

WOMEN POWER IN CULTURE

Women and Leadership in Arts and Culture Research



FOREWORD

The British Council Turkey's Arts programmes are focused on diversifying audiences for the arts. We identify and develop the skills of emerging curatorial voices and creative entrepreneurs who champion a more inclusive and accessible arts offered within new and unconventional spaces and forums.

We believe that gender equality and women's empowerment are crucial to creating inclusive, open and prosperous societies. Developing female leaders in culture, who are explicitly working to diversify audiences, is a key aspect of our programme. In support of this, we have initiated a three-year programme - Women and Leadership in Arts and Culture - the purpose of which is to support the upward mobility of female leaders of the cultural sector and to promote their potential as drivers of social change.

This research was commissioned to provide insight into the needs and aspirations of a cross-section of women working in the arts in Turkey. We believe that understanding the dynamics of the women's leadership in the cultural scene will prove a starting point for discussion of how to best support the crucial role women play in driving forward the cultural scene.



ABOUT THE BRITISH COUNCIL

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create friendly knowledge and understanding between the people of the UK and other countries. We do this by making a positive contribution to the UK and the countries we work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust.

Our work in arts creates new relationships between artists, organisations and audiences to develop stronger creative sectors around the world. We help artists to break new ground, support creativity and innovation, increase capacity by building skills to support livelihoods and cultural enterprise, extend safe spaces for creative exchange and contribute to research and policy.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to the professionals working in Turkey's cultural scene who have contributed their insights and expertise to this research through in-depth interviews and focus groups, including 234 individuals who kindly completed the online interview. Their support has been invaluable throughout the course of this research.

DISCLAIMER

This report was commissioned by the British Council. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the British Council. Please direct enquiries to: www.britishcouncil.org.tr The opinions expressed in this report are those of the participants and do not necessarily reflect those of the British Council or of any organisation mentioned.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The research **Women Power in Culture – Women and Leadership in Arts and Culture** aims:

- a) to identify the challenges faced by women working in the arts and culture sector in Turkey;
- b) to identify their **needs for future career development** in the field;
- c) to find out about the overall perception of the arts and culture field from the research participants' viewpoint.



METHODOLOGY

Ipsos Social Research, an independent research consultancy, conducted the research in three stages between **22 November 2017** and **20 December 2017** using a mixed method combining literature review, quantitative analysis of an online survey and qualitative research based on four focus group discussions. An executive research summary of the research has further been commissioned to an independent editor Ceren Yartan.

The first stage consisted of desk research. In the second stage, **234 individuals** answered an online survey. Among these, **114** are identified as **arts professionals** (all women), **31** are **senior managers** (23 women, eight men), and **89** are **stakeholder representatives** (36 women, 53 men). These female professionals work at private sector institutions (56), non-governmental organisations (24) and public institutions (6). Of these, 28 are independent art professionals and 89 stakeholders represent public, private or non-governmental sectors that have programmes or partnerships with culture and arts institutions in Turkey.

In the third stage, **21 female arts professionals** participated in four focus group discussions. In addition to that, **21** in-depth interviews were held with **eight top-level female and male managers** and **13 stakeholders** from arts and culture institutions.



The research examined:

- The sector: how do participants see the future of the sector? How do they perceive the conditions of the sector within Turkey's larger context? Do managers' opinions regarding the sector differ significantly from low to mid-level employees'? How do stakeholders, who interact with the sector on a daily basis, perceive it?
- Job satisfaction and working conditions: are employees happy with their jobs? How do gender relations shape the work experiences of female professionals working in the field of arts and culture? Are they satisfied with their wages, working hours, recruitment processes or promotion mechanisms?
- Career support mechanisms: do women feel supported in their career paths? Do they face any barriers?
- Discrimination: do women experience any form of gender discrimination in their professional life? Did they experience any discrimination in recruitment? Is being a parent seen as a hinderance in their career development?

KEY FINDINGS

Research results indicate differences between work experiences and career expectations of female and male professionals. Even though the culture and arts sector is mostly seen as a progressive sector, employing a high number of female professionals, inequality continues to exist on various levels, especially concerning issues such as employment, promotion, career development, and pay. The sector is perceived as more egalitarian by senior managers.

A snapshot: employment and gender in Turkey

A number of reports on and indexes of the gender gap in employment underline that Turkey has still much to do in terms of achieving gender parity in participation to the economy. Gender Gap Index compiled by the World Economic Forum states that Turkey ranks 131st regarding women's labour force participation and representation in professional and technical roles.¹

Turkey has the worst performance among G20 countries. Similarly, Women Matter: Turkey 2016 report published by McKinsey states that 'women are disproportionately represented in lower-productivity sectors, such as agriculture, and are insufficiently

¹ World Economic Forum. The Global Gender Gap Report 2018 (Rep.). (2018). Geneva: World Economic Forum.

represented in higher-productivity sectors such as business services.’²

The same report underlines that women are underrepresented in decision making roles. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute’s latest data, as of 2017 the employment rate of women is less than half of the employment rate of men in Turkey. (33.6% and 72.5% respectively)³

According to the International Labour Organization’s World Employment Social Outlook report as of 2018, ‘the global unemployment rate of women, at 6 percent, is approximately 0.8 percentage points higher than that of men.’⁴

Moreover, in Turkey, the Turkish Statistical Institute’s data shows that the female unemployment rate is much higher than the male unemployment rate for 2017 (14.1 and 9.4 respectively)⁵.

Turkey’s performance is below the global average when it comes to overcoming women’s unemployment.

2 McKinsey&Company. Women Matter, Turkey 2016: Turkey’s Potential for the Future: Women in Business (Rep.). (2017, March). p.12. Retrieved February 11, 2019, from: <http://www.mckinsey.com.tr/arastirma-ve-yayinlarimiz/WomenMatterTurkey2016Report.pdf>

3 TurkStat. (2018). Birleşmiş Milletler Toplumsal Cinsiyet Göstergeleri Minimum Seti: Cinsiyete Göre İşgücüne Katılım Oranı. Retrieved February 11, 2019, from http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1068

4 International Labour Organisation (ILO). (2018). World Employment Social Outlook: Trends 2018(pp. 1-81, Rep.). Geneva: International Labour Office, Retrieved February 11, 2019, from https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/-dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_615594.pdf

5 TurkStat. (2018, March 23). İşgücü İstatistikleri, 2017. Retrieved February 11, 2019, from <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=27699>

An unstable yet developing sector

Turkey's culture and arts sector is still unstable and in the process of developing. During in-depth interviews, participants underlined certain issues as constraints and challenges to the development of the sector:

- a) lack of collaboration between various institutions in the field
- b) the limited number of joined action platforms to lobby and secure rights of arts professionals
- c) the social and political dynamics of the country
- d) Turkey's changing international agenda and security issues
- e) society's negative perception of the value of arts and culture

These risk factors create uncertainties for those professionals while planning on their future, and unpredictability may have an adverse effect on their work.

Despite the fact that there are only a few collaborative action platforms that can provide sustainable solutions, the sector also thrives on partnerships. During the qualitative interviews, all research groups emphasised the role of private companies as major contributors to the existence and development of the sector in Turkey. Female professionals, managers, and shareholders consider that compared to the private sector, the public sector contributes less to arts and culture. Moreover, when asked about priorities for partnerships, stakeholders state that it is important to work with arts and culture institutions adopting gender equality principles.

Employee profile

The research focuses on a very small fraction of the labour force in Turkey. The research participants specialise in a number of areas and their education levels are high. Almost all the female participants and all the managers have bachelor's degree or higher (Master's degree or Ph.D.).

For this research, female and male employee numbers in several roles were requested from the seven leading organisations whose top-level managers participated in in-depth interviews. The percentage of female employees varies between 50% and 71% within these institutions. Even though these institutions only represent the top tier of culture and arts sector in Turkey, it is possible to argue that the drastic difference between the low workforce participation rate of women in Turkey in general, and the high numbers of women working in these leading arts and culture institutions is a sign that the sector is doing relatively well within Turkey's larger context.



Working conditions: between happiness and challenge

Intrinsic qualities are important


Working in the arts and culture gives considerable emotional satisfaction to managers and female professionals. In the survey, when asked about their motivations for working in this field, both groups have similar priorities: a dream job, productivity, creativity, intellectual satisfaction and social benefits. Accordingly, 80 per cent of female professionals and 90 per cent of managers are satisfied with their professional lives. These high percentages are evidence of strong employee motivation at these levels. Although there are multiple factors that have an effect on job satisfaction and they are not the same for every profession, the research indicates that the nature of the profession is a major determinant of employee satisfaction in the arts and culture sector.





Positive working environment

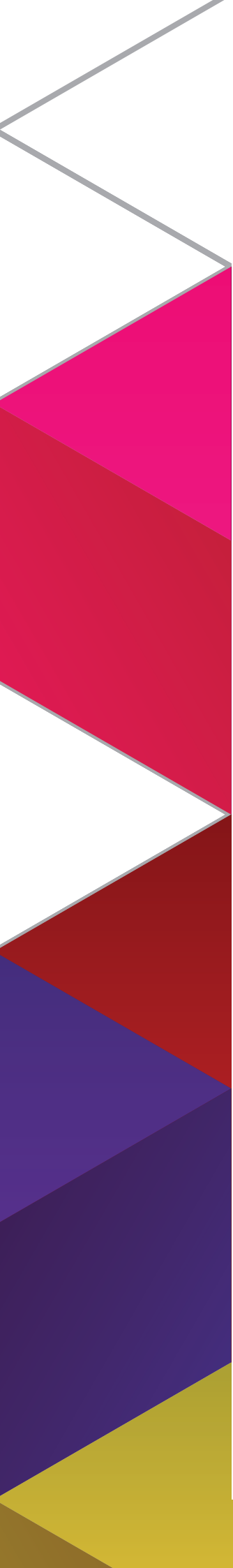
According to the interviews and survey results, the majority of female professionals and managers working in the arts and culture are satisfied with their physical working environment (71 per cent and 90 per cent, respectively), colleagues (71 per cent and 87 per cent, respectively) and supervisors (64 per cent and 81 per cent, respectively). These are factors that sustain a positive working environment for employees. Furthermore, 70 per cent of female professionals states that their opinions are valued by their managers. Likewise, managers believe that they can create change in their own institutions as well as in the field. Therefore, it might be surmised that communication culture, as well as peer/supervisor relationships, are generally favourable across the field which could also lead to employee satisfaction.



Long working hours, and difficulty in maintaining work-life balance

Despite the overall positivity of the working environment, participants and especially female professionals (57 per cent) are rather unsatisfied with the working hours. Nevertheless, workload fluctuations over time might illustrate that the conditions in this field are relatively favourable considering most women in Turkey work more than 45 hours a week in other sectors.⁶


⁶ OECD. (2018). Employment - Hours Worked. Retrieved February 11, 2019, from <https://data.oecd.org/emp/hours-worked.htm>



Yet, almost one out of three female arts professionals states that she cannot dedicate sufficient time and attention to her home (32 per cent), family (29 per cent) and friends (32 per cent) due to her job. Lack of balance between professional and personal life may adversely affect working women who are usually expected to take on other responsibilities. Managers are not in a better position to find a balance between their professional and private lives. Only 42 per cent of participant managers agree with the statement that 'I can organise my time in my work and my personal life.' Accordingly, although employee experiences may vary between institutions, maintaining a good work-life balance seems to be challenging.

In Turkey, according to TURKONFED's Women in Business report 'High costs of child and elderly care and low wages offered may dissuade women from participating to labour force. In other words, the shortfall of prospective returns from employment given the cost of child and elderly care services and absence of practices to conciliate work and family life drive women away from labour markets.'⁷ The arts and culture sector in Turkey does not offer ideal conditions for women who want to have children either: 23 per cent of female professionals participating in focus groups and interviews totally agree with the statement that their job is a deterring factor for having children.

⁷ Bakırcı, P., Karadeniz, O., Yılmaz, H.H., Lewis, E., & Durmaz, N. (2014). Women in Business Report: Executive Summary (Vol. 2, pp. 1-8, Rep.). TÜRKONFED, p.4. Retrieved February 11, 2019, from <http://www.turkonfed.org/Files/ContentFile/idk-2-executive-summary.pdf>



When considered together with the fact that 12 per cent of participants mentioned that they were subject to discriminatory behaviours based on motherhood – also known as the Motherhood Penalty– it is clear that parenthood is still perceived as a barrier to career development for women.

Wages are low

Wages in the field are generally low especially for people working in non-managerial positions. All participants in the focus groups drew attention to the problem of low wages in general. Among survey participants almost one out of four female professionals (23 per cent) indicated that low wages are the main problem in the sector, while 66 per cent express that their income is not enough to cover their monthly costs and that they rely on parents (53 per cent) and spouses/partners (39 per cent) for their livelihood. These percentages are quite high. Difficulties in having financial independence appear to be one of the most pressing issues for female employees. Accordingly, women coming from more disadvantaged backgrounds would find it hard to remain in the field because of low wages.

Career development

Recruitment processes and promotion mechanisms are not transparent

Relationships play a critical role in recruitment. In the in-depth interviews, participants said they found their current jobs through friends, relatives or families (34 per cent) or that they directly applied to institutions and organisations (32 per cent). Another 25 per cent found their jobs via sectoral networking activities. In focus group discussions, participants emphasised that personal connections and relationships are also essential to be informed about job openings. As a result, the sector might benefit from more accessible recruitment platforms. More transparent, sustainable and systemised recruitment processes would create a more diverse and qualified cultural workforce and prevent nepotism.

In the survey, the majority of female professionals (62 per cent) agreed with the statement that 'it is important to establish close relationships with the managers of family foundations or companies that institutions are affiliated to.' These numbers suggest that objective and accurate measures of employee performance may be lacking in the field and there is a risk of unjust favouritism.

Women are ready for managerial roles

Among 114 survey participants, 72 per cent state that they want to progress in their careers and 55 per cent add that they are ready to become managers. These are high percentages which indicate that the future leadership of arts and culture is expected to become more female-dominated. Yet, when we look at gender relations, 40 per cent of survey participants (female employees) note that being a woman in the field is challenging and 25 per cent admit that they sometimes had to ‘act like a man’ in their professional life

In Turkey ‘in spite of growing [rate of] female employment in the services sector, men continue to be disproportionately represented in higher-end positions (i.e. as legislators, senior officials and managers, professionals etc.) while women make up most of the lower paid jobs.’⁸ According to the Turkish Statistical Institute, women constitute 17.3 of the total labour force in senior positions in the year 2017.⁹ All research participants have stated that their institutions employ a high number of female employees; at least half of the workforce is women. The common acknowledgement is that there are many women in mid and high-level management; yet, top level, executive managers

8 *ibid*, p.18, Retrieved February 11, 2019, from <http://www.turkonfed.org/Files/ContentFile/idk-2-executive-summary.pdf>

9 TurkStat. (2018). Yönetici Pozisyonlarındaki Kadın Oranı. Retrieved February 11, 2019, from http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreTablo.do?alt_id=1068

are almost always men. This is in line with the trend in Turkey, yet the sector is doing relatively well as it has many female employees in mid and high-level management roles.

It is possible to speculate that women accept jobs in the arts sector despite the lower wages, few benefits and other disadvantages like late working hours, etc. Furthermore, according to the survey results, 56 per cent of female managers agree that it is not difficult to be a woman in the field, yet 65 per cent admit that the opinions of male leaders are taken more seriously. Although arts and culture is a progressive field, there is still more to be done in terms of women being employed in decision-making roles.




Discrimination still exists

Experiences of gender discrimination may include being paid less than male co-workers, being treated as if they are incompetent, receiving less support, feeling isolated, being harassed, not being given enough incentive or not being promoted etc. Survey results indicate that female professionals were subject to various types of discrimination. A third of the participants confirmed that women and men are not treated equally in recruitment and performance assessment/promotion processes. 'One of the most important consequences of gender discrimination in the Turkish labour market is the wage differential between men and women.'¹⁰ There were varied survey responses on this issue: 39 per cent of female professional participants noted that women are not paid equally with men, yet 25 per cent disagree. According to the survey results, female professionals state that they faced discrimination based on a range of factors: gender (23 per cent), age (22 per cent), and financial status (21 per cent).

When asked about discriminatory practices, managers' assessments were always more positive compared to other groups. On the other hand, survey results show that more than half of the stakeholders believe women and men are not treated equally in the cultural sector. Female professionals may also face more problems while working and interacting with the public sector and government authorities.

¹⁰Bakırcı, P., Karadeniz, O., Yılmaz, H.H., Lewis, E., & Durmaz, N. (2014). Women in Business Report: Executive Summary (Vol. 2, pp. 1-8, Rep.). TÜRKONFED, p.4. Retrieved February 11, 2019, from <http://www.turkonfed.org/Files/ContentFile/idk-2-executive-summary.pdf>



These numbers suggest that even though the field is more progressive than others in Turkey, more steps should be taken to create an awareness of gender discrimination.

The research also looked at whether there is gender discrimination that would result in work segregation. Pursuant to the survey results, 69% of stakeholders observed that technical jobs in this field are mostly dominated by men; and more men work in senior management levels. (61 per cent)


Professional support mechanisms and platforms for organised action are lacking

Participant women are highly motivated for leadership roles; however, research results demonstrate that they do not have adequate support. According to the survey, two out of five female professionals (42 per cent) maintain that they have not received professional support for their career development. This relatively lower percentage is countered by a high percentage of managers (71 per cent), who said that they have been supported in their career development. This may also indicate that when encouraged, female professionals are able to take on leadership roles. Survey results also show that 21 out of 31 managers (84 per cent), as well as 20 out of 114 female employees (23 per cent), found that the relatively small number of cultural organisations and institutions results in few opportunities for new openings.

Graph 1: Received career development support - female professionals (%)



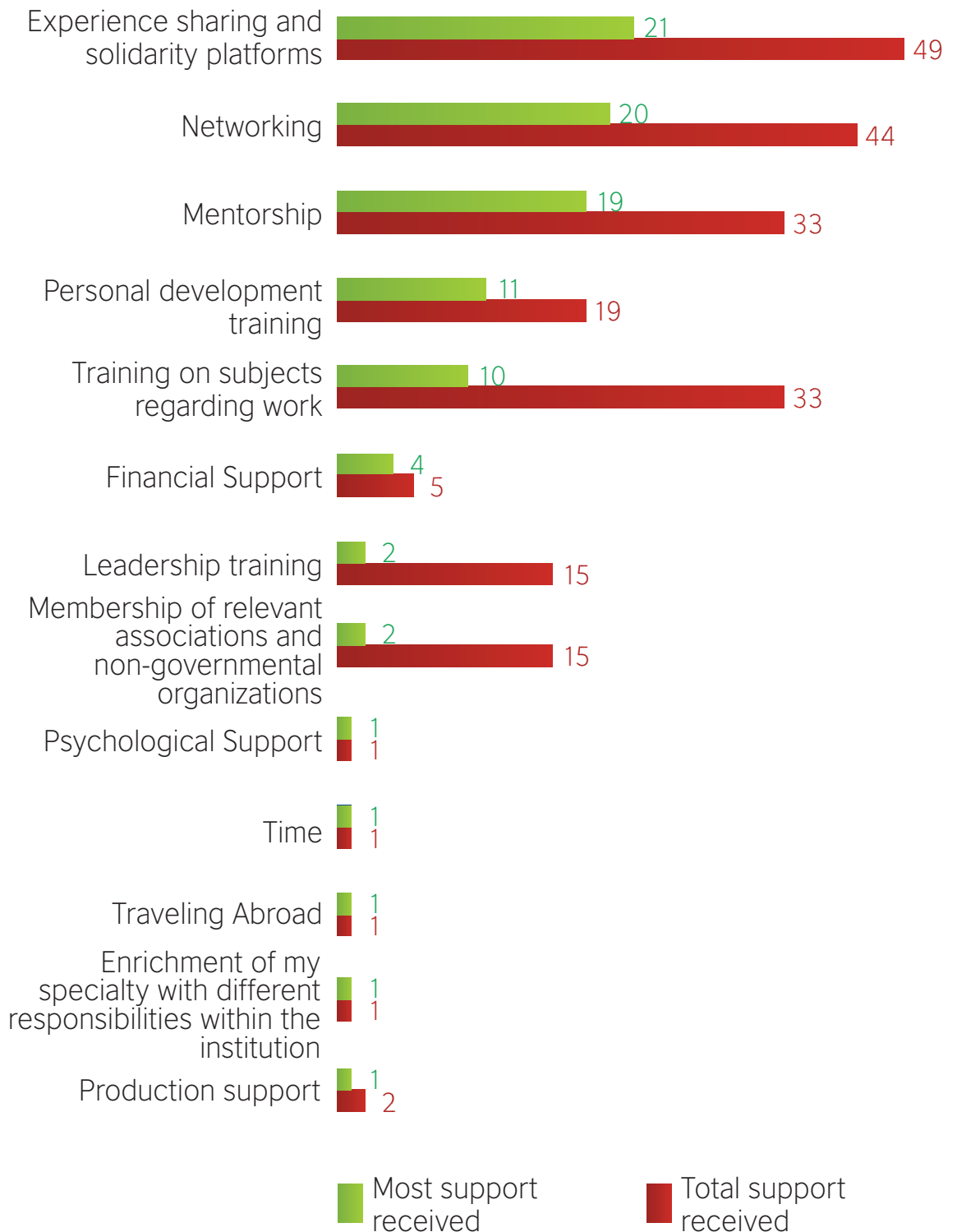
For the issues regarding your career, where do you receive support most? Where else do you receive support?



The survey results show that female professionals turn to friends outside of work (29 per cent), partner/spouse (27 per cent), and their parents (26 per cent) for professional support, yet managers receive professional support mostly from colleagues (42 per cent), international sectoral networks (39 per cent) and their partners or spouses (32 per cent). Research results demonstrate that existing professional support mechanisms and platforms are inadequate for low to mid-level employees. Moreover, 31 managers who responded to the survey also agree with the statement that they have become isolated when promoted (42 per cent) and an equal number of managers express that it was difficult for them to obtain managerial positions (42 per cent). It seems the sector does not fully support its employees during their career journeys. Lastly, the fact that there are a small number of organised action platforms and non-governmental organisations make it difficult for employees to take organised action.

As demonstrated by the graph below, female professionals preferred first and foremost professional action platforms that would enable experience sharing and peer learning (49 per cent), networking (44 per cent), mentorship and training on specific topics (Both 33 per cent). Such platforms may be vital in transforming this leadership potential into actuality.

Graph 2: Further career development support - female professionals (%)



What kind of support do you need for your career development? What other support do you need?

Recommendations for further actions

The cultural sector is expected to continue to grow in the following years even though there are still a limited number of active institutions. The sector will benefit from:

- creating transparent public employment platforms, which would enable employment on an equal opportunity basis;
- working towards standardising and improving working conditions and hours and supporting employees who are caregivers;
- the issue of low wages, which continues to be a problem for most of the employees, especially for women from disadvantaged backgrounds, should be overcome even though funding in the field is limited;
- creating new professional action platforms which would especially address the needs of low to mid-level employees;
- and increasing awareness and implementing new tools to avoid workplace discrimination.

British Council

www.britishcouncil.org.tr

© British Council, 2019

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international Organisation for cultural relationships and educational opportunities.