

GENDER APPROACHES IN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS: LESSONS FROM EASTERN TURKEY

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Abstract

This article analyses a regional development program implemented in Eastern Turkey to explore whether its grant scheme projects helped or hindered the transformation of gender inequalities. The article emphasizes that capabilities of transformation within micro-projects are limited due to structural limitations coming from society, culture and politics. Drawing on the gender and development literature, the projects are assessed by the social welfare, empowerment, and equality approaches. The findings indicate that the project success increases when the labour, relations, and identities of women are considered together. In order to initiate a structural change in women's position, the project designs should explicitly address issues, such as gender equality, poverty alleviation, organized action, and full participation. These issues should also be reflected on implementation and monitoring carefully. Therefore, an integrated empowerment-equality approach supported by social welfare issues is required. Capacity building on such critical issues enhances effectiveness. Merely result-oriented (versus process-oriented) approaches in development overlook the fact that a project is a learning process for all its participants, including its sponsors and experts.

Keywords: Gender inequalities, development, participation, Eastern Anatolia, Turkey

Kalkınma Projelerinde Toplumsal Cinsiyet Yaklaşımları: Doğu Anadolu Örneği

Özet

Bu makalenin amacı, Doğu Anadolu'da uygulanan bir bölgesel kalkınma programı kapsamında yürütülen hibe projelerinin toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizlikleri başta olmak üzere çeşitli eşitsizliklerin ortadan kaldırılmasına yardımcı mı olduğu yoksa bunların yeniden üretilmesine mi yol açtığını sorgulamaktır. Sosyal, kültürel ve politik yapıların sınırlayıcılıkları karşısında küçük ölçekli ve kısa zamanda tamamlanması gereken projelerin dönüştürücü niteliklerinin de sınırlı olduğu vurgulanan makalede, kalkınmada toplumsal cinsiyet yazınına dayanarak, araştırma kapsamına alınan projeler sosyal refah, güçlendirme ve eşitlikçilik yaklaşımlarına göre irdelenmiştir. Bulgular, kadınların emekleri, sosyal ilişkileri ve kimlikleri birlikte dikkate alındığında projelerin başarı şanslarının arttığına işaret etmektedir. Kadınların konumlarında yapısal bir dönüşümü başlatabilmek için proje tasarımında toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği, yoksulluğun ortadan kaldırılması, örgütlü eylem ve tam katılım konuları açıklıkla belirtilmiş olmalı, dikkatle uygulamaya geçirilmeli ve izlenmelidir. Dolayısıyla, sosyal refah konularıyla desteklenmiş bir bütünlük güçlendirme-eşitlik yaklaşımı gerekmektedir. Bu tür kritik konularda kapasite geliştirme çalışmalarını sonuçların başarısını etkilemektedir. Süreç yönelimli kalkınma yaklaşımına karşıt olarak yalnızca sonuç yönelimli yaklaşımların benimsenmesi durumunda, finansörler ve uzmanlar da dahil olmak üzere tüm katılımcılar açısından projelerin bir öğrenme süreci olduğu gerçeği ihmal edilmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizlikleri, kalkınma, katılım, Doğu Anadolu, Türkiye

Gender Approaches in Development Projects: Lessons from Eastern Turkey

Introduction

This article analyzes the Eastern Anatolia Development Programme (EADP) grant scheme projects that directly targeted women. The EADP was implemented in four impoverished provinces of the Eastern Anatolia region of Turkey with the financial support of the European Union (EU) in the early 2000s.

Western technological development and economic welfare have been idealized in Turkey without questioning its male-dominated rationale and paying little attention to the multi-dimensional nature of development. A communitarian instrumentalist perspective regarding women's participation in development has been dominant within the mainstream developmentalists since the proclamation of the Republic, within the radical left in the 1960s-70s, as well as within those groups practicing religious and ethnic identity politics afterwards (Ertürk, 1996; Koğacıoğlu, 2009; Kılıç, 2008). From this perspective, women are functional primarily in the family and secondarily in society to accomplish domestic-reproductive, developmental-economic, and emancipatory-political tasks identified by men. This perspective reflects the Republican model of the female subject based on unequal gender relations; it integrates pre-modern structures, such as "bilateral responsibilities" between relatives and "the honor-shame complex", into modern Turkey's kinship system (Baştuğ, 2002). The Republican citizenship was established via an idealized image of the nuclear family without questioning gender inequalities inherited from the pre-modern forms, and the reconfigured family structure was made instrumental for the state sovereignty and national identity (Koğacıoğlu, 2009; Sirman, 2007). This hegemonic structure has been then replicated within other social formations and political movements such as those noted above.

Under these social-historical circumstances, transformation of gender inequalities becomes difficult in development projects at micro level. In addition, the development literature shows that an emphasis on equality and empowerment in rhetoric fades away in practice for a number of reasons, including awareness and capability problems of beneficiaries, experts, and organizations; financial restrictions; time limitations; and result-oriented, managerial and technocratic approaches (Açıkalın, 2010; Mosse, 2005, Rao and Kelleher, 2005). When such difficulties are considered together in a Bourdieuan (1998) way, one could argue that the inequalities patterned at local, national and international levels interact with each other, and affect the results in local situations, e.g., projects in this article, while the hegemonic culture or structure reproduces itself at micro level (Açıkalın, 2010; Sirman, 2007). In this process, the local, national and international actors of development carry hierarchical or patriarchal political cultures and corresponding power relations into projects although these cultures and relations may historically refer to different inequalities. Moreover, the internalized aspects of a hegemonic culture are practiced usually being unnoticed even by the supporters of opposing ideologies (Bourdieu, 1998).

The EADP was not an exception; it promoted gender equalities in its rhetoric. However, there were a set of structural problems that made gender inequalities difficult to change in practice, such as the overall design of the EADP and that of the micro-projects targeting women; the hegemonic gender perspective internalized by the designers, practitioners and beneficiaries; and the surrounding societal conditions, etc. Hence one could expect little space for the agency of local practitioners, be they managers, trainers or beneficiaries, to influence structural conditions towards change. If so, one wonders how change occurred, under what circumstances, to what extent, or in what aspects of women's lives in the social space that the EADP projects provided. To what extent did the reflexivity, awareness, and responsiveness of actors flourish under quite restricting structural conditions for using uncertainties, contradictions, or co-incidents towards change? Who gained from this transformation and what types of new areas of power were built?

Using available and empirical data, this research explores the answers of these questions qualitatively. Specifically, it explores how the development process in EADP grant scheme projects worked and what impact it had on the identities, relations, or labor of women within a context of unequal and changing gender relations (Alcoff, 1987; Ertürk, 2006; Gouthro, 2005; Kandiyoti, 2001). The narrative is built on the views of project participants to exemplify the changing capabilities and restrictions of collective and individual actors. This evidence is then used to evaluate the success of micro-projects in

relation to the Programme, i.e., the EADP, concerning particularly with inequalities that were transformed or reinforced in the process.

The exploration focuses more on process-related factors and dynamics than the contextual ones. Process-oriented project evaluations referring to structure-agency relations still attract relatively less attention in the development literature. Therefore, this article intends to contribute to this area of interest suggesting some revisions on approaches, strategies, and techniques that are blind to inequalities, gender and otherwise. Specifically, it contributes to the development literature in Turkey where critical evaluations of empirical data on gender and development are inadequate.

As explained below, it is argued that inequalities are more likely to be reinforced to the extent that the *social welfare approach*, as opposed to *empowerment* and *equality approaches* to gender relations, is adopted; to the extent that a *partial participatory approach*, as opposed to a *full participatory approach*, is adopted; and to the extent that development interventions are based on *actions of individual actors*, as opposed to collective actors' *organized action*.

1. Gender Approaches in Development

Social welfare, equality, and empowerment are three approaches to development policies and projects that have targeted women in Turkey (Ertürk, 1996). The *social welfare* approach emphasizes women's domestic and reproductive roles to become better wives, mothers, and managers in domestic life. Typical projects include home economics, food preservation, sewing and knitting, family planning, child care, and small-scale (traditional) income-generating activities (e.g., kilim weaving) that contribute to household budgets without enhancing women's control over their income. Social welfare support can improve the quality of women's lives to an extent while reinforcing women's dependent status as passive receivers of benefits because it does not help women to question patriarchal hierarchies, statuses, roles, and divisions of labor. The *equality* approach underlines the importance of gender equality within domestic and market relations, and it criticizes the marginalizing or exploiting effects of capitalist market relations on women (Hoşgör-Gündüz, 2001). Typical projects embrace poverty alleviation, improving access to resources (e.g., education, skills training, credits, etc.), and organized action. Important results include integrating women more efficiently into production processes or market relations, and increasing their quantitative representation in the public sphere, thus enhancing their position and bargaining power in the public and private spheres. However, when the practice does not challenge the core value of patriarchal power in intimate and societal relations, women not

only lose traditional support mechanisms and survival strategies but also become a natural (unrecognized or unacknowledged) resource of development without gaining any considerable power or value equivalent to their economic, political, or social contributions (Ertürk, 1996). The *empowerment* approach also recognizes the women's agency and favors programs that support women's access to vital resources for increasing their options. This approach aims to generate an autonomous identity more clearly, which increases the likelihood of feeling empowered to diverge from pre-defined forms and areas of action, and to demystify the public/private dichotomy. However, when it does not emphasize organized action towards gender equality, it leads to the avoidance of political confrontation at home or in the society at large. Then similar problems emerge, such as ineffective utilization of empowerment instruments (e.g., literacy courses, women's human rights training, employment) or their utilization for the generation of "proper" sociopolitical identities according to a given ideology (Koğacıoğlu, 2009; White, 2005).

Alternatively, these approaches can be used simultaneously to meet the multi-dimensional needs of women in development (Gouthro, 2005). This multi-dimensional approach requires a revised equality approach (i.e., paying due attention to organized action, full participation, and poverty alleviation). It embraces a strategy for gender-sensitive policy change and institutional transformation (Bartelink and Buitelaar, 2006; Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007; Rao and Kelleher, 2005; Schech and Vas Dev, 2007). The focus shifts from the practical to the strategic objectives of particular projects (Ertürk, 1996), such as gaining a gender-sensitive perspective, autonomy, and capability to identify objectives and initiate organized action towards changing imbalances in power relations in alliance with different groups of both women and men. Hence, the women's agency becomes more likely to be strengthened while social welfare needs are not overlooked.

Reflexivity/self-critique and controlled power (i.e., a critical-ethical perspective; Açıkalın, 2005) could help generate opportunities for the less capable participants' empowerment through full participation (i.e., to have a say in setting up an agenda and to negotiate the terms of policies and implementation before and during implementation). This approach could then help overcome manager/managed hierarchies that emerge in the decision-making mechanisms of projects when excluding and patronizing practices are internalized by "experts" and "beneficiaries", and when high importance is attributed to technical knowledge (Rao and Kelleher, 2005). A dialectical perspective could be useful to identify the sites of negotiation or struggles for change that arise from the contradictions between culture, material conditions, and relations of power (Ertürk, 2006). "A political change in perspective" arises when one's "point of departure" changes towards viewing familiar facts from a

different position (Alcoff, 1994: 116). Here, identity is “positionally” defined “relative to a constantly shifting context, to a situation that includes a network of elements involving others, the objective economic conditions, cultural and political institutions and ideologies” (ibid.). These suggestions may increase the likelihood of going beyond “coping strategies” – i.e., not aiming for “positions of power” which “potentially leads to acquiescence in oppressive situations” (Bartelink and Buitelaar, 2006: 356) or “patriarchal negotiations” (Kandiyoti, 1997) – i.e., seeking protection in return for obedience and behaving properly in sexual relations. Consequently, changing male-dominated institutions in sustainable ways could become more likely.

2. Methods

The objective of this research is to explore qualitatively the ways and means of reinforcing or transforming gender inequalities through EADP micro-projects in the local settings of four EADP provinces (see next section for details). The main unit of analysis is the micro-projects that directly targeted women. The research was based on the data collected by the author from available sources as well as interviews in 2008, six months after the projects were completed. Firstly, the 35 projects that directly targeted women were identified in the local authority’s database. The projects’ final reports were used to classify their strategic and practical objectives. The actual results and problems were also noted for further inquiry. Secondly, 14 project monitors were interviewed both to better grasp the situation in each project and to purposively select 10 projects. The sampling procedure considered provincial and component distributions (see next section), as well as variety in activities to gain meaningful insight about the process. Thirdly, 34 in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted using two semi-structured questionnaires, one for 14 managers and trainers (seven women), and one for 20 female beneficiaries. All managers were interviewed, trainers were selected purposively according to their level of involvement in projects, and beneficiaries were selected randomly from the beneficiary lists in the final reports. The two questionnaires helped to cross-check beneficiaries’ views with those of the manager-trainers while acquiring differing opinions from particular positions.

Conventional evaluation research in development concerns mainly with the overlap between the objectives and results of projects (Weiss, 1972) whereas recent literature alerts us about the details hidden in the process to grasp how success or failure in a project comes about and with what type of new power relations (Mosse, 2005); this research draws on both approaches. Firstly, contextual information is provided briefly considering the most relevant issues for project evaluation. Project objectives are analyzed as initial indicators

of gender approaches. Management approaches of organizations and relations between project participants (i.e., beneficiaries, trainers and managers) are identified by using the views of all participants. Secondly, the overlap between objectives and direct results, unplanned actions and unintended (i.e., indirect) results, as well as sustainability (i.e. impacts) are assessed mainly by the views of beneficiaries; the views of managers and trainers were used for supportive evidence. Finally, the findings are used to evaluate the success of the projects in relation to the programme (i.e., the EADP) in light of the conceptual framework presented above. Success is defined as to what extent results met objectives and as to what extent inequalities were overcome, including those related to gender relations. Findings are presented in the form of a narrative according to the author's understanding of the process built on the expressions of interviewees with relatively short quotations to cover as much evidence as possible. Drawing a relatively more holistic picture of the process is more suitable for an evaluation research with an aim to find some patterns that affect particular results.

3. The Programme

The objective of the EADP was to reduce regional disparities and increase skills and capacities for improving socioeconomic conditions. About 80% of 45 million euros of EU funds were utilized between 2004 and 2007 in four provinces (Bitlis, Hakkari, Muş, and Van) of Eastern Anatolia. These provinces were ranked between 75th and 81st among 81 provinces in the national socioeconomic development index in 2000, with an average female literacy rate of 54% (DPT, 2003). Female employment was 3.5% in the region's non-agricultural sectors in 2006 (TUIK, 2008). The region's population is predominantly Kurdish, and suffered economically, socially, and politically from ethnic armed struggle against the state in the 1980s and 1990s. On the eve of starting official negotiations for Turkey's joining the EU, the EADP was a push towards intra-regional equalities without addressing ethnic issues.

The Programme had four components (agriculture, small and medium enterprises –i.e. SMEs-, social, and tourism-environment) geared towards accomplishing activities, such as capacity building, procurement of mobile health clinics, and infrastructure feasibility studies. Its most important feature was the Grant Scheme Programme (GSP): about 24.5 million euros were allocated for agriculture, tourism-environment, and social development projects; the SME component did not have projects targeting women.

The EU procedures on transparent and fair implementation and the accountability of beneficiaries shaped the GSP. However, organizational capacities and intra-regional disparities along gender and class lines were

largely overlooked in the design (Açıklım, 2005). Some ad hoc measures for technical capacity building improved the design so that 2,055 persons received three-stage training on the application procedures and project design. Grant beneficiaries (i.e., implementing organizations) received training and support on implementation, procurement, reporting, and monitoring according to EU procedures. A full-time monitoring team was established and trained both to enforce EU rules and to provide technical support.

As a result, 20,000 women (24%) benefited from EADP services, 350 women (24%) were employed, and 35 projects (11%) directly targeted women. Sixteen percent of those employed and 14% of those trained in the Agriculture Component were women; the figures were 6% and 50%, respectively, in the Tourism-Environment Component. There were seven projects (5% of 147) in the Agriculture Component that directly targeted women and four projects (8% of 49) in the Tourism-Environment Component.

The Social Development Component showed better scores: 67% of the 9,168 people trained and 60% of the 295 employed were women; 24 (59% of 41) projects directly targeted women, and all projects included women in their target groups. Two principles contributed to this success: women were identified as a target group, and submitting projects for women, among other vulnerable groups, was identified as a priority only in this component.

4. Micro-Projects Targeting Women

The analysis of 35 projects indicated that there were three strategic objectives:

- *Self-awareness and empowerment*: “to perceive oneself as an individual”, “to be aware of one’s own potentials”, “to participate in public life as free and equal actors”, “to gain citizen, woman, and urban dweller identities”, and “to stand on one’s own feet”. This category aims to achieve individual empowerment.
- *Contribution to society*: “to become local community leaders”, “to achieve social coherence and integration”, “to practice one’s rights and contribute to social transformation”, and “to improve mother-child health”. Here the main concern is community development; women’s empowerment is instrumentalized for this purpose. The category also comprises social welfare objectives.
- *Integration into economy*: “to gain income-generating skills and self-confidence”, “to participate in local economic life”, and “to gain entrepreneurship abilities”. This objective reflected an equality approach with an economic reductionist view.

Nineteen projects concentrated on one strategic objective (usually the final one) while 16 combined different objectives. Combined objectives, although not the majority, might suggest that a multi-dimensional approach to development, or alternatively, to the construction of a new female subject, had started to attract more attention of designers. Although these two approaches are in interaction, they differ in their approach to the women to be served as the central subject important in and for herself or as instruments of a given action.

Practical objectives (i.e., activities) aimed at training on skills and/or rights:

- *Training on income-generating skills*: animal husbandry, greenhouse agriculture, kilim weaving, sewing-knitting, making accessories, hairdressing, child care, computer literacy, and accountancy and finance.
- *Training and consultation*: literacy, health and rights, legal and psychological problems, and training of trainers.

Strategic and practical objectives, when considered together, gave an impression about the mainstream gender approach operational in the EADP environment that a new female citizen had to be formed (according to which model, the Republican or otherwise, was unclear): women's individual empowerment and/or their instrumentalization for development would be achieved by raising awareness on rights and/or equipping them with skills for modern domestic life or market relations.

In order to identify which gender approach stayed at the center of practice, one needs to know the actual process, what was achieved with what immediate impact. For instance, a plain literacy course would generate limited empowerment and no "point of departure" from women's submissive views. However, it could become a liberating source if it is part of training on skills, marketing and organized action. It could also turn into an awareness raising or rehabilitation medium depending greatly on the trainer's skills. In short, women's participation in and interaction during the implementation process could be used as learning experiences (Gouthro, 2005) and as a point of departure (Alcoff, 1994), whether strategically targeted (Ertürk, 1996) or unintentionally achieved. If the results do not generate a chance to challenge, rather than legitimize, the women's status as domestic managers-mothers-wives, then the undertaking should be called a social welfare project. However, a project can be called an empowerment project if it starts with an acceptance of the participants' identities and later moves to another stage, in which women could discuss some alternative opportunities with an awareness of their agency (Ibrahim and Alkire, 2007). For a project to be called an equality project, it should include empowerment aspects, as well as poverty alleviation and organized action with full participation.

4.1. Sampled projects and beneficiaries

Seven out of 10 sampled projects were mainly for *income generation* through kilim weaving (social and tourism components), greenhouse production (social and agriculture components), animal husbandry and rural organization (agriculture component), and skills training on child care and entrepreneurship (social component). Two of these projects included activities in their design related to other aspects of women's lives (women's rights, home economics and organized action) whereas five of them were based only on economic-technical concerns in which women were projected as cheap and suitable labor, e.g., making an idle workshop functional, contributing to original kilim making, and utilizing the sunshine for greenhouses. Three *training-consultation-socialization projects* in the social component (these are called below training-socialization, training-consultation, and literacy projects) aimed at literacy training, informing women about domestic and reproductive life (health care and psychological consultations, family relations, child care, etc), and arranging social activities (performing stage plays, going to movies or a neighboring district, physical exercise, organizing exhibitions and meetings for men's gender awareness).

Most of the 20 sampled beneficiaries were exposed to little schooling (11 had been illiterate before participating in the projects and four had up to five years of schooling), not married (13 were single, divorced, or engaged), young (the average age was 27 from a range of 15-46 years), and unemployed Kurdish women having no permanent jobholder in the household or having a permanent jobholder with minimum wage and social security. They resided in villages, semi-rural districts or poor urban neighborhoods, and 16 were migrants from nearby locations, including five forced migrants of the ethnic conflict. Only a few beneficiaries previously participated in or witnessed projects implemented in their neighborhoods.

The portrait of beneficiaries indicates that the projects reached the vulnerable women who needed to build capacities in line with the Programme objectives. Vulnerability pointed out primarily economy and secondarily some other aspects of social, domestic and personal life. This prioritization was less apparent in the beneficiaries' problem definitions (see Section 4.4 below).

Initially, most of the women had to persuade their "patrons" to participate in a project. A woman told her husband, "you are unemployed, I will contribute to the kids' expenses, and I am bored sitting at home". Brothers became more controlling than the parents in some cases. Mothers used religious references when they took on the persuasion job: "do not let her sins get to you". Some men and women were opposed to elderly women's attendance in the literacy courses, arguing that there was no use becoming literate after a

certain age. Some men protested against a municipality that wanted to give Turkish courses to Kurdish women, but the Major persuaded the protesters to reconsider.

Gossip originating from the community was a controlling factor and pointed out the “normal”. The “normal” was perceived as unchanged, and sisters-in-law, brothers, grandparents, or neighbors had a right to enforce it until it changed (sometimes easily and immediately). Gossip was made about the location of a workshop, which was next to a café, about the intentions of beneficiaries attending a project being just to earn money (the daily allowance was two euros), and about the amount of time spent out of the home. Some beneficiaries suffered from such gossip, but others did not care about it. Several of those who initially opposed, teased, or gossiped about the projects later became participants in other projects (for further information on community relations see sections 4.3 and 4.4).

The findings suggest that the surrounding conditions produced several obstacles to women’s participation; however, the benefits, economic or otherwise, that the decision makers perceived made participation possible.

4.2. Organizations, participation, and management

Seven of the 10 implementing organizations were local NGOs (four associations, one cooperative, and two professional organizations), and three were public organizations (one people’s training center and two municipalities). Only two had some experience in implementation from a gender perspective while one had some knowledge of EU procedures. The lack of knowledge and experience of organizations were identified initially (Açıklan 2005), but the information support was provided for EU procedures not for gender and development issues.

Only one organization consulted potential beneficiaries at the design stage. Three projects were based on the observations of local female professionals. The rest were based on the views of non-local professionals. This finding suggests that there was a gender and managerial hierarchy hidden in the design of projects.

The fact that many beneficiaries did not know the name of the implementing organization, what the organization gained through the project or who the real “boss” was further indicates that the beneficiaries remained marginal to the management. Nevertheless, the beneficiaries found their contributions “important and enjoyable”: they identified responsible persons for certain tasks in the training-socialization, child care, and agricultural greenhouse projects (e.g., relating daily news to the others, cleaning/tidying up the venue, distributing tea, checking daily attendance, etc.). Consultation was

systematic in all the projects only in deciding on the training hours. However, the managers were responsive to the observed and expressed needs of the beneficiaries and their requests for participation, which yielded ad hoc revisions in nine projects: opening literacy courses, having mixed-gender activities for fun, a brief computer course, talking to parents against arranged marriage, brief sessions on health and rights issues, going to picnics, getting basic mathematics lessons, rearranging the shuttle bus stops, modifying the food menu, adjusting the timing and location of tea or lunch breaks, identifying the working group members, and standing in a greenhouse to market produce.

The interviews indicate that all popular managers-trainers behaved similarly as patrons of the projects: they explained repeatedly that “everybody was equal in discussions”, and did not “allow” politics and gossip about other participants. The interactions turned into exercises in “freedom of speech under the supervision of a referee”, stated a trainer since “the culture required” them “to act as referees and neutralizers”, which all beneficiaries reported as a positive approach. Establishing a “code of conduct” was complemented with a “human touch” (e.g., singing for or reading books to the beneficiaries during the breaks). The beneficiaries noted that they appreciated all these and remembered the pieces of advice: how things were supposed to be done in a workplace, people’s common characteristics, the ways to become a good person, the importance of continuous learning, and how to avoid becoming a second wife. The beneficiaries reported also that poverty, neighborhood gossip, and ordinary problems related to health or family were shared with everyone, but those related to domestic violence, financial problems, criminality, and boyfriends were shared only with trusted friends and the managers-trainers.

The women were generally “peaceful” according to the managers-trainers; problems were usually about “petty issues” (e.g., who does a certain job, often comes late or takes a leave, does not clean the venue properly, or sits in the front seat of the shuttle bus or near the heater). All participants stated that problems were resolved easily with the mediation of a manager-trainer or friend. According to the beneficiaries, solidarity was common in finishing jobs, giving advice, and supporting each other against neighborhood gossip. The findings indicate that the best social atmosphere was developed in the training-socialization project implemented in a poor rural neighborhood of a small-town: they called up those who did not show up, volunteered to help those who were sick, and shared their lunch with a beneficiary who was not provided food by the first wife of her husband. Their relations, however, did not stay close after the project ended, as has happened in most of the projects, implying that social relations were usually limited to close relatives and neighbors.

The problems turned out to be conflicts in the social-kilim and child care projects implemented in the same poor urban neighborhood, whose dwellers

were forced migrants. A manager reflected on an aspect of the conflicts: “If the family is powerful, it oppresses the others. This ideology is internalized by the women”. In this case, the sources of power were “wealth, which means being able to buy bread instead of making it or having a television”, being beautiful or skilful. In other cases the situation did not seem to be much different, as the beneficiaries reported: ethnic origin, having a different Kurdish dialect, not being able to read and write properly, being overweight, or coming from another neighborhood were among the issues that caused teasing. Additionally, as all urban participants observed, those who were “relaxed”, had boyfriends, or dressed “openly” were usually subjected to gossip even though intra-beneficiary gossip was not “allowed” (i.e., not formally legitimate). A manager explained that the ideology of “honor and shame” was an important source of gossip and division, and that discrimination and punishment were part of the community culture.

Another important aspect of the conflicts came up in the comment of a young woman who was one of the leaders in the conflicts: “I feel being urged to challenge a patronizing person”. She was pointing out her approach in general (exemplifying it with her divorce), which was also applicable in the project. This statement might signify a search for power through recognition. Similarly, several beneficiaries noted that the elders or married ones wanted to be consulted if the subject was familiar; otherwise, they were trying to adjust to the young if they did not want to be teased or ignored. Particularly achievement became a source of power; the beneficiaries developed a sort of competition for “fun”: “who could finish a job faster and better”. Although manageable, the beneficiaries reported that this sometimes produced jealousy: those who expressed themselves better and established relations with the trainers more easily were challenged by the others.

The findings suggest that partial participation was adopted but improved in the process. Unequal power relations were part of the culture shared both by manager-trainers and beneficiaries. Both sides expected that the manager-trainers were to be “good patriarchs”, i.e., to be understanding, giving, protecting, preaching, and mediating persons; in return they received loyalty and obedience from the beneficiaries. Internally, for the beneficiaries, power was controlling the body, thoughts, and behavior of others, and was practiced through gossip, patronage, discrimination, and teasing. This was a replication of how they were treated in their communities except for physical violence (see below). However, in a background where surrounding circumstances have been changing, the projects provided a space with different rules (including the positioning of individuals) in which age, wealth, or other hierarchies could be challenged. The manager-trainers tried to avoid the unequal intra-beneficiary relationships without questioning the manager/managed hierarchy. Although

their approach prevented the beneficiaries from paralyzing the projects, their assumed or real technical knowledge and experience provided them with a power legitimated by the practice of both sides (see section 4.4 for further evidence).

4.3. Results and effects

Direct effects related to the content of the training

The findings indicate that the effectiveness of the courses increased depending on the duration of courses and repetition of subjects, the quality and interest of the trainers, and the interest and experience of the beneficiaries. Skillful and interested trainers took the beneficiaries' previous knowledge, age, as well as existing needs and conditions into consideration.

The literacy courses received high appreciation from the beneficiaries. Although only half of them reported that they could read "quite well", and writing and basic mathematics skills improved little, they were able to send mobile phone messages, read bus signs, sign papers, and go shopping without help. Personal information was remembered better about health issues, e.g., menstruation and the puberty period for younger girls, and pregnancy, giving birth, child care, and family relations for others. According to those who identified themselves as "mothers" in two projects which covered family relations, "the most important result was learning how to show care, love, and tenderness to children", specified as not beating children, show interest in their psychology and homework, etc. A middle-aged woman from the training-socialization project explained that she became friends with her children and stopped fighting with her husband. The children became a controlling factor for them to behave better. She shared her experiences with her husband, who went to the men's (gender awareness) meeting and started to value her better. However, "things remained the same" for those whose family members were not involved in similar interactions.

Skills training produced enduring results. Kilim weaving was the least useful activity for those who already had this skill although all beneficiaries received certificates that documented their skills as a step towards becoming certified trainers. Most of them were employed in other workshops after the projects were completed. All the greenhouse trainees reported that they used their newly acquired skills for household production and marketing. Girls particularly reported delight at being called for advice or help in setting up greenhouses. Vegetable preservation techniques were learned efficiently in the social greenhouse project, which combined training on production skills with home economics. The animal husbandry trainees also reported that they were practicing what they had learned, but the new knowledge on organizations was

useless (for the reasons cited below). The entrepreneurship project trainees recalled the content of the courses although only two started their own businesses; others were engaged in home-based commerce while many were still searching for opportunities. There were plenty of employment opportunities for the skilled child care workers, and some of them had already started working. In half of the 10 projects, the women earned income from daily allowances, per square meter of weaving, the jobs they had found, and the products they sold.

Indirect impacts

The indirect impacts of the projects were outstanding; most of the women reported that they felt highly satisfied and enjoyed the activities. A politically active young beneficiary from a semi-rural district observed: “those who noticed their problems were eager to learn, the others rushed home for domestic work”. A middle-aged woman from the same settlement who overcame her depression during the project said, “Women feel so squeezed that they just want a chance to get out of the home”. In fact, isolation was a common problem: “going out without having a good reason, like working or attending a course, causes gossip”, according to a city girl. All beneficiaries noted that the most important reason for satisfaction was the social life: being in a different environment, meeting new people, developing friendships, exchanging ideas, and being occupied with different things.

The findings indicate that interactions on all possible occasions, as well as gaining literacy and other skills, helped to improve the women’s self-confidence in relation to numerous aspects of life. The first aspect was learning how to do things: “Nothing is like before... I learned how to get somewhere”. Many women devalued domestic work and felt valued by learning an income-generating skill: “It gave me the feeling of standing on my own feet, a feeling that I could also achieve things”. “I expanded my horizon”. “I showed [by joining the project] that I was different, that I was not ordinary”. The second aspect was to understand people and “to differentiate the good people from the bad”. “In the past, I did not talk to anybody; my life has become normal. I used to cry due to the bad treatment [I get at home]; now I consider those people [who treated me badly] as ignorant”. The third aspect was acquiring self-knowledge: “It is important to learn when you can tackle certain things yourself and when you should take the advice of a wiser person”. The fourth aspect was about communication skills: “I was too shy to ask a question, to express my wishes. My anxiety of making mistakes has disappeared”. “My relations with friends changed; I learned to behave more respectfully, talk nicely”. A few women also had family members whose views on women changed: parents who

started to trust their daughter or a brother who stopped teasing his sister for being illiterate.

Earning money was very important for those who had the opportunity to do so: “You cannot imagine how difficult it is to tell your mother or even sometimes your father to buy underwear, bra or pads, or to tell them that you really want to buy this or that”. Most of them reported that they spent the money they earned both for themselves and their family. Daily allowances became “bribes” for the mothers-in-law to not beat the women or for the husbands to let them join in the projects. The money earners noted that they learned how to open bank accounts and to wait in a queue to withdraw money. Only two, however, were still using their accounts although there were six others who continued working.

Rights and organized action

Training on women’s rights produced “somehow” important results. Many participants could recall that they had several rights by referring to the trainers’ words: “do not let others oppress you” or “have courage to raise a complaint if you were beaten”. The best recollection was recorded in the child care project, in which women’s human rights were taught by experts for sixteen weeks although the findings suggested that the women’s levels of interest, relations, and experiences made a difference. All beneficiaries noted that the “bad things” (i.e., domestic violence) happening in their lives were communicated: “When you understand that others also experience similar problems, you feel less pity for yourself”. The actual practice was challenging: a woman resisted her arranged marriage whereas another did not. Some aspects of rights were brought up in unplanned ways: The beneficiaries of the child care project appealed to the municipality for garbage collection. Similarly, a trainer from the social greenhouse project implemented in a neighboring settlement noted, “They did not know the phone number of the health house or avoided getting vaccination [based on the propaganda that it causes sterility]; now they think that the provision of health services and garbage collection are among their citizens’ rights”.

The beneficiaries also understood that organized action might be beneficial for them, but they did not know how to go about it. Organized action was an objective in two projects: Self-help groups were supposed to be established in the social greenhouse project, but these were not achieved due to the inexperience and workload of the field staff. The issue did not seem to be connected to the daily lives of the village women in the animal husbandry and rural organization projects. This was because the beneficiaries thought “management is a man’s job” and the project was not aimed at raising

awareness among women. Although organized action was not an objective in other projects it was repeatedly brought up in four of them. The beneficiaries of the entrepreneurship project recalled most of the information provided although a few remembered about the available opportunities for funding. Women's initiatives for starting businesses remained at an individual level depending on the money or courage each one had. In the child care and social-kilim projects, women were trapped in their community culture of conflict, so the beneficiaries foresaw little hope for a long-lasting organized action towards doing business although they raised their voices collectively for garbage collection and against being paid a few liras less to cover the loss caused by exchange rates. In the training-socialization project, the insistent advice of the trainer yielded individual attempts to get funding, and the beneficiaries reported that they were ready to participate if the trainer took the initiative towards organized action. In the tourism-kilim project, the coordinator established a cooperative, and thirteen beneficiaries became members. In the training-consultation and entrepreneurship projects, the coordinators' attempts at establishing women's associations were put on hold due to their busy schedule whereby their beneficiaries were not involved in these activities.

4.4. Looking Ahead: Problems areas, dreams, and project ideas

The problems reported by the beneficiaries were poverty, illiteracy, community-family pressure (including an isolated life and exclusion from decisions), family relations (including domestic violence), and insufficient infrastructure (water, environmental hygiene, health and education services). The preferred solutions started with employment opportunities for themselves (if the husbands agree) and for their family members. Almost all single women dreamed of a marriage based on love, care, and respect, but some of them considered marriage secondary because "men would not change or would become oppressive after marriage". Some single women wanted to "stand on their own feet", and a few stated that they could do this if they truly tried it. The married women wished that men would change, but most of them were not hopeful about that; their hope was more about their children.

According to all beneficiaries, a project should serve to get women out of the home. Literacy and basic mathematics courses should either be repeated or a second phase be given. Health information, and legal and psychological consultations should continue for the married women, but training should also be provided for their children and husbands. The young women demanded days for listening to their problems or going to picnics, implying that they wanted to be recognized individually and with respect. Income-generating activities

should also continue. The women in the entrepreneurship project requested financial and technical support, feasibility studies, and detailed accountancy and tourism skills. Some of them wanted projects to help others (e.g., handicapped people, victims of domestic violence). Longer duration of projects, as well as better communicative ability and higher interest from trainers were also requested.

These findings suggest that the beneficiaries perceived their household needs (e.g., income generating activities and family relations), on the one hand, in relation to social and technical infrastructure of their settlements, and on the other hand, to social and personal needs (e.g., health, socialization, literacy, etc.).

The project ideas of the managers-trainers also indicated that the income-generating needs should be incorporated with other needs so that projects could provide opportunities for economic and social independence. Specific revisions were suggested in the design: that money be earned not through a daily allowance but through the production of goods and services, that the goods produced be marketed, that the means of production be distributed (e.g., fruit nurseries), that women be involved in pre- and post-production processes (e.g., promotion, marketing, reporting, etc.), that the workplace be better arranged, that producers be insured, that trainers be carefully selected, that parents and husbands be involved in the projects through varying activities, that psychological consultations be systematic, and that study tours be included. All managers-trainers wanted to receive training on development, participation, and gender issues.

Willingness, capabilities, and permissions

The projects offered no systematic information on design and implementation because the managers thought that such initiatives were beyond their own or the beneficiaries' capacity, or that the issue was beyond the scope of the project. Almost all the beneficiaries wanted to learn more and to participate actively in new projects.

All beneficiaries thought that if they were to engage in projects, they would need technical and social assistance or supervision due to their inexperience and lack of respect for each other: "Women here are like children; they do not know how to do things together... They would oppose each other." Backlashes were expected: "I wanted to continue learning more, but my father said I had already learned enough". If sisters-in-law would not attend or if projects would not provide daily allowance, getting a new batch of participants might be impossible. Apparently, values were not suitable: "People despise learning in here", and community pressure was a concern:

“Women would feel pressured by ‘what would others think’; plenty of women should be involved ... We should get the men’s permission. My husband is the most open-minded man around here, but even he would oppose if we exclude men”.

Against this general situation, there were assertive voices: in one of the neighborhoods of forced migrants, where some young women had not even seen the city center before the project, a young woman stated that men would allow them to go, but “even if they do not, we should go”. Another one from the same neighborhood thought similarly:

“It was like the village [from which they were forced to move out] was installed in here [but it has changed now]. We bring the women here [to the community center] during their spare time, when they are not being beaten or doing domestic work; they have changed a lot. Girls particularly influence each other very much”.

This woman attended several development projects, became a distant-learning student in primary school, and wanted to be a teacher “whatever it takes”. She worked as the caretaker of the children in the community center and joined a protest against honor killings although this was a “scary experience”.

In another conservative district where identity politics was more influential on daily life, a middle-aged woman thought obtaining the men’s permission would not be a problem, particularly for “the peace mothers” (who were engaged in ethnic politics). It seemed that political or economic activities provided opportunities as long as women accommodated the dominating figures: “If you change the way of contributing to development beyond what they [the mainstream view holders] could imagine, you would be considered weird” said a woman, who considered herself strong but marginal in an impoverished district where ethnic politics was dominant. However, there seem to be inroads if one dares to use them: a young woman from another district explained that she and her friends were using the opportunities provided by the Party engaged in ethnic politics to organize solidarity among women.

The manager-trainers shared the opinion that the women would not respect each other if they were left alone. According to them, a culture of collective action was needed; their dreams were more individualistic, such as opening a small shop for selling goods or becoming a worker in a doctor’s office. There were “some bright women who could be trained” if they were “less in number and motivated to learn.” They could start with learning how to use a computer, write reports, purchase things, organize activities under the supervision of an expert. There were high expectations in the tourism-kilim project that the cooperative’s members would become more active, such as a girl who would become the secretary in a project set to start soon.

Perceptions of gender equality

The majority of the beneficiaries believed that women were equal to men, but the men did not believe so. All but one thought it was the men's understanding that counted. It was still a requirement "to ask permission of men or elders" in almost everything they did. Half of the women believed they should be accompanied by someone when they go out of their home even after obtaining permission to leave. A young single woman, who had quite liberal ideas on gender equality, noted: "I would be concerned if neighbors saw me walking around the shopping area alone... I live for my honor." Although this was not just how it was but also how it should be for many of them, the content of "how it should be" has been transforming: there were mothers who supported their daughters' preferences in marriage, parents who understood the value that daughters attached to their own thinking, women who "consulted" or "informed" their patrons instead of asking permission from them, engaged women who negotiated with their fiancées regarding marriage relations, women who used ethnic politics to reach other women, and fathers who declared proudly that their daughters bought durable goods. Emphasizing the importance of family ties was incorporated in the unmarried young women's conversation about personal needs.

All these seem to be ongoing "patriarchal negotiations"; women were seeking family protection or recognition while doing "non-traditional" things (e.g., working out of the home/neighborhood, earning money, being with strangers, etc.) that were beneficial to themselves, the family (e.g., contributing to the family budget or taking care of sick family members) or the community (e.g., engaging in identity politics). In a way, the female residents of some marginal areas in Turkey seem to be finding out their ways and struggling to establish a model that the Republic intended to establish.

According to the manager-trainers, the beneficiaries changed considerably: their self-recognition and self-esteem improved; they started to see that they were vital for household management, and the knowledge they acquired and money they earned empowered them by creating new roles at home or in the community. They also observed that the change in single women was more significant than in those who were married, and that the single ones also had more chances to avail of opportunities. However, were the changes sustainable, or did they indicate something more than "coping strategies?" The coordinator of the social-kilim project stated:

"They seem to be one step ahead of their mothers but what they want to be is different from what they are. They shift from one personality at home to another after they get into the shuttle bus [to come to the workshop]... Their change brings conflicts into their families... I am not very hopeful that they can overcome the pressure by themselves; the

overall social structure is important, their prospective husbands and their families are important.”

The informal assistant of this project reflects further on the issue:

“The father has three wives. She thinks that this is her destiny too... Girls are accused when they are harassed, threatened or raped... So they do not complain. The vicious circle of the tribal system, patron-client relations, and hypocrisy should change to get the women to breathe. The key issue is not the cultural-political identity... (it is) helplessness, uncertainty, and having no control over their own lives. Maybe for this reason they like soap operas... they see themselves and hope... If they come here [the café next to the kilim workshop] with their husbands, then I would think that something has started to change... Of course things have already changed; we made them into modern women having self-confidence and waiting for proper husbands!”

4.5. Evaluation of Projects

All sampled projects combined the social welfare and empowerment approaches with varying emphases: income-generating projects focused more on the empowerment aspect whereas training-consultation-socialization projects focused more on the social welfare aspect. The outcomes included improved socialization, self-expression and self-esteem, better family relations and child care, useful health information and services (check ups, vaccination), initial ideas on women’s human and citizen rights, improved literacy and skills, access to means of production, employment and business start-ups, prospects for organized action, and application for funds. The equality approach was at best reduced to employment: poverty alleviation, organized action, and full participation were inadequate.

The women’s labor-relations-identity and the characteristics of the learning process were effective. Five factors specifically affected the likelihood of getting empowerment impacts: (a) the variety and content of activities; (b) the knowledge, experience, awareness, and ideology of the managers-trainers; (c) the time spent on every subject to allow repetition of new issues; (d) the level and type of participation - interactions and utilization of space; and (e) the practical use of information in the beneficiary’s life and her interest in learning. The training-socialization project, for instance, was designed as a social welfare project yet produced empowerment impacts on married women by working on these factors carefully whereas an income-generating skills project (animal husbandry and rural organization), which was designed as an empowerment project, produced little empowerment effects because it failed to consider these factors adequately.

Favorable external conditions balanced unfavorable internal conditions: A comparison of two types of beneficiaries in two different training-

consultation-socialization projects, which both failed to consider more than one of the factors noted above, suggest that women who had previous knowledge/experience and were socially and politically active became more motivated, capable of learning and empowering themselves.

The issues of project management, participation, gender, and EU procedures were new areas for most of the organizations and their employees. A trial-and-error process developed in a patriarchal context based on the managers-trainers' enthusiasm and goodwill. The unexpressed consensus on partial participation (the managerial style) between the managers-trainers and the beneficiaries was an outcome of the culture they shared and the difficulty they faced in dealing with unaccustomed experiences. The managerial approach was revised to resolve practical problems, thanks partly to the beneficiaries' improving (but still partial) participation and partly to the managers-trainers' responsiveness to the women's needs. The beneficiaries could not establish hierarchy and authority within themselves but did not obtain much awareness either about alternative ways of collective action. They became more dependent on the supervision of the managers-trainers with regard to initiating organized action for the continuation of their endeavors. Opportunities for moving towards a better style of participation, management, and organized action were prevented by insufficient time, unsuitable societal relations, the absence of conceptual-practical support, and inadequate experience.

Overall, a positional change was achieved individually in rare cases depending on the women's previous experiences and current relationships. The level of information that was provided and acquired, the level of participation, and the willingness to take collective initiatives remained inadequate to transform the circumstances surrounding gender relations. Nonetheless, the process was successful in generating a need among all the participants that the beneficiaries could use an autonomous space cautiously to improve their conditions in an integrated manner.

Conclusion

Women utilized benefits most in the EADP projects that targeted them while gender inequality was reinforced in other projects: the fact that 11% of EADP projects targeted women can be considered as a reinforcement of gender inequalities whereas the finding that 24% of the beneficiaries and 24% of the staff were women reflected a significant departure from the region's social reality.

Thus, the first relevant question could be why no more than 11% of projects targeted women. The answer lies in the design of the Programme. Firstly, it was superficial in addressing poverty and gender. Secondly, women were not identified as a target group for the Programme; only one of four

components targeted women. Patriarchy, as part of the culture, seemed to be effective on the approaches to women throughout the EADP environment. Thirdly, organized action was not set up as an area that needed capacity-building support for achieving the active participation of vulnerable groups in the Grant Scheme Projects. The inadequate number and capacity of NGOs to implement gender-oriented development projects were overlooked. Hence, if the main question is whether women's position has changed in the gender hierarchy or whether women have been empowered enough to be able to break down this hierarchy, then the answer must be negative. The Programme did not properly satisfy the EU rhetoric, which is pro-women and pro-poor. As such, all institutions could serve to reinforce inequalities regardless of their intentions when the inequalities are not addressed clearly in program designs and implementation.

The second question for evaluation could relate to what happened with the projects that specifically targeted women. Empowerment was achieved to a certain extent and social welfare to a greater extent. The empowerment-social welfare combination engendered positive outcomes, but structural change in gender equality was not accomplished. The women's co-optation capabilities within the patriarchy increased; they learned more about their rights and felt more capable of negotiating with patriarchs. In other words, the content or level of the women's changing power remained largely within the framework of patriarchal negotiations, but it was influenced by the changing relationships between the social structure and the agency, which varied in each local setting. The women's perceptions of themselves, their demands from men or their daughters, as well as their ways of handling some gender issues started to change. There are signs that they could transform their lives provided there are more opportunities covering several aspects of their lives for longer periods. Sustainability, however, remains a fragile issue since the EADP allotted only one year for project implementation while demanding sustainable results (even social transformation) from the beneficiaries. Moreover, the organizational capacities of women were not enhanced although the NGOs accumulated considerable experience and knowledge. Lastly, the gender perception changed little, partly because there was almost no inclusion of men or families in many of the projects.

These issues indicate that an isolationist perspective was adopted and that this was coupled with participation problems. By isolation, two characteristics are referred to. Firstly, change was assumed to be an individualistic capability, so organized action was not acknowledged as vital for achieving development. Secondly, an oppressed group was assumed to transform the larger society if its members have transformed themselves; thus, changes in men and family were either neglected or left to the women's action. The lack of a relational

perspective appeared as a significant downside of the empowerment approach in achieving sustainable transformation in the sociocultural structure.

The connection of these issues to the types of participation pinpoints another pitfall of the empowerment approach (as well as the social welfare approach), which is the lack of a political perspective. Participation, if practiced actively and in all aspects of a project, requires the provision of all relevant information and capacities to the beneficiaries, which by definition means an efficient organized action with the cooperation of related bodies. Partial participation, meaning the inadequate provision of information and capacities, goes hand in hand with a lack of a relational perspective. The alternative solution could be to locate women in networks that will transform their lives while putting other significant people into the transformation process to obtain their cooperation, although this could generate conflict as well. This makes a project political in nature, which may keep many people away from it. Without this political perspective, however, the project is more likely to reproduce gender inequalities, as the patriarchal order of society would remain intact.

Overall, the EADP experience shows that grant projects become useful when women from different orientations come together to work on their daily problems, rights, skills, etc. The outcomes are more likely to be sustained when the projects incorporate social welfare-empowerment-equality approaches with a vision of changing gender and poverty structures. “Increased interaction around common problems” has a *potential* to erode “the dichotomized boundaries that fragment women” *if* the interaction discloses the patriarchal nature of existing discourses, as feminism intends to achieve by defining “women’s identities from within their own experiences” rather than identifying “a role for women within a wider political agenda” (Ertürk, 2006: 102, 95). The findings indicate, firstly, that this is a difficult task when there is no capacity-building component to support the participants on the issues of gender, participation, and development, and when feminists end up working silently in reaching out to women. Secondly, NGOs become useful when they work on unorganized local women’s needs and support them in building their own capacities in all aspects of life. Being organized in formal groups is not as important as expanding networks locally, nationally, and globally to enhance skills and become stakeholders in policy making and implementation. The findings suggest that networking is at a preliminary stage and needs more resources to improve. Thirdly, a critical-ethical perspective focused on equalities is essential for all female participants, NGOs, sponsors, and other actors to reach the intended and institutional success. Merely result-oriented (versus process-oriented) managerial approaches are an obstacle towards this goal.

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