



IDEMA

Gender Equality Plan

12 november 2023





CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....1

SECTION I: Institutionalization for Gender Equality.....2

SECTION II: Work-Life Balance.....4

SECTION III: Research and Capacity Building for Gender Equality.....6

SECTION IV: Violence Against Women, Combatting Sexual Harassment and
Discrimination7

INTRODUCTION

IDEMA has undertaken the mission to consolidate development by creating and implementing socio-economic development projects at the both local, national and international and international levels. Gender equality and diversity have been determined as a strategic priority of this mission. IDEMA possesses a staff structure where women have undertaken leadership positions in management, business development and communication departments.

IDEMA collaborates with consultants holding doctorates in various fields, working in conjunction with national and international high-level academic institutions. These consultants offer both academic and professional expertise in Public Administration, Political Science, Gender Studies, Migration Studies, Development Studies, Economics, Sociology, and many other relevant fields.

The Gender Equality Plan (GEP) meticulously addresses how IDEMA will centralize gender equality in managerial processes and how it will maintain sustainable change in this field. GEP emphasizes that gender inequality is intertwined with every aspect of society and manifests when individuals or groups facing discrimination and being unable to fairly benefit from rights, services, and resources based on sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, gender expression, and sexual diversity. For IDEMA, gender equality holds critical importance not just as an ethical and fair approach but also for the sustainability, innovation, and success of the work.

GEP documents strategies to combat gender-based discrimination violence and inequality, addressing the social, political, economic, mental, and physical consequences that such discrimination and inequalities will bring. This plan demonstrates IDEMA's commitment to mainstreaming the principle of gender equality in all its processes and operations.

In this context, IDEMA commits to integrating an equality perspective at every stage of its main policies, programs, and services; in planning, budgeting, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes. It also prioritizes allocating all necessary resources for the realization of all related activities.

This is in harmony with IDEMA's commitment to identifying and addressing both internal and external gender inequality and reinforces the goal of creating an inclusive, diverse workplace. As IDEMA, we expect all our staff and stakeholders to take an active role in this process and support our continuous improvement efforts on gender equality.

SECTION I: Institutionalization for Gender Equality

Gender at IDEMA in Numbers: IDEMA not only aims to be an equitable organization in decision-making processes but also demonstrates its commitment to gender equality in society by reflecting it in its workforce. In this regard, out of the three founding partners of IDEMA, one is woman, and as of 2024, the staff structure stands at approximately 70% women. At IDEMA, in addition to ensuring gender equality, we aim to continue maintaining a female workforce rate generally between 50-70%, as part of our policies.

In general, several institutions emphasize the importance of societal gender equality; however, they often do not fulfill their commitments to appoint women to executive roles. In stark contrast, IDEMA has actualized its perspectives on gender equality in practice. IDEMA, with substantial representation of women, especially in managerial and top-level positions, not only vocalizes its commitment to gender equality but also substantiates it through its actions. IDEMA's proactive approach in integrating gender equality into its organizational structure makes it a standout entity, aligned with its pronounced values on societal gender equality.

IDEMA also carries forward its commitment to gender equality into its internship positions, aimed at contributing to the experience-building processes of young people in the fields of civil society and development management.

We are committed to gender balance in all our human resources processes, including recruitment, career planning, performance evaluation, termination, compensation and benefits, and communication policies. In line with our dedication to gender equality, we adhere to an 'equal pay for equal work' policy, ensuring that all employees, regardless of gender, receive fair and equal compensation for their contributions to IDEMA. This policy is integral to our commitment to fostering an equitable workplace and is reflected in our compensation structures and practices. IDEMA encourages female candidates and ensures that at least one candidate from underrepresented genders is represented in all positions. This balanced approach is reflected in our career advancement strategies by promoting inclusivity in promotion committees.

IDEMA champions an Inclusive Organizational Culture and Language, utilizing gender-sensitive language in all communications and maintaining an inclusive and anti-discriminatory organizational culture.

These steps are reflective of IDEMA's enduring value and commitment to gender equality. We perceive it not merely as a goal but integrating it into all organizational processes, aiming for a more equitable and inclusive working environment.

In alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), our objectives are significantly influenced by the SDGs' focus on sustaining ecosystems, ensuring dignity, promoting equality and peace, fostering inclusivity, and strengthening partnerships. Our developmental projects are meticulously aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 5, aiming to secure gender equality and empower all women and girls.

While advancements have been made, the vision of a society where every individual experiences complete gender equality and all barriers to their empowerment are eradicated, remains a pursuit. Our Code of Ethics mandates adherence to human rights, ethical conduct, and gender equality, stipulating respect for human rights and freedoms and equitable and honest treatment devoid of prejudice.

IDEMA's initiatives and proactive approach in integrating gender equality illustrate a coherent and tangible commitment to creating a balanced, equitable, and inclusive environment, reinforcing our dedication to societal gender equality.

Additionally, IDEMA commits to enhance its approach through the following initiatives, in pursuit of Institutionalization and Capacity Building for Gender Equality:

- ▶ Developing and Implementing Gender Policies and Strategies:
 - Formulate and implement gender equality policies.
 - Develop and integrate gender-sensitive strategy and operation plans, establishing clear organizational targets focused on gender equality.
- ▶ Establishing Regular Data Collection and Monitoring Mechanisms:
 - Systematically collect and analyze data based on gender at IDEMA
 - Develop and utilize gender equality indicators for internal monitoring and evaluation.
- ▶ Promoting Inclusive Organizational Culture and Language:
 - Use gender-sensitive language in all external and internal communications.
 - Utilize gender-sensitive methods in the dissemination of our projects
 - Develop and maintain an inclusive and anti-discriminatory organizational culture that reflects a commitment to gender equality.

SECTION II: Work-Life Balance

IDEMA complies with the Labor Law No. 4857 regarding maternity leave. Maternity and paternity leaves are regulated separately in the Labor Law. Regarding paternity leave, 5 workdays of leave are granted. However, at IDEMA, we understand that this duration may not be sufficient, and therefore, fathers are granted a 10-day leave to spend time with their newborn babies after birth. Regarding maternity leave, IDEMA follows the procedure outlined below:

- ▶ If requested by the female employee, up to six months of unpaid leave is granted after completing the 16-week period or 18-week period in the case of multiple pregnancies.
- ▶ Female employees cannot be employed within the total sixteen-week period, comprising eight weeks before and eight weeks after childbirth.
- ▶ In the case of multiple pregnancies, an additional two weeks are added to the eight-week period that the employee will not be employed before childbirth.
- ▶ With a doctor's approval, if the health condition permits, female employees can work until three weeks before childbirth. In this case, the periods worked by the female employee are added to the periods after childbirth.
- ▶ If a female employee gives birth prematurely and cannot use the periods that will not be worked before childbirth, they are granted by adding them to the periods after childbirth.
- ▶ These periods are specified with a medical report. Paid leave is granted to female employees for periodic check-ups during pregnancy.
- ▶ If a female or male employee adopts a child under the age of three, they are granted eight weeks of parental leave starting from the date of the child's actual delivery to the family.
- ▶ The payment for the maternity leave periods to be used before and after childbirth, specified with a doctor's report, is paid by the Social Security Institution (SGK) according to the provisions of the law.

Additionally, both women and men are provided with the right to work part-time until the child reaches school age.

The Covid-19 process has disproportionately increased the workload of women, especially in home and office environments. This situation prevents women from balancing work and home life, making it harder for them to reach their professional and personal goals.

Moreover, this situation does not only affect women; the problems encountered during the Covid-19 process and afterward are also applicable to other individuals.

Since the pandemic, IDEMA has been offering daily flexible working hours and a hybrid working model as a solution to these problems. These policies have been established to assist individuals in maintaining work-life balance. Furthermore, IDEMA, besides ensuring a decent working hour, also considers the commuting time as part of the working hours. Additionally, activities are organized to raise awareness of the need to modify corporate culture for more effective utilization of employees' working hours and to observe work-life balance.

IDEMA is committed to fostering the professional development of its employees by offering educational and developmental opportunities and supporting them in gaining new experiences and enhancing their skills. In this context, IDEMA encourages and supports its employees to participate in exchange programs to gain new experiences by utilizing networking platforms. Additionally, it backs the academic progress of its staff, assisting them in pursuing postgraduate education. Furthermore, IDEMA provides flexibility in working arrangements, allowing employees to choose between part-time and full-time work structures, granting them the freedom to overcome personal life challenges and balance their professional and personal lives effectively. Lastly, as IDEMA, we provide unlimited designated sick leave for all employees, including menstrual leave for women, as well as for conditions such as migraine, vertigo, and acid reflux.

In addition to the conducted activities, the commitments given by IDEMA to improve the situation in Strengthening Work-Life Balance are as follows:

- ▶ Conduct surveys and in-depth interviews among employees to collect data to identify and address needs and issues related to work-life balance.
- ▶ Review and update all leave policies (i.e., parental leave, elderly care, partner sickness care) in accordance with the needs and demands of personnel.
- ▶ Organize orientation activities for the return of personnel after parental leave.
- ▶ Create support areas for female staff after maternity leave, such as chairs, refrigerators, hygienic milk pumping, and nursing rooms.
- ▶ Collect feedback on the work-life balance policy annually and prepare an Employee Satisfaction Survey.

SECTION III: **Research and Capacity Building for Gender Equality**

IDEMA, with its entire team, mission, and vision, pays close attention to gender equality, one of the development goals, and manages various projects supporting women for the change of social and cultural codes in this regard. Especially acknowledging that women's participation in economic employment is a significant step towards economic freedom, IDEMA reinforces economic support with awareness-raising activities along with social and cultural support. In this context, it develops various projects to increase women's capacities, reintegrate them into the economy, and its efforts are high to achieve gender equality.

IDEMA nourishes its efforts from its in-house expert staff and experts in the ecosystem. To enhance this nourishment and to trigger gender equality firstly within the institution; then among the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project, and finally to trigger a more extensive social impact, IDEMA commits to continue the following activities and to improve itself in this field:

- ▶ Equip and inform researchers and project office staff to integrate gender equality in research planning, activities, and impact assessment.
- ▶ Regularly refine and enhance approaches to include gender equality perspectives, adapting to evolving needs and insights.
- ▶ Periodically review and update guides and training materials to reflect the latest research and best practices in gender equality.
- ▶ Encourage feedback and discussions on gender integration strategies, utilizing insights gained to improve future projects.
- ▶ Infuse gender equality considerations in the conceptualization and implementation of projects.
- ▶ Take an active part in gender equality networks, workshops, and projects to utilize external best practices and promote innovative models for improvements.
- ▶ Establish a digital information system related to training on gender equality and diversity
- ▶ Establish regular data collection and monitoring mechanisms to implement monitoring and evaluation methods in the conducted projects.

SECTION IV:

Violence Against Women, Combatting Sexual Harassment and Discrimination

Labor Law No.4857 classifies sexual harassment and discrimination as serious offenses, emphasizing the need for sustained awareness and understanding of such behaviors for maintaining gender equality. However, employees often have limited knowledge and awareness about the relevant procedures and codes of conduct, leading to misinformation, disinformation, and a lack of trust in the established complaint and support mechanisms. This underscores the necessity for enhanced awareness and trust-building initiatives within the workplace.

In this context, IDEMA aims to be a benchmark organizations in developing and implementing mechanisms against Violence Against Women, Combating Sexual Harassment, and Discrimination. To ensure the successful implementation and operationalization of these policies and sustain gender-neutral institutional communication, IDEMA has identified three crucial areas of action:

- ▶ Enhancement and Clarification
- ▶ Extensive Accessibility
- ▶ Elevated Awareness

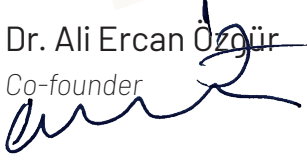
To proactively address gender equality, violence against women, sexual harassment, and discrimination, IDEMA has outlined the following actionable steps:

- ▶ Develop and effectively communicate a comprehensive, confidential complaint and victim support mechanism throughout the organization.
- ▶ Provide information on alternative complaint and support mechanisms and their interrelations, emphasizing the importance of understanding and utilizing available resources.
- ▶ Integrate a gender perspective into the policy and enhance anti-mobbing, anti-bullying, and anti-harassment clauses in the regulations and the Code of Conduct, Disciplinary Regulations and Ethics policy.
- ▶ Implement mandatory online training on violence, sexual harassment, and discrimination for all employees and managers. Regularly conduct initiatives, training, and workshops, providing clear materials outlining the disciplinary and sexual harassment complaint processes to educate all personnel about human rights, violence, and discrimination.

- Ensuring the independent reporting of all forms of gender-based violence.

All these steps are crucial for developing and implementing comprehensive and preventive measures and policies to foster an informed, protected, and supportive workplace environment, effectively addressing and mitigating issues of gender-based violence, harassment, and discrimination.

Dr. Ali Ercan Özgür
Co-founder



Güler Altınsoy Sakar
Co-founder

