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**Women Empowerment
Training At Workplace
2018-2019**

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The Aim of Project

The project aims to empower ERATEKS TEXTILE's female employees to create more productive and qualified working environment and to increase their capacity to comply with international labor standards. In ERATEKS TEXTILE where number of female employees is higher than that of male employees, this project proposes to uncover and discuss the ways of fighting inequalities arising from gender roles.

Determination of Content

The training program to be implemented within the scope of the project and the participants of this program (all female employees) are determined together with the representatives of human resources department and the other managers of the company. After the meeting with ADIDAS's Social and Environmental Affairs Officer, Hasan Dilmenli, and related company representatives, the following subjects are decided to be worked on:

- What is Gender?
- What are Gender-based inequalities?
 - Women and Inequalities in Education
 - Women and Inequalities in Working Life
 - Women and Inequalities in Administration/Management/Politics
 - Violence against Women
- Analysis, Suggestions, How could be Progressed?

Target Groups

It is considered that it would be meaningful to apply the training program to all female employees because it is necessary in order to build a sensitivity to gender equality and to raise awareness on issues in this area. Thus, approximately 400 female employees of ERATEKS TEXTILE / Fatsa were included in the program.

Goals

The main objectives of the empowerment training program for working women are to align company's working conditions with universal values, and accordingly, to improve the quality of working environment. The working environment occupies an important part of a life as a place where people spend most of their time. It is accompanied by many people, by many different positions, and most importantly, by great stress of deadlines and of being productive. These differences and challenges, especially for female employees, contain many particular situations. Women's obligations arising from gender roles and their responsibilities emanating from social perceptions can make their working environment twice as difficult for them. The fact that women have legally equal rights does not

automatically remove the patriarchal perspective within a society. Within a general perception which devalues women and their labor, they have to deal with a lot of inequality. It is in this process, ERATEKS undertakes this program to empower their female employees and raise their awareness about existing inequalities; the company seeks to discuss what could be done to empower women on its own scale.



Moderator of Training: Assoc. Prof. Yasemin Yüce

She had graduated from Istanbul University, Faculty of Political Sciences, in 1994; and continued her education in Hamburg, Germany. After having worked as a consultant in Hamburg Women's Shelter, she now continues her academic studies in Sociology Department of Ondokuz Mayıs University. She had completed her master's degree at Middle East Technical University and her PhD at Ondokuz Mayıs University. In addition to her academic studies on women's issues, violence against women, women and politics, she also works with non-governmental organizations.

The Content of Trainings

What is Gender?

Different rights and responsibilities between women and men are justified on the basis of their biological characteristics. Their different biological structures are accepted as the dominant explanation of questions like "Why should women sit at home and do domestic works?" or "Why should men earn money?" This is the reason why existing unequal division of labor is generally excluded from discussions. Women who participated in these trainings are explained about the concept of gender and about the social, cultural and economical construction of manhood and womanhood.

To put it differently, manhood and womanhood is acquired by society not by birth. The roles and responsibilities attributed to men and women are socially constructed; and this implies the instability and changeability of existing inequalities. Thus, giving this awareness to female employees is the most critical basis to debate on inequalities between women and men. In this context, female employees, throughout the training, had learned the concepts of sex and gender.

What are Gender-based inequalities?

The social roles and responsibilities of women and men lead them to unequal positions within society. The idea that women belong to the private sphere (home) and that men are the only interlocutors of struggle to earn a living (the public sphere) are the basis of the hierarchy established between men and women. This hierarchy results in women achieving less education and training in **the field of education**. While education is an important advantage to acquire a profession, women benefit from this service less than men because, according to general social perception, they are not obliged to earn money; and this causes women to enter working life with less equipped conditions. Because of their domestic responsibilities, women cannot have a career line like men in **working life**. While marriage and childbearing away women from working life, domestic responsibilities, such as nursing care (child care, aged care, patient care, disability care), bring women into “a double shift” working status. These women, working both at home and at work, avoid taking responsibilities about their jobs; and this prevents them to show the expected upward mobility within the working life. The other most prominent example of gender-based discrimination is the lack of **female administrators and politicians**. This absence is normalized by claiming and establishing women’s emotional characteristics as the basis of this lack. However, roles and responsibilities attributed to women separate the fields of women from that of politics and administration, and prevent them to enter these fields. The last part of the training is devoted to an intense issue, the issue of **violence against women**. Within the related context, the causes of violence against women and what victims of this violence could do are expressed.

Analysis, Suggestions, How Could Be Progressed?

Understanding capacity of the company’s female employees about what related inequalities and reasons of these inequalities were was very clear and strong. Being a woman was definitely related to these issues. Accordingly, the training’s last fifteen minutes were devoted to the question “What could be done about it?” In this part, the significance of increasing awareness of women's rights and problems was precisely clarified. It has been emphasized that increasing the level of sensibility on and awareness of gender equality were deeply crucial in combating these inequalities. In this sense, this training arranged only for women was found to be very critical for this kind of effort. Furthermore, the ways and lines within which women can act with solidarity and support each other were questioned. The

establishment of a women's committee to provide female employees to communicate with and support each other about the problems arising only from being a woman has been discussed.



Workshops

The first meeting of the workshop was carried out on 08.09.2018; and one meeting has been arranged for each month until February 2019. In each meeting, training was held in three sessions with a maximum of 30 women. In September, October, November, December and February, meeting dates were determined according to company's availability. The last meeting was held on 07.02.2019. For each training group, the related subject's basic concepts and debates were expressed for one hour. At the last hour of the workshop, evaluations on what could be done with women were made. Certainly, each workshop had begun with the explanation of the aim and the limits of the training. During the workshops, it was crucial and essential to ensure an interactive communication. The suggestions, questions and criticisms of the participants were carefully considered. At the end of the workshops, participants were individually asked to evaluate and state their ideas about the training. According to these women, training subjects are extremely important and these issues should be handled frequently.

ACHIEVEMENTS

In the trainings, women were provided to understand sex / gender difference and to learn the concept of gender. The concept of gender refers that the roles and responsibilities of men and women are based on society rather than physiology; and correspondingly, this gives the idea that it is possible to eliminate inequalities arising from the division of labor

between men and women. Inequalities constituted by social structure can be solved by social changes and this idea has a significant effect on women's empowerment.

Through the workshops, the most significant four areas of gender inequality (education and woman, working life and woman, politics and woman, violence against woman), its forms and causes were explained. By this way, women have increased their level of knowledge about the starting point of the problem. Being aware of the causes and consequences of existing inequalities empowers women to tackle these inequalities. This awareness has also increased women's awareness of their everyday life and daily experience.

In the last part of the training "Analysis and How Should Be Progressed?", one of the most influential achievements was the emergence of the necessity for women to support each other only because they were women. Social structure still needs time to change; however, participants, instead of waiting for these changes, propose that women can come together and produce solutions in order to eliminate inequalities against women in the working environment. Predominantly, women's desire and ambition to create a women's union in which their problems are discussed is the most valuable and crucial achievement of the training.

In the last five minutes of the workshops, female employees were asked to evaluate the training. The most crucial point women had expressed in these evaluations is that such trainings and meetings are valuable because it shows the importance their employers attach to them. This can be recorded also as the one of achievements of the training.

Requests and Suggestions from Training

- These trainings should be also carried out for men and their awareness in this area should be increased.
- In order to ensure that the acquisitions acquired through these trainings are internalized and sustained both by all-female employees and by company management, a questionnaire was asked to be prepared in addition to the periodic audits to be carried out in 2019 by ADIDAS SEA EMEA team; and according to the results of this survey, an improvement plan should be prepared and the process of women's empowerment should closely be monitored.