

International Day of the Girl Child 2021

“The Time is Now! Girls’
Leadership in the Digital Era”

Conference Report

OCTOBER 11, 2021 | ISTANBUL



The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of stylized, line-art girl faces. Each face is unique, with various hairstyles like braids, buns, and bows, and different expressions. The pattern is dense and covers the entire page.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



In 2011, the United Nations General Assembly declared October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child to end discrimination against girls, strengthen girls' rights, and highlight the unique challenges girls face around the world.

The theme of the 2021 conference, the Seventh International Day of the Girl Child conference, was girls' leadership in the digital era.



In 2011, the United Nations General Assembly declared October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child to end discrimination against girls, strengthen girls' rights, and highlight the unique challenges girls face around the world.

Since 2015, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women and the Aydın Doğan Foundation have been key actors in observing this day in Türkiye. This partnership has been organising the International Day of the Girl Child conferences every year bringing young people together with experts, representatives from women and children organisations, media, private sector and members of the international community. In the past, these conferences have addressed girls' empowerment and leadership under various themes including quality education, prevention of child marriage, girls' agency in the 21st Century, girls' empowerment through science, arts and sports, and being an adolescent girl in the face of COVID-19 and climate change.

The theme of the 2021 conference, the Seventh International Day of the Girl Child conference, was girls' leadership in the digital era. This theme was chosen in order to address the global and regional needs of girls

and young women by strengthening collective action in the European and Central Asian (ECA) Region to support adolescent girls' leadership in advancing gender equality in the digital world.

The event was held in Istanbul, Türkiye in a hybrid format, with face-to-face and online participation, in accordance with COVID-19 precautions. The conference was broadcasted live to YouTube and <https://dunyakizcocuklari.org/en>. A range of participants including public figures, young people, and experts discussed the potential, motivation and skills of the current generation of adolescent girls in challenging stereotypes, claiming their rights and building a more equitable world for girls, boys, women and men in the digital era.

The conference was organised around the theme of 'The Time is Now! Girls' Leadership in the Digital Era!', in line with the motto of 'Empowered Girls, Empowered Future'. The keynote speaker of the conference, **Afshan Khan, UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia** said that "the time is now to support young women and girls to advance their skills, leadership capacity and to become the champions of gender equality, especially in a more digital world future." **UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore** shared her views at the "Conversation with Pioneers in the Leadership of Girls and Women" underlining that "education policies should emphasize digital skills for girls as well as boys. We should also include girls' voices and solutions when developing any digital products or services." Professor Sonia Livingstone from LSE, Turkish business person Ayşegül İldeniz and young gender activists Yana Panfilova, Selin Özünaldım, İlayda Işık, Xenia Kellner, Elvira Kalmurzaeva, Buse Tolunay, Zeynep Betül Dermirses and Dominique Ogreau shared their experiences; an adolescent committee composed of 114 children and youth voiced their ideas and their call to action for supporting young leaders of change for gender equality.

The International Day of the Girl Child Conference reached approximately 20 million people with the communications made on social media about the conference. A total of 17 thousand people watched the conference that was made available online, an increase of 909% in the news since 2015 for the International Day of the Girl Child, contributing to significant awareness-raising on the challenges facing girls.

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BACKGROUND: WHY INVEST IN GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN THE DIGITAL ERA?



The aim of the conference was to highlight the potential, motivation and skills of the current generation of adolescent girls in challenging stereotypes, claiming their rights and building a more equitable world for girls, boys, women and men in the digital era.



VUSLAT DOĞAN SABANCI
VICE PRESIDENT OF AYDIN
DOĞAN FOUNDATION

Investing in girls' empowerment and leadership in the digital era, and strengthening their digital skills and literacy, is crucial for breaking barriers so that girls and women can enjoy their human rights, as well as for achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

The aim of the conference was to highlight the potential, motivation and skills of the current generation of adolescent girls in challenging stereotypes, claiming their rights and building a more equitable world for girls, boys, women and men in the digital era.

Discriminatory social norms and violence against girls and women remain prevalent in the European and Central Asian (ECA) Region, affecting the most disadvantaged populations, including refugee and migrant girls and women. Whilst the last decade has been marked by increasingly visible social movements around gender, a push-back against the progress achieved has also been observed globally and in the ECA region, including a trend of challenging international standards concerning women's and girls' human rights and violence against girls and women.

The digital divide for girls persists in the ECA region, as it does in many parts of the world. Over 90% of jobs worldwide have a digital component, and the importance of digital tools and skills is only increasing with every passing year. Investing in girls' empowerment and leadership in the digital era, and strengthening their digital skills and literacy, is crucial for breaking barriers so that girls and women can enjoy their human rights, as well as for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As underlined by the SDG 5.5, "women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life" are key to achieve this goal.

The obstacles and challenges facing young girls in the digital era include the underrepresentation of girls in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), online sexual harassment, digital sexual violence, cyber-bullying, and concerns for privacy and safety which have all been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Statistics show that the rate of women exposed to digital violence in Türkiye is 27 times higher than men, with reports of image-based abuse skyrocketing during COVID-19. Globally, women account for only 35% in STEM at the university level.

At the opening speech of the conference Vuslat Doğan Sabancı, Vice Chairwoman of the Aydın Doğan Foundation, said: "Despite all the positive developments in protecting women's and girls' equality rights through the efforts of states, civil society and individuals in



recent years, girl children still face gender prejudice and inequalities worldwide. One of the most striking of these areas is 'digital inequality', which is vital for the era we live in. In low- and middle-income countries, three hundred million fewer women than men have access to the internet on a mobile. This digital divide increasingly challenges women and girls' access to life-enhancing services such as education, health, and financial inclusion. It is critical to establish strategies that will enable technology to become a great equalizer rather than a destructive one."

It is in this context that the global community needs to support adolescent girls to leverage their leadership and solutions, to claim their rights and become a new generation of digital leaders for their communities.

Vuslat Doğan Sabancı, further stressed the importance of encouraging girls to pursue STEM and strengthen their digital skills. She highlighted studies conducted by MIT showing that institutions and organisations become more successful when women are involved in active decision-making, institutions and organisations are much more successful. She called on the participants to use 'all our might to raise awareness to support girls' leadership in the digital era.' with the conference acting as a first step towards achieving that goal.

The global community needs to support adolescent girls to leverage their leadership and solutions, to claim their rights and become a new generation of digital leaders for their communities.



HASSAN MOHTASHAMI
UNITED NATIONS
POPULATION FUND (UNFPA)
TÜRKİYE REPRESENTATIVE

It is much more critical that adolescent girls learn their rights in the digital world, have a voice and leadership in the online environment, and claim their bodily autonomy to make decisions. We must not tolerate a digital world that reinforces inequality.



United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Türkiye Representative Hassan Mohtashami touched on the importance of the digital era where four out of five people in Türkiye use the internet every day.

Mohtashami brought up concrete numbers concerning digital violence. According to a poll conducted by UNFPA Türkiye, one in five people in Türkiye has been subject to digital violence. Among teenagers aged between 15 and 17—many of whom are girls—those numbers are even more striking, rising to roughly thirty per cent. He said: “A girl who is aware of her own abilities and empowered, with a full understanding of her rights—particularly the right to say no—will not only be the leader of her life but will also contribute to building a gender-equal world in the future.”

He stressed the need of raising the awareness of girls about cyberbullying and digital violence and added: “We are all aware that girls are an important part of the online interaction and learning process since they are active members of the digital world. And the psychological impact of the girls’ experiences in their developmental age, which is now more affiliated with the online environment, will accompany them throughout their lives. For this reason, it is much more critical that adolescent girls learn their rights in the digital world, have a voice and leadership in the online environment, and claim their bodily autonomy to make decisions.”

Pointing out that the pandemic accelerated digitalization, Mohtashami quoted the UNFPA Executive Director Natalia Kanem and said: “We must not tolerate the digital war that reinforces inequality. Instead, let’s apply these technologies to help girls achieve their rights and secure bodily autonomy.”



ASYA VARBANOVA
UN WOMEN TÜRKİYE
COUNTRY DIRECTOR

UNFPA Türkiye Representative highlighted: “At UNFPA, we will continue to advocate for the sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls, also in the digital age, while leaving no one behind.”

Asya Varbanova, the UN Women Türkiye Country Director, underlined the importance of the partnership between the UN organisations, the Aydın Doğan Foundation, and young people in achieving sustainable progress for gender equality. She declared that “every girl has a right to be connected and to play her part in shaping a more equal, green and tech-driven future.

We need to harness the ideas, talents and energy of young people – particularly young women and girls – using the advantages of the digital space, to deal with the complex challenges of today and realize the SDGs.” She emphasised that in order to not be left behind in the 21st Century, it is essential that girls have full access to and use of digital technology. She states “to be a girl today is to be part of a digital generation. Girls of today are leading the digital transformation.”, using examples of coding camps for adolescent girls across the African continent and the Afghan all-girl robotics team. She noted the diversity of girls’ voices during the Generation Equality Forum was instrumental in shaping the global acceleration plan for gender equality, highlighting the action coalition for technology and innovation.

She concluded: “Girls are already mobilising across regions to make this change happen to fight for equality and justice, they are calling for their needs to be incorporated into policies that transform the economies of societies. They are impatient, they are bold, they are leaders, and we have to listen to them. I am fully convinced that unless we can harness all the talent, energy, and commitment of young women and girls today we will not be able to solve the challenges that we have to deal with, and that humanity has to face, in order to achieve sustainable development. Women will continue working hand in hand with all of our partners to put girls at the heart of the digital revolution. We will continue to support initiatives to increase digital skills and access for women and girls to invest in feminist technology and innovation, to develop new tools and partners to combat gender-based violence, cyber violence and continue to insist girls right to education including in ICT and STEM fields. It is non-negotiable.”



To be a girl today is to be part of a digital generation. Girls of today are leading the digital transformation.



Keynote Speech by Afshan Khan, UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia

Following the youth statement, the keynote speaker, Afshan Khan who is the UNICEF Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, delivered her speech. She highlighted how empowering women and girls for self-empowerment and equal participation is investing not only in individuals but building stronger communities. She states: "Girls and women are engines of social development and change." Citing the different ways in which women are important contributors to society, from being key actors in overcoming disasters, ensuring peace and stability, to caring for the community as frontline workers in health and as caregivers. She declared that "investing in women and girls, building their skills, and giving them equal opportunities enhances sustainable development and our common prosperity. The SDGs cannot be met without them." Afshan Khan outlined the notable progress made in past decades in women's health, access to education, women in leadership roles, nutrition, as well as a reduction in the number of child, early and forced marriages. Afshan Khan urged that these gains need to be protected and nurtured, particularly in light of the fact that many girls continue to be excluded from realising their full rights and potential, particularly amongst the most disadvantaged populations including refugee and migrant children, those living with disabilities and health conditions, and children with non-conforming gender identities, etc. To demonstrate this exclusion, she introduced statistics on gender disparities both regionally and globally including:

- » In the ECA region alone, it will take 107 years to close the gender gap at this current rate of progress without setbacks.
- » 327 million fewer women than men have a smartphone and therefore access to mobile internet. In other words, women are 26% less likely to have a smartphone. This makes it exceedingly challenging for women to participate in digital spaces.
- » 30% of women have less access to internet compared to men, losing out on the opportunity to get the necessary skills for the labour market
- » In the ECA region, only 1 out of 3 of the graduates from STEM programs are female. On average, in the OECD, for children of 15 years of age, 0.5% of girls wish to become ICT professionals compared to 5% of boys.
- » 85% of women globally report witnessing online violence against other women including within and outside their networks. 38% report personal experiences with online violence.
- » 45% of Gen Z and Millennial girls are facing online violence, with only 1 out of 4 reporting this on the platform on which they occurred.

Afshan Khan called attention to the fact that many children are born into the digital world, and young girls and boys are forming their identities through and on digital platforms. This makes it even more crucial to address digital gender barriers and ensure they are able to grow from adolescence to adulthood on digital platforms safely and with equal access.

She called the audience and participants to action, stating that it is time to accelerate collective action into advancing gender equality so that women and girls can fully participate and enjoy equal opportunities for use of enabling technologies. Khan had asked: Are we doing enough to address these issues? Can we do more? In order to do more, Khan suggested using the six principles in the gender equality strategy in ECA to guide joint efforts.

Emphasising the need of encouraging girls and presenting them the opportunity to assume leadership in the digital world through their potential, motivation and skills Khan said: "The time is now for all of us – governments, the international community, the private sector, experts, parents, teachers, community members, and girls and boys - to accelerate our support to adolescent girls' safe and meaningful participation in advancing gender equality. The time is now to support young women and girls to advance their skills, leadership capacity and to become the champions of gender equality, especially in a more digital world future. Together, we can and must continue to work together to achieve gender equality, for every child."



The time is now for all of us - governments, the international community, the private sector, experts, parents, teachers, community members, and girls and boys - to accelerate our support to adolescent girls' safe and meaningful participation in advancing gender equality.

AFSHAN KHAN
UNICEF REGIONAL
DIRECTOR EUROPE AND
CENTRAL ASIA

Investing in women and girls, building their skills, and giving them equal opportunities enhances sustainable development and our common prosperity. The SDGs cannot be met without them.

PIONEERS IN GIRLS' AND WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP



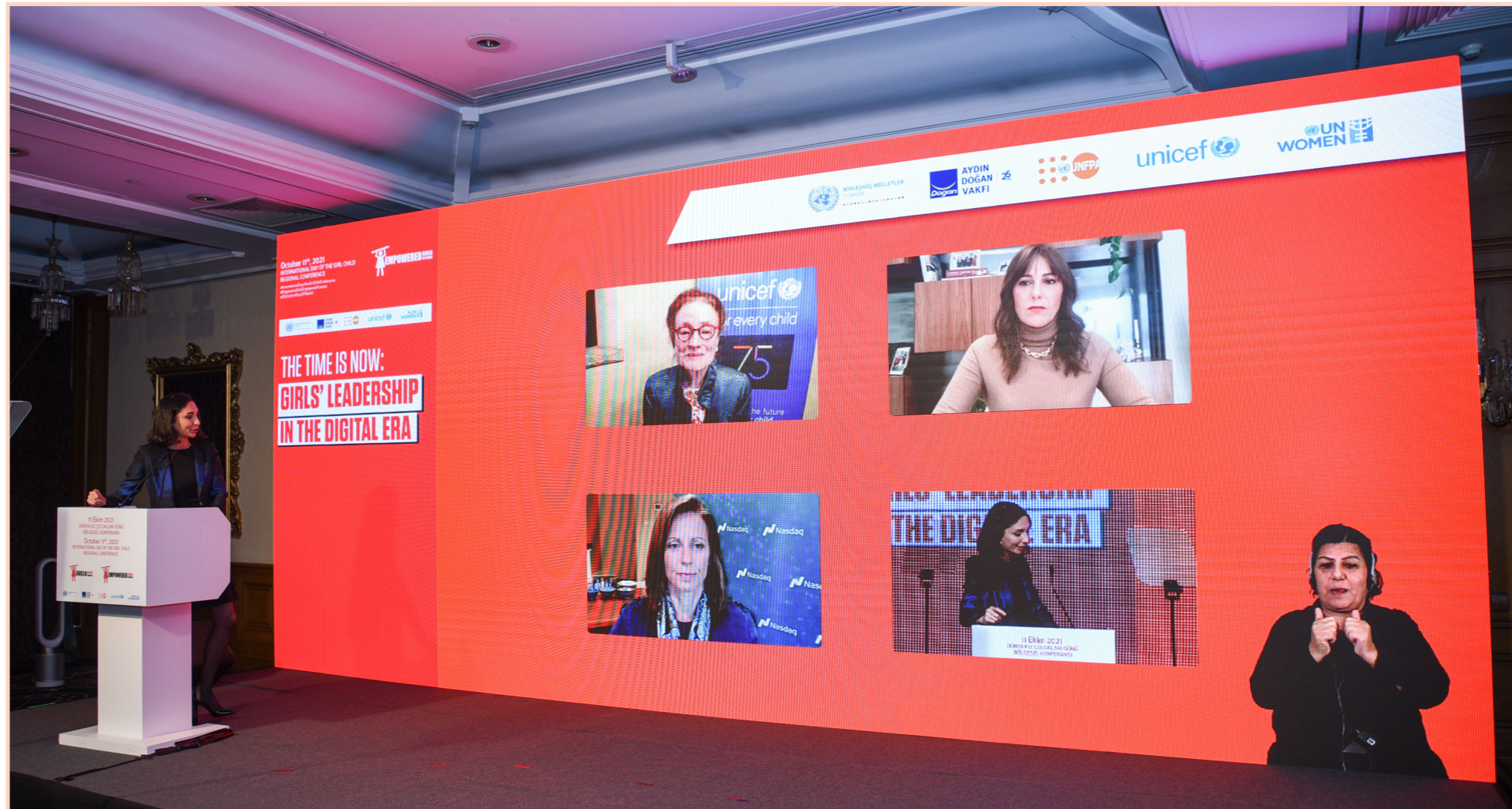
Following the keynote speech, there was a special talk with pioneers in girls' and women's leadership with Henrietta Fore (UNICEF Executive Director), Hanzade Doğan (Chairwoman of Aydın Doğan Foundation), Adena Friedman (President and CEO of Nasdaq).

The COVID-19 pandemic has further limited girls' access to online learning, devices and connectivity.

Following the keynote speech, there was a special talk with pioneers in girls' and women's leadership with Henrietta Fore (UNICEF Executive Director), Hanzade Doğan (Chairwoman of Aydın Doğan Foundation), Adena Friedman (President and CEO of Nasdaq). The discussion highlighted the digital divide globally, emphasizing the need of having every learner including girls to access the internet, strengthen digital literacy and skills, and safeguard young girls on the internet through

stronger legislation. "The COVID-19 pandemic has further limited girls' access to online learning, devices and connectivity," said UNICEF Executive Director Henrietta Fore. "This is especially true for girls living in remote or marginalized communities, as well as those who are living as refugees or migrants. That is why education policies should emphasize digital skills for girls as well as boys. We should also include girls' voices and solutions when developing any digital products or services."

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VOICES OF YOUTH



During the conference, particular attention was given to the work and perspectives of young people in advocating for gender equity in the digital era.

The Youth Statement acknowledged the importance of gender equity in all fields including the digital sphere.

During the conference, particular attention was given to the work and perspectives of young people in advocating for gender equity in the digital era. 114 children and young people, including refugee children, carried out workshops with the motto "Girls Leading Gender Equality in All Fields", producing a youth statement which was declared by 12 youth representatives at the conference. The Youth Statement acknowledged the importance of gender equity in all fields including the digital sphere, using that framework to produce the following recommendations, thoughts, and proposals:

- » The youth emphasised on the need for gender equity and eliminating prejudice. To do so, there was a call to enhance leadership in every sector and enhance employment opportunities for all genders. They emphasised that professions don't have a gender, and both girls and boys should be able to become anything they want to be in all fields.
- » The youth highlighted the importance of successful women as role models and the need for young people to be exposed to them more often, and to hear them more clearly and loudly.



Young people called for an increase in funds in cultural and scientific events for girls to become involved in and in which to show interest.

- » To advocate for gender equity in all fields, they identified that it is essential to address the perpetuation of gender inequalities in social media, commercials, and even pictures in school books. There was a call to change the messages in the media to those that are more egalitarian and not gendered.
- » Young people called for an increase in funds in cultural and scientific events for girls to become involved in and in which to show interest. In areas like literature, science, and sports girls are interested, and want opportunities tailored to increase their participation.
- » They expressed the need for teachers that focus on strengthening and discovering individual natural aptitudes of the students rather than perpetuating gender norms on how girls or boys 'should' act or be 'like'.

GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT IN THE DIGITAL AGE: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES



"Girls' Empowerment in the Digital Age: Opportunities and Challenges" panel hosted academics and activists to discuss the challenges and opportunities of the digital world, moderated by Şirin Payzın.



"Girls' Empowerment in the Digital Age: Opportunities and Challenges" panel hosted academics and activists to discuss the challenges and opportunities of the digital world, moderated by Şirin Payzın. The panel consisted of Sonia Livingstone, Professor of Social Psychology at the London School of Economics, Founder of Teenergizer Yana Panfilova, Gender Equality and HeForShe activist, student Selin Özünaldım and İlayda Işık, Kız Başına Platform Coordinator. The persistent gender gaps in digital technologies were highlighted in terms of access, freedom, and safety as part of the challenges facing girls' leadership in the digital age.

Sonia Livingstone pointed out that it is necessary to not only encourage girls to strengthen their digital literacy and skills, but provide them with more diverse and imaginative online resources to do so. Online resources could also be crucial in providing reliable resources on sexual health, sexuality, mental health, and the ability to cope in the wake of violence. These resources should be strengthened. She highlighted how gaming is often gendered, where boys find communities to engage with online and have their voice heard. Girls do not have access to these online gaming spaces in the same way, and suggested that this may lead to girls not having the same opportunity to gain the confidence and skills to participate fully in the digital world.

Yana Panfilova, a Ukrainian activist and founder of Teenergizer explored the social stigma surrounding her HIV status, and her journey growing up with inefficient laws that blocked her access to understanding her disease more deeply. It was through digital platforms where she was able to access information, realising that there were thousands of adolescents, particularly adolescent girls, in her same situation seeking out online peer counselling. She detailed how the pandemic was exacerbating mental illnesses and feelings of loneliness, particularly for children living in abusive households. Yana Panfilova brought up the fact that the digital era and access to mobile phones is also interrelated with increasing anxieties for adolescents, and more efforts should be made to countering these effects by listening to young women, investing in mental health resources, and ensuring the digital spaces have those opportunities available and are a safe space for young people.



YANA PANFILOVA
FOUNDER
OF TEENERGIZER



Yana Panfilova brought up the fact that the digital era and access to mobile phones is also interrelated with increasing anxieties for adolescents.



Gender Equality and HeForShe activist, student Selin Özünaldım underlined the indispensability of digital platforms particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic as education, communication, and friendship were moved into online spaces. Although precautions exist, Selin Özünaldım had argued that they were not enough or quick enough to protect young people when they are at risk of digital violence. She stressed that the private sector has a critical responsibility to prevent digital violence and cyberbullying. In particular, she notes the ways in which the media embeds harmful gender norms in the minds of young people. Through awareness-raising and proper safeguarding in partnership with the private sector, she argues that we can better protect adolescent girls in the digital age.

SELİN ÖZÜNALDIM
TV PROGRAMMER, STUDENT,
GENDER EQUALITY AND
HEFORSHE ACTIVIST

Through awareness-raising and proper safeguarding in partnership with the private sector, we can better protect adolescent girls in the digital age.



İLAYDA IŞIK
KIZ BAŞINA PLATFORM
COORDINATOR

We don't want depressed, anxious girls. We want girls who know about their fundamental rights and who then will advocate for all women.

İlayda Işık, is the Kız Başına Platform Coordinator, an organisation working to prevent abuse, hate discourse, and cyber bullying against girls. She accentuated the challenges adolescent girls are facing on digital platforms, outlining cyber violence on social media. She drew attention to the extent, type and depth of cyber violence due to social media algorithms that create personalised echo chambers. She stressed that getting young people addicted to these social media platforms is a deliberate act, and it is something that lawmakers should regulate. She recalled that her organisation had conducted a survey where over 25000 people had participated, with 10% of participants being girls below the age of 18. A staggering 35% of that population was subjected to violence online. She called for solidarity, cooperation, and coordination to create a communication strategy to counter these challenges. She states: "We don't want depressed, anxious girls. We want girls who know about their fundamental rights and who then will advocate for all women."

DIGITAL SPHERE AND SKILLS FOR ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY



The second panel covered the topics of the digital sphere and skills for advancing gender equality. The panel consisted of Ayşegül İldeniz, the Board Member of Doğan Holding and Zorlu Holding; Buse Tolunay, a Computer Engineering student; and Xenia Kellner, the Co-Founder of Young Feminist Europe.



AYŞEGÜL İLDENİZ
THE BOARD MEMBER OF
DOĞAN HOLDING AND
ZORLU HOLDING

In terms of careers, the future will belong to women, in terms of capacity, aptitude and emotional skills.

The second panel covered the topics of the digital sphere and skills for advancing gender equality. The first speaker, Ayşegül İldeniz, the Board Member of Doğan Holding and Zorlu Holding, spoke about the way technology is empowering because it is horizontal, placing all of us who have access to it on an equal level. She asserted that "In terms of careers, the future will belong to women, in terms of capacity, aptitude and emotional skills". She went on to explain that knowledge will decrease in value while creativity, the ability to dream, and interpret, all soft skills, will be at the forefront in the future. Using the example of artificial intelligence (AI), she explained that different backgrounds to code AI is necessary for different and varied solutions.

The second speaker, Buse Tolunay, a current junior Computer Engineering student, spoke about her experience of feeling alienated in the field of engineering as she did not fit into the stereotypes of this male-dominated profession. Despite these challenges, she remained confident knowing that despite these social prejudices, she will pursue this career path. She declared: "I will be here as a woman, and I will clear the path for girls in the future."

Xenia Kellner, the Co-Founder of Young Feminist Europe, highlighted the need to transform leadership itself. She stressed the need to move away from just increasing diversity in leadership positions, but making structures themselves more inclusive and transformative, meaning that structures will need to change. She spoke about the importance of creating youth-led spaces using digital tools, and how that in her own experience she has felt much more empowered to speak up due to opportunities such as the youth panel that this conference had provided. To recall what those had said before, she urges us to learn from the youth focusing on their emotional intelligence and ability to tackle generational traumas.



Elvira Kalmurzaeva joined the conference online recounting an inspiring story of a girl living in a remote village at the border of Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan who attended media literacy and activism training and convinced her father to buy her a smartphone. Despite the fact that it was out of her family budget, her father took out a loan and bought her a smartphone. Today, she is a social media manager for several organisations in Southern Kyrgyzstan. This exemplifies the ways in which digital technologies are instrumental in breaking barriers.

The panel concluded with recommendations given to the audience, calling on them to increase girls' intellectual capacity, to treat boys and girls equally, to create co-mentorship programs, and to increase visibility of women in STEM fields in media.

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A CALL TO ACTION BY YOUNG LEADERS



Young leaders Zeynep Betül Demirses and Dominique Ogreau voiced a call to action at the end of the conference, addressing political leaders, private sector, civil society, families and youth.

Start an initiative, develop an inclusive policy, build a committee or connect with the civil society this year to address girls' needs in your community.



Young leaders Zeynep Betül Demirses and Dominique Ogreanu voiced a call to action at the end of the conference, addressing political leaders, private sector, civil society, families and youth: "Take action now, before one more girl faces abusive content online; before one more young woman is denied a job because of her gender; before one more student gives up on their hopes for their future. Start an initiative, develop an inclusive policy, build a committee or connect with the civil society this year to address girls' needs in your community. Let's make today, 11 October 2021, the day we all took an important step to advance girls' empowerment and leadership. We have heard great examples of girls and women leading today yet we heard that gender barriers still exist, preventing women and girls from following their dreams, their independence, their safety, protection, and participation."

They stated in their call to action:

- » "To business leaders, employers, and the private sector: We need your decisive commitment to create the space and use your resources for women's participation, revise your policies and review your ads, increase your donation for girls and women in education. For women in business, sign up for a mentorship program to be a role model and a pioneer for other women in your sector.
- » To policy makers: We cannot afford losing the rights that were guaranteed to us by international conventions, we call on you to sign decisions advancing gender equality in all spheres of life. And reject all that can take us one step back from where we are today.
- » To civil society: We call on you for monitoring and accountability. Find out about national, regional, and global coalitions for advancing girls' rights. Affirm these commitments and understand the power in making change within communities.
- » To parents, family, caregivers: We call on you to have a constructive talk with your daughters, as you have an important role in challenging stereotypes and influencing future generations. It is your responsibility to ensure that we enjoy our rights irrespective of gender. Ask your daughter what she wants for the future, and trust that she has the power to build it herself. Support her decisions, and work on developing digital skills together. Before the end of year make sure she and you are both registered in a learning opportunity.
- » Children and young people: We call on you to go online and learn more about engagement opportunities in your communities. Join child rights committees, student boards, community centres, and ensure that you are participating in the decisions that affect you. Digitally empower yourselves and learn about online protections. As your peers, we are with you in the fight for gender equality.
- » To everyone: In 2030, you will look back and see that you did your part in making a more just world. The time is now!"

In 2030, you will look back and see that you did your part in making a more just world. The time is now!

**7TH INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD CONFERENCE
MONDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2021**

16.00-16.03 Opening	Opening by Master of Ceremony Özge Uzun
16.03-16.06	Opening Speech by Vuslat Doğan Sabancı, <i>Vice President of Aydın Doğan Foundation</i>
16.06-16.09	Master of Ceremony presenting the "Youth Statement" and its background
16.09-16.13	The Youth Statement
16.13-16.24	Keynote Speech by Afshan Khan, <i>UNICEF, Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia</i>
16.24-16.25	Master of Ceremony introducing the "Special Talk with Pioneers in Girls' and Women's Leadership"
16.25-16.52	Special Talk with Pioneers in Girls' and Women's Leadership Henrietta Fore, <i>UNICEF Executive Director</i> , Hanzade Doğan, <i>Chairwoman of Aydın Doğan Foundation</i> , Adena Friedman, <i>President and CEO of Nasdaq</i> . Facilitated by: Afşin Yurdakul
16.52-16.56	Opening remarks to Panel 1 by Hassan Mohtashami, <i>UNFPA Representative to Türkiye</i>

16.52-17.22 Panel 1. "Girls' Empowerment in the Digital Age. Opportunities and Challenges"	Sonia Livingstone (<i>Speaker 1</i>), Yana Panfilova (<i>Speaker 2</i>), Selin Özünaldım (<i>Speaker 3</i>), İlayda Işık (<i>Speaker 4</i>). Panel 1 Moderator: Şirin Payzın
17.22-17.27	Interactive Q&A
17.27-17.45	Video Messages
17.45-17.50	Opening remarks to Panel 2 by Asya Varbanova, <i>UN Women Türkiye Country Director</i>
17.50-18.15 Panel 2. "Digital Sphere and Skills for Advancing Gender Equality"	Ayşegül İlideniz (<i>Speaker 1</i>), Buse Tolunay (<i>Speaker 2</i>), Xenia Kellner (<i>Speaker 3</i>), Elvira Kalmurzaeva (<i>Speaker 4</i>). Panel 2 Moderator: Afşin Yurdakul
18.15-18.20	Interactive Q&A
18.20-18.25	A Call To Action From Young Leaders
18.25-18.30	Closing speech by the Master of Ceremony

FINAL REMARKS

Acknowledging that girls are not just passive recipients but also actors of the digital sphere, the conference shed light on the ways in which the online world provides tools for adolescent girls in their transition to adulthood, such as the means to freely express and value themselves, claim their rights, access services, construct their autonomy, experience and reimagine digital learning, build solidarity with peers, and overall, influence their communities as leaders of change. It did so by engaging with young people, experts, and civil society in panel discussions, video messages, youth statements, and calls to action.



