



WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP IN ARTS AND CULTURE

ACCORDING TO 2017 GLOBAL GENDER GAP REPORT, TURKEY IS RANKED 131ST IN TERMS OF GENDER PARITY, AND THE EMPLOYMENT RATE FOR WOMEN IS 34 PER CENT COMPARED TO OECD AVERAGE OF 63 PER CENT. IN RESPONSE, WE DEVELOPED A THREE-YEAR 'WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP IN ARTS AND CULTURE' PROGRAMME TO SUPPORT THE UPWARD MOBILITY OF WOMEN. WE TALKED WITH PROGRAMME PARTICIPANT ESRA GONEN.



I was selected as one of the female culture professionals of the programme. My initiative, Originn, is the only creative hub in İzmir and we formed a space for entrepreneurs to come together. Creative industries are full of females but 5,7 per cent of enterprises in Turkey are owned by women and 7,4 per cent of all business owners are women.

This programme gave me the chance to visit and observe different business models and professionals in the UK, which helped me develop my own business skills.

I visited inspiring creative hubs and counterparts in London and Manchester and did my job shadowing in Liverpool with the board member of Baltic Creative, Erika Rushton. The most important benefit for me was to be able to compare what I have done so far and gain global expertise and know-how.

It was quite difficult to start a new business concept without having a role model. As a female leader, I have already benefited from my placement with UK women professionals and institutions they lead. I improved my delegation skills with the help of feedback and the business models I observed inspired me to make some strategic choices.

With the support of Erika Rushton, I've organised a public outreach event and engaged with a hundred entrepreneurs, stakeholders and public authorities within the industry. I've developed a great network of contacts and have already started collaborating with the UK organisations. With the good relations we've developed, I've recently been selected to be a part of the Board of Baltic Creative.



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—Esra Gonen, Co-founder of Originn creative hub