



THE TURKISH FEDERATION OF THE BLIND (logo)

## Research Report on the Effectiveness of Women with Disabilities in Non-Governmental Organizations

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Ankara

April 2021

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This study has been prepared within the scope of the European Union Sivil Düşün Programme, with the support of the European Union. Turkish Federation of the Blind fully responsible for the content belongs to and is not reflect the views of the EU.

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Printed in

Ankara

April 2021

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## PREFACE

All people are born equipped with rights. However, there are some segments that cannot exercise these rights for various reasons. Disabled women are of the segment that suffers from multiple discrimination. This research addresses the right of women with disabilities to participate in human rights decisions. Women with disabilities offered support at every stage of the study. We would like to thank all the women who walked together and were in solidarity in this study and to those who made fruitful contribution. Our wish is to contribute to reaching the days when there will be no need to fight to exercise rights.

## ABSTRACT<sup>1</sup>

This study was carried out by the Turkish Federation of the Blind with the support of the European Union Sivil Dusun Programme.

The aim of the study is to obtain data on the position of women with disabilities in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to create the basis for advocacy work.

The proportion of people with disabilities to the population in Turkey is 12.29%. In this case, there are at least 10,277,000 people with disabilities in Turkey. Considering that half of disabled people are women, at least 5,138,500 disabled women live in Turkey. Besides, a quite significant population, considering families living with disabilities and especially mothers, is directly affected by the phenomenon of disability.

It is unquestionable that human rights are the rights of all people. In the exercise of rights, women are more disadvantaged than men, and disabled people are more disadvantaged than non-disabled people, women with disabilities than non-disabled women and women with disabilities are more disadvantaged than disabled men. Disabled women are exposed to double discrimination because of both being women and being disabled.

Social prejudices position women with disabilities as aggrieved, helpless, pathetic, in need of extra protection or adopted and not necessary to make investment. In the space they are in, they have to make more efforts many times to be relatively accepted compared to disabled men.

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<sup>1</sup> The abstract section was prepared as a sign language video in a way to include the hearing-impaired ones.

People with disabilities have established NGOs where they can express themselves to fight against the discrimination and challenges, they face in the society. The number of associations for disabled people in Turkey is [1403](#)<sup>2</sup>. This number is equivalent to 1.15 of the total associations. There are 3 associations for disabled women in Turkey.

Organizations working for disability act as if the disability is a gender-neutral phenomenon on the basis of disability and disabled women are ignored. Having the women's identity as a base in women's organizations, the fact that women's problems are faced in different forms and intensities in different groups of women is failed to notice. In both categories of organizations, women with disabilities are not able to participate in decision-making mechanisms and find a floor to express their own problems. Therefore, equal treatment of different individuals in the definition of discrimination is also encountered here as well.

A broad participation model was followed at each stage of the study.

A [poster](#)<sup>3</sup>, an [infographic](#)<sup>4</sup>, an introductory [video](#)<sup>5</sup> and a press [release](#)<sup>6</sup> were prepared to introduce the study and the study was promoted by this way.

In order to carry out the research, a questionnaire was prepared to be filled out online by women with disabilities and mothers of individuals with mental disabilities. A [video](#)<sup>7</sup> with a sign language translation of questions was prepared for hearing impaired participants, making the survey understandable.

The results of research were shared with the public through a [poster](#)<sup>8</sup>, an [infographic](#)<sup>9</sup>, a press [release](#)<sup>10</sup>, PDF version of the research report in Turkish and [English](#)<sup>11</sup>, the ink and

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.siviltoplum.gov.tr/derneklerin-faaliyet-alanlarina-gore-dagilimi> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.korlerfederasyonu.org.tr/> (access date 18.03.2021)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.korlerfederasyonu.org.tr/> (access date 18.03.2021)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f\\_mh7ctzrxM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_mh7ctzrxM) (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.korlerfederasyonu.org.tr/> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f\\_as06hryhPcl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_as06hryhPcl) (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.korlerfederasyonu.org.tr/> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.korlerfederasyonu.org.tr/> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.korlerfederasyonu.org.tr/> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.korlerfederasyonu.org.tr/> (access date 14.03.2021)

braille print of the report and the sign language video of the report's [abstract](#)<sup>12</sup> 256 women filled the questionnaire out. The highest proportion of participants is 25.4% as visually impaired. The lowest rate is with psychosocial mental disabilities at 1.6%.

64.8% of participants are between the ages of 18-45.

52.3% of respondents are married and 57.8% have children. According to a published [research](#)<sup>13</sup>, 75.5% of women in Turkey are married. This rate is lower in the participants. This result suggests that women with disabilities are discriminated against in marriage compared to women with no disability.

51.2% of participants are not members of an NGO. Most non-member participants have distrust of the NGOs on protection of their rights. Among the participants, there are those who stated that they were not members due to family and care responsibilities caused by gender inequality. There are also participants who are not members due to ignorance and lack of self-confidence.

More than half of the participants who were members of an NGO were candidates for a position on the board of directors, while almost half were not candidates. Some of the selected participants have held multiple positions in various times in the NGO.

Participants who are not candidates and cannot be elected say that personal relationships are the dominant factors rather than success and that they are discriminated since they are women, suggesting that there is no objective choice in NGOs.

The nursing responsibility on women, the judgment that being a woman is not suitable for an executive position, the location of the organizations, the features of the spaces, unsuitability of working and meeting hours for women's participation and decisive attitude of families in women's decisions have been an obstacle to their candidacy.

82.4% of respondents stated that they were not running for the chair position of the organization. Participants may be considered not to be candidates because of the prejudice that the executive position is a job suitable for men or those they cannot be elected.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mlagsgbo-TU&t=17s> (access date 10.04.2021)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.turkiyeraporu.com/evlilik> (access date 16.03.2021):

Considering the reasons for not being elected when they were candidate to be chair of the NGO, the inability to be elected due to gender inequality comes to the fore.

One third of respondents stated that there was no female executive on the NGO Board.

It has been seen that only 20% of the participants have a written regulation (quota etc.) to facilitate women's participation in the board of directors.

82 out of 125 participants who answered the question "Is there a situation to prevent women from taking part in the board of directors in the NGO?" responded negatively. Participants who marked that there was a disabling situation emphasized the gender inequality.

52% of respondents stated that they did not organize meetings to raise their demands and requirements to the board of directors. In this case, it was observed that half of the NGO administrations did not create a mechanism in which they would be aware of the expectations of women with disabilities, nor did they develop a strategy for communicating the problems and demands of women.

While 78.4% of respondents noted that they had not been discriminated against or violated due to being women with disabilities in the organization, 21.2% stated that they had been violated in terms of rights. Even if a person has been discriminated against or violated in rights-based struggle, it is the obligation of NGOs not to allow it. Half of the participants who said that they had been violated within the organization saying that they had received support from the organization's management, and half said that they had not received any support.

While 60.8% of respondents noted they had not been discriminated against or violated outside the organization due to what they were disabled women, 39.2% said they had been violated. About half of the participants who said they had been violated outside the organization stated that they had received support from the organization's management, and just over half said that they had not received any support.

While 75% of respondents considered the establishment of an organization for women with disabilities important and necessary, 25% did not consider it important and necessary. Women with disabilities organizations need to increase their number and increase the struggle for women with disabilities, advocate for rights and make gains.

Notable suggestions from participants for women with disabilities to participate more effectively in non-governmental organizations are as follows:

In order to implement equal representation of male and female in the boards of directors, quota regulations should be made and sanctions should be arranged for compliance.

In order to prove that women can succeed in organizations, the bias “organizations are men's work” should be broken and equality of opportunity should be achieved.

Educational work should be carried out in organizations that ensure gender equality for male members, facilitate women's participation in the organizational process, and break negative stereotypes against women.

The board of Directors of the organization should organize meetings on the problems of organization, thoughts, feelings and requirements of women with disabilities, and conduct research in line with their results.

Disabled organizations should carry out studies for the effective participation of women with disabilities in women's organizations and other NGOs.

Some notable recommendations developed by the research team based on interviews, observations, experiences, and research findings are as follows:

Extensive research should be done on many subjects such as the number of disabled people, gender distribution of disabled people, demographic data on disabled women, ratio of women to men in members and boards of directors in disabled NGOs, numerical data on women's NGOs, ratio of disabled women members in women's associations, ratio of disabled women in boards of directors, etc.

A rights-based perspective should be established to ensure that disabled women are equal people possessing all human rights, and that all necessary efforts are made to enjoy their rights and that special measures are taken until equality is achieved.

The location, venue, working and meeting hours of NGOs should be arranged availably for women.



Training should be carried out for disabled women to be more effective in NGOs. In order for these studies to be carried out, the state and fund organizations should create support.

Preventing disabled women from exercising their birth right is a question of democracy and human rights. This problem should be solved with the participation of society, especially the state.

## INTRODUCTION

This study was carried out by the Turkish Federation of the Blind with the support of the European Union Sivil Dusun Programme.

The study was born from the idea that it is necessary to organize and to take part in management levels in organizations, to participate effectively in decisions and to be represented in order for women with disabilities to benefit from the rights that are stated in international and national documents and which are stated to be the right of all people.

The opinions of women who cannot take part in the management and decision-making mechanisms in organizations for disabilities and organizations that are not related to the disabled, as a reason and result of discrimination, and whose power to influence decisions is limited when participating in these organizations were taken at every stage. Disabled women have embraced the challenge by noting "Not being able to take part in the management of the organization and not be able to participate in decisions is our problem and we can find the solution of this problem by talking, creating a pressure force, defending our rights with solidarity".

This study will provide a concrete basis for associations to identify the reasons that prevent them from becoming volunteers, members, board candidates, board members, presidential candidates and presidents, identify barriers to participation and discuss what needs to be done to increase participation.

## AIM

The aim of the research is the following questions to be answered.

What are the regulations in international and national legal documents regarding the right to participate, which is one of the human rights of women with disabilities?

To what extent are women with disabilities represented in the management of non-governmental organizations?

What are the problems and causes of participation of disabled women?

What works do women with disabilities propose to carry out in organizations to ensure equal representation?

## ASSUMPTIONS

Disabled women are unable to participate adequately in decision-making mechanisms in disabled NGOs and other NGOs due to multiple discrimination and gender inequality.

## LIMITATIONS

Women with disabilities who can reach NGOs, use communication technology, and access social media platforms and the women who are mothers of mentally handicapped individuals were able to participate in the study. For this reason, it does not cover all disabled women living in Turkey. It does not claim to represent all disabled women with this aspect.

## DEFINITIONS

Disability: the World Health Organization uses [disability](#)<sup>14</sup>, as an umbrella term for disability, activity limitation and participation restriction. Disability refers to the negative situations arising from the interaction of individuals with health problems with personal and environmental factors such as negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public premises, limited social support.

Disabled women: Means all women, girls and adolescents with [disabilities](#),<sup>15</sup>

Discrimination: It has been used as inequality in accessing opportunities and resources on various grounds causing inequality, such as race, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity, health status, political or other opinion, refugee, immigration, asylum status. In addition, as discrimination can occur in

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.engellilerkonfederasyonu.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/D%C3%BCnya-Engellilik-Raporu-2011.pdf> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.esithaklar.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/BM-Genel-Yorum-No.3-Engelli-Kad%C4%B1nlar-ve-K%C4%B1z-%C3%87ocuklar%C4%B1.docx> (access date 19.03.2021)

the form of different treatment of people in the same or similar situation, as well as in the form of the same treatment of people in different situations.

Multiple discrimination: It describes situations where an individual faces discrimination on two or more reasons and causes complex and aggravated [discrimination](#)<sup>16</sup>. "Intersectional discrimination" describes situations where different reasons for discrimination intersect in such a way that they cannot be separated at the same [time](#)<sup>17</sup>.

Discrimination against women with disabilities: Disability Rights [Committee](#)<sup>18</sup> approach the issue as "international and national disability-related laws and policies have historically neglected aspects of women and girls with disabilities. In contrast, laws and policies aimed at women have also traditionally ignored disability. This invisibility has led to the strengthening of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against women and girls with disabilities".

Sex and gender: "Sex" refers to biological differences between men and women, "gender" means the characteristics that show a society's or culture's perspective on masculinity and femininity.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LEGAL ARRANGEMENTS

The ratio of people with disabilities to the population in Turkey is observed in the Turkish Disability [Survey](#)<sup>19</sup> conducted by the State Statistical Institute in 2002. Accordingly, the proportion of disabled people in the total population is 12.29%.

According to the World Disability [Report](#)<sup>20</sup> prepared by the World Health Organization, it is estimated that about 15 percent of the world's population lives with some forms of

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.ailevecalisma.gov.tr/media/35252/cedaw-32-sayili-genel-tavsiye-karari.pdf> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>17</sup> <https://ihop.org.tr/dosya/CEDAW/CEDAWGT28.doc> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/docid/57c977344.html> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>19</sup> <http://eski.bingol.edu.tr/media/225884/15TuRKiYE-oZuRLuLER-ARAsTiRMASi.pdf> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.engellilerkonfederasyonu.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/D%C3%BCnya-Engellilik-Raporu-2011.pdf> (access date 14.03.2021)

disability. That's higher than previous estimates from the 1970s, when the World Health Organization set it forth about 10 percent.

According to TUIK (Turkish Statistical Institute) [data](#)<sup>21</sup>, as of December 31, 2020, when 12.29% of Turkey's population, which is 83 million 614 thousand 362, is calculated it appears that there are at least 10,277,000 disabled people in the country. Considering that half of disabled people are women, at least 5,138,500 disabled women live in Turkey. Besides, a very important population, considering families living with disabilities and especially mothers, is directly affected by the phenomenon of disability.

According to the World Disability Report by World Health [Organization](#)<sup>22</sup>, “while there is a correlation between disability and disadvantage, not all people with disabilities are equally disadvantaged. Women with disabilities are subject to gender discrimination as well as barriers that make them dysfunctional.”

It is unquestionable that human rights are the rights of all people. However, it is also clear that people do not have equal opportunities and opportunities to benefit the rights of every group. In the exercise of their rights, women are more disadvantaged than men, disabled people than non-disabled women, women with disabilities than women with no disabilities, and women with disabilities than men with disabilities. Disabled women are double discriminated against because of both being women and being disabled. The fact that this reality is obvious has led to the need to diversify and elaborate the documents regulating human rights in the process according to disadvantage groups. The discussions on “human rights documents cover all people, therefore there is no need to prepare separate documents for women, disabled people and other disadvantaged groups” were over and the documents were prepared. At the moment when we have reached, it is obvious that there is a need for separate documents for women with disabilities and it is necessary to prepare them. In the coming process, the preparation of a convention specific to women with disabilities will also be on the agenda. In this way, human rights, women's human rights, disabled people's human rights discussions are expected to result in

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<sup>21</sup> <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Adrese-Dayali-Nufus-Kayit-Sistemi-Sonuclari-2020-37210> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.engellilerkonfederasyonu.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/D%C3%BCnya-Engellilik-Raporu-2011.pdf>. (access date 14.03.2021)

conventions, as well as the issue of disabled women's human rights becomes the focus of discussions and eventuate with a convention.

In order to advance these discussions, it is clear that it is necessary to discuss the issue in public by conducting research, meetings and studies specific to women with disabilities at various levels. When planning these studies, it is necessary for women with disabilities to be in a decisive position in their work, but it is important for the central authority at all levels to take ownership of the issue to get results.

### **Participation Right of Disabled Women**

In Turkey, while the law sees men and women equal, the actual situation is far from equality. Equality between men and women should be understood as equality in access to opportunities, resources, services.

There are data revealing gender inequality and that women do not have equal opportunities with men.

According to July 2019 data published by Turkish Statistical Institute ([TUIK](#))<sup>23</sup> the labour force participation rate is 34.5% for women and 71.8% for men.

According to TUIK's 2019 Income and Living Conditions [Survey](#)<sup>24</sup> the average annual income earned from work in accordance with education status is 37,072 TL for men and 28,214 TL for women.

According to data from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development ([OECD](#))<sup>25</sup>, the average daily time spent by men and women on household works is 262 minutes for women and 21 minutes for men. As a result of gender roles defining a woman

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<sup>23</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/ankara/projects/gender-equality/lang--tr/index.htm> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>24</sup> <https://tuikweb.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=33820> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>25</sup> <https://t24.com.tr/haber/turk-erkekleri-ne-kadar-ev-isi-yapiyor-dunyada-durum-ne,278852> (access date 14.03.2021)

in the home and in the family and considering the responsibility of care suitable for a woman, a woman undertakes more responsibility at home.

Membership rates in associations in Turkey are 20.77% for women and 79.33% for [men](#)<sup>26</sup>. In this ratio, no information about women with disabilities was available. It can be predicted that this situation, which seems to be against women in the proportion of members, will be lower in participation in the administration.

According to World Economic Forum's 2020 Global Gender Gap [data](#)<sup>27</sup> Turkey;

Ranks 130<sup>th</sup> among 153 countries in gender equality.

Ranks 136<sup>th</sup> out of 153 countries for women's participation in the economy and equality of opportunity

Ranks 113<sup>th</sup> among 153 countries in the ranking of women's participation in education.

Ranks 109<sup>th</sup> among 153 countries in the ranking of women's participation in politics.

Ranks 113<sup>th</sup> among 153 countries in the ranking of women's participation in education.

Ranks 117<sup>th</sup> among 192 countries in the world in terms of being female member of parliament.

Considering these results, it can be assumed that disabled women will be directly affected by the discrimination faced by disabled people, as well as the gender inequality experienced by women.

It can be assumed that these inequalities revealed from the point of view of women will be even more negative for women with disabilities. National policies do not include women with disabilities, and policies for the disabled ignore the gender gap. The most important reason for the lack of policies specific to women with disabilities is that women with disabilities cannot participate effectively in decision-making and policy-making processes.

There are many reasons that ban women with disabilities from participating in all decision-making mechanisms:

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<sup>26</sup> <https://dokuz8haber.net/toplum-yasam/verilerle-dernekler-kadinlar-giderek-daha-cok-derneklesiyor-ankara-karabuk-ve-istanbul-onde/> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>27</sup> <https://tr.euronews.com/2019/12/17/2020-cinsiyet-esitligi-raporu-turkiye-153-ulke-aras-nda-130-s-rada> (access date 14.03.2021)

According to the Problems and Expectations of Disabled People Survey, 2010 [data](#)<sup>28</sup> 54.9% of disabled women are illiterate, 16.5% are primary school, 7.1% are primary-secondary education and equivalent, and 4.7% are university and above graduates. Considering the status of membership in associations and foundations established by disabled and family members, 94.9% are not members. This information is not segregated by gender.

According to Turkish Employment Organization 2014 [Statistics](#)<sup>29</sup> 7,981 of the 36,165 disabled government officials are disabled women.

There are no disabled women MPs in the Turkish Grand National Assembly.

Social prejudices are one of the most important challenges in the lives of women with disabilities. It keeps a disabled woman in a position where she is victimized, helpless, pathetic, needs excessive protection or does not need to be invested as a child. In the environment in which they are located, they have to make many efforts to be relatively accepted by disabled men.

According to the World Disability [Report](#)<sup>30</sup> disability is more common in low-income countries than in high-income countries. At the same time, disability is more prevalent among people in the poorest quintile, women, and older people. Beliefs and prejudices create barriers to education, employment, health and social participation. Besides, the report emphasized that the level of social exclusion of disabled people is 77% in Turkey, compared to 30% in the EU.

### **Non-Governmental Organizations Working for Disabled**

NGOs are important institutions in fighting the discrimination suffered by disabled people, women and women with disabilities. They work for monitoring, advocating, documenting and creating public opinion to combat discrimination.

Disabled people have established NGOs where they can express themselves to fight against the discrimination and problems they experience in society. The number of

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<sup>28</sup> <https://www.ailevecalisma.gov.tr/media/5602/ozurlulerin-sorun-ve-beklentileri-arastirmasi-2010.pdf> (access date 19.03.2021)

<sup>29</sup> [https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/tutanak\\_g.birlesim\\_baslangic?P4=22399&P5=H&page1=16&page2=16](https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/tutanak_g.birlesim_baslangic?P4=22399&P5=H&page1=16&page2=16) (access date 19.03.2021)

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.engellilerkonfederasyonu.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/D%C3%BCnya-Engellilik-Raporu-2011.pdf> (access date 19.03.2021)

disabled associations in Turkey is [1403](#)<sup>31</sup>. This number is equivalent to 1.15 of the total associations. There are 3 disabled women associations in Turkey. In the data of the General Directorate of Civil Society Relations, there is no information about the number of women's associations in the category of associations according to their areas of activity. Disabled women participate in both disabled organizations that they consider themselves to belong to, as well as in women's organizations and other NGOs, trying to find answers to their problems and demands.

The observations reveal that women with disabilities are discriminated against both in the organizations for the disabled and in organizations other than the disabled organization and do not have the opportunity to raise their voices adequately in accordance with their demands and requirements.

Disability organizations, based on disability, treat disability as if it is a gender-independent phenomenon, and women with disabilities are ignored. Based on female identity in women's organizations, the fact that women's problems are experienced in different forms and intensity in different women's groups is observed. In both categories of organizations, women with disabilities are not able to participate in decision-making mechanisms and find an environment to express their own problems. Thus, equal treatment of different individuals in the definition of discrimination is also encountered here. Women with disabilities need to find ways to fight to ensure their rights are exercised.

Being deprived of the opportunities to influence decisions by taking part in management and decision-making mechanisms has a preventative effect on women with disabilities from raising their own problems.

The floors where they can find a place in NGOs are support, cleanliness, organization, which are extensions of gender roles.

Some disabled women have chosen to participate in disabled women's organizations where they can focus on the problems and needs of women with disabilities, rather than mixed disability organizations or women's organizations where they cannot express themselves enough. It is important that women with disabilities develop methods that can

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<sup>31</sup> <https://www.siviltoplum.gov.tr/derneklerin-faaliyet-alanlarina-gore-dagilimi> (access date 14.03.2021)



make their voices heard in all aspects of life and allow them to take advantage of opportunities.

## **International Human Rights Regulations**

In this chapter, international documents are examined in terms of the concepts of women, disability, women with disabilities, equality, discrimination, participation and gender equality affecting the participation of women with disabilities. All of these factors were deemed to affect the participation of women with disabilities.

### **Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>32</sup>**

The universalization of human rights idea in the world was provided by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights declared in 1948. After this date, many international documents have been produced to ensure the development of human rights in the world.

1. and 2. articles of the declaration emphasize rights and equality by covering all people. But disability has not been particularly highlighted.

### **UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women<sup>33</sup>**

The Convention on the Prevention of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, one of the most important documents prepared for women's rights, was approved by the Republic of Turkey on 24.7.1985.

Article 2 of the Convention assigns the state e) "to take all appropriate measures to prevent discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise".

In Article 11, which regulates the principle of gender equality and to prevent discrimination against women in terms of employment and social security rights, disabled women are mentioned as "e. The right to social security, especially in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, disability, old age and other incapacity to work, along with paid leave". Disabled women have little ground in the convention.

### **UN Fourth World Women Conference<sup>34</sup>**

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<sup>32</sup> <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyon/insanhaklari/pdf01/203-208.pdf> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyon/kefe/docs/protokol.pdf> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/komisyon/kefe/docs/pekin.pdf> (access date 14.03.2021)

Articles on women with disabilities were regulated in the declaration and action plan prepared as a result of the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995.

Preventing discrimination faced by disabled women in working life,  
Increasing literacy rate of disabled women,  
Organization of health services to respond to the needs of women with disabilities,  
Reducing violence against women with disabilities.

In addition, one of the 12 critical areas identified in the action plan of this conference had a title “Women in decision-making mechanisms”.

### **UN Convention on the Rights of the Disabled People<sup>35</sup>**

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, one of the most important documents prepared for the rights of persons with disabilities, was approved by the Republic of Turkey on 3 December 2008.

The aim of this convention is to “promote, ensure, protect and enhance the full and equal enjoyment of fundamental freedoms and all human rights of all people with disabilities and to increase respect for their dignity as human beings”. This represents a great change in understanding and responses to disability around the world. This international agreement, which is a crossroads, reinforces the idea that solving problems caused by disability is a human rights and development priority. The convention reveals an agenda for change.

This is a convention in which disability and womanhood intersect and is considered to cause multiple discrimination. In the introduction chapter of the convention, a reference is made to the Convention on the Prevention of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Emphasis has also been made on disabled women and disabled girls.

#### **Article 3 General Principles**

- (a) Respect for human dignity and individual autonomy of individuals, including their freedom and independence to make their own choices;
- (b) Non-Discrimination;
- (c) Ensuring the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in society;
- (d) Respect the differences and accept disabled people as part of human diversity and humanity;
- (e) Equality opportunity;

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.ktood.org/BM-engelli-haklari-yasasi.pdf> (access date 14.03.2021)

- (f) Accessibility;
- (g) Gender equality;
- (h) Respect the developmental capacity of children with disabilities and the right to protect their identity.

These principles can be deemed as areas that need to be fought for the exercise of disability rights.

#### Article 6 Women with Disabilities

1. Contracting States recognize that women and girls with disabilities are subjected to multifaceted discrimination and take measures to ensure that they enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms in full and equal terms.
2. Contracting States shall take all necessary measures to ensure the full development, advancement and empowerment of women and the exercise and enjoyment of the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in this convention.

#### *General Interpretation of the UN Disability Rights Committee on the Disabled Women and the Girls, No. 3 (2016)*<sup>36</sup>

Disabled Rights Committee's General Comment No. 3 makes "The voices of disabled women and girls with disabilities have historically been silenced. For this reason, their representation in public decision-making processes is not enough; due to power imbalances and multiple discrimination, women, children and the disabled have much fewer opportunity to establish organizations that will represent their needs and to participate in existing ones." warning. The committee points out the inadequacy of including a gender perspective in disability-related policies and the inadequacy of a disability rights perspective in policies promoting gender equality as the reasons for the inability or insufficient participation of women with disabilities in decision-making processes in public and political life.

It is reported that in order to eliminate this multiple discrimination, it is necessary to support and encourage women with disabilities to form organizations and networks and to take a leadership role in public decision-making bodies at all levels.

#### **European Convention on Human [Rights](#)<sup>37</sup> and European Regulations**

The prohibition of discrimination stated in Article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights is both a right and a fundamental principle in the enjoyment of the rights

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.esithaklar.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/BM-Genel-Yorum-No.3-Engelli-Kad%C4%B1nlar-ve-K%C4%B1z-%C3%87ocuklar%C4%B1.docx> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.izmirbarosu.org.tr/Upload/files/Sayfalar/merkezler/cmk/aihs.pdf> (access date 14.03.2021)

and freedoms mentioned in the convention. In accordance with this provision it is stated that, "The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms granted in this Convention should be provided without any discrimination based on any other condition, especially gender, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, belonging to a national minority, wealth, birth."

Other documents produced by the European Union also draw attention to the importance of this issue:

The European Commission commits in the "A Renewed Commitment for Barrier-Free Europe: European Disability Strategy 2010-2020" [document](#)<sup>38</sup> that "the Commission will consider disability within a broader anti-discrimination framework to highlight disability as a human rights issue" and "it will work to remove obstacles to the enjoyment of rights by persons with disabilities as political actors".

The action plan for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in Foreign Relations (2016-2020) ([GAPII](#))<sup>39</sup> set out the goal of "focusing on the fulfilment of women's political and civil rights".

"The policy of the European Commission which was included in the European Commission's Gender Equality Strategy ([2020-2025](#))<sup>40</sup> to support representative democracy at all levels, including European, national, regional and local, and the encouragement of women's participation as voters and candidates in order to ensure equality between women and men in decision-making." was stated.

The approach that "in the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Action Plan 2021-2025 ([GAP III](#))<sup>41</sup>, the European Commission will promote gender in all policies and actions with a transformative and intersecting approach and all intersecting dimensions of discrimination will be overcome in order not to leave anyone behind, especially women with disabilities" was stated.

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<sup>38</sup> [https://www.turged.org.tr/Hukuk-Engelli-Mevzuati/Avrupa\\_Engellilik\\_Stratejisi\\_2010\\_2020.doc](https://www.turged.org.tr/Hukuk-Engelli-Mevzuati/Avrupa_Engellilik_Stratejisi_2010_2020.doc) (access date 15.03.2021)

<sup>39</sup> [https://www.kagider.org/docs/default-source/diger-raporlar/abtoplumsalcinsiyetstratejisi2020-2025\\_tr.pdf?sfvrsn=2](https://www.kagider.org/docs/default-source/diger-raporlar/abtoplumsalcinsiyetstratejisi2020-2025_tr.pdf?sfvrsn=2) (access date 15.03.2021)

<sup>40</sup> [https://www.kagider.org/docs/default-source/diger-raporlar/abtoplumsalcinsiyetstratejisi2020-2025\\_tr.pdf?sfvrsn=2](https://www.kagider.org/docs/default-source/diger-raporlar/abtoplumsalcinsiyetstratejisi2020-2025_tr.pdf?sfvrsn=2) (access date 15.03.2021)

<sup>41</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/cyprus/news/20201125\\_4\\_tr2](https://ec.europa.eu/cyprus/news/20201125_4_tr2) (access date 15.03.2021)

These documents include the goals of ensuring gender equality, leaving no one behind and eliminating the glass roof barrier. However, no direct regulation on women with disabilities took place.

## **National Regulations**

### **The Constitution of Turkish Republic<sup>42</sup>**

In the equality article of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey (Article 10), the prohibition of discrimination was introduced and by mentioning about women and disabled people, it was emphasized that the measures to be taken in order to benefit from equal rights cannot be deemed against the principle of equality.

### **The Turkish Penal Code<sup>43</sup>**

Article 3 of the Turkish Penal Code introduces "Prohibition of discrimination in the implementation of the law".

In Article 122 of the Turkish Penal Code, discrimination based on hatred arising from differences in race, state, nationality, colour, gender, disability, political opinion, philosophical belief, religion or sect is considered a crime.

### **The Turkish Civil Code<sup>44</sup>**

In this study, since the NGO membership of disabled women, their election to the board of directors and their influencing the decisions, the equality regulation in the associations included in the Turkish Civil Code is addressed.

Article 68 of the Turkish Civil Code emphasizes equality. "Members of the Association have equal rights. The association cannot distinguish between its members by language, race, colour, sex, religion and sect, family, group and class. It cannot make practices that violate equality or grant privileges to some members for these reasons. Each member has

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<sup>42</sup> <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/anayasa.htm> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>43</sup> <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanunlar/k5237.html> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.4721.pdf> (access date 14.03.2021)

the right to participate in the activities and management of the association". This article did not include the emphasis on disability while emphasizing gender.

## METHOD

### Research Model

A broad participation model was followed at each stage of the study.

The study was conducted with a team of women who have been active in the field of women's rights and disability rights for many years.

At each stage of the research, women from various disability groups and mothers of individuals in the mental disability group exchanged views by conducting focus group studies, ensuring that women's ideas were directly reflected in the study.

For the study, first of all, the problems experienced by women with disabilities in joining organizations, their experience in being effective at every stage of NGOs were discussed. During the phases of volunteering, becoming a member, serving on boards of directors and serving as chairman, the difficulties and reasons of being a disabled woman were discussed. This discussion contributed to the preparation of the survey and promotional materials, the creation of comments and suggestions.

At the beginning of the study, a promotional [poster](#)<sup>45</sup>, an [infographic](#)<sup>46</sup>, a promotional [video](#)<sup>47</sup> and a press [release](#)<sup>48</sup> were prepared and the study was introduced.

Women with disabilities and mothers of individuals in the mental disability group have been invited to complete the questionnaire. Promotional material has been announced and disseminated via the website of the Turkish Federation of the Blind website, the social media accounts of the website and the working team, the social media accounts of disabled and women's NGOs and the press.

In order to carry out the research, a questionnaire was prepared to be filled out by women with disabilities and women with mental disabilities. A video with a sign language

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<sup>45</sup> <http://www.korlerfederasyonu.org.tr/> (access date 18.03.2021)

<sup>46</sup> <http://www.korlerfederasyonu.org.tr/> (access date 18.03.2021)

<sup>47</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f\\_mh7ctzrxM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_mh7ctzrxM) (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>48</sup> <http://www.korlerfederasyonu.org.tr/> (access date 14.03.2021)

translation of the questions was [prepared](#)<sup>49</sup> for the hearing-impaired participants and the survey was made clear. Support was given to the visually impaired who had problems accessing the survey and applied to fill out the survey.

The research results were shared with the public through a [poster](#)<sup>50</sup>, an [infographic](#)<sup>51</sup>, a press [release](#)<sup>52</sup>, PDF version of the research report in Turkish and [English](#)<sup>53</sup>, the ink and braille print of the report, and the sign language video of the report [summary](#)<sup>54</sup>.

## Universe and Sample

The research was carried out throughout Turkey. There was participation from all geographical regions. Disabled women from different disability groups and mothers of individuals from the mental disability group participated in the study. 256 women completed the questionnaire.

## Data Collecting

The prepared questionnaire consists of 32 questions.

The questionnaire includes introduction, demographic information, the relationship of women with disabilities with non-governmental organizations, the capacity of women with disabilities to influence the management of non-governmental organizations, and recommendations sections.

To finalize the questionnaire, two focus group studies were conducted in which 19 women with disabilities and mothers of individuals from the mental disability group participated.

Pilot implementation of the prepared questionnaire was carried out with the participation of 15 women.

The questionnaire form is uploaded to the Google form application and completed online. The questionnaire was announced and disseminated from the Turkish Federation of the

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<sup>49</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=as06hryhPcl> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.korlerfederasyonu.org.tr/> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.korlerfederasyonu.org.tr/> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>52</sup> <http://www.korlerfederasyonu.org.tr/> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>53</sup> <http://www.korlerfederasyonu.org.tr/> (access date 14.03.2021)

<sup>54</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mlagsgbo-TU&t=17s> (access date 10.04.2021)

Blind website, the social media accounts of the website and the working team, the social media accounts of disabled and women's NGOs and the media.

Data collection phase was carried out between 21.02.2021-05.03.2021.

The planning of the study was carried out in the light of the regulation "compliance with internationally accepted norms on the protection of human rights, fundamental freedoms and ethical principles should be sought in the collection and use of statistics" stated in the article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the [Disabled](#)<sup>55</sup> and under the heading "statistics and data collection". In the introduction section of the questionnaire, it is stated that volunteering is essential in participating in the study, personal information will not be requested from participants, writing the email address is not mandatory, email addresses will be used to deliver the report to be prepared as a result of the study, data will be closed to access outside researchers and will not be used outside the research purposes.

According to the same article, in line with the regulation "the information collected, if appropriate, should be distributed and used in evaluating the practices of the participating states within the scope of the current contract and revealing the difficulties faced by the disabled people in exercising their rights", the results of this research will be widely shared with the public, private sector and NGOs.

### Data Analysis

The questionnaire was filled out by 256 disabled women and mothers of individuals from the mental disability group. The results were evaluated and interpreted with the analysis capabilities provided by the Google form application.

### FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

The results of the findings are shown as a pie chart or column chart.

The information given in the graphic is shown below each chart for the visually impaired.

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<sup>55</sup> <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2009/07/20090714-1.htm> (access date 14.03.2021)



## Demographic Information

### 1. What is your disability group?

256 responses



### 1. What is your disability group?

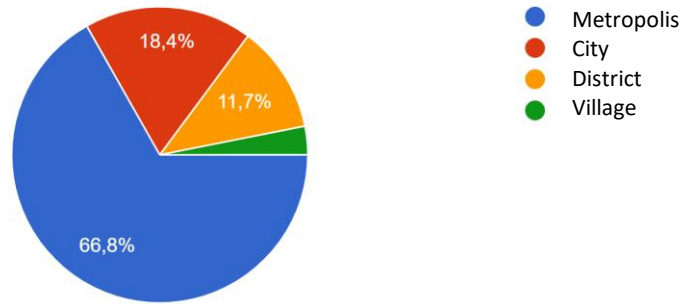
25.4% Visually impaired, 13.7% Hearing impaired, 13.7% Orthopedically disabled, 14.5% Mentally handicapped individuals, 19.1% Mothers of individuals from the mental disability group, 1.6% Psychosocial mentally disabled, 7%, 4 Rare disease, 14.5% Chronic disease.

The majority of participants are visually impaired. Since the study was conducted by the Turkish Federation of the Blind, it can be thought that it increased the participation of visually impaired women. When mentally disabled group individuals and mothers of individuals from the mental disability group are considered together, it is seen that mentally disabled people are represented with the highest rate with a rate of 33.6%. Psychosocial mental disabilities were the lowest group among the participants.

These results are in line with the May [2020](https://www.ailevecalisma.gov.tr/media/51832/mayis-istatistik-bulteni.pdf)<sup>56</sup> data in the Statistical Bulletin of the General Directorate for Disabled and Elderly.

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.ailevecalisma.gov.tr/media/51832/mayis-istatistik-bulteni.pdf> (access date 16.03.2021):

2. Where do you live?  
256 responses

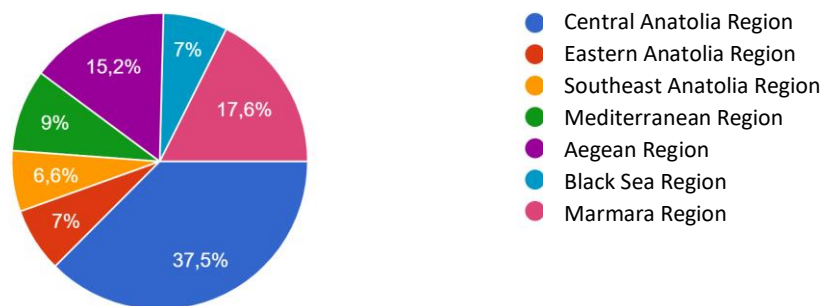


2. Where do you live?

66.8% Metropolis, 18.4% City, 11.7% District, 3.1% Village.

The vast majority of participants live in the metropolis and city. Considering that the majority of disabled NGOs are located in major cities and cities, the place where they live is important for access to organizations. In the recommendations section (32. Question) responses were received from participants living in the village that they did not have access to NGOs.

3. Which region do you live in?  
256 responses



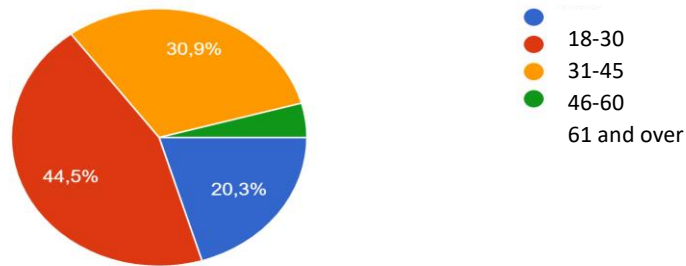
3. Which region do you live in?

37.5% Central Anatolia Region, 7% Eastern Anatolia Region, 6.6% South Eastern Anatolia Region, 9% Mediterranean Region, 15.2% Aegean Region, 7% Black Sea Region, 17.6% Marmara Region.

The majority of participants live in the Central Anatolia Region. This is followed by the Marmara Region and the Aegean Region respectively. According to the regions included in the data of the General Directorate for Civil Society Development, [NGOs](#)<sup>57</sup> are in line with their results. It can also be considered that disabled women living in the South Eastern Anatolia Region and Eastern Anatolia Region cannot use social media effectively.

#### 4. What age range are you in?

256 responses



#### 4. What age range are you in?

20.3% 18-30 years old, 44.5% 31-45 years old, 30.9% 46-60 years old, 3.1% 61 years old and over.

The majority of participants are in the age range of 31-45 years. Participants who are over 61 years of age are the least in number. Young disabled women may be considered more interested in organizational work and use of social media.

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<sup>57</sup> <https://www.siviltoplum.gov.tr/derneklerin-bolgelere-gore-dagilimi> (access date 16.03.2021):

## 5. What is your Education Background?

256 responses



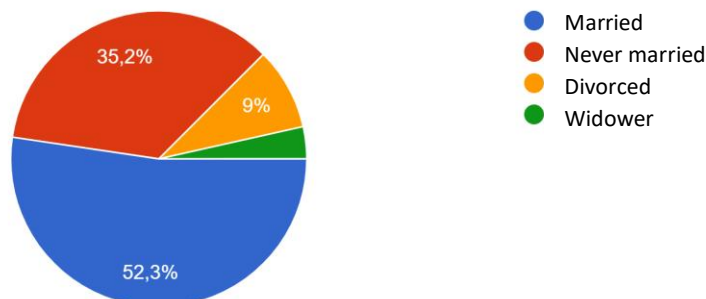
## 5. What is your Education Background?

2% are illiterate, 1.6% are literate, 9% have graduated from primary school, 12.1% have graduated from secondary school, 21.5% have graduated from high school, 14.1% have associate degree, 34.8% have bachelor's degree, 4.7% have Master's degree, 0.4% have PhD degree.

The majority of participants received high school and higher education. It is expected that the education levels of disabled women who have a chance to access associations and technology will be high. This result showed that NGOs needed to do more work to cover disabled women with lower education than high school

## 6. What is your marital status?

256 responses

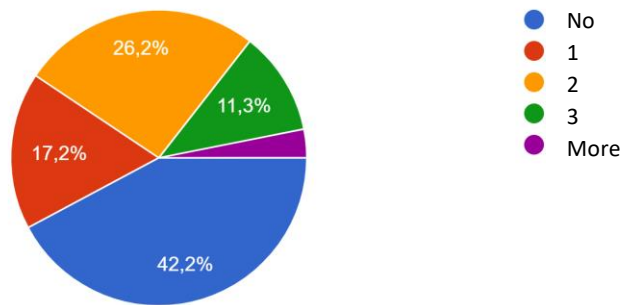


## 6. What is your marital status?

%52,3 Married, %35,2 Never married, %9 Divorced, %3,5 Widower.

The married ones among the participants are at a higher rate. According to a published [study](#) <sup>58</sup>, 75.5% of women in Turkey are married. According to TUIK [data](#),<sup>59</sup> the proportion of people who have never married in Turkey among women aged 15+ is 23.09%. These rates are lower in participants. This result suggests that women with disabilities are discriminated against in marriage compared to women without disabilities.

7. Do you have children?  
256 responses



7. Do you have children?

42.2% No, 17.2% 1 child, 26.2% 2 children, 11.3% 3 children, 3.1% more children.

The majority of the participants have children. Concerning the childless participants, according to a study conducted in [Turkey](#)<sup>60</sup> 40% of women aged 25-49 are childless, and this result is consistent with the study.

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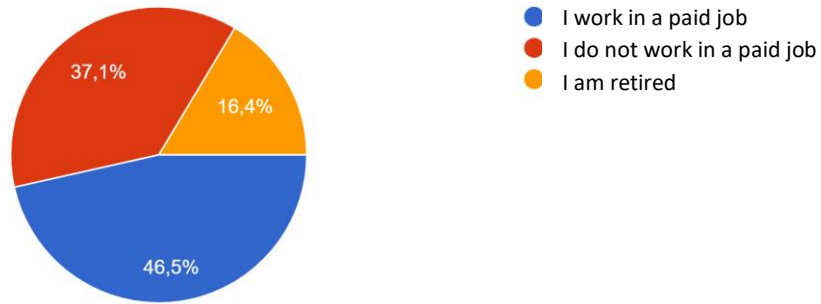
<sup>58</sup> <https://www.turkiyeraporu.com/evlilik> (Access date 16.03.2021):

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.drdatastats.com/illere-gore-15-yas-hic-evlenmemis-kadin-nufus-ve-oranlar-2019-yili/> (access date 16.03.2021):

<sup>60</sup> <https://kadem.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Degisen-Turkiyede-Kadin.pdf> (access date 16.03.2021):

#### 8. Do you work in a paid job?

256 responses



#### 8. Do you work in a paid job?

46.5% Work in a paid job, 37.1% do not work in a paid job, 16.4% are retired.

The proportion of participants working in a paid job is significantly higher than in other groups.

According to TUIK [data](#)<sup>61</sup> the labour force participation rate is 34.5% for women, and this rate is higher for participants. It is believed that the reason for this is that highly educated and working disabled women participate in this study at a higher rate.

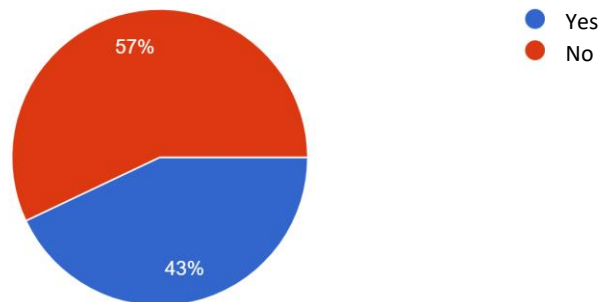
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<sup>61</sup> <https://www.ilo.org/ankara/projects/gender-equality/lang--tr/index.htm#:~:text=Kad%C4%B1nlar%2C%20T%C3%BCrkiye%20n%C3%BCfusunun%20neredeyse%20yar%C4%B1s%C4%B1n%C4%B1,%71%2C8'dir> (access date 14.03.2021)

## Relationship of Disabled Women with Non-Governmental Organizations

9. Are you a volunteer in a non-governmental organization?

256 responses



9. Are you a volunteer in a non-governmental organization?

% 43 Yes, %57 No.

Non-volunteers in a non-governmental organization consist of the majority. However, the proportion of women with disabilities who are voluntarily associated with an NGO cannot be ignored. Some participants stated that this question was inspiring, changing the idea that non-disabled people not to volunteer for the disabled, and giving rise to the idea that disabled people can volunteer in NGOs.

10. Are you a member in a non-governmental organization?

256 responses



10. Are you a member in a non-governmental organization?

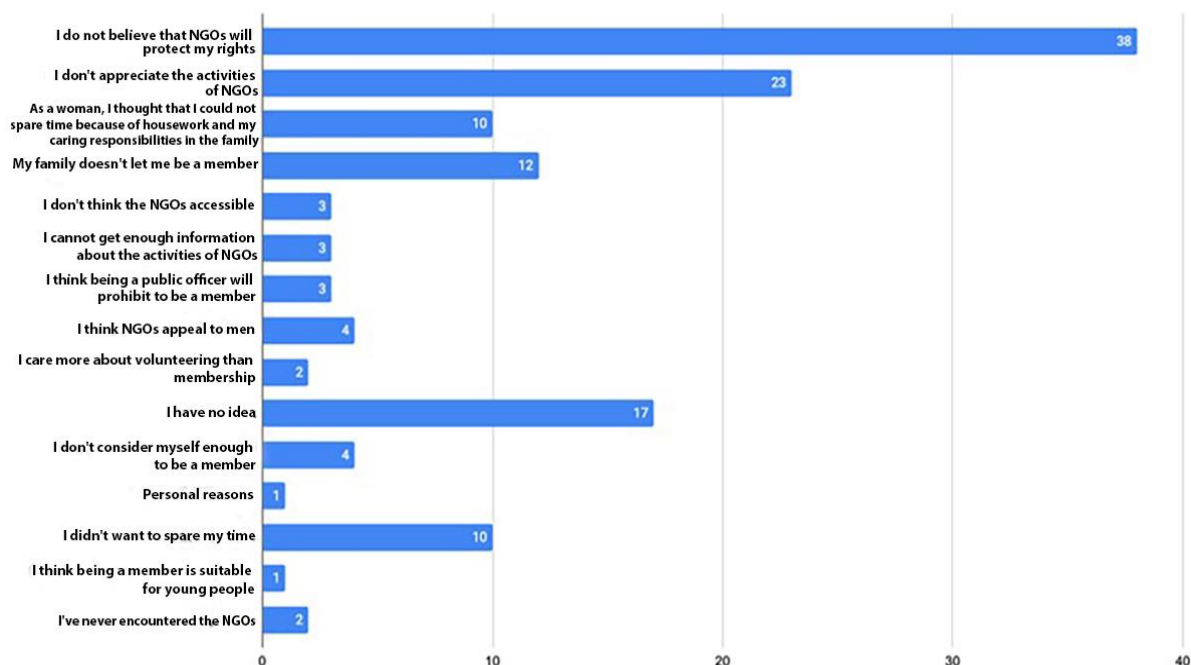
40.2% I am a member of a non-governmental organization for the disabled, 2.3% I am a member of non-governmental organization not related to disabled people, 6.3% I am a

member of both a disabled and non-disabled-related non-governmental organization, 4.3% I was a member of a non-governmental organization, but I resigned, currently I am not a member. 46.9% I have not been a member of a non-governmental organization so far.

The majority of participants stated that they had not been a member of an NGO so far. Considering those who have previously been members but have resigned, those who are not members reach half of the participants. Very few of the participants are members of non-disabled NGOs. NGO administrations need to work to increase women's membership.

11. What are the reason(s) for being a member? (You can make multiple choices)





11. What are the reason(s) for being a member? (You can make multiple choices)

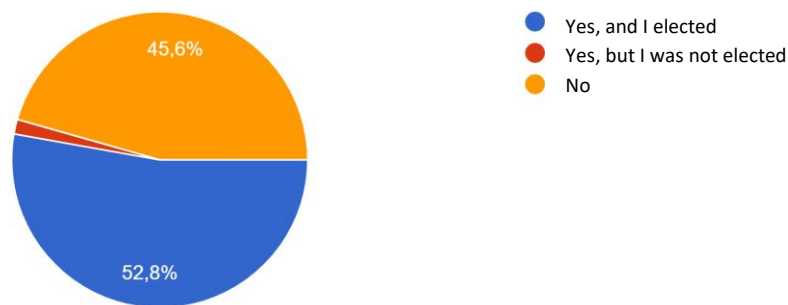
Shown as the number of responses.

131 people answered. 38 responses I do not believe that NGOs will protect my rights, 23 responses I do not appreciate the activities of NGOs, 10 responses I thought that as a woman, I cannot spare time because of my housework and care responsibilities in the family, 12 answers my family does not let me be a member, 3 answers I do not find NGOs accessible, 3 responses I cannot get enough information about the activities of NGOs, 3 responses I think being a public officer will prohibit to be a member, 4 responses I think NGOs appeal to men, 2 responses I care more about serving as a volunteer than membership, 17 responses no idea, 4 responses I don't consider myself enough to be a member, 1 answer personal reasons, 10 responses I didn't want to spare my time, 1 answer I think being a member is suitable for young people, 2 responses I've never encountered the NGOs.

Most non-member participants have distrust of NGOs for the protection of their rights. A significant proportion of participants stated that they were not members due to family and care responsibilities caused by gender inequality, while there were also participants who were not members due to ignorance and self-insecurity.

12. Have you ever been a candidate to serve on the board of your organization?

125 responses

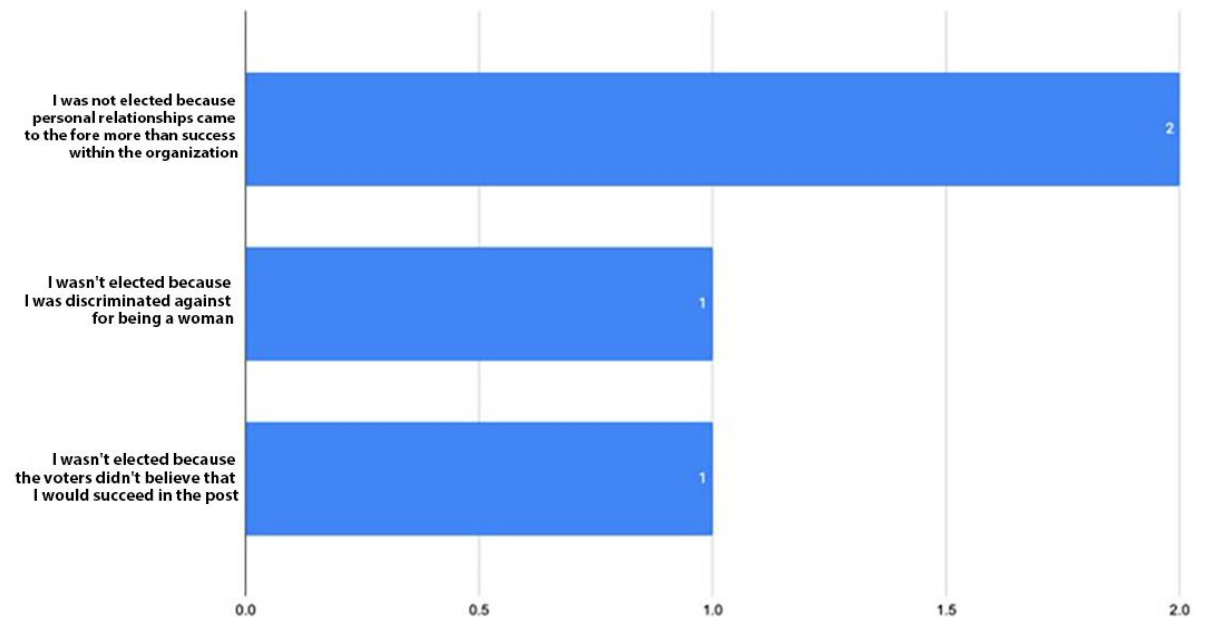


12. Have you ever been a candidate to serve on the board of your organization?

52.8% Yes and I elected, 1.6% yes but I was not elected, 45.6% no.

While more than half of the participants who were members of an NGO were candidates for a position on the board of directors, almost half were not candidates. The low proportion of those who were candidates but could not be elected suggests that the participants became candidates after securing being elected. It is known that members and management are mostly women in associations where there are mothers of individuals from the mental disability group. For this reason, the proportion of participants who were candidates for the board was high. Disabled women who are not candidates for the administration are also considerable.

13. What was the reason why you were not elected when you were a candidate for a position on the board of Directors of your organization? You can make multiple choices.



13. What was the reason why you were not elected when you were a candidate for a position on the board of Directors of your organization? You can make multiple choices.

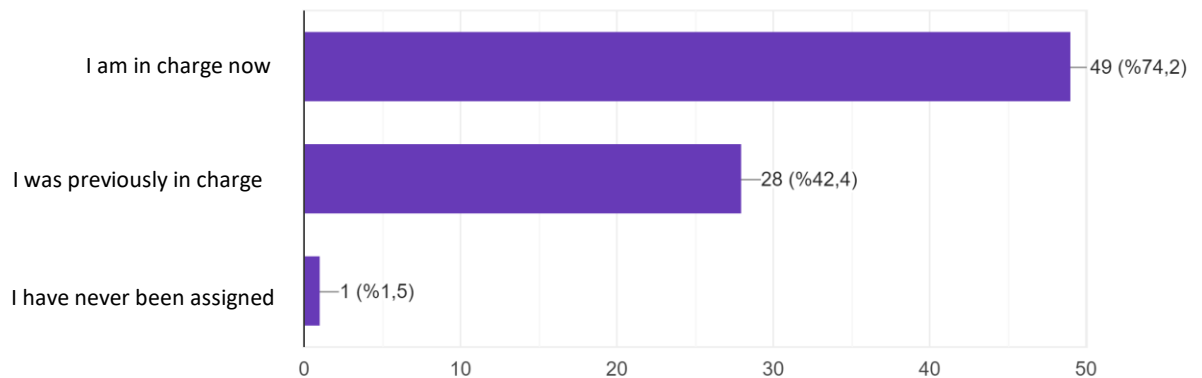
Shown as the number of responses.

2 participants answered. 2 I was not elected because personal relationships came to the fore more than success within the organization, 1 response was I wasn't elected because I was discriminated against for being a woman, 1 response was I wasn't elected because the voters didn't believe that I would succeed in the post.

Considering the statements of participants who were candidates and could not be elected, it turned out that personal relationships were at the forefront rather than success. The fact that participants stated that they were discriminated because they were women suggests that there was no objective election in NGOs.

14. Have you served on the board of directors in your organization? (You can make multiple choices).

66 responses



14. Have you served on the board of directors in your organization? (You can make multiple choices)

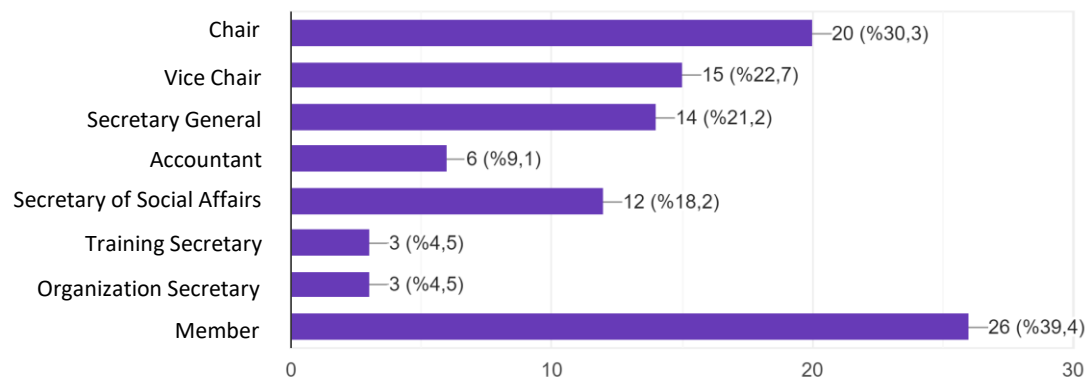
Shown as the number of responses.

66 participants answered this question. 49 answers I am in charge now, 28 answers I was previously in charge, 1 answer I have never been assigned.

In this question, there were participants who marked both the options I had previously served and now I am on duty. The fact that the number of signs exceeds the number of participants means that some participants remain in administration for multiple periods.

15. If you have been served, what post have you been on? (You can make multiple choices.)

66 responses



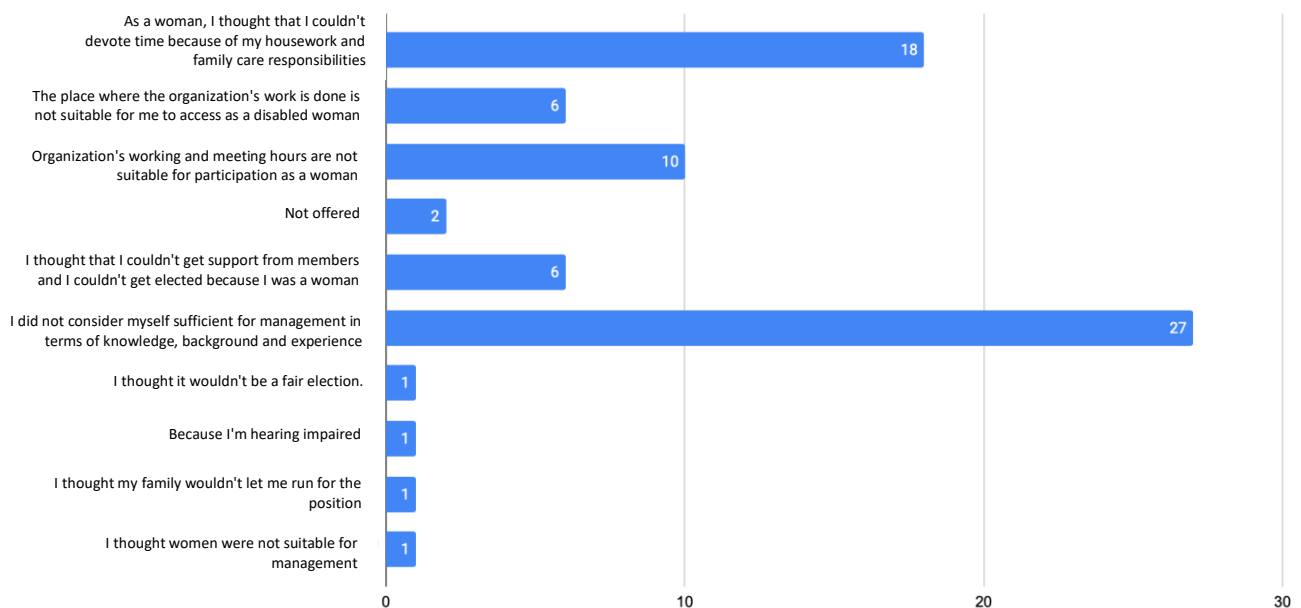
15. If you have been served, what post have you been on? (You can make multiple choices.)

Shown as the number of responses.

66 participants answered this question. 20 responses Chair, 15 responses Vice Chair, 14 responses Secretary General, 6 responses Accountant, 12 responses Secretary of Social Affairs, 3 responses Training Secretary, 3 responses Organization Secretary, 26 responses Member.

The fact that the number of responses exceeds the number of participants means that some participants perform multiple tasks in different periods. Members and management in associations where mothers of individuals from the mental disability group are present are mostly made up of women. The proportion of mothers of individuals from the mental disability group among participants is high. For this reason, the proportion of participants in the chair and vice chair was high. It is known that women in mixed organizations are more suitable for the position of Social Affairs Secretary. The result showed that the Secretary of Social Affairs was smaller than expected. High participation of mothers of individuals in the mental disability group led to this result.

16. Why have you never been a candidate for a position on the board? (You can make multiple choices.)



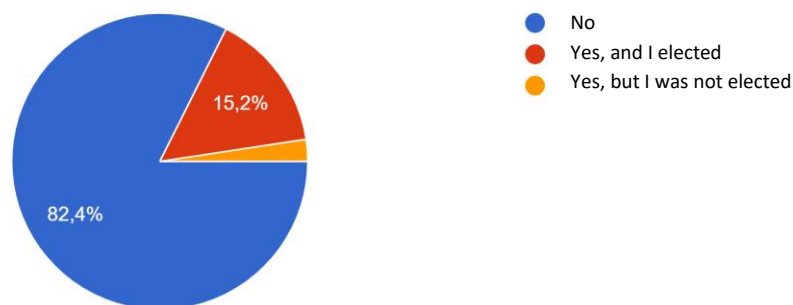
16. Why have you never been a candidate for a position on the board? (You can make multiple choices.)

Shown as the number of responses.

57 participants responded. 18 As a woman, I thought that I couldn't devote time because of my housework and family care responsibilities, 6 responses The place where the organization's work is done is not suitable for me to access as a disabled woman, 10 responses Organization's working and meeting hours are not suitable for participation as a woman, 2 responses Not offered, 6 I thought that I couldn't get support from members and I couldn't get elected because I was a woman, 27 answers I did not consider myself sufficient for management in terms of knowledge, background and experience, 1 answer I thought it would not be a fair election, 1 answer Because I am hearing impaired, 1 answer I thought my family would not allow me to be a candidate for this position, 1 answer I thought women were not suitable for management.

It seems that the reasons for not running for the board are due to being women and gender inequality. The responsibility of caring for women, the judgment that being a woman would not be considered appropriate for management, the location of organizations, the characteristics of the place, the lack of working and meeting hours suitable for women's participation, and the fact that families are decisive in women's decisions prevented the candidacy. One participant stated that she was not a candidate because she was hearing impaired. Hearing impairment should not be an obstacle to candidacy, special measures should be taken to prevent it.

17. Have you been a candidate for chairmanship at the organization's general assembly?  
125 responses

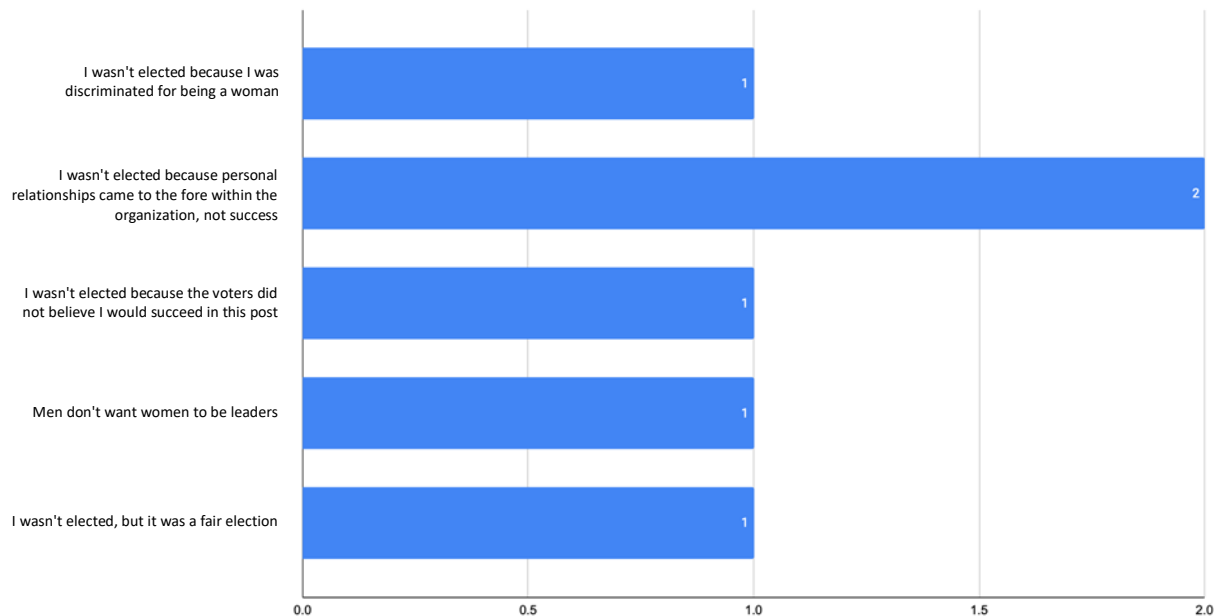


17. Have you been a candidate for chairmanship at the organization's general assembly?

82.4% no, 15.2% Yes and I elected, 2.4% yes but I was not elected.

Most of the participants stated that they were not candidates for the presidency of the organization. Participants may be considered not to be candidates because of their bias that the presidency is an occupation suitable for men or that they cannot be elected.

18. What's the reason you're not elected when you're running to be president of your organization? (You can make multiple choices.)



18. What's the reason you're not elected when you're running to be president of your organization? (You can make multiple choices.)

Shown as the number of responses.

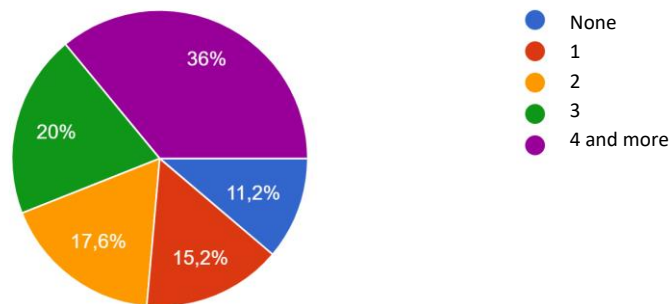
3 participants answered. 1 answer I wasn't elected because I was discriminated for being a woman, 1 answer I wasn't elected because personal relationships came to the fore within the organization, rather than success, 1 answer I wasn't elected because the voters did not believe I would succeed in this post, 1 answer men do not want women to be leaders, 1 person I wasn't elected, but it was a fair election.

Considering the reasons for running for president and not being elected, the inability to be elected due to gender inequality comes to the fore.

## The Capacity of Disabled Women to Impact the Management of Non-Governmental Organizations

19. How many women executive you have in the board of your organization?

125 responses



19. How many women executive you have in the board of your organization?

36% None, 15% 1 women, 17.6% 2 women, 20% 3 women, 36% 4 women and above.

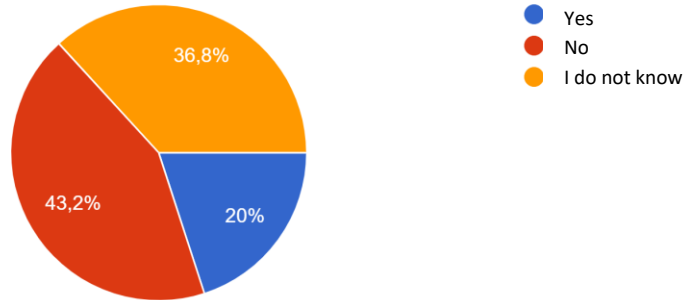
One third of respondents stated that there were no women executives on the organization's Board of directors. The problems and needs of disabled women can be visible and planning related studies can only be possible if they take part in the boards of directors.

Considering that half of disabled people are women, half of the management in disabled organizations is expected to consist of women. But in this case, it is obvious that women with disabilities will ensure that they become members of organizations, participate in decisions, and make decisions in accordance with their own requirements. In boards with only men or fewer than 3 women executives, decisions are expected to be made in accordance with the men's agenda.



20. Is there a written regulation (quota, etc.) in your organization to make it easier for women to serve on the board of directors?

125 responses



20. Is there a written regulation (quota, etc.) in your organization to make it easier for women to serve on the board of directors?

%20 Yes, %43,2 No, %36,8 I do not know.

Those who answered no are more than twice as likely to answer as yes. It was seen that only a fifth of participants had written regulation in their organization. Besides, a high proportion of women are not interested or knowledgeable about the written regulations on the board of directors and the representation of women in management.

The participation of women in management allows them to take a more active role in the organization. It is not a spontaneous situation for women to share management in half with men. But quota-like written regulations can be realized.

Articles 3 and 4 of the convention on the Prevention of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women states that "temporary special measures taken by participating states to actually ensure equality of men and women".<sup>62</sup>

The Disabled Rights Committee made determinations about the participation of disabled women in decision-making mechanisms in the General Comment (2016) No 3<sup>63</sup> on Disabled Women and Girls. Emphasizing Article 6 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it is commented, "It should guide the Participating States to

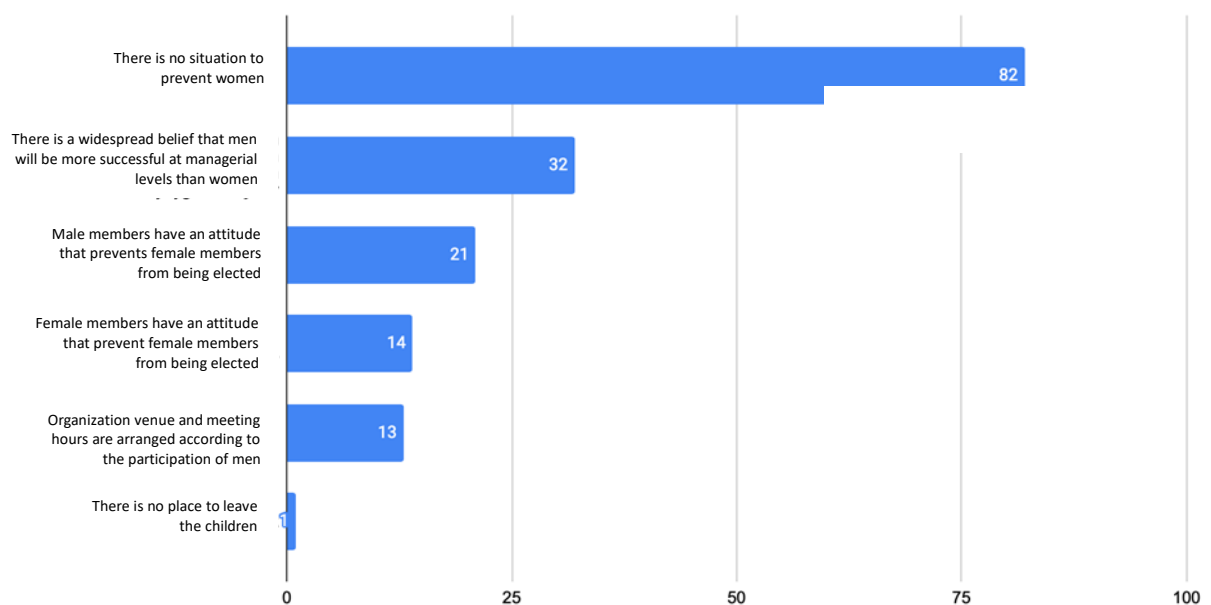
<sup>62</sup> <https://www.turkhukuksitesi.com/showthread.php?t=13906> (access date 16.03.2021)

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.esithaklar.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/BM-Genel-Yorum-No.3-Engelli-Kad%C4%B1nlar-ve-K%C4%B1z-%C3%87ocuklar%C4%B1.docx> (access date 16.03.2021)

comply with the articles of the Convention on the promotion, protection and implementation of the human rights of women and girls with disabilities, with a human rights-based approach and perspective of development."

Considering that disabled people are discriminated against in disability organizations, and women with disabilities are also discriminated against multiple times, it is ideal for them to be represented by half on boards.

21. Is there a situation in your organization to prevent women from serving on the board of directors? (You can make multiple choices.)



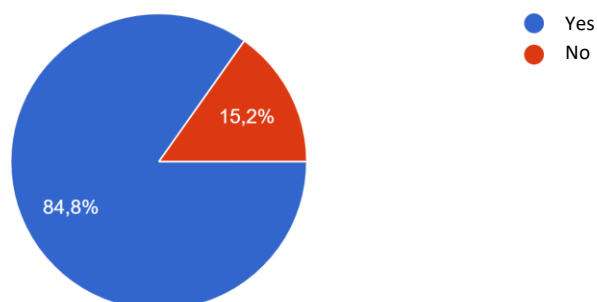
21. Is there a situation in your organization to prevent women from serving on the board of directors? (You can make multiple choices.)

125 participants answered. 82 answer There's no situation to prevent women, 32 answer There is a widespread belief that men will be more successful at managerial levels than women, 21 answer Male members have an attitude that prevents female members from being elected, 14 answer Female members have an attitude that prevent female members from being elected, 13 answer Organization venue and meeting hours are arranged according to the participation of men, 1 answer There is no place to leave the children.

Most of the participants noted that there was not a situation that prevents women. This can be acceptable as what it is not a legally preventive situation. The participants highlighted gender inequality. This has shown that gender inequality prevails in NGOs.

22. Do you participate in the study, training, social activities, etc. carried out by your organization as a disabled female member or volunteer?

125 responses



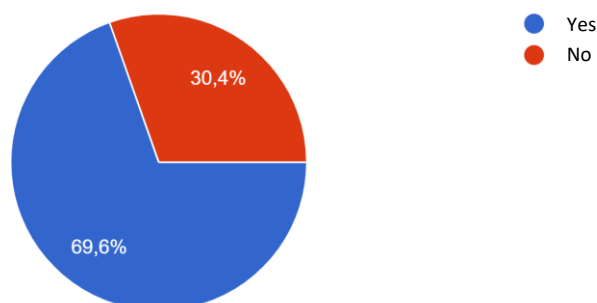
22. Do you participate in the study, training, social activities, etc. carried out by your organization as a disabled female member or volunteer?

% 84,8 Yes, % 15,2 No.

The majority of participants stated that they actively participated in the works of the organization.

23. Are there efforts being carried out in your organization to ensure active participation of non-executive disabled women members in work?

125 responses



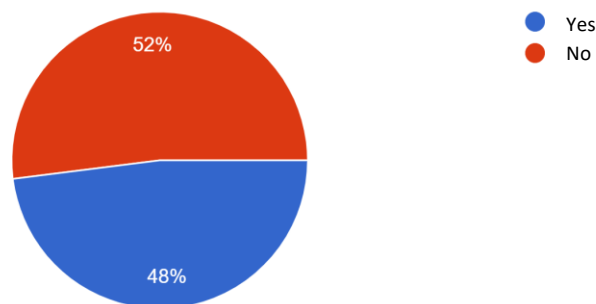
23. Are there efforts being carried out in your organization to ensure active participation of non-executive disabled women members in work?

%69 Yes, %34,4 No.

The majority of the participants noted that there were activities aimed at ensuring the effective participation of non-executive women in the works. But it is also important that 34.4% of respondents who say there are no such kinds of works.

24. Do you organize meetings in your organization that will determine your demands and needs for women with disabilities to submit to the board of directors?

125 responses



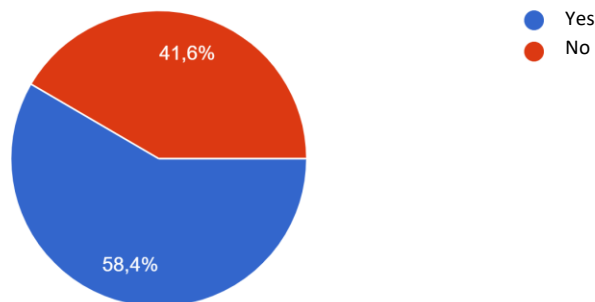
24. Do you organize meetings in your organization that will determine your demands and needs for women with disabilities to submit to the board of directors?

%48 Yes, %52 No.

While nearly half of the participants reported that they organize meetings to present their demands and requirements to the board of directors, more than half stated that they did not organize such kinds of meetings. In this case, it was observed that half of the NGO administrations did not create a mechanism in which they would be aware of the expectations of women with disabilities, and that women did not develop a strategy to communicate their problems and demands.

25. Can you influence the decisions on the board of directors in your organization in favours women with disabilities?

125 responses



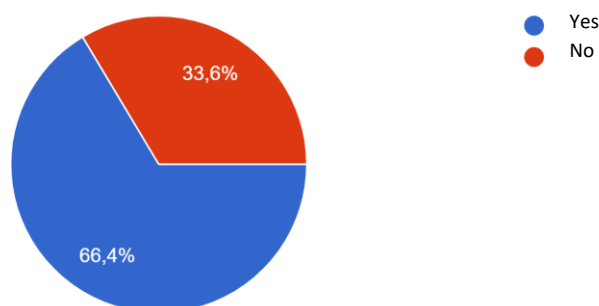
25. Can you influence the decisions on the board of directors in your organization in favours women with disabilities?

%58,4 Yes, %41,6 No.

While the majority of respondents say they can influence decisions in favour of women with disabilities, the proportion of those who say they can't influence is also considerable state.

26. Do you think there is a responsive approach and effort on the board of your organization to meet the demands and needs of women with disabilities?

125 responses



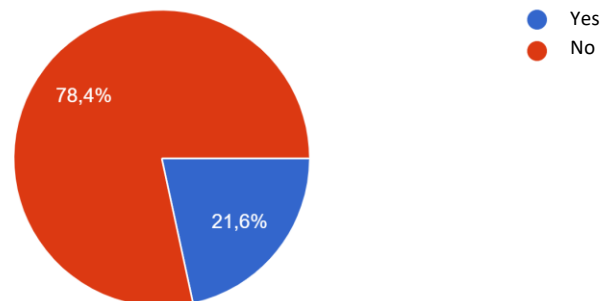
26. Do you think there is a responsive approach and effort on the board of your organization to meet the demands and needs of women with disabilities?

%66,4 Yes, %33,6 No.

Most of the participants felt that there was a responsive approach and effort on the board to meet the demands and needs of women with disabilities. A third portion noted that there is no sensitivity on the issue.

27. Have you been discriminated against or violated (harassment, violation of your rights, etc.) within the organization because you are a disabled woman?

125 responses



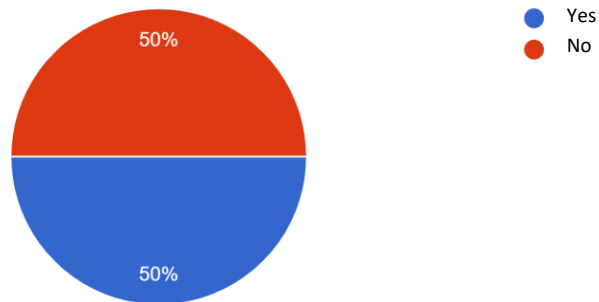
27. Have you been discriminated against or violated (harassment, violation of your rights, etc.) within the organization because you are a disabled woman?

%21 Yes, 78,4 No.

While the most of the participants noted that they had not been discriminated against or violated within the organization because they were women with disabilities, one fifth of them said they had been violated. Even only one person has been discriminated against or violated in rights-based struggle; it is the obligation of NGOs not to allow it.

28. Did the management of the organization support you when you were subjected to discrimination or violation of your rights (harassment, violation of your rights, etc.) within the organization?

32 responses



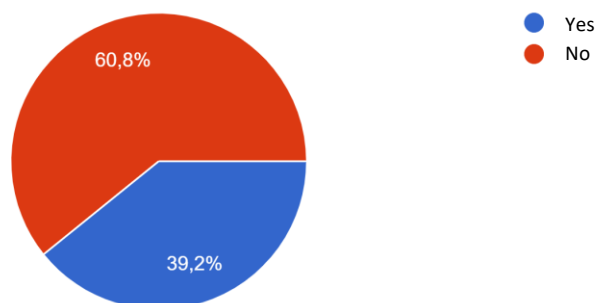
28. Did the management of the organization support you when you were subjected to discrimination or violation of your rights (harassment, violation of your rights, etc.) within the organization?

%50 Yes, %50 No.

Half of the participants who reported that they had been violated within the organization stated that they had received support from the organization's management, and half said that they had not received support. It is desirable that everyone who has been violated has received support. It is the responsibility of NGOs to make the necessary interventions. NGOs must fight against violation of rights of their members.

29. Have you been discriminated against or violated (harassment, violation of your rights, etc.) because you are a disabled woman outside the organization?

125 responses

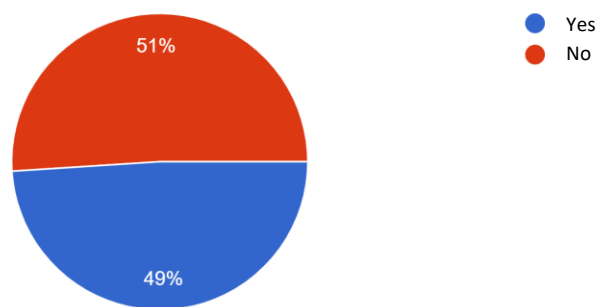


29. Have you been discriminated against or violated (harassment, violation of your rights, etc.) because you are a disabled woman outside the organization?

%39,2 Yes, %60,8 No.

While most of the participants said they had not been discriminated against or violated because they were disabled women outside the organization, more than a third noted they had been violated.

30. Did the management of the organization support you when you were discriminated against or violated (harassment, violation of your rights, etc.) outside the organization?  
49 responses



30. Did the management of the organization support you when you were discriminated against or violated (harassment, violation of your rights, etc.) outside the organization?

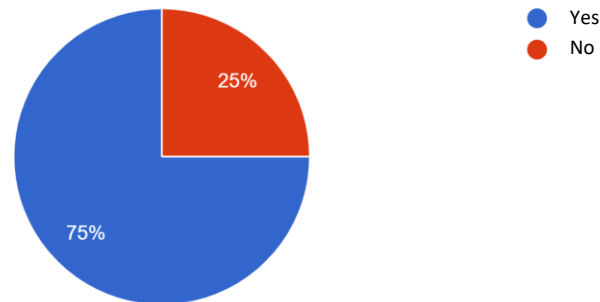
%49 Yes, %51 No.

About half of the participants who reported they had been violated outside the organization stated that they had received support from the organization's management, and just over half said that they had not received support. What is desirable is that everyone who has been violated is receive support. NGOs should fight against violations of their members' rights.



31. Do you find it important and necessary to create an organization consisting only of women with disabilities to defend the rights of women with disabilities?

256 responses



31. Do you find it important and necessary to create an organization consisting only of women with disabilities to defend the rights of women with disabilities?

%75 Yes, %25 No.

While a significant majority of participants found the establishment of a disabled women's organization important and necessary, a quarter did not find it important and not necessary. Many women's organizations established in Turkey have made significant gains in issues of discrimination and violation of rights related to women. In our country, there are three organizations for women with disabilities. Disabled women's organizations need to increase the struggle for women with disabilities, advocate for rights and achieve gains by increasing their numbers.

### Recommendations from Participants

32. What would you suggest that women with disabilities get more floors on the boards of non-governmental organizations? Please indicate.

Suggestions reported by the participants for women with disabilities to be more involved in the boards of directors of non-governmental organizations are grouped in the following headings:

Recommendations of participants about policy documents and written regulations in organizations that ensure the participation of women in decision-making mechanisms:

1. In order to ensure the effective participation of women with disabilities in decision-making mechanisms, NGO representatives should conduct public campaigns and lobbying with relevant public institutions to make this issue a state policy.
2. In order to implement equal representation of men and women in the boards of directors, quota arrangements should be made and sanctions should be assigned to comply with it.
3. It should be regulated how many terms male managers will be elected. Women's election periods should not be restricted.
4. The board of directors should establish the position of vice president responsible for gender equality and this position should be included in the charter.
5. A safe environment should be provided for women with disabilities that does not cause harassment or discrimination within the organization. In the case of such a situation, some boards should be created where women can apply and express themselves.
6. A women's Assembly should be established in NGOs.
7. Participation in NGO management should be ensured according to competence, not according to nepotism.

Recommendations of participants on the efforts to ensure the gender equality:

8. NGOs should work to change society's view towards the women with disabilities.
9. The problems of women with disabilities with access to the NGO should be taken into account.
10. NGOs should not serve only in cities. Branches should be established in places close to the villages so that women there can participate effectively in the activities of the association and to provide transportation to the villages.
11. In order for women with a heavy burden of care to be more effective, NGOs should organize a place suitable for their children.
12. The working times of NGOs should be planned in accordance with women.
13. In order to see that women can succeed in NGOs, the “organizations are men's work” bias must be broken and equal opportunities must be achieved.
14. As for the election of women to the presidency, men who are leaders should work to support women in order to break the negative stereotypes of male members.
15. The criteria for success that apply to women's participation in management should also apply to men.
16. In management, women should not be seen as showcases, their qualities should be highlighted and they should be noticed that they are individuals.

Recommendations of participants on awareness-raising efforts:

17. Informative material (documents, videos, etc.) for disabled women to become members of NGOs should be prepared and included on the organization's website.
18. Disabled women should be told through training that membership in NGOs is a legal right and they will not be harmed in any way.
19. The NGOs' board of directors should work to encourage women with disabilities to become members by communicating one-on-one and making family visits.
20. In order for disabled women to participate in NGO work, their families should be talked.
21. Efforts should be carried out on the spouses of women who cannot be active in NGOs due to husband pressure.
22. Women should be supported to use technology effectively.
23. Care should be taken to select well-equipped and experienced disabled women for NGO management boards.
24. Effective and successful women in management should be brought to the forefront as encouraging role models, their experience of being elected to the president and board of directors and fighting within the organization should be shared with women with disabilities, and these studies should be included in social media.
25. In order to provide the necessary equipment, qualifications for women to be managers in NGOs, trainings, meetings, workshops and self-confidence-building activities should be organized on subjects such as management, governance, administrative law, communication skills, public relations and women's human rights.
26. For male members in NGOs training activities should be conducted to ensure gender equality, facilitate women's participation in the organizational process, and break negative stereotypes against women.
27. Vocational training courses should be diversified according to the needs of women in NGOs and encouraging work should be done by communicating one-on-one with women in order to increase women's participation.
28. It should be made obligatory to carry out training programs that change the male-dominated mentality in NGOs.
29. Projects should be carried out to increase the number of women managers in NGOs.

Participants' suggestions to ensure that the mood in NGOs is supportive of positive communication:

30. Environments should be created where the problems and experiences of disabled women are shared.
31. The board of directors of the NGOs should organize meetings on the organizational problems, thoughts, feelings and requirements of women with disabilities and conduct studies in accordance with their results.
32. For women with disabilities, an environment that strengthens female solidarity should be created.
33. Competition of female candidates with each other in CSOs should be maintained within the framework of fair, respectful, non-discrimination and sincerity.
34. Women members should advocate for rights in cooperation.
35. The strength and labour of women working in NGOs should be visible.
36. NGOs should create a communication environment in which disabled women can freely express their ideas and be respected accordingly.
37. Women should not be interfered with by men in NGO work and autonomy should be granted. Women's success should be attributed to women, and this should be important in getting into the board of directors.
38. In order for women to be successful in NGOs, a working environment should be provided in which they do not have to spend many times more effort than men.

Recommendations of participants on strengthening inter-organizational relations and cooperation:

39. The number of disabled women's NGOs should be increased.
40. Disabled NGOs should carry out studies for the active participation of women with disabilities in women's NGOs and other NGOs.
41. In order to strengthen the relationship between disabled NGOs and women's organizations and disabled women's organizations, joint projects and studies should be carried out in areas such as anti-discrimination, education, health, media.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

In this study, the situation of women with disabilities to express themselves and respond to their demands and needs through participation in the form of volunteering to NGOs,

being a member, being a candidate for the board of directors, and being a president was searched.

256 women participated in the study. The highest proportion of participants is visually impaired with a rate of 25.4%. The lowest rate is with psychosocial mental disabilities at 1.6%.

64.8% of participants are between the ages of 18-45.

52.3% of respondents were married and 57.8% had children.

51.2% of participants are not members of an NGO. The most of the non-member participants have distrust of NGOs for the protection of their rights. Among the participants, there are those who reported that they were not members due to their family and care responsibilities brought about by gender inequality. There are also non-members due to ignorance and self-distrust.

While more than half of the participants who were members of an NGO were candidates for a position on the board of directors, almost half were not candidates. Some of the selected participants have held multiple positions in the NGO during different periods.

Participants who are not candidates and cannot be elected note that personal relationships are at the forefront rather than success and that they are discriminated against because they are women, suggesting that there is no objective election in NGOs.

The reasons for not running for the board were seen to be due to being female and gender inequality. The responsibility of care for women, the judgment that being a woman is not suitable for management, the location of the organizations, the characteristics of the place, the unsuitability of working and meeting hours for women's participation, and the fact that families are decisive in women's decisions have prevented their candidacy.

82.4% of respondents stated that they were not running for the presidency of the NGOs. Participants may be considered not to be candidates because of their bias that the presidency is a job suitable for men or that they cannot be elected.

Considering the reasons for not being elected when they were candidate to be president of the NGO, the inability to be elected due to gender inequality comes to the fore.

A third of respondents stated that there were no female directors in the board of NGOs.

It has been observed that only 20% of the participants' organization have a written regulation (quota etc.) to facilitate women's participation in the board of directors.

82 of the 125 participants who answered the question "Is there a situation in NGOs to prevent women from taking part in the board of directors" noted that there was nothing to prevent. The participants who marked that there was a preventive situation emphasized the gender inequality.

52% of respondents stated that they did not organize meetings to present their demands and requirements to the board of directors. In this case, it was observed that half of the NGO administrations did not create a mechanism in which they would be aware of the expectations of women with disabilities, and that did not develop a strategy to communicate of women problems and demands.

While 78.4% of respondents said that they had not been discriminated against or violated due to being women with disabilities in the organization, 21.2% reported that they had been violated. Even if only one person has been discriminated against or violated in rights-based struggle, it is the obligation of NGOs not to allow it. Half of the participants who said that they had been violated within the organization stated that they had received support from the organization's management, and half said that they had not received support.

While 60.8% of respondents said they had not been discriminated against or violated outside the organization because they were disabled women, 39.2% said they had been violated. About half of the participants who noted that they had been violated outside the organization stated that they had received support from the organization's management, and just over half said that they had not received support.

While 75% of respondents considered the establishment of a woman with disabilities organization important and necessary, 25% did not consider it important and necessary.

Considering that discrimination and inequality are experienced in all areas of society, it is not surprising that it is also seen in NGOs that have the function of combating discrimination and inequality. This research has been a study in which the inequality experienced by disabled women is an area that needs to be recognized and struggled, and what needs to be done is discussed. The struggle will be strengthened when research results are widely shared with the public.

## Recommendations

This section includes recommendations developed based on interviews, observations, experiences and research findings:

## **Data Creation**

It is necessary to increase the data on disability. In the literature scanning, it was determined that the data obtained from widespread research on disabled people, women and women with disabilities in Turkey is not up to date, that the current data does not cover all disabled people, that there is no gender sensitivity in the data. Extensive research should be conducted on many issues such as the number of disabled people, distribution of disabled people by gender, demographic data on disabled women, ratio of women to men in members and boards of directors of disabled NGOs, numerical data on women NGOs, ratio of disabled women in women associations and the ratio of disabled women in boards of directors. Effective participation of women with disabilities should be ensured at each stage, starting from the planning of these studies.

## **Liabilities of the State**

The state should take specific measures to ensure that women with disabilities enjoy the rights guaranteed in the international documents signed. Women with disabilities should be consulted and actively involved in this process when regulating policies, laws and services. Institutional mechanisms should be established to share family and care responsibilities brought about by gender inequality, which prevents women with disabilities from participating in NGOs.

Changing the perspective about the disabled women is crucial for their participation in decision-making mechanisms. The problems and needs of disabled women can be seen and the efforts on this can only be done by taking them part in the boards of directors. It is necessary to change the perspective of pity, compassion, overprotection etc. towards disabled women, which are common in the society, and replace them with the rights-based perspective in the form of "Women with disabilities are equal people equipped with all human rights; and all necessary work should be done to enjoy rights and special measures should be taken until equality is achieved". The state should conduct some studies and campaigns to ensure this change.

## **Liabilities of the NGOs**

It is important that women with disabilities become members in NGOs and support their decision-making processes so that they can effectively announce their needs and choices. Efforts should be made to increase the awareness of NGO administrations and male members on this issue, and their attention should be drawn to this issue. The quota must be applied until there is equal representation of men and women in the administration. Mechanisms must be established by which women with disabilities can communicate their demands. Location, venue, working and meeting hours of NGOs should be arranged in accordance with women.

NGOs should make a strong struggle by coming together and creating networks in the fight against women with disabilities to avoid discrimination and inequality.

### **Studies Devoted to the Disabled Women**

Disabled women who cannot access information should be informed about their rights. Awareness should be developed that the defence of their rights can only be realized through organized work and that they can struggle to use their rights in line with their demands and needs by being a member of NGOs and taking part in the management, and trainings should be carried out. In order for these studies to be carried out, the state and fund provider organizations should create support.

Preventing disabled women from exercising their natural right is a question of democracy and Human Rights. This challenge should be overcome with the participation of society, especially the state.

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