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Women within Development Projects

The Case of Turkey Local Agenda 21 Program

Simla Yavaş

Abstract

Theoretical frameworks of women in development (WID), gender and development (GAD) and Empowerment have influenced the discourses and practices of development projects on women's participation since the 1970s. The main concern has been whether development projects' inclusion of women can promote gender equality and women's empowerment rather than participation of women in numbers. In this study, I analyze this debate with the case of Turkey Local Agenda 21 (LA-21) Program. The analysis explores the Program's role on women's participation to promote gender equality and women's empowerment based on the theoretical approaches. It shows how practices and discourses of the Program on women's participation have been influenced from the interaction among global, national and local contexts. It concludes that the Program, having both WID and GAD components, has the potential to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through women's participation.

Key words: Women's participation, development projects, women's empowerment, gender equality, Turkey LA-21 Program, women's councils, WID, GAD, empowerment approach.

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Abbreviations

EU: European Union

GAD: Gender and Development

GDLA: General Directorate of Local Authorities

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

HDI: Human Development Index

IMF: International Monetary Fund

IULA-EMME: International Union of Local Authorities- Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East Region

LA-21: Local Agenda 21

MDGs: Millennium Development Goals

OECD: Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development

SAPs: Structural Adjustment Programs

UCLG-MEWA: United Cities Local Governments- Middle East West Asia Section

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

WAD: Women and Development

WID: Women in Development

WB: World Bank

WEF: World Economic Forum

WSSD: World Summit on Sustainable Development

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1. Introduction

Discourses and practices of development programs on women's participation has been a dynamic process influenced by intersections of development and feminist theories for the last three decades. Before the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), it was assumed that both men and women benefit equally from the development projects but most of the time these projects were gender biased (Karl, 1995: 94). However, the development discourse and practices have started to be challenged with awareness-raising on the gender issues. Beginning from the mid-1970s, the discourse integrating women in development plans and projects gained considerable attention. In addition, theoretical frameworks such as Women in Development (WID), Gender and Development (GAD) and Empowerment Approaches brought new visions in discourse and implementations of mainstream development projects. Therefore, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment has been an integral part of the development objectives for many development agencies. Even for development projects that do not directly aim to promote gender equality and women's empowerment; people started to recognize women's participation and implement special activities for women. However, the main issue becomes whether development projects that involve women's participation can promote gender equality and women's empowerment rather than integrating women only in numbers. Therefore the concern is women's participation that goes beyond the participation in numbers.

1.1. The Aim of the Study and the Research Questions

This study aims to *explore the role of development projects on participation of women to promote gender equality and women's empowerment*. For this aim, I analyze Turkey Local Agenda 21 (LA-21) Program, a sustainable development project, has been conducted since 1997. Although the aim of this program is to localize sustainable development through promoting democratic and participatory governance, it recognizes women as a target group organizing special participatory mechanism and activities for women. In this case study, I analyze *whether Turkey Local Agenda 21 Program including women's participation promotes gender equality and women's empowerment*. Thus, this question includes following related sub-questions:

- How does Turkey LA-21 Program promote women's participation?

- Which theoretical approach (WID, GAD or Empowerment) does Turkey LA-21 program adopt in discourse and practice for women's participation?
- Whether women's participation in the program can promote gender equality and women's empowerment?

I analyze the Program with the theoretical frameworks of WID, GAD and Empowerment. Based on theoretical discussions, my argument is that development projects have the potential to promote gender equality and women's empowerment through women's participation when they adopt and implement GAD and Empowerment Approach rather than WID approach. GAD and Empowerment Approaches emphasize the meeting of strategic gender need of women (gender equality and women's empowerment) while WID focus on meeting the practical gender needs of women (employment, health, education etc.). Thus, the issue of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment is assessed with GAD and Empowerment approaches in this study. On the other hand, the use of GAD and Empowerment is critiqued since the development programs can adopt them only in their discourse rather than in practice or they can interpret and adopt GAD and Empowerment different from feminists' arguments. Therefore, in depth analysis of the case study is necessary to understand whether the program promotes women's empowerment and gender equality through women's participation.

1.2. Literature Review

There are various studies and research on the women, gender and development field which I benefit for my research. Among these studies, I mention only the ones I used most for my study since I give references to all throughout the study. I benefit most from Moser's book (1993) 'Gender Planning and Development' in which she discusses the features of WID, GAD and Empowerment with the integration of strategic and practical gender needs. It constitutes the backbone of my theory and analysis chapter. In addition, Karl's book (1995) on women and empowerment provides discussion on participation of women in development projects. The edited book of Parpart, Connelly and Barriteau (2000) entitled 'Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development' provides valuable knowledge about the theories I

used in my research. In addition Kabeer's study (2002) on empowerment is useful to see different aspects of empowerment.

In addition, I use the studies on development and women's issues in Turkey. For instance, İlkkaracan's (2007) article on 'Women, Gender and Development Discourses and Practices in Turkey' and Sancar and Bulut's (2006) 'Gender Profile in Turkey' are very useful for my context chapter and provide background information for the case. In addition some theses on issue in Turkey allow me to see what has been done in the field so far and how I contribute to it with my study. For instance, Özgüler's thesis (2007) on '*Looking to Development Projects in Turkey from Empowerment Approach*' is a similar study with mine. She focuses on two local projects in 'Zümrüt Kastamonu' and 'Tunceli-Ovacık' and analyzes and compares them with empowerment approach. Differently, I select a nation-wide 10 years development program that intersects with global, national and local levels. Therefore, my study also contributes to see how global discourses on the issue influence and also be shaped by national and local contexts.

In addition, I benefit from writings on Turkey LA-21 Program. These studies provide useful information about the program which I mention as a secondary source for my analysis in the research design chapter. However, there is not any academic study on gender aspects of Turkey LA-21 Program. There is only an evaluation report on the Program with its impact on gender equality prepared by Tokman and Bora in 2006 at the request of UNDP. It is the only direct previous study on my topic that is a beneficial source for me. However, it provides limited analysis since it only covers the third phase of the project investigating only national level and it is in a report format without theoretical perspectives. Therefore, my study can contribute to evaluate the Program on women's participation from a theoretically informed perspective.

1.3. Outline of the Study

After the introduction chapter; chapter 2 gives information on the research design including methodology and the methods used in the research. Chapter 3 explains the theoretical frameworks in women, gender and development field and gives insights into each theoretical approach. Chapter 4 covers the context of Turkey in relation to development and women. This

contextual background provides better understanding of the importance of the issue in Turkey. Chapter 5 gives background historical information on the global origins of the Turkey LA-21 Program. This information enables us to grasp the global level discourse on the issue. Chapter 6 includes the analysis of Turkey LA-21 Program with relation to women's participation. Analysis part is divided into three sections: general information on Turkey LA-21 Program, the analysis of the each project phase and the analysis of women's activities of the Program. Finally, chapter 7 covers the conclusions of the study and reveals the answers to the research question with the discussion on the results of the analysis.

2. Research Design

2.1. Methodology and the Methods

Methodology refers to an overall strategy to study research topics. It includes the whole process of methods of data collection and data analysis and governs which methods are used and how they are used (Silverman, 2005:109). In this study, I use the qualitative approach to answer the research question. The main features of qualitative research include a variety of methods and approaches and analysis of different perspectives (Flick, 2006: 14). The core criteria in qualitative research are whether the methods are appropriately chosen and applied as well as relevance of the findings and reflexivity of proceedings. Thus, qualitative approach provides the use of a large range of evidence for this study.

2.1.1. Case Study Method

Among variety of the strategies within qualitative research, I use the case study method that enables me to explore in depth a program, a process or an event (Creswell, 2003:15). I select Turkey LA-21 Program as a case study that provides in depth knowledge about the topic. There are various reasons why I chose Turkey LA-21 Program as a case study. First of all, it is a well known, long-term sustainable development project applied in Turkey with partnerships of different governmental and non-governmental organization and local authorities. Second, the Program has global, national and local levels giving the opportunity to grasp the interaction among these three levels. In addition, although the aim of the program is to enhance participatory local governance to promote sustainable development at local

level, it has special emphasis on the participation of women which provides an illustration to discuss the role of the program. Thus, it enables me to examine how a mainstream development program integrates women and whether this integration facilitates gender equality and women's empowerment.

In addition, I am personally interested in the Program and worked for two years in the national coordination unit of the Program (UCLG-MEWA); one year as a LA-21 Program Expert and another year as a LA-21 Women's Activities Facilitator. This work experience had been the motivation behind my master's study in development field. Moreover, working on women's issues within a development program increased my concern with the gender and development area. My experience and practical knowledge resulted in a desire to transform them into an academic study and understand the issue with theoretical perspectives. Finally, my personal experience and easy access to the empirical data played important role on choosing this topic for my thesis.

In order to conduct a high quality case study, using sources of evidence are necessary (Yin, 2003:85). Among an extensive list of sources; I use documents and their analysis as a method. Like other methods in qualitative research, documents and their analysis can be used as either a complimentary strategy to other methods or as a stand-alone method (Flick, 2006:246). When it is the only method used in the research, the research relies on the reality of the data that is documented (Ibid). Thus, I select the documents according to the four criteria that Scott (in Flick, 2006: 146) argues. These are authenticity (genuine), representativeness, meaning (clear and comprehensive) and credibility (without error). I selected the documents written by the coordination unit of the Program as primary sources taking into account these criteria. I use the project documents, progress reports, terminal reports of the project phases of the Program and the national meeting reports and working group meeting reports of women's councils. National Coordination Unit of the Program (UCLG-MEWA) and the partner organization UNDP provided these documents about the program. Moreover, official web site of the Program (www.kentkonseyleri.net, formerly www.la21turkey.net) has been the useful source for my research.

I use documents and their analysis as my major method but I also benefit from secondary sources on the topic. I benefit from an evaluation report of the third phase of the program entitled 'Evaluation of Turkey's LA-21 Program within the context of Gender Equality and Women's Participation in Local Decision Making' written by Tokman and Bora in 2006 as a

secondary source that I mention in literature review. In addition, the books of Emrealp (National Coordinator of the Program) on Turkey LA-21 Program and City Councils are the useful secondary sources as well as Göymen's article¹ on the Program.

Analysis of the case study includes two ways. First is the analysis of the project phases of the Turkey LA-21 Program with relation to women's participation; the second is the analysis of the women's activities within the context of the Program. Indeed, I analyze the women's activities in two levels including local activities of women's councils and national activities of women's councils. In the analysis of project phases with relation to gender/women, I use the project reports and the web-site of the program. For the analysis of women's activities, I use reports of meetings of women's councils, the results of the survey² conducted by the Program, project documents, women's projects under the Supporting Local Project Program, the web-site of the Program and the secondary sources that I mentioned.

2.2. Limitations of the Research

Despite the advantages of the case study method, it is not useful to make generalizations on the topic (Donmoyer, 2000). I cannot generalize the results of the case but my aim is to understand the case without making any generalizations. On the other hand, when the case is described properly, readers can make generalization to a similar case so readers may establish naturalistic generalization between similar cases (Stake, 2000: 23).

Since I use the documents as data, I have to rely on the reality of the information that is documented. In order to avoid bias, I take into account the context in which the document is produced, the function and the use of the documents (Flick, 2006: 252). Since they are institutional reports, there is possibility that documents are produced without mentioning problems and failures. However, the reports I use have a section to inform the other stakeholders and public about the problems. In addition, I also use secondary source on the topic as well as my experience and observations on the case. Along with these methods, other

¹ Göymen K. (2007) 'Promoting Service Delivery through the Implementation of Local Agenda 21 in Turkey', *Innovations in Governance in the Middle East, North Africa and Western Balkans*, New York: United Nations.

² Women's Councils Survey conducted in the fourth phase of the program in 2007 will be used to give information about the structures, functioning of women's councils and relation between city councils and women's councils.

methods (i.e. interview, survey) could have been used as complementary but due to time and financial constraints, I limited my research to these methods.

3. Theoretical Framework

The area of women, gender and development has been the major concern for the last three decades for development agencies (Jaquette and Summerfield, 2006:3). Within this field, how to integrate gender analysis into development programs has become an important debate since 1970s. Although there are different categorizations of the theoretical framework, it can be said that there are three main approaches: women in development (WID), women and development (WAD) and gender and development (GAD) including empowerment approach (Rathgeber in Visvanathan, 1997: 17). The Implementations and institutionalization of these theoretical frameworks by mainstream development programs are the concern of this study. While WAD approach contributed to the field with its critics against WID, it remained limited with its practice by development programs compared to WID and GAD. Therefore, mentioning briefly about WAD, I mainly focus on WID and GAD approaches that dominated the field and applied by the development programs.

In this chapter, I discuss the debates and criticisms of WID, WAD and GAD. The discussion of WID includes three approaches: Equity, Anti-poverty and Efficiency and the analysis of GAD includes Empowerment³ approach. I explain them based on the historical contexts that gave rise to them.

3.1. Women in Development Approach (WID)

WID approach has its roots both in modernization theory and liberal feminism in 1970s. Modernization paradigm dominated the development initiatives based on neoliberal approaches during the post-World War II era. It argues that Western modernization should be the main path for the 'backward' societies to follow in order to be developed (Potter, 2008: 83). However, this approach is criticized for increasing the gaps between poor and rich

³ However some scholars argue empowerment approach as a separate approach (Moser, 1993), some argue it as a concept rather than approach (Datta and Kornberg, 2002; Kabeer 2002 and Parpart, 2008) and others argue it is connected to gender and development approach (Connelly et al, 2000). Being aware of these different views, I analyze empowerment approach under GAD approach as an extension of it but at the same time I focus on its conceptual meaning.

countries (Visvanathan, 1997: 3). Apart from increased gaps, these neoliberal approaches ignored women (Connelly et. al, 2000). It was assumed that development programs were gender neutral and both men and women would benefit equally. Moreover, early development initiatives regarded women as wives and mothers and applied programs related with health, population and fertility for women (Karl, 1995: 94). These initiatives were based on Welfare approach so called pre-WID that is the oldest development approach related with women in 1950s (Moser, 1993: 58). Welfare approach focusing on the reproductive roles of women considers women as passive beneficiaries of development programs (Ibid).

This was the case until Boserup's study '*Women's Role in Economic Development*' in 1970 indicated that women's role in production is essential for economies. She indicated (1980) that development programs led to marginalization of 'Third World' women since they exclude women's labor and offered trainings only to men (Connelly et al, 2000; Jaquette and Staudt, 2006:24; Karl, 1995:94; Visvanathan, 1997: 3). In addition, international women's conferences gave opportunity to feminist activists and scholars to influence the development discourse and practices. In UN international women's decade years between 1976 and 1985, three important UN women's conferences were organized: in Mexico in 1975, in Copenhagen in 1980 and in Nairobi 1985 (Visvanathan, 1997: 3). These conferences raised awareness rising of gender issues in the development field and showed the importance of sex-segregated data on basic indicators. Following these processes, development agencies started to integrate women in development programs. WID offices were established in development agencies and worked on how to integrate women into development (Connelly et al., 2000).

3.1.1. Main Arguments of WID

WID focuses on the women's role in economy and supports the integration of women into development programs. WID shared the same assumption of modernization and liberal feminism⁴ with its emphasis on equal opportunities and women's role in economic growth (Connelly et al., 2000). Moreover, main arguments of WID vary depending on the different approaches within WID. It is beneficial to discuss the main arguments within these approaches. According to Moser (1993: 62), there are three policy approaches within WID:

⁴ Liberal Feminists argue that the cause of gender inequalities is the unequal opportunities (Connelly et al., 2000).

Equity, Anti-Poverty and Efficiency. In order to understand how these approaches meet women's needs, Moser (1993) uses the conceptualizations of practical gender needs and strategic gender needs, developed by Maxime Molyneaux⁵ (1985). Practical gender needs refer to women's daily needs such as education, employment and care services within specific contexts whereas strategic gender needs refer to the women's need to challenge with and overcome their subordinate position and gender inequalities within specific context such as domestic violence and access to legal rights⁶ (Moser, 1993:39-40; Karl, 1995:97).

Moser (1993: 62) argues that 'Equity is the original WID approach introduced during UN Women's Decade' (1976-1985). It aims to achieve gender equality and overcome women's subordinate position (women's strategic needs). Although the focus is on integrating women into the labor market (women's practical needs), gender equality is expected to be achieved through the interventions of development programs and governments of the developing countries (Karl, 1995: 97). However, it was criticized being based on Western feminism and also governments considered it as threatening (Moser, 1993: 63). Therefore this approach has been removed from implementation.

Being the second WID approach, Anti-Poverty focuses on the women's poverty rather than women's subordination (Karl, 1995: 97 and Moser, 1993: 66). In the 70s, dependency school's criticisms and social movements influenced development thinking and led development agencies to work on poverty alleviation and provide basic needs for all (Connelly et al, 2000). In the light of this shift, WID adopted anti-poverty approach. It focuses on women's poverty and attempts to meet practical gender needs of women such as employment through income generating projects (Moser, 1993: 67). These projects usually increased the burden of women. Thus, it seeks to overcome economic inequalities rather than gender inequalities (Ibid).

⁵ For detail information see Molyneaux M. (1985). 'Mobilization without emancipation? Women's interests, the state and revolution in Nicaragua', *Feminist Review*. Vol 11 (2):225-254

⁶ Strategic gender needs challenge with gender roles and the roles associated with women's so it helps to achieve gender equality; practical gender needs, on the other hand, do not challenge with gender roles and sexual division of labor rather they respond to the immediate needs of women related with traditional socially accepted roles of women (Moser, 1993: 39-40) .

In the 1980s, the oil crises resulted in severe problems in many 'Third World' countries and development agencies particularly IMF and World Bank proposed structural adjustment programs (SAPs) as a solution (Connelly et al, 2000). In this environment, WID used Efficiency Approach to increase women's economic participation for efficiency of the economic development (Moser, 1993:69). In efficiency approach, meeting the practical gender needs of women relies on women's multiple duties and responsibilities as well as their tendency to be cheap and flexible labor (Moser, 1993:70).

3.1.2. Main Criticisms to WID

WID is criticized by feminists for its aim to integrate women for the efficiency of economic development. WID's assumption that women could also benefit from economic growth was problematic since it was lack of analysis whether economic growth was enough to solve the gender inequality problems (Barriteau, 2000). Likewise, WID approach did not criticize development programs based on economic priorities nor are these mainly planned by male policy makers with little contribution of women (Karl, 1995: 100). In addition, WID aimed to solve the results of problems such as alleviation of women's poverty rather than causes of the problems such as capitalism and patriarchy (Jaquette and Staudt, 2006:25). Indeed, WID failed to question the causes of the women's subordinate position and explain why women had not been integrated into development before (Visvanathan, 1997: 19). In addition, WID ignored the unpaid domestic labor of women focusing only on their paid labor. While, WID provided women's participation into development programs, it failed to include women's perspectives on programs and policies.

WID provided inclusion of women only through women-specific projects (Karl, 1995: 100). However, women specific projects and units within development agencies had the problem of marginalization of women issues and prevent them from being integrated into the mainstream of development programs (Ibid). It focused on programs that enable women access to resources and improve family welfare together with income generation projects for women (Jaquette and Staudt, 2006:24). For instance, small scale income generating activities related with the tasks which were assumed to be women's such as cooking and sewing maintained the traditional gender roles. It failed to challenge traditional gender roles and increased the workload of women. On the other hand, these activities gathered women together allowing them to improve organizational skills (Karl, 1995: 100).

Southern feminists argued that women integrated into the development projects have been vulnerable since they became the source of cheap labor. In addition some groups of scholars claim that development projects have led to marginalization of women through reducing the economic status of women (Moghadam, 1990:11). Moreover, WID is criticized for regarding women as clients of development programs rather than seeing them as active agents. Another criticism raised by mainly 'Third World' feminists is that WID based on hegemonic western feminism viewed third world women as a homogenous powerless category and ignored the diversities among women in terms of class, race, ethnicity and culture (Mohanty, 2003: 20-23; Mohanty, 1984: 334). Likewise, WID ignored the culture of the host countries in which the projects were implemented (Jaquette and Staudt, 2006:30). It based on a Western development discourse and assumed the superiority of Western institutions (Barriteau, 2000).

All in all, despite the relevant feminist critiques, WID has been the first attempt that made progress in the area of development integrating women into the development discourse and practices. Feminist critiques of WID contributed to the emergence of new approaches giving opportunity for improvement in development discourse and practice.

3.2. Women and Development (WAD)

WAD approach inspired by dependency theory and Marxist feminism in the second half of the 1970s (Visvanathan, 1997:18). Dependency theory argues that the structure of the global economy shapes economic growth, politics and class structure constraining development opportunities in the 'Third World' (Clark & Lemco, 1988: 4). According to the Marxist feminists, capitalist mode of production causes the subordination of women so that gender inequalities are part of capitalist accumulation (Visvanathan, 1997:22). Therefore, based on dependency theory and Marxist feminism, WAD approach emerged as a critique of WID for its failure to recognize the structural factors that maintain gender inequalities (Visvanathan, 1997:18).

The main argument of WAD is that women's roles in both public and private sphere maintain the societal structures and integration of women into development programs which contributes to the reproduction of international structures of inequalities (Ibid). Thus, WAD

assumes that when international structures of inequalities are overcome, women will have better conditions. It focuses on structural change to overcome inequalities rather than the individual based changes (Visvanathan, 1997:22).

Despite its contribution to the women, gender and development field, it has also been criticized. Assuming the main problem of inequalities as structures, WAD ignores the question of gendered power relations and patriarchy. In addition, since it regards both women and men as exploited by structures of class and capitalism, it fails in terms of its analysis on women's subordination (Visvanathan, 1997: 19). Moreover, as Kabeer argues (in Visvanathan, 1997: 22) the 'uncompromising' position of WAD restricted their involvement in mainstream development agenda in addressing women's practical needs.

3.3. Gender and Development (GAD)

The rise of women's grassroots organizations working locally on women's empowerment contributed to the emergence of GAD approach as an alternative to WID and WAD in 1980s (Connelly et al. 2000; Jaquette and Staudt, 2006:30). Unlike WID, GAD approach is based on the contributions of 'Third world' women. These were mainly 'Third World' feminists and DAWN (Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era) that is a network launched during Nairobi International Conference in 1985 consists of southern activists and researchers (Connelly et al, 2000; Karl, 1995:101). In addition to DAWN, socialist feminists also contributed to the emergence of GAD approach. Socialist feminists argue that women's subordination is caused by both material conditions (mainly capitalism) and patriarchal ideology. Therefore, GAD approach recognizes that women's subordination is caused by both capitalist material conditions and patriarchy (Connelly et al, 2000).

3.3.1. Main Arguments of GAD

The aim of GAD is to empower women to challenge gender inequalities (Moffat in Connelly et al. 2000). GAD focuses on gender⁷ in order to emphasize women's subordinate position instead of focusing on just women as WID and WAD did. For GAD socially constructed

⁷ Gender is socially constructed category and socially defined roles of men and women (Karl, 1995:102).

relations between women and men are the central issue of investigation (Connelly et al, 2000; Visvanathan, 1997:19). GAD argues that focusing on women in isolation means avoiding analysis of women's subordinate position to men (Moser, 1993:3). Therefore, gender as a category of analysis sheds light on power relations between men and women. In addition, GAD criticized WID for its ignorance of the diversity among women and gendered power relations (Jaquette and Staudt, 2006:28). Moser (1993) emphasized that the social character of gender and development should regard the diversity among women rather than seeing them as a homogenous group. Moreover, GAD argues that development programs do not have the same effects on men and women and women are the active agents of development to challenge gender inequalities (Connelly et al. 2000 and Visvanathan, 1997: 19). In addition, GAD argues that states must sustain social services to contribute to women's empowerment. Unlike WID, GAD recognizes the unpaid reproductive role of women as well as the paid productive role. GAD argues that structures subordinating women can be eliminated through women's empowerment (Jaquette and Staudt, 2006:31; Sen and Grown, 1987).

GAD proposed the term 'mainstreaming'⁸ in order to integrate women into mainstream development programs. According to GAD, women's participation into development programs means going beyond the numbers, it refers to integrating women's perceptions and experiences into development programs (Arnfred, 2002: 77). Unlike WID, GAD seeks to achieve strategic gender needs of women as well as addressing the practical gender needs. Molyneux's (1985) concepts of practical and strategic gender needs as mentioned above contributed to Moser's thinking on which method GAD should apply. According to her, GAD should have a participatory empowerment approach that enables 'third world' women to decide their own needs and 'how to make their practical needs strategic' (Jaquette and Staudt, 2006:31).

3.3.2. Main Criticisms to GAD

Although GAD transformed the discourse from women to gender focusing on gender relations, it is criticized for losing its feminist standpoint when mainstream development agencies institutionalize the GAD approach. International conferences on women i.e. Beijing Conference in 1995 have contributed to institutionalization of the GAD approach which

⁸ Mainstreaming gender means making gender as a main focus of development programs/policies and 'bringing women into the mainstream of development' (Karl, 1995: 102).

created a global language on the issue (Arnfred, 2002:74). But the language has been the language of development agencies rather than the language of local grass root feminist movements (Arnfred, 2002: 74). Development agencies transformed their WID offices to GAD offices with gender mainstreaming as their strategy (Özgüler, 2007: 33). In addition, GAD term of gender referring to the unequal power relations between men and women, started to be used as a power neutral term by development programs (Arnfred, 2002:75). Therefore, using GAD terms and discourse does not always mean that development programs apply GAD understanding in its original sense which includes feminist struggle to challenge patriarchy. In other words, using GAD discourse different from feminist arguments may depoliticize the women's issues in development (Ibid).

If development agencies apply GAD in that way, GAD will have problems similar to WID. For instance, Arnfred (2002: 77) gives example of how World Bank has institutionalized the GAD discourse to strengthen its emphasis on economic development. In the 'Engendering Development' report of World Bank, it (2001: 1) says that while gender equality is a core development issue, achieving gender equality contributes to mitigating poverty. Moreover, World Bank prepared a Gender Action Plan in 2007 called 'Gender Equality as Smart Economics'⁹ arguing that women's economic empowerment enhances economic growth as a whole. Thus World Bank regards gender equality and women's empowerment as an instrument in reducing poverty rather than as a means to end women's subordinated position. In this respect, development agencies using GAD terms of women empowerment and gender equality may actually use WID's anti-poverty and efficiency approaches. As Karl (1995: 102) argues, the potential of GAD is related to how it is understood and implemented by mainstream development agencies.

3.3.3. Empowerment Approach

Empowerment arising from GAD approach has been a crucial concept and entered into the language of mainstream development programs. The concept of empowerment was first discussed in gender and development discourse by Moser (1993) and Sen and Grown (1987) (Parpart, 2008:356). GAD approach highlighted the term of empowerment. According to

⁹ For detail information see,

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS/EXTGENDER/0,,contentMDK:21983335~pagePK:210058~piPK:210062~theSitePK:336868,00.html>, last consultation on 14 May 2010.

Moser (1993:74), empowerment approach is the recent approach in this field and developed by 'Third World' women emphasizing empowerment through the internal 'self-reliance' of women. It seeks to achieve strategic gender needs through addressing practical gender needs with a bottom-up approach such as local grass-root movements of women (Ibid). According to Sen and Grown (1987), empowerment refers to the collective action through lived experiences of 'Third World' women. Hence, empowerment can refer to both individual self reliance and collective action.

Empowerment is a contextual term. While locality is emphasized by empowerment, local level cannot be seen separated from national and global levels. Therefore, empowerment is understood through interaction of these three levels (Parpat, 2008:357). Moreover, it can be analyzed in two ways: one is as a process and the other as an outcome (Datta and Kornberg, 2002:1). As a process, empowerment refers to the development strategies and policies that affect and transform the lives of women. 'Third world' feminists used empowerment as strategies of women to change the existing gender inequalities through increasing their control over resources and decision making (Datta and Kornberg, 2002:2).

In addition, empowerment is relational with concept of power. According to Batliwala (1994:129-130), 'empowerment means a process of challenging with existing power relations and gaining control over the sources of power'. Thus, political action is crucial for empowerment to achieve the transformation of the power relations. Another scholar Kabeer argues that empowerment is central for promoting gender equality. She emphasizes (1994 in Parpat, 2008:356) the concept of 'power within' meaning power urges women to challenge with existing gender inequalities through local participatory action. In addition she relates empowerment with the ability to make life choices. She (2002:19) argues that empowerment refers to the 'expansion of people's ability to make strategic life choices in a context where this ability was previously denied to them'. Thus empowerment is related to disempowerment. Only the ones who are in a disempowered condition can be empowered (Kabeer, 2002: 19). In addition, Rowlands (1997 in Parpat, 2008: 356) argues that empowerment is not only participation in the decision making but also a process that makes people feel that 'they are entitled to make the decisions'. Another scholar Mosadele (2005 in Parpat, 2008: 356) defines empowerment as a process of challenging and altering gender roles

and extending the possibilities of women to do and to be rather than enhancing the choices. Therefore she emphasizes the importance of extending the possibilities.

Empowerment is a rich and complex concept, has been a challenge for development institutions. It entered into the mainstream development discourse in the 1990s and became a main development goal of development institutions such as World Bank and UNDP (Parpart, 2008:355 and Karl, 1995: 108). Development programs that aim at women's empowerment vary depending on the specific contexts since empowerment approach recognizes that every woman has unique life experiences (Datta and Kornberg, 2002:8). This also creates difficulties in understanding and implementing the women's empowerment for development programs. However, as it happens in GAD approach, development agencies can interpret and apply empowerment approach different from the feminist scholars and activists do. Therefore, like GAD approach, the problem occurs when the mainstream development agencies view empowerment as instrumental. According to Karl (1995:109), development programs follow two ways to empower women: empowerment through increasing economic opportunities of women such as income generating activities and access to credits and empowering with rural development programs through improving education, literacy, economic possibilities and social services for women. On the other hand, women local grass root organizations apply aim empowerment through capacity building and awareness raising activities (Ibid). Therefore, feminist critiques attempt to ensure that women's empowerment is more than integrating women into the development and meeting the practical gender roles of women.

In sum; WID, WAD and GAD (including Empowerment Approach) have been the main theoretical frameworks within women, gender and development field. These theories follow a historical path and each evolves with the feminist critiques of the existing ones. However, it does not mean that development programs only use the recent approach. On the contrary, WID continues to be the predominant approach used by development agencies and in some cases, institutions prefer to use the language of GAD but they apply WID approach instead (Connelly et al, 2000). Therefore, the language of the development programs is not enough to understand the theoretical framework they apply, so analysis of the content of the programs (including both discourse and practice) is crucial to grasp which approach is being used. Indeed, this analysis enables us to see whether integration of women into development programs promotes gender equality and women's empowerment.

4. Turkish Context: Development and Women

In this part, I examine the issue of development and women in the historical context of Turkey. First, I give brief information about the scope of gender inequality in terms of education, employment and political participation. Then I examine the discourse and practices of development and women in Turkey. Thus, this chapter not only gives information about gender inequality in Turkey but also gives the contextual background that provides the better understanding for the case study in the following section.

4.1. General Information on Gender Inequality in Turkey

Turkey being a large middle income country has one of the 20 largest economies in the world (WB, 2008: 1). According to the UN Human Development Index (2009), Turkey's GDP per capita is US\$12.955 with a ranking of 63th out of 182 countries. Moreover, Turkey is a member of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and has been undertaking reforms in equality, human rights and democracy as steps towards becoming a member of European Union (WB, 2008: 1). However, in terms of human development, which is beyond the GDP as a measure of development and includes the social, economic, political and aspects, Turkey is far behind the other middle income countries and EU countries. According to the Human Development Index (HDI) that measures process mainly in three dimensions; long and healthy life, access to education and standard of living Turkey ranks 79th out of 182 countries (UNDP, 2009).

Moreover, gender disparities are high in terms of employment, political participation and education in Turkey. According to UNDP gender related development index (2009) that measures gender inequalities in countries, Turkey ranks 126th out of 155 countries and 101th out of 109 countries according to gender empowerment measure that reveals gender inequality in terms of economic and political participation. Furthermore, in the Gender Gap Index (2009), that measures inequality between men and women in areas of economic participation, educational attainment, political empowerment and health, Turkey is in the 134th place among 134 countries. The Literacy rate of women is 80 per cent, in other words

20 per cent of women are illiterate (WEF, 2009). Since Turkey has regional disparities in terms of development, illiteracy rates also vary according to the regions; for instance, in the southeastern region¹⁰ 44.6 percent of women are illiterate while in the Marmara region it is 12.5 percent (Acar, 2003: 35). Likewise, gender equality could not be attained for formal education in Turkey where 16.7 percent of women (ages 15-49) have no formal education (Ibid). Moreover, women's access to primary education exhibits differences according to rural-urban residence and regions. Women's access to schooling in rural areas and east and southeastern regions is much more limited than urban and western regions (Ibid).

In addition to education, gender disparities are high in labor force participation in Turkey. According to Household Labor Force Survey (Turkstat, 2010), 69.8 per cent of men participate in labor force whereas only 26.1 per cent of women participate in labor force¹¹. This rate is very low among OECD countries. For instance, female labor force participation is 77 per cent in Sweden, 60 per cent in Germany and 44 per cent in Mexico (WEF, 2009). When it comes to politics, gender inequalities persist. Only 9 per cent of the parliament consists of women in Turkey. The situation in local politics is worse. As a result of the 2009 Local Elections, only 0.9 percent of mayors (27 out of 2.877), 3.3 percent of members of the provincial councils (110 out of 3.379) and 4.2 percent of municipal council members (1.340 out of 31.790) are women (Turkstat, 2010; GDLA, 2010). All the data given indicates the scope of the gender inequality issue in Turkey.

4.2. Development Discourse and Practices on Women in Turkey

Gender equality debate has a long history in Turkey. The historical context is important to understand the women, gender and development discourse and practices in Turkey. I examine the development discourse and practices on women in Turkey in three periods: Early republican period between the 1920s and the 1940s, the period between the 1960s and the 1970s and the after 1980.

¹⁰ Southeastern region has lower development levels than the national level in terms of income, education, gender equality and health. In national human development rankings, its provinces are ranked among the lowest 20 provinces in Turkey. The rankings are worse in gender indicators in the region. (UNDP, 2010).

¹¹ Female labor force participation includes both employed and unemployed women that seek work (Tansel, 2001: 4)

4.2.1. Early Republican Period: 1920s-1940s

Steps were taken to promote gender equality through women's legal rights in the late Ottoman period and mainly early Turkish Republic period (Sancar and Bulut, 2006: 6). Early Turkish Republic implemented reforms taking western countries as a direct reference point in the process of westernization (Genel, 2002: 44). In this period, westernization and modernization were emphasized and seen as same with development. These reforms that is called *Kemalist*¹² reforms were equal rights to education for girls (1924), banning the hijab (1925), equal rights in the family (1926) and women's right to vote (1934) (İlkkaracan, 2007:76). Therefore, women's active involvement into public sphere as equal citizens became a crucial part of the modernization process (Ibid). In other words, these reforms created the image of 'modern women' as a symbol of modernization in the way to be a modern-western society rather than traditional and religious one (Sancar and Bulut, 2006: 6). Thus gender equality policies and reforms have been the component of modernization process rather than being an aspect of the development process (Ibid). However, these rapid changes had occurred with top down policies and led by national (ruling) elites who were different from the rural masses (Genel, 2002: 47). As Kandiyoti argues (1987: 322), while urban bourgeois women benefitted mostly from the Kemalist reforms, these reforms were a 'dead issue' for the women in rural areas where civil rights such as civil marriage, monogamy and equal right to schooling were ignored in favor of religious and traditional practices.

On the other hand, throughout the modernization process family has been considered as the main institution in providing stability to society through the role of women as mother and wife. This prioritizing of women's family based roles restricted women's political and economic participation and regarded charity kinds of works suitable for modern women as a way of social participation (Sancar and Bulut, 2006: 6). In addition, the division of labor within family that perceives men as breadwinner and women as homemaker restricted women's participation in the labor market and in political decision making (Culpan and Marzotto, 1982: 339). Therefore this understanding regarding traditional norms and values has been an obstacle for women's empowerment and their equal participation in society.

¹² Kemalist comes from the name of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of Turkey and Turkish revolution.

4.2.2. The Period between 1950s-1970s

Development practices can be described as state directed until 1980s. Especially between 1950 and 1960 planned economic strategy applied with the demand of financial international institutions (Özgüler, 2007: 63). State Planning Organization was established to prepare national development plans and determine development priorities. Development plans prepared to promote national development through regional development and to overcome regional disparities (Ibid). In this period, rural development projects were widely implemented to improve agriculture and generate income (Özgüler, 2007: 69). The aim of the rural development projects was to overcome regional disparities and to ‘modernize’ the rural women (Akder, 2003: 125). According to İlkkaracan (2007:77), during this period, it was assumed that urban educated women being ‘modern women’ enjoyed the equal rights with men but the rural women being mostly illiterate and uneducated were considered as ones to be modernized and developed. Therefore, development projects supported education, literacy and the use of civil rights against the traditional practices such as bride money, forced and early marriages (Ibid). On the other hand, mostly men benefitted from the trainings on improvement of agriculture. On the other hand, women were provided with activities related with traditional gender roles such as child care, carpet weaving and handicraft activities (Akder, 2003: 125, İlkkaracan, 2007:77; Özgüler, 2007: 69). Akder (2003: 129-130) critiques of these projects claim they were lacking the gender component which excluded women from agricultural training activities and reinforced the traditional gender roles of women. While these projects achieved the participation of women, it led to the marginalization of women from planning, implementing and decision making processes of the projects (Akder, 2003: 130; Özgüler, 2007: 69-70).

4.2.3. The Period after 1980

The late 70s and the early 80s, Turkey had experienced economic and political crises. In order to recover from economic downfall, a structural adjustment program was implemented with the support of IMF and World Bank in 1980s (Genel, 2002: 55 and Özgüler, 2007: 65). This process reduced the role of the state in economy and development resulting in a shift from statist policies to neo-liberal ones (Ibid). Development projects funded by mainly international organizations like UN started to be implemented to diminish the negative effects of the structural adjustment program such as poverty, unemployment etc. This process accelerated in the 1990s when the focus of development projects was transformed from

economic development to human and sustainable development with parallel to the global level (İlkkaracan, 2007:77 and Özgüler, 2007: 67).

Together with the socio-economic change in the 80s, the emergence of the women's movement influenced the development and women discourse and practices in Turkey (İlkkaracan, 2007:77). Women's movement in Turkey was influenced by the second wave of feminism that emerged in the West during the 1970s and 1980s, mostly questioned the causes and the ways women are subordinated focusing on the power structures between men and women often theorizing patriarchy (Yuval-Davis, 1997:5). During this period, feminists started to question the early republican reforms on gender equality. Contrary to the general public opinion, they argued that these legal rights and reforms also have gender discriminatory components and gender equality could not be attained in practice for the majority of women (İlkkaracan, 2007:77 and Devlet, 2006: 48). As a result, women's organizations started to organize activities on women's human rights issues such as elimination of violence against women including honor killings, equal access to education, increasing participation of women in politics and labor market (Sancar and Bulut, 2006: 7). Thus these activities raised awareness on the existing gender inequalities in Turkey. In addition, international conferences and mandates¹³ on women issues influenced the women and development discourse focusing on women's empowerment rather than instrumentalization of women in development practices (Ibid). All these contributed to the shift in discourse on women and development from modernization to women's human rights discourse (İlkkaracan, 2007: 77).

Moreover, international development agencies such as UNDP and World Bank started to conduct projects with gender component or gender specific projects with aim of gender equality and women's empowerment. These agencies focused on activities related with education and employment such as income generating activities and vocational trainings. (Özgüler, 2007: 71). Not only women's organizations and international development agencies emphasized gender equality perspectives, but also state institutions and development programs started to take interest in gender, women issues from the 80s. For instance,

¹³ These international conferences and mandates are mainly 'Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women' (CEDAW in 1986), World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 and Beijing Platform of Action and European Union Accession process (İlkkaracan, 2007:77 ; Sancar and Bulut, 2006: 8).

Directorate General on Status of Women was established in 1990 as a government agency to work on women's problems and to adopt gender policies (Devlet, 2006: 50; Sancar and Bulut, 2006: 9). Southeastern Anatolian Development Project launched in 80s can be given as an example of indicating the state's interest in integrating women, gender into development programs. Although it started as an agriculture and irrigation development project, it included social aspect of development focusing on women's development in 1990s (Genel, 2002: 97). Multi-purpose community centers were established for women to raise the status of women in the region through capacity building (Ibid). While rural development projects considered men as a target group before, with the rising awareness on gender inequalities they started to focus on women.

In sum, parallel to the global shift from WID to GAD, women and development discourse and practices in Turkey have been transformed from modernization understanding to women's empowerment and gender equality discourse. Women's movement and international agenda on gender issues contributed to this process since the 80s. The assumption that all women benefit from legal rights in practice and the reforms provide gender equality were criticized and challenged by the women's movement. Thus it gave rise to emphasis on gender equality and women's empowerment in development discourse and practices with the support of international agencies. This process has also influenced the state agencies and development programs towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

5. Global Origins of Turkey Local Agenda 21(LA-21) Program

Although the case I examine is a national sustainable development program based on local levels, it has its origins from global levels such as international conferences and mandates. Global level discourse has its impacts on the national and local implementations. Therefore, understanding the global discourse allows us to see the interactions among global, national and local levels on the issue, mainly on women's participation including gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as the importance of contextuality. In this chapter, I give the global level background information that gave rise to Turkey LA-21 Program and influence its discourse and implementations.

Local Agenda 21 refers to the participatory planning process of the 21st century that aims to reach sustainable development at the local level. Thus the origin of the Local Agenda 21 goes back to the concept of sustainable development which was first defined in Brundtland Report in 1987. Therefore, first I explain the Brundtland Report and the second I focus on UN Rio Earth Summit and the Agenda 21. I discuss them with regard to their discourse on women's participation and sustainable development. Finally, I mention the other international conferences that contributed to Turkey LA-21 Process.

5.1. Brundtland Report- Our Common Future

Sustainable development brings together two important concepts; development and environment, which were seen as separate areas until mid 1970s (Elliot, 1994:12). In 1972 the UN Conference on Human Environment in Stockholm emphasized the importance of the environment in development (Rogers et al., 2008:9). Although the link between environment and development was established in the 1970s, the concept of sustainable development traces back to a report entitled 'Our Common Future', also known as Brundtland Report carried out by the World Commission on Environment and Development (chaired by then Prime Minister of Norway Gro Harlem Brundtland) (Rogers et al. 2008: 9). Brundtland Report (1987:43) defines sustainable development as 'development that meets the needs of present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.

Brundtland report remains limited when it comes to gender aspects and inclusion of women into the sustainable development. Women are mentioned in mainly population policies to decrease fertility rates, population growth rates and apply family planning towards sustainable development. In the chapter 4 of the report entitled 'Population and Human Resources'¹⁴ (1987), it indicates that 'improvements in the health and education of all, but especially of women and in conjunction with other social changes that raise the status of women, can have a profound effect in bringing down population growth rates (art.28)'. In addition, according to the report (1987, art. 36), population policies should ensure the improved status of women through better health and education for the fall in fertility rates.

¹⁴ For the full Brundtland Report <http://www.un-documents.net/k-002988.htm> ; last consultation on 23 March 2010.

Finally, the approach of the report on women can be regarded as pre-WID approach, that is, the welfare approach mainly used in 60s-70s but still widely used. The aim is to bring women into development to limit population growth and reduce fertility rates and family planning. Although women's status, education and employment opportunities are recognized, it remains instrumental since it is believed that improved status of women would reduce fertility rates. Therefore, the report fails to recognize 'women's control over their own fertility and women are treated in instrumental manner' (Moser, 1993: 61).

5.2. UN Rio Earth Summit and Agenda 21

Following Brundtland Report, sustainable development became an international debate. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, also known as "Earth Summit" was held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. In the summit, Agenda 21¹⁵ was introduced as a guide to promote sustainable development in the 21st century signed by more than 178 governments (UN, 1992). According to UN (1992), 'Agenda 21 is a dynamic program and can vary according to the different capacities, priorities of the countries and this process marks a beginning of a new global partnership for sustainable development'¹⁶. Emphasis on partnership is also accepted as a key element by Turkey LA-21 Program. Agenda 21 has 4 sections (Social Economic Dimension, Conservation and Management of Resources for Development, Strengthening the Role of Major Groups and Means of Implementation) and 40 chapters.

Among various chapters, I am interested most in the 24th chapter called 'Global Action for Women towards Sustainable and Equitable Development' under the third section- Strengthening the Role of Major Groups as the concern of this study. This action plan aims to achieve full and equal integration of women in all development activities based on the objective of implementing Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (UN, 1992: art. 24.1). It takes Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the

¹⁵ For the document of Agenda 21 see <http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/index.shtml> ; last consultation on 24 March 2010.

¹⁶ Agenda 21 Preamble 1.6. For detail see, http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/res_agenda21_01.shtml, last consultation on 24 March 2010.

Advancement of Women (1985) as its base approach to women rather than the approach used in Brundtland Report. The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women was developed by the World conference to review and appraise the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985): Equality, Development and Peace, that was held in Nairobi, Kenya in 1985¹⁷ (UN, 1986).

In the first article of the 24th chapter (1992), it states that active involvement of women in economic and political decision making is crucial and pre-request for the success of the implementations of Agenda 21. Different from the Brundtland report, Agenda 21 regards women as active agents in development and aims to meet practical gender needs of women such as employment, health and education. In addition, it emphasizes the participation of women in development not only as beneficiaries but also as decision makers, managers and advisers for sustainable development (UN, 1992: art 24.2b). It also calls governments to implement policies and strategies to achieve equality in all aspects of society providing women education, training, and access to resources, health and participation in decision making and ensure men and women have the same rights to decide freely on number of children (UN, 1992:art. 24.2f/g). Mentioning the private sphere (household) and women's workload in the household, it emphasizes the necessity of equal share of domestic work by men and women including governments' duty to provide care services to reduce the domestic workload (UN, 1992:art. 24.2). To achieve all the goals in the section proposed by Agenda 21, it argues that women's full participation into decision making is necessary (UN, 1992: 24.7).

Thus, Agenda 21 not only aims to integrate women into sustainable development but also proposes objectives to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. Moreover, it recognizes the importance of empowerment of women's groups and organization (UN, 1992:art. 24.3b). Moreover, it also challenges gender roles and stereotypes that GAD aims. In these respects, the report aims to promote women's achievement of strategic gender needs, that is, gender equality and women's empowerment and address their practical needs as well. I can say that its discourse has GAD and Empowerment understanding.

¹⁷ For detail, see, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/confer/nfls/Nairobi1985report.txt>, last consultation on 24 March 2010.

Another chapter that is important for this study is the chapter 28 entitled ‘Local Authorities’ Initiatives in Support of Agenda 21’¹⁸. In this chapter, the importance of local activities for Agenda 21 is emphasized and local authorities’ contribution and participation in reaching the goals of Agenda 21 is seen as a priority (UN, 1992: art 28.1). Therefore, local authorities are expected to launch their Local Agenda 21 (LA-21) process. In addition, cooperation and coordination among local authorities are encouraged for exchange of information and experience. That has been the backbone of Turkey LA-21 Program. One of the objectives in the chapter is also important for the concern of this study, it states that:

‘All local authorities in each country should be encouraged to implement and monitor programmes which aim at ensuring that women and youth are represented in decision-making, planning and implementation processes (UN, 1992: 28.2d)’

It underlines the role of local authorities on the representation of women and youth in decision making and implementation. The approach to apply this target is the participatory approach based on a dialog among local authority, citizens and local organizations (UN, 1992: 28.3). Therefore, this chapter determined the principles of LA-21 and encouraged local authorities to apply LA-21 in countries including Turkey. According to the survey conducted in 2002, over 6.400 local authorities in 113 countries have launched their LA-21 processes (ICLEI, 2010).

5.3. Other Conferences on the Issue

Following the Rio Conference (1992), conferences such as UN Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), UN Habitat II (Istanbul, 1996), UN Millennium Summit (New York, 2000) and UN Johannesburg Summit (2002) contributed and enhanced the LA-21 Processes including LA-21 in Turkey. Since they became influential for the beginning and strengthening of LA-21 in Turkey, I want to mention about these conferences in brief. First, as an outcome of UN Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995) Beijing declaration¹⁹ emphasized

¹⁸ For Chapter 28 see, http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/res_agenda21_28.shtml, last consultation on 24 March 2010.

¹⁹ For Beijing Declaration (1995), see <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/declar.htm>, last consultation on 26 March 2010.

women's empowerment and underlined the necessity of 'full and equal participation of women and men as agents and beneficiaries of people centered sustainable development' (UN, 1995: art. 16). Second, UN Habitat II Conference²⁰ held in Istanbul in 1996 has been the driving force for the beginning of LA-21 process in Turkey since this conference provided local authorities to be familiar with LA-21 and encouraged them to start the LA-21 processes (Emrealp, 2005: 25). Although its focus was on human settlements, it also concerned with sustainable development, LA-21 processes with emphasis on the concept of governance and 'full and equal participation of all women and men' (UN-Habitat, 1996: art. 7).

The third conference related with LA-21 process and women was UN Millennium Summit that held in New York in 2000 with participation of nearly 190 countries. In UN Millennium Summit, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)²¹ (eight goals) to be achieved by 2015 were adopted by 189 nations. The eight goals to be achieved by 2015 are; (1) eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, (2) achieving universal primary education, (3) promoting gender equality and empowering women, (4) reducing child mortality, (5) improving maternal health, (6) combating HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases, (7) ensuring environmental sustainability and (8) developing a global partnership for development (UN, 2000). The achievement of gender equality and women empowerment is set as development goals. Moreover, Local Agenda 21 plays a crucial role in the localization of these global goals. It becomes the concern of this study since Turkey LA-21 Program seeks to localize the MDGs in Turkey. Finally, Johannesburg Summit 2002-World Summit on Sustainable Development was held in order to evaluate the implementations of Agenda 21 ten years after the Rio Summit. According to Implementation Report of Agenda 21 (2002), despite the powerful vision of Agenda 21, its implementation remained weak underlining the importance of Agenda 21. Along with the other issues, it mentioned the commitment to the integration of women's empowerment and gender equality in Agenda 21 activities.

To sum up, global origins of Turkey LA-21 Program go back to the concept of sustainable development and various international conferences to establish global partnership to promote

²⁰ For UN-Habitat II Declaration (1996), see <http://ww2.unhabitat.org/istanbul+5/declaration.htm>, last consultation on 26 March 2010.

²¹ For Millennium Development Goals, Targets and Indicators see, <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/gti.htm>, last consultation on 26 March 2010.

sustainable development. Although Agenda 21 focus on environmental issues, it underlines the importance of gender equality and women's participation in decision making. Although the link between sustainable development and women was based on population policies and fertility in Brundtland report, the approach on women and sustainable development has shifted in Agenda 21. Global discourse has GAD approach components regarding women as active agents of development processes rather than passive beneficiaries and with its focus on gender equality. Other conferences such as Beijing Conference, Habitat II Conference, UN Millennium Summit and Johannesburg summit contributed to the LA-21 Process in Turkey. I can argue that women, gender and sustainable development discourse has shifted from pre-WID to GAD and empowerment understanding at global level.

6. Analysis Part - Turkey Local Agenda 21 (LA-21) Program

In this section, I analyze whether Turkey Local Agenda (LA) 21 Program as a development project promotes women's participation to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. Thus, the assessment based on theoretical framework gives the opportunity to understand whether discourse and practices of Turkey LA-21 Program on women's participation can promote gender equality and women's empowerment as GAD and Empowerment approaches propose. I analyze the program based on WID, GAD and Empowerment. In this chapter, first I give the general information about Turkey LA-21 Program, the second I analyze the project phases of the Program to understand the program's approach and practices on women's participation and finally I analyze the women's activities in the program at local and national levels.

6.1. General Information about the Program

After UN Habitat II Conference (1996), Turkey LA-21 Program was launched in 1997 as a sustainable development project with the support of UNDP-Turkey²² (United Nations

²² UNDP-Turkey supporting LA-21 Program works on democratic local governance, poverty reduction and sustainable development. It has a special emphasis on gender as a cross cutting issue. See for further information www.undp.org.tr, last consultation 28 March 2010.

Development Program) and under the coordination of UCLG-MEWA²³ (United Cities and Local Governments, Middle East and West Asia) (formerly IULA-EMME) (Emrealp, 2005). Turkey LA-21 Program aims to develop the democratic participatory local governance ensuring the equal participation of citizen into the decision making to promote sustainable development at the local level. The program has a coordination mechanism at the national level called the LA-21 Program National Steering Committee including the representatives of the under-secretariat of the Prime Ministry, the State Planning Organization, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Prime Ministry-Directorate General on the Status of Women, General Secretariat of the European Union, partner supporting organizations, UCLG-MEWA and UNDP (Emrealp, 2005: 36 and Göymen, 2007: 66).

The Program continues with the partnership of over 60 local authorities of varying sizes and characteristics spread all over the country, ranging from huge metropolises to small districts (ibid). Each LA-21 exhibits peculiar features depending on the priorities of their city results in variety of different implementations. However, they also have common characteristics, structures and functioning as determined in the light of global agendas, experiences from partner cities and the article²⁴ on city councils and the by-law of the city council. When it comes to the structure of the LA-21 in cities, there are a coordination mechanism and participatory mechanisms in each city. The coordination of LA-21 is provided by the respective LA-21 General Secretariat in each city. In addition, city wide participatory mechanisms established within the context of program have been the backbone of LA-21 processes in each city. Primary participatory mechanisms are mainly city councils and other mechanisms that function under the umbrella of the city councils including working groups, women's councils, youth councils and special interest groups such as children, disabled and elderly (Emrealp, 2009: 5).

²³ UCLG-MEWA that is formerly IULA-EMME was established in 1987 in Istanbul in order to enhance the local democracy and support local governments to increase their capabilities. See for further information www.uclg-mewa.org , last consultation 28 March 2010.

²⁴ 'The article of the city council enacted in 2005 in the law of municipality and the by-law of the city council came into effect in 2009' (Emrealp, 2009: 9-10). For the article-76 on the city council in the municipal law, see appendix 1

Participatory mechanisms of city councils including women and youth councils, have emerged as a model peculiar to the Turkish context (UCLG-MEWA, 2008: 11). Therefore, while global agenda suggests participation as an effective approach, the implementation and institutionalization of this participatory approach vary according to the national and local contexts. In the Turkish context, the mechanisms such as city councils, women's councils and youth councils have evolved as an implementation of participatory approach. Indeed, in each city these mechanisms reflect the priorities of their city and therefore have peculiar characteristics which can be seen as an implication of contextuality.

The City Council being the primary mechanism of local governance brings together the central government, local authorities and civil society within the understanding of partnership (Göymen, 2007:66 and Emrealp, 2005). The City Councils aim to establish a consensus for the city through democratic platforms where development priorities and problems of the city are discussed and resolved based on sustainable development principles. One of the duties of the city councils are to increase the effectiveness of the women, youth, children and elderly in social life and to ensure their active participation in the local decision making (Emrealp, 2009: 12). Therefore, instead of having direct objectives on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, city councils focus on women's active participation in social life and local decision making.

Under the umbrella of the city councils, women's councils facilitate the raising of awareness on priority issues concerning women, particularly by promoting the active involvement of women in decision-making and to integrate the gender perspectives into the policies and strategies (Emrealp, 2005: 38). Integrating gender perspectives and increasing women's participation are regarded as the main functions of women's councils. Although women participate not only women's councils but also city councils (however limited participation), youth, working group and special interest groups mechanisms; gender issues are only seen as related to the women's councils.

6.2. Analysis of the Project Phases of the Program with relation to gender/women

There have been five project phases of the LA-21 Program since 1997. 'These phases of the Program have been supported by the Council of Ministers and have been published in the

Official Gazette of Turkey (dated 6 March 1998, 8 February 1999, 22 January 2001, 4 December 2001, 11 June 2003 and 12 November 2003) as international agreements' (Emrealp, 2009: 3). Project phases of the Program are; (1) 'Promotion and Development of Local Agenda 21s in Turkey', (2) 'Implementing Local Agenda 21s in Turkey', (3) 'Localizing the UN Millennium Development Goals and WSSD Plan of Implementation through the Turkey Local Agenda 21 Governance Network', (4) 'Localizing the UN Millennium Development Goals in Turkey through the Local Agenda 21 Governance Network' and (5) 'Training and Capacity Building for Strengthening the City Councils and their Functioning as Local Democratic Governance Mechanisms'. Since the fifth project phase is to be implemented now, within the scope of this study I did not examine the fifth phase. The analysis of the four project phases is based on project documents, progress reports, annual reports and the terminal reports of the program. Therefore, this section enables us to see the approach and practice of the program particularly on women's participation.

6.2.1. Promotion and Development of Local Agenda 21s in Turkey

The first project '*Promotion and Development of Local Agenda 21s in Turkey*'²⁵ launched in 1997 and was implemented in nine pilot cities. The purpose of the project is to encourage local authorities to commit to LA-21 for achieving the Agenda 21 goals at the local level through participation. This project had two objectives, the first to promote LA-21 at the national level and the second to establish city-wide consultative mechanisms for achieving participatory local sustainable development planning (UNDP, 1997). Although it started with nine pilot cities, during the project the number of partner local authorities that started LA-21 in their cities increased to 23 (IULA-EMME, 1999b:6). According to the final project document (1999:6-7), main outcomes have been the awareness-raising on LA-21 among local actors and citizens, increased number of partner local authorities that establish LA-21 and the decree was issued by Ministry of Interior that urge governorates to support LA-21 activities in their cities. Thus, the decree provided the official recognition of LA-21 to some extent.

²⁵ For summary of the first phase see,

<http://www.kentkonseyleri.net/changepage.aspx?lg=1&pi=101>, last consultation on 30 April 2010.

Moreover, partner cities set up city-wide participatory mechanisms such as city councils²⁶, working groups, women platforms, youth councils and special councils (disabled, elderly and child) at the local level with different local actors and citizens. In addition, partner cities established LA-21 Secretariats for coordination purposes amount to 21 at the end of the phase (IULA-EMME, 1999b: 7).

As concern of the study, despite the fact that there was no specific objective on women and gender issues in the project, giving reference to global agendas, the project placed emphasis on the active involvement of women and integration of gender issues in local planning and decision-making (IULA-EMME, 1999b: 6). For this aim, women started to be organized under the women's platforms in partner cities. According to the final report of the project (1999: 9), the number of cities that set up such platforms amount to 14 and they were established not only in cities located in developed regions but also in disadvantaged regions. It reflects that the project and the participatory mechanisms were launched both developed and less developed regions of Turkey where regional disparities are high. In addition, the number of women working as the LA-21 Secretary General in project cities amounted to 12 out of 21, signifying the active involvement of the women in the process (IULA-EMME, 1999b: 7).

In the final report (1999:14), it indicates why involvement of women is crucial;

‘The project experience has apparently reaffirmed the global lesson that, it is indeed crucial to secure the active involvement of the women and the youth in the *Local Agenda 21* process. In addition to serving the integration of gender and youth perspectives in local policies, programs and projects, such involvement provided a real dynamism and vigor to, as well as securing the sustainability of, the whole process of local action plan development and implementation’

Therefore, the program aims to promote involvement of women for integration of gender perspective as well as to the sustainability of the whole implementation. Moreover, it is argued that although the women apparently have participated in the project activities in numbers, the project targets are far from being met, and further efforts are necessary to increase the role of women in the local decision-making, planning and implementation (IULA-EMME, 1999b: 17).

²⁶ ‘City councils consists of *ex officio* members such as the Governor, Mayor and Parliamentarians of the respective province, and representatives of foundations and associations, professional chambers, private sector organizations, trade unions, academic institutions, neighborhood heads, etc., as well as working group representatives’ (Emrealp, 1999:8)

Finally, although the first project caused more cities to establish LA-21 with its participatory mechanism with particular attention to active involvement of women, there were some challenges faced with during the implementation. These were mainly the inequalities among the regions mainly eastern and southeastern of Turkey in terms of development and local capacities which resulted in the slower process in project cities in these regions (IULA-EMME, 1999a:6). Likewise, other problems were more related with democratic traditions of Turkey which tends to be central and have vertical hierarchical structures. Since the project aims to enhance participatory local governance with decentralization and horizontal structures; thus some partner cities have a tendency to convert it to central and vertical structures (IULA-EMME, 1999a:6) which may lead to negative impacts on the whole process in general and women's participation in particular. Therefore, these challenges also generate obstacles to women's participation.

6.2.2. Implementing Local Agenda 21s in Turkey

The second project phase entitled '*Implementing Local Agenda 21s in Turkey*²⁷', started in 2000 after the termination of the first project. The aim of the project stated as to promote local governance ensuring the participation of civil society into decision-making (UNDP, 1999). The project had five objectives; to increase the number of cities engaged in LA-21, to create a mechanism (LA-21 action plans) that enables LA-21 to affect the local decision-making, to launch the campaigns for awareness raising, to provide long term support for LA-21 and to extend it to whole country and to enable LA-21 to support for recovery and reconstruction of the Marmara Earthquake of 17 August 1999 (UNDP, 1999). Moreover, local communities in general and women in particular were recognized as target beneficiaries of the project emphasizing their active involvement (UNDP, 1999:7).

During this phase, the number of partner local authorities reached to 50 and Turkey LA-21 project converted into a 'program' (Emrealp, 2005: 35). Therefore, increased numbers of cities set up city-wide participatory mechanisms and 'LA-21 Houses' to serve the public. Although general awareness was developed about LA-21, the main bottleneck has been the

²⁷ For Project Phase 2 see,

<http://www.kentkonseyleri.net/changepage.aspx?lg=1&pi=102> , last consultation on 30 April 2010.

lack of legal personality of LA-21s that pose institutionalization problems (IULA-EMME, 2002:25). On the other hand, important steps were taken with regard to women's participation. 30 partner cities established women's councils/ platforms and, in over half of partner cities, LA-21 Secretary-Generals were women (IULA-EMME, 2004: 5-6). In addition, around one-third of the working groups were women (UNDP, 2003:5). Women were seen as acting as driving forces behind successful LA-21 partner cities (Göymen, 2007: 68). In addition, several meetings and activities were organized to promote women's active involvement in the process. First, the representatives of the *Local Agenda 21 Women Councils/Platforms* met in İstanbul in 2001(IULA-EMME, 2002a:12). Second, representatives of LA-21 women platforms gathered in 2002 in İzmir for the first LA-21 Women Activities Festival, to be organized every year (IULA-EMME, 2002b:11). Third, the second LA-21 Women Activities Festival was held in Bursa in 2003, where hundreds of representatives of women platforms from over 30 partner cities met for various events (IULA-EMME, 2004: 6). I examine these meetings in the analysis of women's activities section.

6.2.3. Localizing the UN Millennium Development Goals and WSSD Plan of Implementation through the Turkey Local Agenda 21 Governance Network

The purpose of this project²⁸ was to institutionalize the LA-21 at local and national level and also promote the MDGs and WSSD Plan of implementation²⁹ at local level through LA-21 Supporting Local Projects Program (UNDP, 2003:1). LA-21 Supporting Local Projects Program started in 2005 and 12 out of 24 small projects was related with women (UCLG-MEWA, 2007:9). This project sought to institutionalize the LA-21 Women & Youth Networks at the national level (UNDP, 2003: 3). In order to promote institutionalization of LA-21 Women's Councils Network, nation-wide meetings of women's councils organized as a way of cooperation among women from different cities (UNDP, 2003:12). LA-21 Women's Activities Facilitator has been responsible for organizing and facilitating nation-wide women's activities.

²⁸ For the Project Phase 3, see; <http://www.kentkonseyleri.net/changepage.aspx?lg=1&pi=103>, last consultation on 30 April 2010.

²⁹ The WSSD Plan of Implementation underlines the importance of participatory processes and partnerships for decision-making as well as the role of women and youth in sustainable development (UNDP, 2003).

In addition, this project was interested in activities to increase women's representation in local elections. Hence campaigns planned to be organized prior to local elections to increase the number of women candidates in local elections and impact legislation to increase the representation of women including 'imposition of election quotas for women' (UNDP, 2003: 10). With its focus on strengthening the women's nation-wide cooperation and women's representation in local politics, this project encourages the activities to meet the women's strategic gender needs. Not only was women's active involvement in local decision making within the context of program a primary goal but also women's active involvement in local politics has been a concern. Thus, the program started to support women's political struggle to challenge gender inequalities with GAD and Empowerment understanding.

The phase of the program consists of two other interviewing projects. The first one is '*Establishing a Sustainable Network to Promote Local Democratic Governance in Turkey*' contributed to the establishment of Local Agenda 21 Governance Network through nation-wide web site of the program (www.la21turkey.net, currently www.kentkonseyleri.net³⁰). The second project entitled '*Enhancing the Role of the Women and the Youth in Local Partnerships and Networking for Transparency*' supported by the MATRA Program of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The aim was to increase the participation of women and youth into local decision making (Emrealp, 2005: 35). Therefore, the focus has been the increasing role of women. It is argued that there are barriers to women's participation in decision making which result in gender inequalities. Especially women's voices have less impact than men's on decision making in shaping their lives (UNDP, 2003:3). Therefore the aim was to promote gender equality through women's active involvement in decision making mechanisms. This exhibits the program's growing emphasis on women's participation in promoting gender equality. Aiming to challenge with gender inequalities and achieve women's participation in decision making shows that the approach of the program has the components of the GAD understanding. In this project, a series of regional meetings were organized with women representatives from different cities.

Within the context of this project, the third National LA-21 Women Activities Festival was held in Samsun in 2004. Over 220 representatives of LA-21 Women Councils and platforms

³⁰ The name of the web-site has change within the context of the fifth Project phase of the Program which focuses on the functioning of the city councils in accordance with new legal regulations on city councils. (article 76 of the law on municipalities and the by-law of the city councils).

from 34 partner cities came together for the festival having opportunity to take joint action and share experiences (IULA-EMME, 2005: 7). This festival followed by a series of LA-21 National Coordination Meetings in order to make preparations for the fourth LA-21 Women Activities Festival and increase the cooperation among women's councils (UCLG-MEWA, 2007: 22-23). The Fourth National LA-21 Women's Activities Festival was held in Zonguldak in 2005, with the theme "Women and Economy". The Festival brought together over 380 representatives of LA-21 Women's Councils from 41 partner cities (IULA-EMME, 2006a: 8).

In addition, voluntary representatives of women's councils set up a 'quotas for women' working group in order to create awareness raising on the issue and plan strategies to increase the women's participation in politics for both upcoming national and local elections. The working group organized several meetings regarding ways of promoting the use of appropriate quotas in the candidature lists of political parties, mainly before the next national and local election (UCLG-MEWA, 2007: 25). Growing emphasis on women in politics with upcoming national election brought together over 400 representatives of women's councils for LA-21 Women's Summit held in Ürgüp (previously LA-21 Women Activities Festival) in 2006 (IULA-EMME, 2006b: 7).

Various activities on women were organized within this project phase such as LA-21 Women Activities Festival, National Coordination Meetings and working group meetings aiming to encourage networking among women's councils to organize nation-wide events. Although the women platforms increased in number and made a progress in networking among women and joint activities, it is argued by the program that adequate integration of women into the decision making and budgetary priorities of local authorities and central government organizations could not be attained (IULA-EMME, 2006a: 13). However, main achievement of the program as a direct impact of the program have been the incorporation of the City Council, as the main city-wide participatory platform of the LA-21 processes, in Article 76 of the new Law on Municipalities (enacted in July 2005), along with other participatory mechanisms including women and youth councils (IULA-EMME, 2006b: 5). This has been the major step towards institutionalization of LA-21 participatory mechanisms. Therefore, bottlenecks due to a lack of legal personality were overcome. Indeed, women's councils as a vehicle of promoting women's active involvement in decision making have gained their legal base for institutionalization.

6.2.4. Localizing the UN Millennium Development Goals in Turkey through the Local Agenda 21 Governance Network

The fourth project³¹ aimed at localizing the Government's MDG commitments through the prioritization of the MDGs in local action. The project strategy is based on participatory local governance to achieve the MDGs and advocating the critical role of local authorities in promoting gender equality and engaging broader segments of the society, including the private sector, in localizing the MDGs (UNDP, 2007:1). This project places emphasis on promoting gender equality since it is the third goal of MDGs.

One of the targets of the project that directly related to women is to strengthen the National Network of LA-21 Women Councils, with a focus on benefiting from the potential of this women's network to address the MGDs both at national and local levels, in particular the third goal of MDGs (UNDP, 2007:5). Thus, the aim to localize MDGs leads to the program's focus on promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. In the project document, the concept of empowerment is used and the focus is given not only to women's participation but also to the empowerment of women and gender equality.

The number of partner local authorities reached to 73. By-law of the City Council that underpins the operation, structure and functioning of the City Council including participatory mechanisms such as women and youth councils was prepared by Ministry of Interior and published in the official newspaper of Turkey in 2006 (Emrealp, 2009:10). Therefore, city councils and its participatory mechanisms that launched under the Turkey LA-21 Program had their legal stronghold. However, after by-law of the city council came into effect, cities implementing the by-law of the city council faced with some problems that's why the Ministry of Interior-General Directorate of Local Authorities started a revision process with the participation of partner cities. Within these contexts, a series of regional training programs on city councils with the partnership of the Ministry of Interior-General Directorate of Local Authorities were conducted where problems in implementations were identified and suggestions were made for changes in the by-law of city council were made by participants (ibid). Indeed, these regional training meetings held in Uşak, Konya, Ankara, Trabzon, Kocaeli, Kars and Şanlıurfa during May-October 2008 (UCLG-MEWA, 2009:19) in which I have also participated with the exception of the last one.

³¹ For Summary of the Project Phase 4, see

<http://www.kentkonseyleri.net/changepage.aspx?lg=1&pi=104> , last consultation on 30 April 2010.

The representatives of the women's councils took part in the regional trainings to propose suggestions on the by-law of city council for the effective participation of women in city councils. As a result of arrangements towards effective participation of women and youth in decision-making were realized. In this context, the representatives of the women's and youth councils are 'included as *ex officio* members of the Executive Committee' of the city council in the by-law (Emrealp, 2009: 15). It provided women's councils to be represented in the executive committee of the city council where they have the potential to bring up gender issues and their perspectives on the agenda of city councils. Together with this arrangement a series of changes were made in the light of suggestions and new by-law of the city council was published in official newspaper of Turkey in 2009.

In addition, a series of national meetings of LA-21 Women's Councils organized with the participation of over 80 women representatives from about 40 cities. (UCLG-MEWA, 2009: 20). The topics discussed during meetings vary but mainly about the women and politics including quota issue; institutionalization of women's councils and preparation for the next women's summit which was supposed to be held in Antalya but cancelled³². Moreover, Working Groups established within the National Network of LA-21 Women's Councils conducted a series of meetings.

6.3. Analysis of the Women's Activities within the context of the Program

In this part I analyze the women's activities of LA-21 Program in three sections. First, I give general information on women's councils, secondly I analyze the local activities of women's councils and lastly I focus on the activities of LA-21 Women's Councils National Coordination Network.

6.3.1. General Information on Women's Councils

Women's activities within Turkey LA-21 Program based on the global agendas (mainly Agenda 21) that call both women and men for their equal and full participation in sustainable

³² 'The Summit has been cancelled upon the recommendation of Antalya LA-21 Women's Council as the host (and supported by the majority of partner cities) due to the precarious environment caused by the escalation of terrorist activities on the eve of the Summit' (UCLG-MEWA, 2008:30).

development (City Councils, 2010). Although the emphasis on women's active participation has its roots in global discourses; national and local contexts of Turkey in terms of gender disparities in decision making, politics, education and employment led to emergence of separate participatory mechanisms within LA-21. This idea of separate mechanisms to increase women's participation finds its base in WID approach which seeks to integrate women into mainstream development programs through women-specific activities and divisions (Karl, 1995: 100). However, the women-specific activities and separate mechanisms for women have also been a debate discussion among program partners. As Emrealp (2005:96) argues, some partner cities claimed that city councils and working groups would be sufficient for the participation of women and thus there was no need for a separate women's platform. In addition, it was argued that the separate mechanism for women would lead to the isolation or even the discrimination of women. Therefore, the establishment of participatory platforms for women was specifically avoided by some partner cities (Ibid). This perspective is also used as a critique of WID approach arguing that these women-specific activities and divisions would lead to marginalization of women rather than their inclusion (Karl, 1995: 100).

On the other hand, national and local dynamics influenced this process where the issue of contextuality came into effect. With implementation of the Program by partner cities, the need to have separate participatory mechanisms for women emerged with the realization of the low participation of women in existing participatory mechanisms within LA-21 (Emrealp, 2005:96). Low representation of women in the city councils showed the necessity of a separate mechanism for women's participation (ibid). Therefore, women's councils are seen as an instrument to promote increased women's participation. Limited representation of women in the city councils has resulted from the low number of women among the 'natural members' of the city councils such as elected women in local councils (ibid).

When the constituents of the city councils are observed, women can only appear as the representatives of civil society organizations which are not also in expected numbers (Ibid). This structural constrain- low representation of women has its reflection from both national and local levels in Turkey. For instance, only 9 per cent of the parliament consists of women. The situation in local politics is worse. As a result of the 2009 Local Elections, only 0.9 percent are mayors (26 out of 2.877), 3.5 percent are members of the provincial councils (115

out of 3.166) and 4.5 percent are municipal council members (1.471 out of 30.921) are women (GDLA, 2010). In addition to low participation of women in local politics, male dominated and centralized structure of the local politics remains as an obstacle for both participatory local governance and women's participation that the Program seeks to promote (Bora and Tokman, 2006:7).

In the light of these structural challenges against women's participation, women's platforms started to be established in LA-21 for promoting the active participation of women into the process (Emrealp, 2005: 98). They are also expected to bring gender issues into the agenda of city management and gender perspective into policies and strategies. Although women's platforms/councils have the potential to promote these objectives and have made impressive progress at national and local levels, as it is stated by the reports of the program, active participation of women into local decision making and reflection of gender perspective into policies could not be fully attained (IULA-EMME, 2006a: 13). Thus, it also shows the Programs intention to achieve women's participation beyond numbers.

In the following years women's platforms transformed into Women's Councils that seek to reach out to all organized such as members of women's organization and unorganized women in the city (Emrealp, 2009:17). In that sense, women's councils function as a joint umbrella for all women in the city. Moreover, being open to unorganized women is crucial since a large proportion of women is unorganized in Turkey and most of them only participate into local democracy through voting in the elections (Bora and Tokman, 2006:8). In general members of women's councils are elected women as members of the provincial and municipal assemblies, the women were elected as neighborhood heads, representatives of public institutions concerned with women-related issues, bars and other relevant professional chambers focusing on women, women-related cooperatives, the women-related branches and women centers of universities, as well as non-governmental organizations focusing on gender issues as well as individual members without any membership to any organization such as housewives, unemployed, employed, retired women and also spouses of male local officials (Emrealp, 2005: 100). In some cities, the spouse of the mayor is elected as the head of women's councils which has led to discussions on the autonomy of the women's councils from local authority among women's councils.

6.3.2. Local Activities of Women's Councils

Although priorities and working areas can vary in each city, in general women's council has multiple and extensive common objectives and functions, these can be listed as the 'empowerment of women in all aspects of local governance, awareness raising on gender issues and problems, integration of gender perspective in policy-making, the development of a sense of participation and ownership in local affairs, development of solidarity against all kinds of discrimination and violence against women, the development of solution proposals and projects directed to the problems, needs and aspirations of women, and promoting the participation of women in the realization of these proposals and projects³³, (Emrealp, 2005: 98; Emrealp, 2009: 17).

In this sense, women's councils highlighted the empowerment of women in local governance and active participation as their objectives. It shows common aspects with GAD and empowerment approach. In addition, they aim to meet the basic needs of women through projects that WID approach focused on. Since women's councils can be seen as local grass-root participatory mechanisms for women, it has the potential to promote empowerment with a bottom-up approach as empowerment approach argues (Moser, 1993: 74). However, being mainly local movement, they also interact among each other and seek to have an impact at the national level with regard to current gender/women issues. It indicates the features of empowerment approach with its interaction with local and national and the potential of collective action. Thus, they also try to establish solidarity among each other through LA-21 Women's Councils National Network which I discuss later.

There are various working areas that LA-21 Women's Councils are interested in their cities. Although they change from city to city depending on their priorities, some of common areas of interest are: Politics including activities on women's participation in politics and decision-making, campaigns, activities on electoral women quota, and national campaigns through declarations, etc.; Governance and Participation aiming to increase women's participation to urban management and local decision-making mechanisms; Violence in order to support mechanisms for women facing violence, raise awareness to prevent violence through campaigns and seminars, working on Consulting and Solidarity Centers/Women Shelters;

³³ These objectives of women's councils are stated by some women's councils in their by-law but they may have differences due to their specific priorities.

Women, Mother and Child Health Care and Public Health Care including activities organizing panels and seminars about women's health, awareness raising about health issues; Training of Women includes activities such as organizing seminars, trainings on various topics such as women's human rights, international and national agreements on women issues, computer skills, literacy, income generation activities and Culture and Art through organizing cultural activities, performing theater, and meeting with women actresses (City Councils, 2010).

In order to illustrate the local activities of women's councils, I give some examples from the cities. These local activities were presented by the representatives of each women's councils in the national coordination meeting of women's councils held in Ankara in 9-11 July 2008 in the fourth phase project and reported by UCLG-MEWA. The cities that presented their activities were Adana, Afyonkarahisar, Antalya, Batman, Bursa (including Nilüfer), Denizli, Diyarbakır, Kocaeli (including Gölcük), Malatya, Samsun, Sinop, Yalova and Zonguldak (UCLG-MEWA, 2008). For instance, Adana Women's Council focuses on violence against women conducting projects to recover victims of domestic violence. Afyonkarahisar Women's Council established partnership with municipality, governorship and provincial directorate of social services and established 'Women's Collaboration Center' and 'Shelter Home' for women that are victims of domestic violence. In addition, they work on trainings to provide income and employment for women such as trainings in cooking, weaving carpets and nursing. Antalya Women's Council has working groups on politics, violence, employment, art, health and environment. Moreover, they focus on active participation of women into the women's council and supporting women's candidates for local elections. Batman Women's Council gave its priority to women's suicide which happens often in that city as well as other serious women's problems and established support centers for women.

Bursa Women's Council organized awareness raising meetings, seminars and worked to increase women's participation in politics. Nilüfer (a district of Bursa) Women's Councils, launched a milk project with the support of the municipality, Uludag University and Pınar Süt (a company produces milk) and work on violence against women through the establishment of a Women's Collaboration Center. Denizli Women's Council worked on activities to generate income for women organizing trainings such as child care, computer trainings and seminars on domestic violence, recycling etc. and providing free tickets for women in the cinema. Diyarbakır Women's Council conducted a survey on the effects of

migration on women, informed the public about the results and launched a project on women and politics. Kocaeli Women's Councils work on issues of women and politics and for this purpose they organized meetings with political parties for quota issue. Gölcük (a district of Kocaeli) Women's Council organized literacy and handicraft trainings and provided a bazaar for women to sell their handicrafts. Malatya Women's Council established Women's Support and Collaboration Center and organized meetings with NGOs to discuss women's problems. Samsun Women's Council established partnership with Van Women's Council and NGOs in Sweden and launched a project on fishing net knitting to provide employment for women. Sinop Women's Council conducted a project with women on handicrafts. Yalova Women's Council focused on activities on concerning women's participation in politics organizing seminars on the issue. They also organized seminars on women's health providing women with free check-ups for breast cancer. Zonguldak Women's Council also worked on women's election quota and organized signature campaign in their local (UCLG-MEWA: 2008).

As it is seen, women's councils from different parts of Turkey work on a large range of issues in their cities mainly depending on their priorities and needs. When we examine the local cases, in addition to function as a mechanism to provide women's active involvement in decision-making, women's councils work to empower women through meeting the practical gender needs of women such as employment, health and education. In this sense, these activities represent the WID understanding and are similar with regards to how the development programs usually interpret and apply empowerment approach. Women's councils try to meet the practical needs of women providing social services for disadvantaged women and organizing activities like charity work when these are not met by the local authorities and state institutions (Bora and Tokman, 2006: 10). Focusing on these activities has the possibility of making women as passive beneficiaries rather than active agents of the development program (Ibid). Moreover, trainings on child and elderly care and income generation projects such as marketing women's handicraft might reproduce the traditional gender roles of women rather than introduce women to new areas of work (Moser, 1993:68).

Although providing the practical gender needs of women is not sufficient to challenge the existing gender inequalities and achieve women's empowerment, it is also important when they are not met within the existing structures. Furthermore, if meeting the practical gender

needs of women leads to greater autonomy of women; it has the potential to meet strategic gender needs (Moser, 1993:69). As it is seen from the local cases, structural constraints as well as local structures and needs may influence the functioning of women's councils towards meeting the practical gender needs of women. However, when activities on practical gender needs such as income generating activities increase women's domestic burden it may even fail to promote women's practical needs (Ibid).

While meeting the practical gender needs of women is an important part of women's activities, to increase women's representation in politics is one of the working areas of women's councils. Thus, they seek to meet strategic gender needs through organizing activities and campaigns to promote women's increased representation and participation as decision makers to challenge the existing power structures and establishing women's collaboration centers, shelter homes and awareness rising. Especially, activities and political struggles to empower women as decision makers through activities to increase the number of women in local politics signify their aim to meet the strategic gender needs of women as GAD and empowerment approach aim.

LA-21 Women's Councils Survey conducted by the Program within the fourth project phase in 2007 gives information about the structure of the women councils and their participation into city councils and municipal councils. The number of partner cities participated into the survey accounts to 35³⁴. According to the survey results (2007), Women Councils have been established in 26 cities, and there are related works in 7 cities in the form of women's platforms/women's working groups while Women Council has not been established in 2 cities. 25 Women Councils have working groups. Members of women's councils participate into the city council meetings activities in 23 cities while in 7 cities, Women's Councils are not represented in the City Councils. However, it is important to consider that the survey conducted before the new regulations of by-law of the city council that increased representation of women's council within city council came into effect in 2009 and thus this survey is valid for the respective time period in 2007.

³⁴ These cities are Adana, Afyonkarahisar, Antakya, Antalya, Bakırköy (Istanbul), Bingöl, Bursa, Denizli, Diyarbakır, Doğubeyazıt (Ağrı), Gölcük (Kocaeli), İzmir, Karaburun (İzmir), Kars, Kızıltepe (Mardin), Kocaeli, Kuşadası (Aydın), Malatya, Manisa, Mardin, Mersin, Mustafapaşa (Nevşehir), Nevşehir, Nilüfer (Bursa), Osmangazi (Bursa), Samsun, Sinop, Şanlıurfa, Şişli (Istanbul), Tarsus (Mersin), Uşak, Ürgüp (Nevşehir), Van, Yalova and Zonguldak (UCLG-MEWA, 2007).

In addition, only in 15 cities do the members of Women's Councils actively participate in the working groups that are formed within the city councils. In 20 cities, the members of Women Councils follow the meetings of the Municipal Councils while in 11 the members of Women Councils do not. Although the number of women's councils that participate into the Municipal Councils is not that high, in 29 cities the proposals and recommendations of Women Councils are conveyed to the Municipal Administrations regularly and in 26 cities, the degree to which the proposals and recommendations of Women Councils are reflected in the local administration policies, the results that are obtained and what can be changed are monitored (UCLG-MEWA, 2007).

I can argue that according to the survey results, in the fourth project of the Program, women's councils have not been established in all partner cities which may lead to obstacles hindering the participation of women in those cities. Women's councils are not represented in city councils in every partner city which is problematic for their participation into local decision making. But important legal steps are taken with by-law of the city council where representatives of women's councils have been the natural members of executive committee of the city council (Emrealp, 2009: 24). At least it can guarantee the representation of women in the city councils' executive committee. On the other hand, existing women's councils convey their recommendations and the proposals to the municipal administrations in a way can affect the local policies.

Some women's councils also developed projects funded by LA-21 Supporting Local Projects Program (SLPP) in the third project phase of the program. The priority topics of the LA-21 SLPP were reduction of poverty in cities, increasing the quality of life in cities and achieving environmental sustainability (IULA-EMME, 2006). The program supported 23 local projects. The implementation of the selected projects started in September 2005 and ended in October 2006. 12 of these projects were developed by women's councils related with women. These were; "First Human, Then Woman!" (Adana), "Strengthening the Societal Roles of Women Living in Poor Districts of Bursa" (Bursa), "Training and Supporting Women Entrepreneurs" (Çanakkale), "Increasing Ability of Women and Employment Generation" (Dalyan), "Impact of Migration on Women" (Diyarbakır), "Prevention Against Violence in Family, Early Determination and Providing Counseling" (İzmir), "Woman Training and Coordination Center" (Malatya), "Mother as a Trainer" (Mardin), "Ceramics Shining in the Hands of Trainees in Tuşba" (Van), "Empowerment of Women with Certified Courses and Seminars"

(Yalova), “Baby Sitter Training” (Zonguldak) (UCLG-MEWA, 2006). These projects aimed at empowering poor women through trainings, seminars and income generating activities. Although they have the language of empowerment, they implement empowerment through meeting the practical needs of women. In this sense, their implementation based on WID approach without challenging unequal gender relations. In addition, some projects have the potential to reproduce the traditional gender roles of women i.e. as baby sitter, mother.

6.3.3. Activities of LA-21 Women’s Councils National Coordination Network

In addition to the local activities, women’s councils have established a national collaborative network for cooperation, the exchange of information and sharing experience among themselves. Women’s Councils National Coordination Network consists of Women’s Councils³⁵ in 33 cities from different regions of Turkey by the end of the fourth project phase (UCLG-MEWA, 2008). In order to strengthen the national network of women’s councils a series of national meetings, women’s festivals and (lately) women’s summit and working group meetings were organized. In addition, women’s councils share their experiences and inform their activities with each other not only through national meetings but also via electronic mail group of the representatives Women’s Councils. However, not all women’s councils can communicate through internet as they are relatively disadvantaged in position when it comes to use of internet (UCLG-MEWA, 2008:8). Therefore, sometimes information sharing through phones is seen as a short-term solution.

Within the context of National Coordination Network, women’s councils organize National Coordination Meetings to exchange of information and experience among themselves. Two representatives from each Women’s Councils and representatives from UNDP and UCLG-MEWA participate in these meetings. During these meetings, the representatives of Women’s Councils inform about their activities, share their opinions on the previously-identified topics by women’s councils, discuss campaigns, and prepare for the Women’s Festivals/Summit. In

³⁵ These cities are Adana, Afyonkarahisar, Antakya, Antalya, Bakırköy (İstanbul), Bursa, Denizli, Diyarbakır, Doğubeyazıt (Ağrı), Gölçük (Kocaeli), İzmir, Karaburun (İzmir), Kars, Kızıltepe (Mardin), Kocaeli, Kuşadası (Aydın), Malatya, Manisa, Mardin, Mersin, Mustafapaşa (Nevşehir), Nevşehir, Nilüfer (Bursa), Orhangazi (Bursa), Osmangazi(Bursa), Sarıyer (İstanbul), Sinop, Şişli (İstanbul), Tarsus (Mersin), Ürgüp (Nevşehir), Van, Yalova and Zonguldak (UCLG-MEWA, 2008).

In order to see the geographical locations of these cities, see the map of Turkey in appendix 2.

this direction, meetings were held in Aliğa (February 2001), Babaeski (August 2001), Istanbul (November 2001), Bursa (December 2001), Yalova (December 2004), Afyonkarahisar (February 2005), Ankara (July 2005), Ankara (June 2006), Ankara (November 2006), Adana (January 2007), Ankara (March 2007), Van (May 2007), Uludağ/Bursa (August 2007) and Ankara (July 2008).

These meetings also function by establishing solidarity among different women's councils for gender/women issues on the national agenda of Turkey. For instance, in national coordination meeting held in Van in 2007, women's councils unite on the joint declaration³⁶ on equal participation of women in politics for the national elections in 2007 with the demand of quota for women in lists of candidates (UCLG-MEWA, 2008). This declaration was signed by 29 women's councils and announced to the media. In addition, national meetings give the opportunity to discuss general problems they face during the implementation and learn from different experiences.

LA-21 Women's Councils also established Working Groups at the national level to focus on some issues that they determine important for them to work on. These working groups were; 'Quotas for Women', 'Shelter Homes for Women', 'Institutionalization-Strategy Development-Action Plans and Capacity Building', 'Poverty Alleviation, Education and Health' (UCLG-MEWA, 2008:32). Each working group consisted of 8-10 voluntary representatives of previously-identified partner cities. First, Quotas for Women group focused the ways and means for promoting the endorsement of (informal) quotas by political parties for the upcoming elections, since the imposition of formal quotas would not be possible in the face of the reluctance of politicians to make the necessary amendments in pertinent legislation. They discussed on the strategies to increase the number of women in Turkish National Grand Assembly. They started a signature campaign in their cities and encouraged other Women's Councils to join this campaign. Second, Shelter Homes for Women working group focused on activating Clause 14 of the Law on Municipalities pertaining to the establishment of Shelter Homes in cities with a population of over 50,000 (Ibid). They prepared a model project with the Women's Consultation and Collaboration

³⁶ See the joint declaration in appendix 3 and it can also be found at;

<http://www.kentkonseyleri.net/change.aspx?lg=1&pi=108> , last consultation 15 May 2010.

Center and Shelter Home to assist the new cities that aim to establish centers and shelter homes.

Thirdly, Institutionalization, Strategy Development, Action Plans and Capacity Building working group focused on the institutionalization of Women's Councils, particularly in relation to accommodating the relevant clauses of the By-laws of the City Council enacted by the Ministry of Interior. Finally, Poverty Alleviation, Education and Health working group focused on identifying the priority components and problem areas in relation to poverty alleviation, education and health issues, and preparing detailed action plan proposals separately for each of these three major areas (UCLG-MEWA, 2008:32). As it is seen, national working groups focused on specific areas and awareness-raising among women's councils on these topics. They seek to meet both strategic and practical gender needs. However, a stable number of representatives within the groups restricted the entry of new members which conflicted with the participation approach of the program. This, along with the budgetary problems, ended the program's support on working group meetings.

Moreover, women's councils organized "LA-21 Cities Women's Activities Festival" each year at national level (Emrealp, 2005:105). The first Festival "Peace and Women" was organized in 2002 in Izmir, the second Festival "Globalization and Women" was organized in 2003 in Bursa, the third Festival "Governance and Women" was organized in 2004 in Samsun, and the fourth Festival "Economy and Women" was organized in 2005 in Zonguldak (Ibid). The Festivals gave the opportunity to increase the interaction and collaboration among LA-21 women representatives from different partner cities for taking collective action and sharing their experiences. During the festivals, LA-21 women activities in different cities were displayed via exhibitions and stands, and a series of events were organized by participating cities, including theatre, folk dances, exhibitions, etc. Parallel to the cultural events, a series of seminars and panel discussions on women issues were held, with the participation of eminent scholars and experts specialized on pertinent topics (UCLG-MEWA, 2004:7).

These festivals increased the collaboration among women's councils but they were more like cultural events. As a result, the representatives of LA-21 Women's Councils have decided to transform the "LA-21 Cities Women's Festival" into "LA-21 Women's Summit" to focus on discussions. "LA-21 Women's Summit" entitled "Women and Politics" was held in Ürgüp (Nevşehir) in September 2006 with the participation of over 400 women representatives from

32 partner cities. In the Summit, panels and seminars have organized on “Place of Women in Politics”, “Activities can be done to increase the number of Women in Parliaments” and “Legal Arrangements to Achieve Gender Equality in Representation: Quota”. Finally, the Women’s Summit Declaration was prepared and announced by the representatives of LA-21 Women’s Councils (UCLG-MEWA, 2008:29).

In sum, in this section I analyzed the discourse and practices of Turkey LA-21 Program in terms of women’s participation and focused on the analysis of women’s activities with theoretical perspectives. Analysis of each project phase of the program provided information not only about the program but also its aims, objectives and activities on women’s participation. This historical contextual information and analysis of project phases also showed the influence of global discourse as well as the impact of national and local contexts on implementation of the global discourse. Moreover, the analysis of activities of women’s councils demonstrated whether women’s councils as a means of women’s participation can contribute to women’s empowerment and gender equality. I examined both local and national level activities of women which provided in-depth information. In the conclusion section, I discuss the outcomes of the analysis in detail in relation to the combination of theoretical framework.

7. Concluding Remarks

Women’s participation in development programs has been a growing concern of development agencies. The understanding of development programs has shifted from integrating women as passive beneficiaries to promoting the active participation of women. They started to use the language of GAD in their discourse and practices which address strategic needs of women. As Connelly argues (2000) even development programs use the language of GAD, they may apply WID which aims to meet practical gender needs. In addition, there is always potential to integrate women for efficiency of the programs rather than challenge gender inequalities as GAD and Empowerment propose. Although meeting the practical needs of women is important and it is not enough to challenge women’s subordinated position. On the other hand, if meeting practical needs provides women with autonomy, it can enhance the

possibility of reaching to the strategic needs. However, if it increases women's burden, then it even fails to meet practical needs (Moser, 1993: 69).

Therefore, with the feminist interventions, it has been an ongoing discussion whether development programs promote women's participation to achieve women's empowerment and gender equality. I discussed this with the analysis of the case of Turkey LA-21 Program using the WID, GAD and Empowerment Approaches. Moreover, this debate is also important in the context of Turkey where gender inequalities are high. In parallel to global level discussions on the issue, the discourse and practices of development and women follow similar pattern in Turkey. Modernization understanding challenged by feminist critiques and shifted towards empowerment and gender equality discourse with the support of international meeting and institutions. Therefore, Development and women discourse in Turkey has also transformed from WID towards GAD and Empowerment. However, how this discourse is interpreted and applied is questionable due to the existing gender inequalities.

The analysis of Turkey LA-21 Program with its different levels and components shows that it is difficult to give one definite answer to the research question. Therefore, first I give answers to the sub-questions of how the program promotes women's participation and which theoretical approach(es) the Program adopt in its discourse and practice and finally whether women's participation promotes gender equality and empowerment. First of all, the Program has special interest in active involvement of women into the process giving references to the global level discourse. The program adopted the global discourse on women and sustainable development, that is, the full and equal participation of women in decision making and implementation of LA-21. Aiming to promote women's participation in decision making, the program addresses the meeting strategic gender needs. It also focuses on integration of gender perspectives in local decision making. Thus, these aims indicate the components of GAD and empowerment approaches in the program's discourse on women's participation.

Secondly, in practice, the program promoted participation of women through women's councils. According to the program, women's councils are mechanisms to promote women's participation and integrate gender perspectives into local policies. Thus the emphasis is on mainstreaming of women's perspectives as well as participation in numbers. While the aim of the women's councils has aspects of GAD and Empowerment, promoting women's participation through women specific mechanism has been the discussion in the program. The problem was whether it results in women's marginalization. The separate mechanisms and

divisions for women are widely applied in WID approach (Karl, 1995). It can be argued that this implementation of women's participation has the WID understanding. However, low representation of women in city councils as a reflection of low representation of women at national and local levels showed the need of having women specific mechanism to promote participation (Emrealp, 2005). It shows how national and local contexts influence the implementation of the discourse of the program.

In addition, as it is argued in project reports, although women's participation is achieved in numbers, active involvement of women in decision making and integration of gender perspectives as promotion of strategic needs of women have been problematic and could not be achieved fully. This situation can be seen as obstacle to challenge with gender inequalities. On the other hand, representation of women councils as the natural members of the executive committee of the city council is provided through legal arrangements in the by-law of the city council (Emrealp, 2009: 24). That legal regulation has increased the potential of women's councils to be a part of the decision-making.

Thirdly, the program has extended its role from facilitating women's participation in local decision making to support activities of women's councils to increase women's representation in local and national politics since the third phase of the program. Therefore, the program supported political struggles of women through supporting the activities of women's councils. In this respect, fulfilling strategic gender needs has been the integral understanding of the program. In the fourth phase of the project, the program focused on localizing MGDs and underlined the potential role of women's councils to promote women's empowerment and gender equality. Therefore, in its discourse and practice the program seek to meet strategic needs of women using the GAD and Empowerment thinking.

The analysis of women's activities focused on whether women's councils as a means of women's participation can promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The results of this analysis also vary. First of all, as a structure, women's councils have components of empowerment approach since they are local grass root participatory mechanisms to work on women's empowerment. Second, their activities vary depending on the needs and priorities of women in their cities. They work to meet both women's practical and strategic gender needs. Their activities range from empowering women in decision making and politics, working against domestic violence to organizing seminars, training, income generating activities to awareness raising on women issues. They mostly organize income generating activities to

empower women which can be seen as WID anti-poverty approach. Moreover, these activities can reproduce the traditional gender roles of women. Therefore, this strategy is not sufficient to challenge with gender relations and promote women's empowerment.

Third, although providing social services such as literacy courses and trainings (practical needs of women) is not a main objective of women's councils, they try to fulfill the gap mainly created by local authorities and state institutions (Bora and Tokman, 2006). Fourth, women's councils also organize activities to increase participation of women in politics such as quota campaign which can transform women into decision makers. Thus, without making any generalization, I argue that women's councils determine their working area due to their priorities. It can be said that their activities exhibit GAD, empowerment and WID understanding.

In addition to local activities, national level analysis focuses on national collaboration network activities of women's councils. Women's councils organize national collaboration meetings, women councils' festivals and working groups at the national level. While they serve both practical and strategic needs, they organize the national network and meetings as a means of collective action on current gender issues on the national agenda such as election quota for women. For instance, the joint declaration was prepared by all women's councils for women's quota for national elections in 2007. This indicates the empowerment understanding on collective action and interaction of local level with national (Parpart, 2008: 357). On the other hand, previous women's festivals are criticized being like cultural events rather than political struggles. In this respect, joint action may not provide women's empowerment.

To sum up, it is difficult to draw general conclusions about the program with its different dimensions. Being aware of this limitation, I can argue that Turkey LA-21 Program aims to promote women's participation with GAD and empowerment understanding. This participation has the potential to meet strategic gender needs with GAD and Empowerment understanding. On the other hand, in practice, active participation of women in decision making and integration of gender perspectives could not be fully attained by the program. This becomes an obstacle in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. However, important steps are taken towards this goal. For instance, legal regulations in by-law of the city council signify the steps that are taken on the issue. Women activities indicate

that women's council both work to meet strategic and practical gender needs. But especially at the local level, they focus on meeting the practical needs of women with WID understanding even though they use the language of empowerment approach. At the national level, they focus on mostly on increasing women's representation in politics through collective action. These activities exhibit the GAD and empowerment understanding.

Considering the structural constrains and gender disparities in Turkey, it can be said that the program has the potential to increase women's participation in promoting women's empowerment and gender equality through women's councils. But women's councils should also internalize and apply the empowerment and GAD understanding in their original sense. Moreover, other mechanisms, mainly the city councils and local authorities, need to ensure the women's participation and integrate gender perspective into their discourse and practices as well. Therefore, further attempts are necessary to ensure that women's participation into the program that promotes gender equality and women's empowerment.

Finally, even though it is not possible to make generalizations with a single case study, this study itself indicates that the global, national and local levels interact and influence the discourses and practices of development projects on women's participation. Thus, national and local contexts can shape the implementations of development programs that aim to adopt global discourse. In addition, when the discourses of development programs interact with the feminist theories and movement, it enhances the potential of development programs to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Therefore, for further research, would be interesting to focus on this interaction itself to see how development practice and discourse influence and is influenced by women's movements in a specific context. In my case, the interaction between Turkey LA-21 Program and the women's movement in Turkey, particularly the influence of the Program on women's movement in Turkey can be a further study topic to investigate.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: City Council Article in the Law of Municipalities that was enacted in 2005

(Law on Municipalities No. 5393)

City Council

ARTICLE 76 — The City Council seeks to realize the development of a city vision and responsible citizenship, preservation of urban rights and the rule of law, sustainable development, responsiveness to environment, mutual social assistance and solidarity, transparency, accountability, participation and subsidiarity in urban life.

The municipalities shall provide assistance and support in relation to the effective and fruitful conduct of the activities of the city councils, consisting of the representatives of professions' chambers having the status of a public body, trade unions, notaries, universities if exists, concerned civil society organizations, political parties, public institutions and the neighborhood heads, as well as other relevant participants.

The recommendations developed in the City Council shall be included in the agenda of, and be evaluated in the subsequent meeting of the municipal assembly.

The procedures and bases for the operation of the City Council shall be determined by the By-laws to be prepared by the Ministry of Interior.

Source: Emrealp, S. (2009). *The City Councils: as a participatory-democratic local governance model developed in Turkey*. İstanbul: UCLG-MEWA.p. 9

Appendix 2: The map of Turkey that shows the cities



Source: Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry, Directorate General of Press and Information.
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(Accessed 20 May 2010).

Appendix 3: Women's Councils Joint Declaration- 30 May 2007



**LOCAL AGENDA 21 PROGRAM
WOMEN's COUNCILS
Joint Declaration**



TOWARDS DEMOCRATIC POLITICS TOGETHER WITH WOMEN...

LET DEMOCRACY AND POLITICS EXIST WITH WOMEN!

SO, LET A WOMAN OCCUPY ONE OF THE FIRST TWO RANKS IN YOUR LIST!

Women experience problems in every political, economic, social and cultural area.

These problems can be solved only with women's existence in all these areas at every level.

As a requisite of democracy, we want women to have their place at the **TURKISH GRAND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY** with equal participation and in a participatory approach.

We, women, want to exercise our right to be elected equally in our country where half of the society is not sufficiently represented at the decision-taking mechanisms.

We, as the representatives of **Women Councils**, pursuant to the principle of representational justice and democracy, with regard to the 22 July General Elections, demand that **more women** designated as candidates and ranked with “**one woman – one man**” order on the election lists.

We will pursue this matter and support woman candidates.

LOCAL AGENDA 21 WOMEN COUNCILS*

***Signatory Women Councils to the Proclamation**

Adana LA-21 Women Council
Afyonkarahisar LA -21 Women Council
Ağrı-Doğubeyazıt LA -21 Working Group on Women
Antalya LA -21 Women Council
Antakya LA -21 Women Council
Aydın/Kuşadası LA -21 Women Council
Bingöl LA -21 Women Council
Bursa LA -21 Women Council
Bursa/Nilüfer Working Group on Women
Bursa/Osmangazi Working Group on Women
Denizli LA -21 Women Council
Diyarbakır LA -21 Working Group on Women
İstanbul/Bakırköy LA-21 Working Group on Women
İstanbul/Şişli LA -21 Women Council
İzmir/Karaburun LA -21 Women Council
Nevşehir LA -21 Women Council
Nevşehir/Mustafapaşa LA -21 Women Council
Nevşehir/Ürgüp LA -21 Women Council
Kars LA -21 Women Council
Kocaeli LA -21 Women Council
Kocaeli/Gölcük LA -21 Women Council
Kütahya LA -21 Women Council
Malatya LA -21 Women Council
Manisa LA -21 Women Council
Mardin LA -21 Women Council
Mardin/Kızıltepe LA -21 Women Council
Mersin LA -21 Women Council
Samsun LA -21 Women Council
Sinop LA -21 Women Council
Tarsus LA -21 Women's Commission
Van LA -21 Women Council
Yalova LA -21 Women Council
Zonguldak LA-21 City Council Women's Commission

Sources: UCLG-MEWA (2007). *LA-21 Women's Councils National Coordination Meeting Report, 28-31 May 2007 Van*. İstanbul: UCLG-MEWA.

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