

Empowering Disabled Women and Girls Through Sports and Livelihood Opportunities

Project Closure Brief Note



EMPOWERING DISABLED WOMEN AND GIRLS THROUGH SPORTS AND LIVELIHOOD OPPORTUNITIES

PROJECT OBJECTIVE:

As the **EYDK** and **Etkiyap** Consortium, “**Empowering Disabled Women and Girls Through Sports and Livelihood Opportunities**” project—designed in line with **UNESCO Fit for Life Programme** and implemented with the support of the **British Embassy Bilateral Programme**—aims to collect the necessary data to enhance the physical and mental well-being of women and girls with disabilities, improve their access to education, and increase their employability by harnessing the power of sports.

Based on the insights from the collected data, the project will contribute to shaping sustainable and effective interventions to empower women and girls with disabilities.

PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS:

- UNESCO Fit for Life Sports Program
- Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality (GBB)
- Ministry of Industry and Technology
- General Directorate of Development Agencies
- İpekyolu Development Agency
- Provincial Directorate of the Ministry of Family and Social Services
- Provincial Directorate of the Ministry of Youth and Sports
- Provincial Directorate of the Ministry of Health
- Associations working with people with disabilities

PROJECT DURATION:

Project Start Date: 27.11.2024

Planned Project End Date: 31.03.2025

PROJECT ACTIVITIES:

1. Project Pre-Launch Event-Gaziantep/Türkiye



Pre-Launch Event of the project was held on December 9, 2024, in Gaziantep with over 200 participants, the majority of whom were individuals with disabilities.

The event started with the opening remarks of **Fatma Şahin, Mayor of Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, Wendy Wyver, Minister Counsellor, British Embassy Ankara** and **Şafak Müderrisgil, Chair of EYDK**.

In her opening remark, **Fatma Şahin**, stated: *"If we can remove the barriers in front of people with disabilities, this becomes a development project."*

Wendy Wyver, said in her speech: *"The project focuses on achieving social equality and equal opportunities. Considering the importance of creating equal opportunities, the value of this project is very clear."*

Şafak Müderrisgil, said in her speech: *"Supporting the participation of women with disabilities in employment and sports is a vital step, not only for individuals but also for society and sustainable development. This project, which will be carried out under the coordination of the EYDK and Etkiyap consortium within the framework of UNESCO Fit for Life Programme, is a social investment in the community."*



Following the opening remarks, a special session was held with **Philipp Müller Wirth, UNESCO Chief of Sport Section** moderated by Şafak Müderrisgil, focusing on the Fit for Life Programme and its role in driving innovative solutions through sports. EYDK Secretary General Tuğçe Söğüt introduced the project's goals and EYDK and Etkiyap's vision. National athletes Sevilay Öztürk, Sevda Kılınç Çirakoğlu, and Sude Naz Cin shared how sports transformed their lives, while Türkiye's only amputee physiotherapist, Zeynep Büyükdıç, captivated participants with her inspiring story.

2. Data Collection Through Focus Groups

Interviews and survey studies were conducted with a target group consisting of women and girls with disabilities, as well as trainers working with people with disabilities, to understand their needs, challenges, and expectations regarding economic empowerment and access to sports.

The report prepared in light of this information will serve as a guide for the development of strategic interventions.



12
days



117
surveys



one-to-one
interviews with
26
participants



focus groups with
44
participants



Highlights From the Report:



of the participants stated that they do not have access to sports activities suitable for their physical development.



of the participants expressed that awareness-raising efforts should be increased to make individuals with disabilities more visible in the workforce.



of the participants stated that they would feel like a part of society when participating in social, cultural, or sports activities.

3. Overcoming Barriers Workshop

Overcoming Barriers Workshop successfully organised in collaboration with Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality (GBB) and the GBB Engelsiz Yaşam Merkezi.

The workshop, which started with opening speeches, brought together 77 participants, primarily academics.

Six thematic committees were formed to address key issues:

- Challenges faced by individuals with disabilities and their families
- Social, cultural, employment, and sports opportunities for women with disabilities
- Education, rehabilitation, and support mechanisms for children with disabilities
- Social security, in-kind, and financial assistance for people with disabilities
- Accessibility and support services provided by local governments
- Medical reports and healthcare services related to disabilities

The workshop concluded with the presentation of key outcomes by the committees, followed by a closing speech from Fatma Şahin, Mayor of Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality. Together, we took concrete steps towards breaking down barriers and fostering empowerment!



4. Inspiring Sport Matches

As part of the project, sports competitions were organised for women and girls with disabilities to introduce them to sports culture and raise awareness of various sports disciplines. Unforgettable matches took place at the Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality Engelsiz Yaşam Merkezi, where women and girls with disabilities participated as spectators.



On December 18-19, inspiring sports matches were organised with the participation of teams from various disciplines to spark interest in sports and inspire women and girls.



5. Project Launch Event / Paris



On February 17, 2025, project stakeholders gathered at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris to mark the completion of all project activities and to hold the launch event.

During the event, **Gabriela Ramos, UNESCO's Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences**, emphasized the transformative power of sports in her remarks, stating, "*By demonstrating tangible results, the Gaziantep project can serve as a blueprint for future projects worldwide, proving that sport can drive real and lasting social transformation.*"

Anna Nsubuga, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of UK to UNESCO, highlighted the project's significance for the United Kingdom, saying, "*This project is an outstanding example of what can be achieved through partnership and shared vision. It is one of many examples of the UK's steadfast commitment to supporting Türkiye's recovery and development.*"



Gülnur Aybet, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Türkiye to UNESCO, emphasised that the project is an important step in terms of social inclusion, gender equality and economic empowerment and said: "The long-term success of such projects

requires sustainable financing opportunities, integration of disability-focused approaches into national and local government policies, and strengthening international cooperation."

Fatma Şahin, Mayor of Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, emphasizing the project's role in supporting social development in Gaziantep and how its sustainability will be ensured, she said: "On February 6, we experienced the earthquake of the century, and we are recovering with the solidarity of the century. Our girls and women were the most affected by the earthquake. Through UNESCO, we are introducing a new financial model called 'social impact bond' to the world through Gaziantep. This model will be an example for 110 countries."

Şafak Müderrisgil, Chair of EYDK and Etkiyap, stressed the importance of this collaboration and outlined the project's future goals, stating: "In 2025, we aim to conduct a feasibility study and structure a social impact bond for the transformation of this project. It is an endeavour representing a significant collaboration between UNESCO, Metropolitan Municipality of Gaziantep, Ministry of Industry and Technology and the British Embassy in Ankara. We will move forward together with our distinguished partner institutions to bring this project into fruition."



PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY:

This project represents an initial stage of a broader initiative, and this funding would serve as catalytic capital, an innovative financial mechanism for social good. Through this mechanism, private funding—as a social impact bond—is expected to be sustained upon completion of the data collection process to be completed within the coverage of this project.

The project's goals closely align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those aimed at reducing inequalities, promoting gender equality, and building resilient communities.



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