process of constructing local action plans that are in keeping with Millennium Goals.
Likewise, training and technical support programs, pilot projects implemented in the framework of new legislations should be evaluated and arranged with a social gender approach.
Output 2.3: Comprises activities which make it possible for the women’s councils network to localise MDG especially in the framework of target 3.

The communication facilities of the network (web site, etc.), the scope, content and target groups of the national meetings that are being planned must be re-evaluated in the framework of “women’s chart”; furthermore, as mentioned above, activities towards women must not be limited to the framework of target 3.

Output 2.5: Training and educational work must include a woman component; the pertaining regulations of the EU towards social gender equality must be employed in the training.

Output 3: Establishing support monitoring and assessment mechanisms for the localization of MDG

Facilitating women’s activities is not enough; an “MDG Project Social Gender Equality Unit” and at the local level “MDG local social gender equality units” must be established.

In the assessment of the project, “indicators for the strengthening of women and provision of social gender equality” must be considered; the increase in transformation capacity must be measured with these indicators.

The language (negative example: male and higher language) of the web site, and ways of spreading this language must be considered (negative example: women councils who do not have access to the computer and internet network).

A regional “equality watch network” must be considered along with “millennium local watch network”.

Output 4: Promoting the development of “best practices” in partnerships with the private sector in localizing the MDGs

Cooperation projects developed by women’s councils and local private sector companies of women’s organisations and international cases must always be considered in the context of partnerships.