

# **FLYING TEAM AGAINST VIOLENCE**

## **Combatting Honour Related Violence, Forced Marriages and Abandonment**

### **NATIONAL REPORT TURKEY**

**Kalkinma Atoyasi (Development Workshop)**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. The Goals and the activities

We conducted interviews with NGOs and grass root organizations working on violence against women about honour-related violence, forced marriage and abandoning within the framework of Flying Team Against Violence Project. We gathered information from the interviewed organizations and institutions about their opinions on these issues as well as their impression of state policies and their future plan, demands and requirements. This project aims at establishing an international network in order to ensure that women organizations share their information and experiences and thus, develop their work methods and empower themselves. To that end, we facilitated the sharing of good practices in line with the projects and activities the interviewed organizations carried out.

This report, based on the interviews, will identify the definitions for honour-related violence, forced marriage and abandoning commonly used by women movements and organizations and then, will depict the broader picture of the economic, social, political and juridical aspects regarding the context about violence against women in Turkey. In the subsequent section, it will give information about the research method and scope. It will inform about the content, method and success indicators of the activities or project suggested by each organization as good practices in accordance with the categorization of their organization structure and field of activity. Lastly, it will give place to their broader demands and proposals regarding what has to be done about violence against women. In this way, while the report intends to provide important clues what kind of a struggle and organizing could be developed within the current context, it also informs about good practices emerged in different scales.

### 1.2. Conceptual Definitions

#### **-Honour-related violence:**

Honour-related violence is among the most horrible forms of violence against women and it takes away the basic right to live. Honour means the domination and control of men over women within the context of relationships between genders. Honour in our country, as elsewhere the patriarchal thinking is prevalent, is defined on the basis of male's control and domination over female body and sexuality.

This control, the most prominent example being family, is (re)produced through various societal institutions. Women's wear of pants, going out alone, looking at or talking to strangers, seeing a man, visiting her family without permission, wearing "revealing clothes", being out at night, extramarital sex and similar examples could be viewed as the reasons staining woman's and concomitantly man's honour as her "owner".

Honour forces not only women, but also men to behave specifically. While women are regarded as the carrier of honour, men are seen as defenders. In Turkey, defending one's honour is primarily taken as duty of her husband, father, brother or other male and female members of the family and relatives. Thus, punishing woman if she does anything in harm of this relative sense of honour falls to these people or institutions. Punishing can be woman's exclusion from the society, buzz cutting her hair, injuring body organs like mutilation of her nose, ear or genital organ or branding, forcing to suicide or murder in various ways.

Punishing or murdering woman in diverse ways in order to restore one's honour could be a decision taken by an individual man as well as by family council composed for "the sake of customs" and by a large group of individuals in order to decide on how, when, by whom and where the punishment will be executed. But oversimplification of honour-related violence as customs would be quite limiting and problematic. Customs and honour feed into each other and the substitution of honour with the concept of customs implies and reinforces the idea that women are only subject to violence committed by uneducated men in regions where feudal relationships are prevalent. This in turn ends up with the association of honour with countries dominated by Islamic culture or underdeveloped in the global plane and the Eastern and Southeastern regions of Turkey where feudal relationships and traditions are more affective. However, honour-related killings happen in a so large area of the world that it cannot be associated with a specific region or culture and many women in the globe are subject to violence in the name of honour. We should keep in mind that these killings are not related with a particular group or geography and they are proportional with the patriarchy establishing dominance over female body in the name of honour.

### **-Forced Marriage:**

There is no widely acknowledged definition about forcing into marriage and forced marriages yet. Most simplistically, forced marriage is a kind of marriage that one or both partners to be married do not give free or legitimate approval. Since 2000, forced marriage is defined as violence against woman and considered as discrimination. This kind of marriages without consent or with forced consent are first and foremost relevant for women and play rather significant role in unequal gender roles and relations and the rise of violence against women stemming from them.

The most common form of forced marriage happening in the various ways such as bride price and exchange in Turkey and elsewhere is the enforcement of women into marriage at early or child age. Early marriages which are illicit and covered by the scope of international conventions as human rights violation committed against women are amongst the areas where inequality between women and men as well as child abuse manifests itself worst. While forced marriage could be an escape from raising the girl regarded as an economic burden for the family by marrying her at early ages, it could also happen to force the girl at early/child age to marry a rich man in exchange of money in order to earn income for the family or bolster its economy or a relative in order to keep the family wealth undivided.

Even though these economic factors are determinant in forced marriages, its main foundation is based on the dominance and control of the girl's body and sexuality at an early age basically due to patriarchal traditions and cultural values and norms. Women are married by force at early/child age without consent in order to defend family honour and pride based on young girls' virginity and to eliminate pre-marital problems originating from girls' sex and sexuality. These forms of forced marriages occurred as the consequence of such religious and cultural traditions are indeed in a sense different manifestations of the relationship between honour and forced marriage. Thus, the conception of forced marriage could be only defined comprehensively and explicatively within the framework of a total approach to honour.

Otherwise forced marriage can also happen more invisibly in women's lives. For instance, women being forced to get married resulting from the lack of alternatives, i.e. too little economic and social choices women can have and women debarred from the right of education and work finding solution in getting married in order to sustain their lives or to escape from the pressure of being spinster and acquire social recognition could be considered in a broader context as forced marriage.

### **-Abandoning:**

Abandoning constitutes a newly emerging face of violence that women are subject to and occurs at national and transnational plane and often in parallel to the increasing job mobility. The notion of abandoning which has still no clear definition and requires serious conceptualizing could be in a broad sense defined as an individual's leave of other individual(s) economically and socially dependent on him without necessary resources to live on. Particularly the proportion of women abandoned in countries lacking social security and programs or with their insufficiency is observed high enough to risk women's social and economic survival.

Abandoning could be in various ways but the primary among the most common forms is man's going another city or country for work and leaving them behind with the promise to take along later. In Turkey, it is observed especially in provincial and rural areas of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia where men move to cities like İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir and Antalya leaving his family to his parents in order to find employment. Another common form is a man's leaving his wife in the home country by migrating to the European countries especially for work. Often men's stay for long years in the country they work without taking their wives along and factors such as keeping company with another wife or partner make the situation much worse on the part of woman. Since the divorce is not still a common and acknowledgeable fact, women have to sustain their lives alone for a long definite or indefinite time and obliged to look after the children and her husband's parents as well as they cannot fulfill economic, psychological and emotional needs.

Although the most significant form occurs at the end of man's physically moving away from home and family, abandoning could be manifest in different ways which are more difficult to see and recognize. Especially when abandoning is not conceptually defined fully and delineated, we should develop an approach that would be comprehensive as much as possible and involve different manifestations of this case. In this sense, one has to think second marriage of a man divorced when he has no child or for other reasons or his relation to a second woman and often have religious marriage could be considered as abandoning, because there is also an intangible and not only material loss. Here the most important point concerning violence against women, the abandoned one is usually woman due to gender roles and relations deeply rooted in the society because there are several mechanisms legitimizing man's abandoning his home, family or wife. However, abandoning is not a question for woman having on income or obligated to protect her honour and this situation creates a de facto inequality on the part of women.

## 2. CURRENT SITUATION in TURKEY

In Turkey, struggle against violence against women started in 1980s with various actions and campaigns which are heard in public areas and then, this organization is followed by the NGOs established by women that had work on state policies and applications in the 1990s. During this process, while a street-oriented politics adopting anti-state discourses and rejecting collaboration was dominant at first, struggle against violence against women started to be institutionalized in 1990s and became widely known by using state mechanisms as well. In other words, in the 1980s, street actions and campaigns in big cities carried out by feminists made it possible to achieve success on struggle against violence against women in the 1990s. Thus, while on the one hand the concepts that we use in everyday life and meet with in the newspapers or TV such as sexual harassment, violence in family are noticed today as feminist discourse gained legitimacy, on the other hand legal arrangements and changes are enabled by international conventions signed and/or applied as a result of institutional efforts.

While women movements in Turkey struggle against each kind of gender inequalities, their starting point can be defined as opposing the physical violence that women are socially subjected to. Initially, legal gains of this organized struggle are achieved in the 1990s as legal arrangements such as eliminating the reduced sentence for the rape of prostitute women and allowing women work outside home without her husband's permission. Among these, especially the enactment of Law 4320 that prepared to protect women against domestic violence is of significant importance. Thus, it became legally possible to consider the domestic violence against women and children as crime and punish it. In the 2000s, these legal improvements are followed by the elimination of the Civil Code and Penal Code articles that contain violence and discrimination against women. As a result, new achievements have been gained towards the equality between men and women under the law by the amendments made to ensure the basic principles of equality as well as de facto equality between men and women.<sup>1</sup>

In time, women movement both established its own organizations and contributed to the production of new policies and establishment of new organizations by the state. It is possible to say that this institutionalization process happened in different ways and at several scales. Especially by the impact of starting to receive funds from abroad, women and feminists working on the ground started to work with the state in different researches and projects. In this process, giving new functions and responsibilities to new state institutions established to work in this area such Directorate General on The Status of Women or to old institutions like Social Services and Children Protection Agency and also the local municipalities as well as new NGOs established by women were effective. At the end of the process that worked in a multidirectional way in the 2000s, various departments and women committees in local governments, universities and bar associations fighting against violence become widespread.

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<sup>1</sup>Altınay Ayşe Gül and AratYeşim, *Violence Against Women in Turkey (Türkiye'de Kadına Yönelik Şiddet)*, İstanbul; Metis, 2008, p. 28; [www.kadinayoneliksidet.org](http://www.kadinayoneliksidet.org)

The number of women foundation was about 10 in the 1980s and jumped to about 350 when we came to the 2000s.<sup>2</sup>

The basic factor determining and shaping the institutionalization in these different layers was the objectives of women to develop solidarity and collaboration against violence and concretely, their demands to build mechanisms such as shelter houses or information centers. By the huge efforts and pressures of women organizations, shelter houses are established under the body of state, though too insufficient in number. According to the data for 2007, there are 35 shelter houses in total serve, while 19 among them are ran by Social Services And Children Protection Agency, 12 ran by the special provincial administrations and 4 ran by the municipality.<sup>3</sup> By September 2011, the number of women shelters just increased to 51 and their total capacity to 1125.<sup>4</sup> In the 1990s women shelters built by the volunteer efforts of Foundation for Women's Solidarity and Purple Roof Women Shelter Foundation became the first examples in nationwide. Also, Women Shelter's Congress gathered annually women organizations fighting against violence, independent women groups and state departments working on this area and became an important communication and solidarity platform. As from 1998, the Congress is gathered every year in a different city and the final declarations issued are used to affect state policies and implementations.<sup>5</sup>

Even this short summary mentioning about basic points can give some important clues how much women movements in the struggle against violence against women gained ground and achievements since the 1980s. It can be said that some positive steps by the state in the second half of the 2000s were taken about the struggle against domestic violence. In this sense, Prime Ministry Circular no.26218 issued in July 2006 has great significance. This circular is based on the report of the commission established by Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) in 2006 in order to conduct research about violence against women and children and honour killings and to take measures against in view of honour killings increased in the 2000s. This is a precursor in that it employs the elimination of all acts of violence against women as a state policy and suggests inter-institutional collaboration for the implementation of solution alternatives.<sup>6</sup> Although it is pleasing to see that the evaluation and proposals included in the circular are in accord with the demands of women organizations, any sanction for the enforcement of the circular is not imposed and stated commitments carried through yet. For example, Metropolitan municipalities with over 50,000 population are liable to open shelter houses to protect women and children in accordance with the Article 14 of the Municipal Law, presently there are only 23 houses run by the municipalities. The fact that the measures and plans stated in the Circular could not be put into practice or have so insufficient examples

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<sup>2</sup> Flying Broom, *Guide of Women Organizations in Turkey (Türkiye'de Kadın Örgütleri Rehberi 2004)* (Ankara: British Council and Flying Broom, 2004).

<sup>3</sup> [www.shcek.gov.tr/hizmetler/Kadin\\_Aile\\_Toplum/Kadin\\_Konukevleri.asp](http://www.shcek.gov.tr/hizmetler/Kadin_Aile_Toplum/Kadin_Konukevleri.asp)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&ArticleID=1064441&Date=26.09.2011&CategoryID=77>

<sup>5</sup> Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation, *Women's Shelter I. and II. Congresses (Kadın Sığınakları I. ve II. Kurultayları)*, Women's Shelter Congress Series:1 (İstanbul: Purple Roof, 2000). Purple Roof Women's Shelter Foundation, *Women's Shelter I. and II. Congresses (Kadın Sığınakları I. ve II. Kurultayları)*, Women's Shelter Congress Series:2 (İstanbul: Purple Roof, 2003).

<sup>6</sup> Ayşe Gül Altınay and Yeşim Arat, *ibid.*

of implementation demonstrates the lack of a sincere and strong-minded attitude of the State in fighting against violence against women.

That the State does not produce efficient and realistic policies on this issue and has no volition in putting it into effect is frequently criticized by women organizations and NGOs. Being the most important among the reasons is that the State does not take sufficiently protective and preventive measures, although violence against women and especially concluded with killing significantly increases in society recently. According to the officially recorded cases, it is estimated that the ratio of women killings have raised 1400% in the last seven years. According to data available, 226 women are killed and 6223 women are applied to hospitals by the reason of domestic violence in the first seven months of 2011.<sup>7</sup> Because the above-mentioned legislative improvements and especially dissuasive arrangements are not enforced, this constitutes an impediment in fighting against the violence against women. Also, there is a backlash regarding the rights previously achieved by women movements as a result of the conservative nature of the current government and its addressing the women issue from this point of view. In this respect, the most important change among the others is the removal the State Ministry Responsible for Women and Family and its replacement by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. Thus, state's approach to women happened to be delineated primarily and only through family. Moreover, another development has been putting to the article 434 of Turkish Penal Code that women organizations have long struggled to cancel back into the agenda, one of the proposals developed in a meeting of the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors gathered to reduce the heavy work load of the jurisdiction.<sup>8</sup> This article proposing the marrying of women with her rapist reveals the approach of the jurisdiction which is amongst the important parties concerning the violence against women. Finally, Social Services and Children Protection Agency suggested the isolation of women making prostitution in a distinct unit on the grounds that they can affect other women staying in the shelter badly in the meeting held by the State Ministry Responsible for Family and Social Policies in Ankara last week.<sup>9</sup> Feminist organizations strictly criticized the proposal since it would classify women and make them 'the other'. Considering that 51 of the total 77

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<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.aktifhaber.com/kadin-siginma-evlerinin-sayisi-artirilmali-358375h.htm>, See "Domestic Violence Has Locked Police Force"

(AileçiŞiddetEmniyetiKilitledi)<http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&Date=&ArticleID=1061988&CategoryID=77>. According to Human Rights Association's report on violence against women between 2005 and 2011, men murdered 4190 women in the last seven years and 143 women in the first eight months of 2011, see <http://bianet.org/bianet/toplum/132866-erkekler-sekiz-ayda-143-kadin-oldurdu>

<sup>8</sup> According to Article 434 which is also known as "marrying of the rape victim with her rapist", in case that marriage is brought about, the sentence of the rapist could be delayed for five years. Moreover, other suggestions are examining "whether the physical health is damaged or not" rather than examining "whether the physical and mental health is damaged or not" in order to get a forensic report about sexual assaults much faster and granting sentence reductions for consensual sexual relations of youth aged under 15.

<sup>9</sup>"Honour Criteria to Shelter Houses" (SığınmaevlerineNamusKriteri)

<http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalDetayV3&ArticleID=1064441&Date=26.09.2011&CategoryID=77>

shelter houses are affiliated with Social Services And Children Protection Agency, this case gives significant clues how such practices could be deficient and problematic.<sup>10</sup>

Although it is not possible to make a concrete analysis about the dramatic increase in violence against women in the 2000s, it cannot be denied that there are some evidences. Qualified in-depth researches are urgently needed in order to understand the reasons behind this violence, having almost warlike character against women. Yet we can also indicate first and foremost among the main problems are the institutionalized violence forms such as militarism and war emerging to a high degree and nationalistic tendencies rising in the society. Moreover, while conservative and sexist arrangements consolidate women's secondary position in the society, the lack of dissuasive and protective measures banalize all kinds of violence including women murders. At a period of time when the government adopts an approach suggesting women's staying at home and making three children and produces social policies in this respect, it is possible that women cannot raise their voices against violence till the bitter end, especially because of the economic reasons. Besides, lack of legal protection for women against violence which is transformed into a prevalent and systematic violation of rights has influence on this process. But beyond these reasons, the fact of violence in recent years must be considered in relation with the change of the classical family and the transformation in the relationships and sexual roles between men and women. Female scholars working on this issue point out that women's search for power, demands and desires increase in recent years, while there is a crisis in male identity and reduction in the powers attributed to them due to these transformations.<sup>11</sup> According to the research results about violence against women conducted in 2007, each one of the three women is subjected to violence but nine out of ten women do not excuse it.<sup>12</sup> Also, according to the available data, great majority of the women do not regard domestic violence as a matter to be solved within family, women developed awareness about male violence and they do not approve it.<sup>13</sup>

Honour-related violence is the most common form of recently increasing violence against women. Especially in the last five to six years, honour-related killings are not only an issue of women movements but it also occupies the public agenda attracting attention the public opinion.<sup>14</sup> This situation is not limited with Turkey and it is increasingly witnessed around the

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<sup>10</sup> Also according to the explanation in the mentioned news, although only 53,7% of the capacity of the shelter houses are full and 40,22% of these women stay five or lesser days, the fact that the percentage of women who stay 3 months or more is only about 7,41% raises doubts about the services provided by these houses.

<sup>11</sup> AlevÖzkazanç, "Violence Has Transformed to Massacre"

(ŞiddetKatliamaDönüşü) <http://www.kulturmafyasi.com/2011/09/23/siddet-katliama-donustu/>, see also SerpilSancar, *Masculinity: Impossible Power (Erkeklik: İmkansızİktidar)*(İstanbul: Metis, 2011 [2009]).

<sup>12</sup> This comprehensive report of AyşegülAltınay&YeşimArat's study conducted with Turkish Scientific and Technical Researches Institution's (TÜBİTAK) support is published in 2007 and awarded the Pen DuyguAsena Prize in 2008. Within the survey framework, questionnaires with 1800 married women from 56 different cities, 150 interviews as well as interviews with 50 women organizations from 27 cities are conducted. Ayşe GülAltınay and YeşimArat, *Violence Against Women In Turkey (Türkiye'deKadınaYönelikŞiddet)*, İstanbul: Metis, 2008. [www.kadinayoneliksidet.org](http://www.kadinayoneliksidet.org)

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> "The Epidemic of Honour killings spreads quickly" (Namuscınayeterisalgınıhızlayayıyor) <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/planet/15728344.asp> According to that, police records drawn from the cases between 2000 and 2006, 480 women were killed by honour related murders and one out of five of them were 19 to 25 years old. Following are some researches on this issue:



world. According to UN estimates, about 5000 women are killed by their own family members each year because of honour-related reasons. The most deadly and visible form of violence against women is honour-related violence and it consists of a crime in many respects such as the fundamental right to live, human freedom and body, laws prohibiting torture, ill- and degrading treatment, gender-based discrimination, right to be protected against sexual abuse, right to private life, laws commanding the rejection of discriminatory laws and bad behaviours against women.<sup>15</sup> International convention CEDAW signed by Turkey and related action plans, UN General Assembly's decisions and reports requires prevention and struggle especially against honour-related violence. As a result of women organizations' efforts honour-related killings are arranged in Turkish Penal Code under the title of "premeditated murder". Honour killings are described as aggravating circumstances and aggravated life imprisonment is asked. In addition, tort is laid down as a condition for deciding over the unjust provocation. But in practice, because there is no arrangement enough to connect between these two articles and also honour is not defined comprehensively enough in law, honour related values are frequently considered as matters of extenuation for these kinds of crimes.<sup>16</sup>

Recently, another case of violence against women frequently ran across is forced and early marriages. The plenitude of the news about child marriages in the press is remarkable.<sup>17</sup> According to the results of the Social Democracy Foundation's "Playing at Families, Not Marriage" campaign, although legal marriage age should be at least 17, forty percent of the total marriages happen below 17 years old and considering that these are official records, it is

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NükhetKardam, *Dynamics of Honour Related Murders in Turkey: Suggestions for Action Plan Conclusion Report(Türkiye'de Namus Cinayetlerinin Dinamikleri: Eylem Programı için Öneriler Sonuç Raporu)*. United Nations Population Fund, Population Science Association, United Nations Development Program. (Ankara: Koza, 2005); LeylaPervizat, *Honour Related Killings Within the Framework of International Human Rights: Conceptual and Legal Dimensions and Appraising Turkey's Peculiarity (Uluslararası İnsan Hakları Bağlamında Namus Cinayetleri: Kavramsal ve Hukuki Boyutu ve Türkiye Özelinin Değerlendirilmesi)*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. (İstanbul, Marmara University, 2005); DicleKoğacıoğlu, "Discourses of Tradition and Naturalization of Power" (Gelenek Söylemleri ve İktidarın Doğallaşması), *Feminist Approaches*, June 2007, number 3, [www.feministyaklaşımlar.org](http://www.feministyaklaşımlar.org); NükhetSirman, "Relationships, Politics and Love: Morals After Colonialism-Turkish Example"(Akrabalık, Siyaset ve Sevgi: Sömürge-Sonrası Koşullarda Namus – Türkiye Örneği) in *Violence in the Name of Honour: Theoretical and Political Approaches (Namus Adına Şiddet: Kuramsal ve Siyasal Yaklaşımlar)*, ed. Shahrzad Mojab and Nahla Abdo (İstanbul, İstanbul Bilgi University, 2006); See about women suicides: Müjgan Halis, *Women Are Dying in Batman (Batman'da Kadınlar Ölüyor)* (İstanbul: Metis, 2001)

<sup>15</sup>Navi Pillay (United Nations Human Rights High Commissioner), "Honour Killings and Domestic Violence" (Namus Cinayetleri ve Aile İçi Şiddet)

<http://www.radikal.com.tr/Radikal.aspx?aType=RadikalHaberDetayV3&ArticleID=984919&Date=12.08.2011&CategoryID=99>

<sup>16</sup>Ece Göztepe, "Legal Aspect of Honour Killings: An Assessment of the New Turkish Penal Code"

(Namus Cinayetlerinin Hukuki Boyutu: Yeni Türk Ceza Kanunu'nun Bir Değerlendirmesi), Union of Turkish Bar Associations (TBB) Magazine, no. 59, 2005. Regarding it, women organizations opposed the use of the "custom killing" term because the term "custom killing" does not accurately describe killings committed in the name of honour and the expression of custom is associated with a region and tribe structure. So, killings in the name of personal honour have been allowed.

<sup>17</sup>About this subject see *2010 Yearbook of Early and Forced Marriages*

(*Erken ve Zorla Evlilikler Almanığı*) prepared by Flying Broom. <http://bianet.org/bianet/kadin/127065-ucan-supurgeden-erken-ve-zorla-evlilikler-almanagi>

a very worrisome state of affairs. The main reasons of early marriages are economical and traditional. But the imposition of marriage as the only way of living a relationship for young women also plays an important role. It is pleasing that a subcommittee has been formed in TGNA to research early marriages and determine the measures to take against. In Turkey, marriage age is determined as 17 years old and in unusual conditions 16 years old is permitted as well. According to legal arrangements about forced marriage, she has the right to sue against it, as long as she applies timely.<sup>18</sup> In addition to this, Turkey signed and approved CEDAW and Children Rights Convention and also took place among the thirteen signatory countries of Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence opened in signature in 11 May, 2011 in İstanbul. According to this Convention, Turkey is liable to penalize all kinds of violence against women such as forced marriage, psychological violence, woman circumcision, abortion and honour-related killing.

At last, regarding the abandoning in Turkey, one can say that it is not specifically addressed. Although women organizations did not make a specific conceptualization, most of the institutions and organizations working on violence against women also work on the negative results of abandonment. Abandoning could be in the form of men's moving to work in another city or country because of economical reasons after marriage as well as getting divorced because of not having a child or similar reasons or living with another woman with a religious marriage without divorcing his wife. Here, what makes it unequal and problematic in terms of gender is that, it is regarded normal for men to divorce or abandon while it is regarded as a serious honour or moral problem as far as women are concerned. Also in cases when man abandons or gets divorced, woman mostly has to live under economically and/or socially precarious circumstances. According to the Civil Code, "a woman has the right to file a case for divorce if her husband has deserted her in order to avoid his matrimonial obligations or has failed to return to the family home without rightful reason".<sup>19</sup> Accordingly, the abandoned woman has the legal right to divorce. But, how much difficult is the enforcement of the law is evident from the fact divorce constitutes one of the main reasons for women killings in recent times. Although there are not clear evidences, even by following the news in the press one can easily notice the multitude of cases about women killings because they wanted or got the divorce from their husbands. These cases happen either killing wife or killing both wife and then himself. Thus, researches should be conducted emergently and measures to solve it should be taken.

Considering what has been mentioned so far, it is possible to say that the violence against women can only be understood multidimensionally and would yield results by fighting

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<sup>18</sup> In Turkey, forced marriage is arranged by Articles 148-152 of the Civil Code. Woman who is forced to marriage can go to the police station/ gendarme/public prosecutor to file a complaint. She can file a case in the Family Court by the reason of getting forcefully married. But annulment cases must be filed after six months when pressure and threat, etc. ended and also in five years after marriage in all conditions. After five years, only divorce case could be filed.

<sup>19</sup> Regarding it, if the separation has lasted for at least six months and appears set to continue, woman may ask the judge to issue a warning to the man and invite him to return. If the abandoning spouse does not return back, then the abandoned spouse can file a divorce case due to "abandoning"; see Article 164 of the Civil Code.

against in this way. Legal achievements as a result of women organizations' serious efforts and especially arrangements brought by the Prime Ministry Circular are the important steps taken against domestic violence. But, although there are some improvements in legal realm, there are still serious deficiencies and shortcomings in practice. Especially inconsistent and reluctant attitude of governmental policies impact this process adversely and consists of an impediment to the provision of solution. However, we already know from the knowledge and experience of women movement from the 1980s till today, the violence against women can only be fought by adopting a holistic approach. Awareness and sensibility of police forces, health sector, jurisdiction, local government and NGOs should be increased and this should feed into social state policies. It is immediate and indispensable for women organizations, NGOs, grass roots organizations and other similar organization working on the same issues to collaborate so that all parties discharge their incumbent liabilities in order put legal improvements in practice.

### **3. METHODOLOGY OF THE PROJECT**

#### **3.1. Scope and Method of the Research**

Eight institutions and organizations fighting against violence against women are interviewed for the “Flying Team Against Violence” Project. In deciding the organizations to be interviewed, first of all was determinant their close concern with at least one issue among honour-related violence, forced marriage and abandoning and their past or present work experience on these issues. In this regard, we held interviews with the organizations which are particularly interested in one of these issues in national context and became more prominent by their work and projects. Yet since it had been difficult to find out institutions and organizations interested only in these issues specifically within the context of the project, we had to enlarge our scope so as to establish contact with the organizations working on violence against women and fighting against it. Within this period, we paid attention that there are complaints about honour-related violence, forced marriage or abandoning among the cases these institutions and organizations to be interviewed at least come across or work on, even though these do not constitute specifically their realm of interest.

Another important point for the research conducted within the project framework is the diversity of the institutions and organizations to be interviewed both geographically and in terms of field of activity and organizational characteristics. Thus we strived to make interviews with women organizations from different cities and of distinctive scales. In this respect, we paid attention to include especially regional diversity insofar as limited budget and time factors permitted. As a consequence, 8 women organizations are interviewed, one being from Istanbul, three from Ankara, one from Van, two from Mersin and one from Nevşehir, within the framework of the above mentioned features.

A survey questionnaire composed of structured questions had been used for the research. The great majority of the interviews were face-to-face conversations. Only some interviews were left to be sent later by some organizations which, while they have been interviewed, wanted to fill in the survey questions and especially good practices themselves. Two of the interviews are conducted through Internet after the phone and e-mail contact due to time limitations and since the majority of members were at a different city at the time being. Besides documents are fetched, if any, about examples of good practices that the interviewed institutions and organizations suggested in accordance with the good practices matrix taking place at the survey questionnaire. We considered important to gather products like posters, brochures, trainer book as well as eventually prepared outputs like reports, booklets and leaflets used in the project or activities. In addition, we supported the survey assessment with asking for additional accounts and interviews via e-mail if there were any missing or poor or inarticulate parts.

#### **3.2. General Information About Organizations Interviewed:**

As mentioned above, the organizations included into the research show diversity in terms of field of activity and organizationally. Three of the interviewed institutions/organizations – each having different field of activities- are organizations known nationwide and highly institutionalized regarding the struggle against violence against women. In addition, two of the organizations are at the status of women counseling center and shelter affiliated with a municipality at the local government level. Finally three of them are small-scale organizations working at the local level and they occasionally collaborate with more institutional and/or large-scale organizations. Regarding this classification, the organizations included in the research could be enlisted as follows:

- **Nationally known and institutional organizations:**
  1. Flying Broom Women Research and Communication Center (Ankara)
  2. Foundation for Women's Solidarity (Ankara)
  3. Van Women Solidarity Association - VAKAD (Van)
- **Organizations affiliated with local government/municipalities**
  1. Küçükçekmece Municipality Women's Shelter (Istanbul)
  2. Akdeniz Municipality İřtar Women Counseling Center (Mersin)
- **Small-scale organizations working at local/national level:**
  1. Kapadokya Women Solidarity Association (Nevşehir)
  2. Independent Women Association (Mersin)
  3. Women Shelter Collective (Ankara)

## **4. FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEW OUTPUTS**

### **4.1. Good Practices of the Nationally Known And Institutional Organizations**

Three organizations working on this field at national scale for long time and/or highly known are interviewed for the research conducted in Turkey within the framework of “Flying Team Against Violence” Project. While two of them serve as women counseling center and shelter, the third is conducting research about violence against women and work to build a communication network in this field. Foundation for Women’s Solidarity in Ankara runs significant project in local scale and at different regions about raising consciousness and awareness about violence against women as well as doing shelter work. While the Foundation works on the problems and cases of honour-related violence mostly, it addresses it in relation to the domestic violence. VAKAD works in similar line and indicates that they come up against honour-related violence and forced violence so often in their shelter and counseling center work. Lastly, Flying Broom conducts researches about several issues regarding the violence against women and organizes film festivals as well as carrying on large-scale work to fight early/child marriages.

#### **4.1.1. Flying Broom Women Research and Communication Association**

##### ***--Description of the Good Practice Example***

Flying Broom launched Child Brides Project in April 2011 in order to make early and forced marriages an issue, to create public opinion and mobilize people, institutions and organizations that would develop solution alternatives for this social problem beginning from the grass roots up. It ran the project to be finished by October 2011 in 54 cities and film screenings and seminars were held in line with the project theme. Two fiction movies with the theme of early and/or forced marriages were used for these activities and talks with women of all ages were conducted after each screening. These talks are supported with seminars of expert psychologist, lawyers, doctors and/or sociologists. These activities were conducted in collaboration with local governments and local departments of public administration in each city in order to inform decision makers and policy implementers about women’s issues and demands and address these issues through the communication between the citizens and the state administration. It is intended to compile these talks where women narrated their witnesses and experiences into a book. Also it is aimed to make a documentary with the use of videos and photographs shot during the activities. Besides, a media campaign was run to develop awareness to the violation of women’s human rights by pointing out the adverse effects of early and forced marriages to the physical and mental health of women and the hardening of social justice and gender inequality. Moreover, a petition campaign to submit the parliament was conducted nationwide in order to stop early and forced marriages. Additionally, it is planned to be conducted field research about the support of universities in ten cities selected out of 54 ones.

##### ***-- Characteristics of the Good Practice and Success Factors***

According to Flying Broom, the project has the characteristics of good practice for the reason of being the first and single work conducted in this area in Turkey. It is indicated that Child Brides Projects, completed in 54 cities, is the most comprehensive and in-depth work about early marriages. Also the sustainability of the project, the

collaboration with so different sector from various realms, the dissemination of the available data extensively as much as possible to raise awareness are indicated as the success factors.

#### **4.1.2. Foundation for Women's Solidarity**

##### ***-- Description of the Good Practice Example***

Foundation for Women's Solidarity ran "Raising Awareness Against Violence Against Women And Establishing Local Cooperation In Central Anatolia" Project with the support of European Commission between August 2007 and November 2008. Several trainings activities about the struggle against violence against women were conducted in the cities of Çankırı, Eskişehir, Kırıkkale and Nevşehir for ten months. The project location was determined as Central Anatolia since the women movement and organizing is so weak and there are little shelter and Counselingcenters. Workshops for women as well as project activities for the establishment of women organizations and fighting against violence against women in cooperation with local governments were conducted. Thus while raising awareness of women about violence, four municipality staff had been gained awareness through gender trainings. The foundation prepared a kit titled "Handbook For Fighting Against Violence Against Women" with the support of specialists of the area in order to use for the training activities. The training kit included general information about gender as well as information about several topics such as violence against women, available mechanisms for fighting against, legal rights of women and international tools in fighting against violence. While meetings and trainings activities were held in municipal and social centers' facilities thanks to the cooperation of municipalities, women are awarded trainer certificates at the end of the training. The training program was planned considering women's priorities and everyday routines in order to raise the participation. At the end of the project, a closing meeting of three days were held to assess the outputs with the participation of 130 women among all project participants and the presentations and talks made at the meeting were compiled into a book.

##### ***-- Characteristics of the Good Practice and Success Factors***

The foundation attributes their project the quality of good practice, because women realized their power while their awareness was raised and women's rights they are entitled to were told and the project provided women participants empowering effects on their lives. In this sense, it is argued that it constituted a good practice from the viewpoint of ensuring the organization of such training activities in several cities. It is suggested that the success and long-term qualified impact of the project, close contact between women trainees and trainers and considerably careful planning of the trainings kits on the basis of experience rather than theoretical knowledge played role as significant factors.

#### **4.1.3. Van Women Solidarity Association – VAKAD**

##### ***--Description of the Good Practice Example***

VAKAD gave trained doctors working at state hospitals about gender within the framework of their project suggested as a good practice example. The Association ran the project in collaboration with Van Governorship and YüzüncüYılUniversity Women's Studies Center and trained 80 doctors in total. The governorship held the

overall organization by mobilizing Provincial Directorate of Health through official correspondence. VAKAD, then, carried out the training program that they used continually for similar purposes. The Association indicates that an interactive and inclusive gender training rather than an activity based on rehearsal and listening –i.e. didactic. In this regard, it pays attention to the practicing of thinking and discussing the topic all together by questions and answers after giving preliminary knowledge to the participants. The association representative expresses that these trainings provided opportunity for developing cooperation and dialogue with health staff as well as challenge bias about feminism and speaking about it. It is intended to identify the violence women going to the hospital are subjected to, learning about the kinds of violence and gender discrimination and discussing about them within the project framework.

#### ***--Characteristics of the Good Practice and Success Factors***

VAKAD explained their training project as a good practice by the idea of cooperation and collaboration. Training of 80 doctors about gender with the cooperation between public administration and NGOs and support of university is suggested as a success reference. In this respect, the training activity is considered as a good example for coordination and inter-institutional communication.

## **4.2. Good Practices of Organizations Affiliated With Local Government/Municipalities**

Two distinct organizations running shelter and women counseling center under the municipal body were interviewed. One is Küçükçekmece Municipality Shelter House in Istanbul and the other is İřtar Women Counseling Center of Akdeniz Municipality in Mersin. Both organizations in question essentially and only financed by Küçükçekmece Municipality of Justice and Development Party (AKP) and Akdeniz Municipality of Peace and Democracy Party (BDP). Both organizations provide services to all women in need of help, while they help overwhelmingly women victims of violence. Even though they do not work specifically on honour-related violence, forced marriage and abandoning, there are relevant cases among the applications these organizations receive. Applications about honour-related violence and abandoning are more concentrated among those coming to İřtar Shelter House, while there are lesser cases of forced marriage. But the underlying factor is believed that problems related to forced marriage are solved in “community assemblies” and such complaints are reported to these assemblies in this region.<sup>20</sup>

### **4.2.1. Küçükçekmece Municipality Women’s Shelter**

#### ***-- Description of the Good Practice Example***

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<sup>20</sup> Community assemblies are bodies established in order to put the idea of participatory and democratic local administration into practice. It is possible to come across with common examples in Mersin and neighboring cities where interviews are conducted. They can conduct small-scale community work on family, youth, culture and health issues as well as assuming a mediatory position. It can be easily run against such practices in the neighborhood of these cities where Kurdish population is concentrated and community assemblies are embraced and put into practice by BDP. However, this body of organization is not only limited with BDP and it is observed that other political parties such as Republican People’s Party (CHP), though conducting work in different ways, can ask from their local government such practices where they play active role.



It aims to serve women subjected to domestic violence and oppression, lacking support from their parents and relatives due to the traditional culture and without financial income. The organization, it is mentioned, provides an alternative to women driven to the streets under these circumstances in order to build a life of their own. It gives services such as accommodation in the shelter house, psychological rehabilitation, provision of food, clothing and household goods, vocational training, child care and education. The length of stay is set as three months in the shelter house of 14-bed capacity and it is intended to give financial and psychological aid to ensure that women gain self-esteem and begin new life. For this purpose, the shelter strives to find employment in the district where it is located as well as conducting work to house one or several women provided rehabilitation and economic independence in the same place. Besides social workers, health staff and psychologist also give services in the shelter house. While the guideline published at Küçükçekmece Municipality's webpage clarifies job definitions of the working staff in detail, it is observed that it also sets a body of rules –entry and exit hours, food for women and children, bed time, rules for alcoholic beverages and smoking, relationship among women and with the employees, secrecy etc.- for women staying at the house. The shelter put emphasis that one-to-one communication is particularly significant as a method of conducting such work and achieving success for the struggle against violence against women.

#### ***-- Characteristics of the Good Practice and Success Factors***

Küçükçekmece Municipality Shelter House indicates that ensuring women's standing on their own feet and gaining self-esteem is what makes the work they carry on features of a good practice. Furthermore, volunteering, satisfaction about the work and devotion are mentioned as essential factor underlying the success of their work.

### **4.2.2. Akdeniz Municipality İřtar Women Counseling Center**

#### ***-- Description of the Good Practice Example***

The organization gives counseling services to women violence victims about a year and makes arrangements for opening a shelter in the meantime. A guideline employing woman's perspective drawn from the experiences and knowledge of Purple Roof, Women Sheltering Collective and Diyarbakır Municipality is prepared for the shelter which will be launched in 16 October, 2011. The applications in the meantime that preparations are carried out are directed, when necessary, to the Social Services and other relevant organizations. The drafted shelter guideline defines the main goal of İřtar Shelter House as opposing all kinds of sexism and discrimination and emancipating itself of all kind of sexist ideology. From this point of view, it is described that the shelter house would go beyond giving the feeling of shelter and provide a realm "free life" free from domination, patriarchal power and violence. Similarly, the answers to the survey explain the organization's approach to the shelter as "common consciousness rose above the state of womanhood and a way of struggle shaped by this consciousness". In addition, it is stated that it should function as an alternative lifeworld not only for women but also for child victims of violence. İřtar underlines the importance of establishing horizontal work relationships, conceiving the woman solidarity and emancipation from a feminist viewpoint and adopting anti-hierarchical methods in order to carry out such a work regarding the struggle against violence against women.

### ***-- Characteristics of the Good Practice and Success Factors***

Iştar Women Counseling Center explains the features of their work as a good practice by stating the satisfaction of women's demands and needs as well as provision of solutions through its own dynamics. It lays down the sustainable character and the support drawn from good experiences and financially as success factors.

## **4.3. Good Practices of Small-Scale Organizations Working At the Local/National Level**

During this research, we also made interviews with small-scale organizations working against violence against women. These are women's institutions and groups in various cities, mostly carrying out activities on a voluntary basis. They mostly work in cooperation with other women's organizations. Besides, depending on the availability of funds, they develop training and awareness-raising programs on issues of gender.

### **4.3.1. Independent Women's Association**

#### ***--Description of the good practice example***

The Association organized an awareness-raising work within the framework of the Project "Developing the violence awareness of women and raising the perception of violence" in the slum neighbourhoods of Mersin, aiming at increasing consciousness among women living in this slum area, in the issues of domestic violence and women's legal rights. Actually, this Project was already carried out in Ankara, Mersin and Diyarbakır between 2001-2003, with the financial support of United Nation's Women's Fund UNIFEM, by Foundation for Women's Solidarity, KA-MER and the Association. The overall goal of the Project is set as developing the women's counseling centers and increasing awareness against violence among women. In this framework, the voluntary team of Independent Women's Association participated in the trainings of Foundation for Women's Solidarity and then, trained women living in the slum neighbourhoods in their local districts on issues of violence. In order to fight domestic violence, women were trained to better perceive of and be aware of violence and at the same time, informed about their legal rights and the services they are entitled to receive in case they suffer from violent acts. The aim hereby was to define and clarify the issue of violence for the local women. Pre-determined groups of women were to be reached through training sessions undertaken during home visits. Prior to the sessions, visits to the neighbourhood made it possible to establish relations and find a woman willing to host the group. Then, the host invited neighbours, friends and relatives, who at a total made groups of 15 to 20 women. Those trainings were provided by a professional psychologist, during which films were screened and violence was discussed on the basis of those sample events, creating an environment where women can discuss freely on violence.

#### ***-- Characteristics of the Good Practice and Success Factors***

According to the Independent Women's Association, the basis of success for a Project is its ability to start a mental and social transformation among the women it reaches. The characteristics which defines a successful project are its power to clarify violence for the women. The factors of success are listed as: being financeable and the use of the right language and the right discourse. What is meant here is to develop a language during training and while talking about violence that can be understood and is in accordance with the intellectual level of the women with whom the group works.

#### **4.3.2. Kapadokya Women's Solidarity Association**

##### ***--Description of the good practice example***

An education program was provided within the framework of the "Mother and Child Education Foundation's Reading and Writing Course" Project. As the rate of people who can read and write is low in the area, the program included adult education on the issues of women's health, the rights of the handicapped, inter-family communication and violence against women. Books used in the training program and the training materials were prepared and designed by a Professional team. The events described in the reading material were based on stories from daily life. This choice depended on the possibility that women may show little interest to special training sessions about violence against women or even showing interest, may be hindered to join them due to pressures from their spouse or family. Answering the interview questions, the association representative stated that women from rural areas would be interested in programs based on writing and reading skills, women's health, child raising etc., which makes it easier to provide information about violence against women in this context. The topics in the training program are selected accordingly and in supplementary reading pieces, little daily events about the situation of women suffering from violence are provided. The association representatives said that this helped to attract the attention of women to this subject and made it easier to increase their perception about violence around them, also leading them to talk about violence that they personally suffered.

##### ***-- Characteristics of the Good Practice and Success Factors***

Kapadokya Women's Solidarity Association gave similar answers to this question. The project success is defined as the increased consciousness of women to struggle for their rights. The answers to the survey mention that at the end of the training, a group of women emerged, who struggled for the rights of girls suffering from violence and the example of a mother was provided, who after attending the training, went to a lawyer to protect the rights of daughter suffering from violence. Regarding the success indicators, the association named factors such as: providing training about violence which is in accordance with the intellectual level of the attending women, doing the discussions on the basis of sample cases so that the subjects remain more strongly in women's memory, and to transmit the fact to a woman that it is not only herself alone who suffers from violence.

#### **4.3.3. Women's Shelter Collective**

##### ***-- Description of the good practice example***

Within the framework of the "An example of a feminist shelter supported by the local municipality" Project, the women's shelter collective is trying to develop a women's shelter organization, that is totally free of patriarchal methods and which supports the empowerment of women. The members of the collective argue that the shelters run by various institutions in Turkey have the logic of "serving the needy" and so, invade the basic human rights of women, trying to develop alternative methods to this approach. According to the model proposed by the collective, the basic function of a shelter should be "not only providing a temporary shelter to women and children, but to help empower women and provide them with a material and ideological basis to lead a

violence-free life of their own". With the support of the institution they recently worked with, they tried to put in reality this feminist perspective and solidarity based on horizontal modes of organization. The collective is not working officially with any institution right now, but is providing training to newly opened shelters, and to NGOs working in this field, and sharing experience about how a shelter should function, the characteristics each unit should have in a shelter; training on gender issues, training on non-violent mothering, trauma training, training on neglect and abuse of children etc. Besides providing training, they prepared a handbook to be used in shelters to be opened, entitled "Struggle against violence against women and women's shelters for local governments".

***-- Characteristics of the Good Practice and Success Factors***

In line with their goal to develop shelters where women's perspectives prevail, women's shelters collective defined the basic characteristic of a good shelter project is being organized and run with a focus on the point of view of the women living there. Besides, it was mentioned that leading many activities for children to live in violence-free relations is also another important characteristic. Some of the indicators for the empowerment of women were defined as transforming bureaucratic, hierarchical, masculine relations within the shelter and the change of attitude of the children and women towards the shelter.

## 5. GENERAL DEMANDS AND PROPOSALS

### 5.1. Nationally Known and Institutional Organizations

**VAKAD** made several suggestions to improve women's social statute and the struggle against violence against women. Especially prominent is the issue of women's shelters. The association stressed that the shelters should be more widespread, the related municipality regulations should be applied and the activities to strengthen the women already living in shelters should increase. Also, taking the shelters in Germany as an example, VAKAD expressed that women's organizations should run the shelters and that the local governments are only to act as financial supporters. They also put forward that the witness protection law should also be applied in cases of honor related killings.

**The Flying Broom**, an association mostly involved with communication and research, defines the struggle against violence against women as a field where many partners and many parts need to work together. The association underlines that public institutions, women's organizations, mass media and universities should cooperate and function together. They also stated that many supporters are needed right now for a multi-dimensional effort, but the platform needed to perform such a work is lacking. They think that it is vital to have continuous, sustainable resources, and that the work carried out right now is lacking those. The Association complained that there are no specialized institutions working in the field of forced/early marriages and that in this regard, a chain of control should be established, starting from the customs/border policies of the countries involved and reaching to the zone of the private domains and homes. They reported the problems encountered in the working of institutional mechanisms, while doing practical work in this matter. The group's experience shows that in the cities they were active in making projects, representatives of public institutions usually acknowledge the problems in the field of violence against women, but then, take no responsibility. As the language of the state authorities is hypocritical and bureaucratic, the need was expressed to construct a language which is more sincere and closer to daily experience, in order to get real results from the work done.

Similar to what the crew of the Flying Broom suggested, **Foundation for Women's Solidarity** also stated that structures and events should be organized to improve cooperation and make the sharing of experience possible between women's organizations and institutions, grasping the importance of inter-organizational exchange. The Foundation stressed that the foremost problem they had while doing practical work is to build relations and cooperate with institutions. They suggested that, in order to build stronger ties of cooperation among women's organizations, each institution or structure should quit the habit of acting as if they were the first to do some work in their field of action. Instead, each should act to learn, use and share the experience gathered until now. Besides, they stated that in order to be effective, events and campaigns should be organized, which aim to create a female public opinion and publicize women's points of view. The Foundation underlines that universal and common knowledge about male mentality should be shared and used, but at the same time, the knowledge and experience gathered in the local context should be acknowledged and taken seriously.

## 5.2. Organizations Affiliated With Local Government/Municipalities

Regarding what the interviewed organizations defined as needs and necessities and their proposals, we can say that they both agree on the point of improving solidarity and cooperation. Both organizations stressed that nationally and internationally, more cooperation, sharing of information and experience, increasing the number of shelters and adding child care facilities in those shelters are necessary. As a result of negative experiences with state policies, The İřtar Women's Counseling Center also proposed more support for women's organizations on the national level, a new regulation of the legal system working in this field (i.e. creating a new ministry responsible for women's affairs) and improving the connected infrastructure (i.e. courses organized by women's organizations for security forces, judges etc.)

At this point, we should mention one important detail about the results of the interviews. The interview results show that two institutions have almost totally opposing impressions concerning state policies about violence against women. While the K uukekmece Shelter expresses that state policies, especially recent regulations (the actions of the present ministry responsible for family, the shelter policies, the electronic handcuff application, social support programs etc) are positive and give reason to hope, İřtar Women's Counseling Center stated that there is no nation-wide policy in this matter and there are difficulties putting the legal regulations into practice. Although working in the same field and organizing similar actions, this striking difference between the two organizations can be due to the fact that the municipalities they work with are run by different political parties. The K uukekmece Municipality, which demonstrates a positive attitude towards state policies, is run by the AKP Party, holding the state power presently. On the other hand, the İřtar Counseling Center, which is connected to the Akdeniz Municipality, is run by the BDP Party, protecting the citizens' rights and national identity of the Kurdish people.

## 5.3. Small-Scale Organizations Working On the Local/National Level

Similar to the organizations connected to local institutions handled in the previous section, the small scale organizations handled in this part also put forward the issues of more sharing of information and experience, cooperation and financial support. While **Independent Women's Association** said that sharing information about practical processes is important, they also defined cooperation and solidarity between women's organizations in the framework of influence upon governing instances and decision-making mechanisms. The group suggests that the NGOs should develop the right position in accordance with their goals and try to become a power that can apply pressure when needed. Parallel to that, it was mentioned that sharing experience would help to develop policies from a women's perspective and that, constructing institutional mechanisms quickly would help to put these policies in practice.

**Kapadokya Women's Solidarity Association** stated that women's participation in professional life and gaining economic power are important points. In this regard, legal regulations are as significant as the processes of putting them into practice. The group underlined the basic role of working together and working for each other, the necessity of cooperation among women, especially in the struggle to raise public consciousness against violence and while doing work at the grassroots level. The organization proposes that as much as women, men also need to be educated, where NGOs and universities can work together to start educational campaigns among the public and effectively raise consciousness.

Finally, **Women's Shelter Collective** argued that policies with an integrated and female point of view need to be developed, in order to change the ways in which the society perceives of violence towards women, and stressed the important role of getting organized in the struggle. Grown out of experience in the field they work on, they insistently pointed out that the feminist movement should have the say in the matters concerning women's shelters. They reminded that, besides being too few in numbers, the shelters already existing are not offering good conditions, and that women's organizations should participate in inspecting those.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

The data gathered during the interviews present important clues about the needs and gaps, and the methods and tools to be applied, in the struggle against violence against women. Although the women's organizations participated in this research have different structural features and practical experience, their demands and proposals focus on certain common points. Those are financial support and sustainability, consistent and efficient state policies in this field and mechanisms for their practical application and channels for the exchange of information and experience on the national and international level. None of the organizations in this research have an autonomous budget with continuous inflow, they receive support based on projects and so can carry out their work only in certain limits, without continuity. Although the shelters connected to municipalities receive regular financial support, their situation is also dependant on the political party they are affiliated to and whether this party holds the political power. Women's NGOs and organizations are especially weak in this regard, because, depending on the attitude of the political party holding power in the local government or on the basis of differences of opinion with the ruling party about how to run the shelters, women's organizations and NGOs are easily kept out of the ongoing process or their work is totally ended. The experiences of the Foundation for Women's Solidarity and the Women's Shelter Collective give examples to this point, their work on the shelters are terminated in this manner. Besides, being economically dependant on the EU projects and similar international institutions and counting their work on their funds make this work short-lived and limited, making them dependant in a certain way. Besides, small-scale women's organizations have limited access to those funds and projects and they have a serious need for cooperation with national and international women's organizations. That not only the NGOs and women's organizations, but also, increasingly, professional companies and institutions run the projects in this field, make it the more difficult especially for small scale organizations to take part in the work done.

Those impressions about the financial budgets of women's organizations show how multi-dimensional and intertwined the problem is. Having no budget for continuous and regular action; insufficient state policies and lack of effort to put the existing policies into practice and even, in many cases, the obstacles created by those policies, are all parts of the problem. There is no special state budget for the struggle against violence against women and there is no long-term planning in this field. As a result, all work carried out is partial and have no long-time impact, with no holistic effect on daily life. The difficulties in the application of legal regulations in the right direction and the lack of necessary inspections make the existing problem the more serious. For example, it is striking that the problems encountered by women's organizations that carry out large-scale work are especially based on the encounters with institutional mechanisms. The Flying Broom and the Foundation for Women's Solidarity expressed that they had serious problems during their work in rural areas and towns, because of the unwillingness of the state officers to apply the legal framework and their uncooperative attitude towards women's organizations. It is also a problem with regards to permanent improvement and durability that in such projects, after the women's organizations leave the region, the institutions here take no responsibility however in this matter.

And as a last point, the mostly underlined issue in the interviews was the need of exchange of experience and information and cooperation among women's organizations working in this field. Most of the good examples of practical experience were carried out as a result of such cooperation and their success was defined on the basis of this solidarity. We can conclude



that, in order to carry out an integrated, effective work and to create an expanded field of practical effects, organizations and institutions from different scales and fields of action need to work together and cooperate with each other. Large-scale work which can have an impact nationally and influence public opinion can only be applied with the participation of different actors and through the use of a variety of tools, based on the cooperation between a number of institutions and organizations and at the same time, with the support of similar structures and organizations from the international level. The results of the interviews from this research make clear that such platforms for common work and cooperation are lacking. There is a need to create different platforms, organize actions and gatherings for more exchange of information and experience. This is why the goals and demands set forward from the onset by the “Flying Team Against Violence” were gladly accepted by the participants and is regarded as a good step forward for creating a platform where those needs can be satisfied.

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<sup>21</sup> Since January 2012 Turkish member of the EU project *Flying Team against Violence* (January 2010- January 2013), to replace Kalkınma Atölyesi (Development Workshop).