Project for Attaining Gender Equality in Education and Social Participation

Civil Monitoring Activities Evaluation Report

Güher Erbil - Aygen Yenigün

ACEV
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of Women Candidates

Project for Attaining Gender Equality in
Education and Social Participation
Civil Monitoring Activities
Evaluation Report

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Contents

Dear "reader",

A considerable part of our report is based on statements included in the interviews conducted with 44 people, most of whom had been volunteers. We are grateful to them for their positive attitude and eagerness for sharing.

Although we had no empirical information on the period prior to the start of our work in September 2007, in line with the request from the Project partners, a style generally employed in reports has been used in this document. Consequently, some sections –while belonging to the period before our activities- might give the impression of being from the period wherein we are involved with. These sections however, are written based on the statements who were involved with the project for various reasons.

Information on the concept and structure of the report are included in 'Introduction' and 'Executive Summary' parts.

The 'Background' part was complemented through significant contribution from the Project Team.

Thank you for your attention.

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Introduction

This report was prepared for evaluating the Civil Monitoring Activities (CMA) of a European Union Project which was launched in 2005, originally entitled "Raising Women: Reducing gender disparity in education through functional and political literacy, parent training, collective action and "advocacy" and generally referred to as "Gender Equality in Education and Social Participation" (Project), on request from the Project partners –i.e., AÇEV – Mother and Child Education Foundation (Leader), KA.DER - Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates, and ERI – Education Reform Initiative. The CMAs comprise all the activities conducted by the Civil Monitoring Groups (CMGs) which is an innovative field of study within the scope of the project. As both the Turkish and the English project title imply, the "Gender Equality in Education and Social Participation" project includes numerous activities targeting its objective, above and beyond the CMAs.[1].

Within the framework of Civil Monitoring Activities of the Project, four Civil Monitoring Groups (CMG) for conducting activities on local level in the provinces of Diyarbakır, İstanbul, Mardin and Şanlıurfa were established, as well as a National Monitoring Group (NMG) for monitoring the activities and suggesting solutions regarding the education policies on girls' access to education on national level by evaluating the information from these groups. The National Monitoring Group's name was later changed to Civil Initiative (CI). In this report requirement arose to simultaneously mention the processes conducted under the names of both the National Monitoring Group and the Civil Initiative. In these cases, the name National Monitoring Group was used as general reference and it might be that the period mentioned includes the Civil Initiative period as well.

The practices referred to as CMA include those carried out for monitoring gender disparity in education, analyzing its causes, generating recommendations for solution, bringing up the issue to the agenda and monitoring whether the recommendations are implemented.

Considering that these activities have been among the first practices wherein civil initiation -with its value and significance being acknowledged more and more and thus the inevitability thereof being equally felt- has been implemented in our country, the motive for the partners to request an evaluation survey which would approach the entire scope of the CMA's, has been to compile the activities conducted on behalf of the CMA's including all aspects whether positive or deficient, to analyze them and to present the results in a document offering an insight to all parties involved and particularly to the project team and those who have conducted these activities, as well as to other organizations which are/will be implementing projects of this sort.

For a detailed evaluation on the CMA's, initially the activities of the Civil Monitoring Groups (CMG) established in the project provinces as well as the practices of the National Monitoring Group (NMG) were analyzed. The report referred to the opinions of three executives from the community of Ministry of National Education and a Provincial Director of National Education in order to attain some information on how the process have been perceived from and assessed by an external point of view; thus, an insight to the outlook of the Ministry and the local organization has been sought.

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1 Please see **www.kizlaricinegitim.net** for all Project activities.

Within this framework, the activities conducted by the Civil and National Monitoring Groups were benchmarked against the objectives during the preliminary phase of the project in order to recognize the differences between the intended and realized; with the causes of these differences being identified by referring to the views of those concerned. The content of the report is based on the output from this activity.

In line with this objective, the authors of the report carefully analyzed all papers and documents submitted, and furthermore conducted 45 minutes to 2.5 hours face-to-face interviews with a total of 44 individuals in Ankara, İstanbul, Diyarbakır, Mardin and Şanlıurfa. The involvement of the individual in the project, duration of involvement in the group, conducted activities, interviewee's opinions on positive/constructive outputs and deficient/problematic areas, as well as prospective views and suggestions were discussed during these interviews. Following the implemented activities, all obtained information and opinions were evaluated and compiled to finalize this report.

In the report, AÇEV, KA.DER and ERI group were referred to as "Project Partners" and those who implemented the project were referred to as the "Project Team".

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Executive Summary

Being submitted to the European Commission in 2004 by the AÇEV-KA.DER-ERI consortium, the Project was approved by the end of the year and the implementation phase was officially initialized on January 1, 2005. Originally planned for a period of three years, the Project was concluded at the end of June 2008 with the approval of an extension request for six months.

The Civil Monitoring Groups established for carrying out the Civil Monitoring Activities (CMA) are comprised of the representatives of various nongovernmental organizations as well as interested educationists and further individuals, with the aim of analyzing gender disparity in education "in the field"; i.e. in their respective provinces; searching for motives; developing solution recommendations; carrying out advocacy[2] activities on behalf of these recommendations; communicating findings to the National Monitoring Group and to the participants of the national congresses; acting as a pressure group against local administrations by monitoring –again, in the field- whether the recommendations have been implemented. The National Monitoring Group on the other hand, is intended for communicating the observations and recommendations from the Civil Monitoring Groups to relevant bodies and particularly to the Ministry of National Education by complementing those with academic data and studies; carrying out "advocacy" work and monitoring the results and in line with its objective, is established with the participation of representatives from nongovernmental organizations and academics.

Various obstacles have been confronted during these activities, while extremely valuable achievements have also been obtained.

The most remarkable positive results have been:

- The initialization of a cooperation among diverse nongovernmental organizations in all provinces within the CMA process, as well as the attainment of awareness on the significance and worth thereof;

- Civil Monitoring Groups' 2005 report which enabled a conceptual overview on gender disparity in education and the compilation on obstacles facing girls as well as solution recommendations on the level of project provinces;

- The manifesto[3] entitled "Equality in Education; Priority for Girls", issued by the National Monitoring Group which was regenerated around the midway of the process by summoning numerous nongovernmental organizations, being renamed as the Civil Initiative; the abundant number of bodies undersigning the cited manifesto as well as their respective contributions for qualified solution proposals;

- The inclusion of certain articles of this manifesto in the National Action Plan for Combating Violence against Women prepared by the General Directorate on the Status of Women;

- The request from the Board of Education and Discipline to the Civil Initiative, both for the analysis of the curriculum with regards to gender disparity and for the training of the institution experts on the subject;

- Increasing awareness in the public and local administrations on disparities in education;

- Broadening "local" information to more extensive masses through national conferences;

- The experience acquired throughout the CMA as well as the practices conducted for sharing/ communicating this experience.

These achievements also demonstrate that the objective of generating inductive impact by influencing the laws and practices -which stand as the fundamental approach of the concept of *civil monitoring* - has started to be materialized.

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2 The concept of "advocacy" used in this text refers to "the process of changing the opinion of decision-makers on a specific issue".
3 Please see **www.kizlaricinegitim.net** for the manifesto.

Key obstacles on the other hand, could be defined under two groups:

- *Unforeseen external factors* such as the tension and incidents occurring in the Southeastern Anatolia in 2006 and rescheduling of the parliamentary elections for July, which had been originally scheduled for November 2007;

- *Structural factors* which could only be tried to be identified and avoided during an extensive preliminary work, such as the discrepancies among the expectations and requirements of the established groups in Diyarbakır, Mardin and Şanlıurfa due to their respective social structures, or the inherent challenges of the heterogeneous configuration of Istanbul.

Furthermore -while it might not be appropriate to identify this as an *"obstacle"*- since this has been the first CMA process implemented in the country, it is a fact that the problems stemming from lack of "experience" have influenced the practices.

Since particularly the statements during the interviews revealed that various stages of process related to the CMA required to be dealt with individually, a chronological structure was employed in the evaluations contained in this report. Activities conducted during each phase had distinct impacts on the results; thus, considerable differences were noted between the positive aspects/the challenges requiring to be dwelt on. On the other hand, it was also observed that certain issues required specific attention. Among them is the "Structure of Relations" which calls for the details to be underlined within the scope of the report. Therefore, besides analyzing each phase in general, the issues which were considered to be significant were analyzed exclusively, the scope of the report thus being expanded by interlinking the chronological structures with the thematic structures.

The complete Project was discussed in chronological order under three individual titles –i.e. the initial "Project Proposal Preparation", "Preliminary Phase" when activities conducted on CMA on approval of the project, and finally the "Implementation Phase", with the report being prepared in line with this order.

Project Proposal Preparation

Key details indicated by the data and outlook related to the phase: Deficiencies in terms of identification of requirements such as scheduling, workforce and other resources stemming from the fact that the executives had been oblivious of the possible impacts of the social discrepancies among the provinces; the concern for the preparation of a project which would meet the expectations of the EU; possible challenges arising from a project which includes numerous activities; the fact that the partners would be working together on this sort of a project for the first time; the partners' corporate discrepancies; involvement of civil monitoring notion in a project for the first time; and the lack of a comprehensive action plan on CMA. On the other hand, the initiative for implementing civil monitoring concept and activities –which could also be defined as collective civil initiative- in a project in the field of education for the first time in our country epitomizes the most positive and critical aspect of this phase.

Preliminary Phase

This phase denotes the time period between the acquisition of the Project and the time when the Civil Monitoring Groups were established and started to work, as well as the activities carried out during this period. The preliminary work conducted by the Project Team has been considered to be positive by the members of the Civil Monitoring Group in general. The most prominent issue which is underscored as a deficiency is the lack of clear definitions on civil monitoring and –particularly- the lack of an action plan. These deficiencies apparently have brought about a feeling of being at loss among the members and have led to anxiety. The Project Team asserted that they had realized that not being able to allocate sufficient time for preliminary internal work to be carried out before going in the field would be the key motive for numerous problems in the future. They have been relating the fact that -in their own words- not having meetings to their heart's content; i.e., that sufficient time not being allocated for the preliminary work, on their presumptions that the activities listed in the Project would be implemented easily.

Implementation Phase

The members perceived the time period between the establishment of Civil Monitoring Groups and the finalization of the project as two distinct phases. The initial workshop held with the participation and facilitation of the experts in the Project Team has been described somewhat like a spring board mobilizing everyone. In the cited workshop, the reasons for girls not being able to access education were identified; solutions were generated by utilizing the problem tree method; the results being submitted to all participants at the first national conference held for the outputs from the year 2005. The tangibility of these practices as well as the attainment of clear results generated a feeling of satisfaction and motivation among the members.

Subsequently, negative impact of the issues which have been referred to as the unforeseen factors such as the tension setting off in Southeastern Anatolia, rescheduling of the parliamentary elections and the change of Project Team experts was experienced. Furthermore, the provinces were granted the initiative to generate and implement their respective strategies. While attaining positive results in Diyarbakır, this attitude led to ambiguity, disintegration and abandonment in the other provinces. The Civil Monitoring Group in İstanbul was virtually dissolved; Şanlıurfa Civil Monitoring Group was attempted to be kept going through personal connections, while the Mardin Civil Monitoring Group was disturbed owing to the impact of some opinion-leading members leaving for moving out to another city or for other reasons.

Hence, the period until the end of 2005 and the period following this are perceived as distinct phases by the members. As stated by one of the members, some sort of a "fault line" emerged between the period before the national conference at the end of 2005, and the period following this conference.

Despite all the problems, the national and civil monitoring groups have attained a certain part of the specified objectives and have covered ground for further attainment. The details on these topics are included in the following sections.

One common opinion of the interviewed individuals is that the positive and important point is the implementation of the practice which brought about this report as well as its structure based upon the information and viewpoints of those involved with the issue.

Getting "aware" of these and passing them on into the future through various means including this report has been an extremely precious achievement. A further significant value of these activities which represent a "prototype" in the field of education in Turkey has been the acquired "experience" as well as the efforts made in order to generate awareness on this experience and to make it shareable/ communicable.

Acknowledging the fact that this is the minimum for what they deserve, here is the only thing we could say to all those who took pains in this –

"Congratulations".

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Background

The Project on the Attainment of Gender Equality in Education and Social Participation is a practice targeting to generate interventions against the attitudes, practices and policies which systematically impact girls and women and prevent them from accessing educational services, consequently from participating in social life. The Project was written and implemented under the partnership of the Mother Child Education Fund (AÇEV), the Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates (KA.DER), and the Education Reform Initiative (ERI). Within the context of the grant program, "Integrating Gender Issues into Development Cooperation", the European Union responded to the applications from only three countries including this project from Turkey, and provided funding. The project was implemented in the provinces of Diyarbakır, İstanbul, Mardin and Şanlıurfa.

The activities carried out within the scope of the project could be categorized under three headings:

- **Raising consciousness on the significance of girls' education.**

    Within the context of this objective, dialogue visits were paid to public authorities and nongovernmental organizations, while 4,150 individuals were accessed through the Parent Seminars and Public Information Meetings held.

- **Reducing the number of illiterate women; enhancing the contribution of women in decision-making mechanisms in the private and public fields.**

    Within the framework of these activities, 13 trainers' trainings were held in the project provinces during a period of 3.5 years, providing trainings for 311 volunteering trainers as well as 21 supervisors who would be monitoring the trainings and offering support. With the further participation of 139 former trainers, 510 literacy and civics training courses were opened to train 190,428 women, aiding them in participation in social life.

- **Developing local and national policies targeting the attainment of gender equality in education.**

    Civil Monitoring Groups were formed in the project provinces and on national level to monitor gender disparities in the local regions, to develop local and national policies and to advocate those. The field of work of the Civil Monitoring Groups could be summarized as developing educational policies to be conducted in the local regions, monitoring them and conducting the required interventions. Three key targets were set up for these groups: Bringing together people from various educational organizations or volunteers in education who would be monitoring local policies, generating recommendations for solution and carrying out advocacy work, later to autonomously sustain the activities which have been conducted with the contribution from the Project Team during the project period.

    In addition to the four civil monitoring groups in the project provinces, a National Monitoring Group was also established which would evaluate the information from these groups in order to generate national policies and provide support for active interventions. While during the initial years of the project the group originally consisted of the representatives of local monitoring groups and nongovernmental organizations, as well as an association of academics; it went through a structural change in the subsequent years. Targeting to conduct more active advocacy activities, the Project Team summoned the representatives of all nongovernmental organizations involved particularly in the enrollment of girl students and, expanding with their participation, the group was designated as the Civil Initiative. Composing a manifestation entitled "Equality in Education; Priority for the Girls!", the Civil Initiative had meetings within the scope of the advocacy activities with regard to the manifestations, with numerous parliament members, authorities from the public institutions and corporations, as well as journalists.

Furthermore, again within the framework of the activities on policy development targeting equality in education, workshops were held in the provinces as well as a national conference organized each year. The stakeholders in education were brought together through these activities, enabling mutual information exchange. The drop-out circumstances were investigated and were incorporated in a report.[4] The best practices from the world and from Turkey were published as a book. The reports of the Civil Monitoring Groups were also incorporated in a separate booklet. The journalists were invited to the project provinces for briefing trips and were informed on gender issues.

Project Period and Domain

The story of the project started in 2004, with the representatives of AÇEV, KA.DER and ERI preparing a project proposal subsequent to a series of meetings and applying for an EU grant program. While with the approval of the project the official launch date was designated as January 2005, and the ending date as December 2007, the project period was extended for six months in accordance with an application for extension; thus, the ending date of the project became definite as June 2008. In the project implemented during a time period of 42 months, 10,428 trainees were reached; with the targeted number of courses being exceeded. While the project activities were initially conducted in Diyarbakır, İstanbul, Mardin and Şanlıurfa, they were not limited to these provinces. Hundreds of education volunteers, staff and stakeholders were reached through various events such as conferences, civil initiative meetings, workshops and civil society development as well as tens of published sources being produced during the project period.

There is, of course, a lot to say about these results to many people; yet, that which the Project Team would like to say is the most significant among them:

"If not for the contributions of the volunteers, it would have been impossible to provide such an abundant input for the pool of activities conducted particularly for the education of women and girls. We owe them gratitude on behalf of girls, women and the whole society.

Project Team"

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4 Okulu terk raporu için bakınız **www.kizlaricinegitim.net**, yayınlar ve belgeler bölümü

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Process

A) Project Proposal Preparation

Upon being summoned for submitting a proposal for the Project, AÇEV proposed KA.DER and ERI for a joint participation. The representatives from these three bodies set off to establish the outlines of the Project through "idea generation/discussion" meetings. While the initial activities were limited with the framework and practices included in the call of the European Union, the concept of Civil Monitoring was later included in the scope of the Project, being brought up on the agenda by ERI.

The basis for the ERI proposal:

- The fact that the information rendered on Turkey in international reports, for instance, in UNESCO's Paris report (UNESCO Global Monitoring Report on Education for All) being on Turkey in general, and that this being considered a deficiency by all those who are concerned and particularly by ERI;

- Lack of national and local monitoring groups for education in Turkey;

- Requirement for decentralized information on education;

- ERI's attitude towards the Ministry of National Education targeting to influence the educational policies through laws and practices;

- The fact that the issue of monitoring the educational practices on local and national scale is already upon the agenda of ERI.

Motives for selecting Diyarbakır, İstanbul, Mardin and Şanlıurfa as the project implementation field:

- The intensity of gender equality in education and social participation in the cited provinces;

- The existing infrastructure and activities of AÇEV and KA.DER in Diyarbakır, İstanbul, Mardin and Şanlıurfa;

- The opinion that the civil society experience in these provinces have attained a certain level of maturity;

- High percentage of emigration, low percentage of school enrollment for girls and the high extent of the number of illiterate women in İstanbul, as well as the scarcity of local data in relation with the latter two problems.

CMA was included in the scope on the basis of long-termed prospects which are listed below:

- Information, viewpoints and recommendations gathered by the Civil Monitoring Groups on the education of girls from their respective provinces would be submitted to the National Monitoring Group at the end of each year; the National Monitoring Group would communicate the accumulated information through an annual report to those who are in charge/involved; and the cited report would be expected each year;

- Civil Monitoring Groups would be competent in report writing and similar matters; they would *get institutionalized* while generating information throughout the project and they would *autonomously maintain their existence and activities* subsequent to the end of the project;

- Monitoring tools would be developed during the project period for the Civil Monitoring Groups; thus, the evaluations on local administrations would attain a more tangible structure.

The project draft was prepared by the experts from AÇEV, KA.DER and ERI. Subsequently, the experts from AÇEV and ERI worked further on the draft for some revisions and supplements and it was submitted to the European Commission. The final version of the project and the general division of labor were communicated to all the partners held following the acquisition of the Project.

Positive Aspects

The mutual opinion of the interviewed individuals and particularly of the Civil and National Monitoring Groups was that the integration of the mentioned activities into the scope of the Project has been appropriate and necessary. Those participating in the activities expressed that they considered the Project's CMA sections discussed in this report to be positive, evaluating that the discussions on the disparities in education in their respective provinces are put into writing; that while the residents of the provinces –in their own words, "the locals"- had been merely spectators in similar projects, they would be active in this project; that this action is the first civil initiative with a function with regards to education; that some activities which have not been previously conducted in Turkey are being brought up on the agenda within the scope of this project.

Challenges

The common viewpoint of the interviewed individuals on the deficiencies of the CMA could be summarized as the presence of gaps generated by a certain extent of vagueness on the social discrepancies of the provinces; and that the activity content –i.e., the main tools such as the framework/system/mechanism- being not organized.

In the opinion of the Project Team, the fact that the Project had too many legs which led to the requirement of implementing numerous activities through limited resources especially in terms of human resources, posed an individual challenge. The fact that clear action plans on certain CMA activities were not prepared during the project proposal preparation period, led to failure in precise designation –thus, a failure in claiming in advance- of the required workforce and therefore to various problems during the implementation of the Project. The fact that an action format such as Civil and National Monitoring Groups which is not yet known in Turkey not being communicated in appropriate detail to all the partners during the project proposal preparation phase, led to dissimilar or vague insights.

Another problem stemmed from a communication accident faced during the period between the preparation of the Project proposal and the submission of the proposal. As mentioned above, the Project draft was prepared by the experts from AÇEV, KA.DER and ERI; later being worked on by the experts from AÇEV and ERI to be further revised and supplemented before being submitted. However, since these revisions and supplements were not communicated to the KA.DER representative, KA.DER noted certain differences including the fact that their share of work within the Project in general had substantially reduced. While this occasion led to trouble within KA.DER, eventually the problems were overcome through the problem-solving attitude of the parties. However, the fact that the viewpoint of KA.DER had not been employed in the designing of the project activities within CMG and CMA had a certain impact upon the process, however little it be.

The Structure of the Relations (Corporate)

It was indicated in the Executive Summary that while this report was prepared in a chronological order, certain specific issues from each period would be dwelt upon exclusively and one of these would be the Structure of Relations. Since the structure of relations is an issue which incorporates both the corporate and the individual relations, the one which has been influential in the respective period is specified in the title.

The relations that were influential during the project proposal preparation were between the bodies which comprised the Project Team and it was noted that their divergences could have an impact on the process.

The below divergences led to several challenges during some stages and in the implementation of the CMA:

- While ERI concentrates upon inductive impact through policy generation, thus adopting a critical attitude towards The Ministry of National Education; AÇEV has been conducting numerous projects in cooperation with the Ministry;

- While KA.DER and ERI are process oriented; AÇEV is result-oriented;

- AÇEV and ERI are professional organizations; on the other hand, KA.DER's structure is based on volunteerism;

- While KA.DER is focused on women's issues and primarily on the political aspects thereof; AÇEV and ERI are concentrated upon educational issues targeting women, men and children;

- Besides its critical and policy-generating structure, KA.DER' is an activist organization unlike AÇEV and ERI.

The potential impact of the challenges which would have stemmed from some of the divergences is eliminated on account of the personality and positive attitude of the representatives of the institutions within the Project Team; while the potential negative impact of the system deficiency was substantially reduced through an attitude which puts the Project and CMA interest before the personal and corporate concerns.

Comments and Recommendations

The fundamental motives of the challenges within this period arose from the corporate discrepancies of the partners, inclusion of new and unfamiliar concepts within the scope of the Project and lack of sufficient practices as to "how" these activities would be implemented.

The former two among these are substantial facts and the only way of preventing them from being a source of problem is to articulate them at the beginning of the job to discuss the probable effects and to generate proposals and methods on the manner to be attained against those which are considered to be negative; and review them in each and every phase.

The distinct characteristics of different institutions might lead to certain challenges during a project's implementation phase. While it might be possible to foresee some of them; some others are unforeseen –they are only recognized through experience. Thus, institutions should be flexible towards each other, should trust each other and should be respectful towards the manner of operation of each other without imposing their own values.

A final concern on implementation is –since it is a practice which failed to be done completely - that the only thing to be said might be "it should have been done". The manner of implementing activities could be specified through action plans, and this process is considered to be a practice which is carried out immediately after the approval of a project. On the other hand, failing to execute this process during the proposal preparation might lead to inadequate claim of resources –and particularly the workforce- and hence to various disturbances.

Apart from these, the challenges stemming from the fact that the Project had too many legs have also been mentioned above. This sort of a problem could be overcome either by planning fewer activities or by providing the workforce and other resources which could deal with more activities. Since there was no action plan prepared at the beginning of the Project, it is not quite possible to tell that whether the confronted problems arose from a deficiency in resources and especially from the lack of workforce; or from failure to use them in an organized and efficient manner.

This topic reemphasizes the significance of the preliminary work required during various phases including the project proposal preparation period. It is a common assertion that these practices are not executed due to lack of time. On the contrary, however, a requirement to allocate a great deal of time shows up when the losses in terms of time and resources in the work process are considered. The term "preliminary" as used here, refers not only to the organization of the tools such as the system/action plan/mechanism, but also to a holistic practice which deals with all sources of problems mentioned above including the analysis of the social structures of the provinces.

B) Preliminary Phase

With the approval from the European Commission, the project implementation was officially launched on January 1, 2005, with the part-time and fulltime team which would be conducting the work being established in the first month.

The Project Coordinator and an expert in charge conducted activities at the end of February and throughout March in the four provinces and set up a communication web with the aim of establishing the Civil Monitoring Groups. In the face-to-face interviews held during this period, they communicated the outlines of the concept of civil monitoring and the matters expected from the group; while explaining that the method of work would depend on the groups' decisions. With the groups being set up as a consequence of these activities, meetings with broad participation were held in April and general information on the Project was communicated to the participants by the Project Team.

Positive Aspects

The mutual opinions with regards to this period could be summarized as that the circumstances for everyone to put their ideas forth was created and that the information submitted on the CMA were adequate. The fact that the three implementing institutions are renowned and trusted bodies was indicated as another positive point; and this was expressed to be an important factor in the decision of some of the members for participating in the activities. The information rendered in the first meetings held in April, the manner of presentation as well as the number and characteristic of the participating Project Team members had a positive influence on the participants in general.

The discrepancies among the social structures of the provinces on the other hand, initially started to come into view at this phase. A majority of the members of the Diyarbakır Civil Monitoring Group for instance, were interpreting the fact that no precise definitions and limits were set as an extensive area being allocated to them and considering this as a positive aspect. On the other hand, the attitude in the other provinces was on the contrary and demonstrated divergences as indicated below.

Challenges

Apart from the majority of the members of the Diyarbakır Civil Monitoring Group, a deficiency whereon the other interviewed individuals were of the same opinion was the lack of a structured action plan on CMA. Furthermore, the matters they indicated as to be requisite and which should have been provided during the implementation of the job differentiated among the provinces. While the members of the İstanbul Civil Monitoring Group indicated that their relations with the Project Team should be defined; the Mardin Civil Monitoring Group felt the deficiency for evident/clear-cut targets and the Şanlıurfa Civil Monitoring Group believed that the group members should be selected from top-level and influential individuals in the province. Diyarbakır Civil Monitoring Group underlined the requisite for statements being basic and less academic, and it should not be considered that everybody knew all the details on the challenges for the school enrollment of the girls.

Support for methodology, clear and exemplified written description of the Civil Monitoring Group, the definitions for responsibility-task-authorization, information on the differentiations in similar projects formerly conducted, trainings on diverse matters in line with the requirements of both the provinces and the individuals who comprise the group were among further topics which were indicated as deficient in general. On the other hand, the fact that the Civil Monitoring Groups were not supported on the subject of the employment of the monitoring tools for gender disparity in education was specified as a deficiency by the Project Team.

The Structure of Relations (Corporate and Individual)

The relations which should be emphasized at this phase were specified as those between the part-time/fulltime executives and the Project Team in general. Some individuals are obligated to serve more than one body in the practices conducted through the cooperation of several institutions such as this one. The fact they are also assigned for other tasks of their institution while conducting their responsibilities within the Project, raises priority issues. The same occasion was also true for this Project. The lack of a definite work plan and clear-cut definitions both within the institutions and within the Project, led to concept ambiguity, confusion and loss of motivation among the partners. A further factor is -with regards to the people assigned in the tasks conducted with several institutions coming together- the confusion and time loss due to the ambiguity as to whom they should be reporting in which occasion. These assessments have been particularly included in the report since they constitute examples which could emphasize the vitality of the "preliminary" phase.

Comments and Recommendations

Two key deficiencies emerged at this phase. The first deficiency was the fact that the Project Team have not executed their complete and comprehensive internal preliminary work at the start of the Project, which should have included the action plan and corporate relations with regards to the Civil Monitoring Groups and CMA, and the second deficiency was the lack of information with regards to the discrepancies of the provinces. Obviously, a majority of the matters indicated to be deficient would not have been emerged should these were approached during the proposal preparation of the Project. Some deficiencies, however, could have been dealt with during this phase as well. It might have been seen that approaching each province in accordance with their respective characteristics would have positive impacts. All these call attention to the importance of a preparation work which is referred as the "preliminary work" and which should have been conducted before the physical start of the Project activities. Furthermore, even if all the detailed work had been completed and all the details had been specified in the Project during the proposal preparation, the meetings held with the aim of recapitulation and review, as well as for emphasizing the impacts of the time period between the proposal preparation of the Project and the start of the implementation are of great significance. Therefore, the preliminary work is required at all events. These activities would take a shorter or a longer time in accordance with the manner of Project proposal preparation.

In short, the below activities should have been conducted during the Preliminary Phase:

- The content of the Project should be reviewed;
- General action plans should be prepared for the activities;
- These plans should be revised and customized in line with the characteristics of the provinces;
- The relations should be shaped by approaching the structures of the institutions which comprise the project team;
- Thus, **efficiency** which is of vital significance should be guaranteed.

C) Implementation Phase

It would be more logical to approach and analyze this phase by years since the developments during each year came out owing to both general and province-specific reasons. This approach would only be used for the Civil Monitoring Groups; and the activities of the National Monitoring Group will be conveyed in general at the end of the section.

a) 2005

The year 2005 was active and efficient for all the groups. In the workshops organized with the support from the Project Team, the issues were identified and solutions were generated by utilizing the problem tree method; The Civil Monitoring Groups prepared the 2005 Monitoring Report and this report also being published in a booklet, was submitted by the members of the groups at the first National Conference held at the end of the year[5].

Positive Aspects

The members of the Civil Monitoring Groups were impressed with the activities conducted during the workshops and the consequent results and perceived this as an important training and therefore an investment in them. The presentations during the National Conference attracted a great deal of attention and the effectiveness was also felt by the Civil Monitoring Group. Furthermore, the positive effects of the cooperation of the representatives from various nongovernmental organizations come to the fore by the end of the year. The workshops and the National Conference presentations submitted by the Civil Monitoring Groups accelerated the group identity and group attachment attainment process for the members of the Civil Monitoring Groups.

Challenges

The most significant problem was confronted in İstanbul during this year and the Civil Monitoring Group could not be established definitively as a result of the heterogeneous structure of İstanbul where each municipality is as large as a sizeable city. The participating nongovernmental organizations sent different representatives to each meeting and this slowed down –in fact, even completely stopped- the process of and the activities on group forming. Problems were experienced in other provinces in the transition to the Civil Monitoring Group identity, since the participants failed to break up with their identities in their respective institutions.

The Structure of Relations (Individual)

Three different relation networks emerged with the launch of the Project:

- **Internal relations of the Project Team:** The issues were resolved before turning into conflicts and the relations were maintained in a positive atmosphere since all the three institutions worked hard for conducting their respective jobs and since the personal relations were well-established.

- **In-group relations of the members of the Civil Monitoring Group:** The most important problem was experienced by reason of individuals bringing in their identities in their respective organizations to the group. Divergent habits from the distinct institutions they represent had some negative impact at the start of the activities.

- **Civil Monitoring/Project Team relations:** These started and developed in a positive manner. Both experts who worked in liaison with the Civil Monitoring Groups developed good relations with the group member personally as well, and the positive effects of this was observed. The visits to the provinces by the institutions' representatives who comprise the Project Team were effective and allowed the members to feel that they are considered significant.

The relations with the National Education community and other actors such as the local/public administrators are described in the following pages under a separate title in relation to the implementation phase as a whole.

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5 The complete report is available in **www.kizlaricinegitim.net** web site or could be provided through the contact information on the back cover of the report.

Comments and Recommendations

Of the two challenges confronted in İstanbul as the magnitude of the province and the representatives of the nongovernmental organizations who attend the meetings being frequently changed, at least the former one stands as an issue which could have been predicted in advance. A survey conducted during the project proposal preparation could have led to a decision to deal with İstanbul on the basis of pilot district(s) and not on a general scale. Even though the Project Team intended to effectuate a change in that direction, it was not possible to carry out this owing to lack of time and to the scarcity of the nongovernmental organizations which implement district-based activities.

The issue concerning the members bringing their respective institution identities to the forefront –a fact which is seen in all the provinces to a different extent- could have been resolved or mitigated through preliminary phase trainings which were indicated to be missing by the members of the Civil Monitoring Group as well. A training which would include topics such as the concept of corporate identity, its structure and formation conditions, its impact in various circumstances, the challenges in the transition to a different identity and steps to be taken on the way to transition could have enabled the formation of a consciousness and awareness in the participants and could have generated a sensitivity in the members of the CMG against possible negative effects. While it would rather be an optimistic attitude to expect the identity transition to occur in several days; nevertheless, it would have been possible to reduce the time in a substantial manner through such awareness-raising trainings.

b) 2006

There was a junction –a period of differentiation- for the Civil Monitoring Group of each province and for the National Monitoring Group. Disruptions started to emerge due to causes such as the departure of two experts who had key tasks on the Project, the stress and the events starting in the Southeastern Anatolia before the Newroz and extending over a period of several months, the launch of activities in Ümraniye which has been chosen as the pilot region in İstanbul, the person who acted as the representative of Mardin for the activities moving out of the city.

The advocating objective was communicated to the Civil Monitoring Groups in the meetings held in February and March. Workshops were organized in Diyarbakır, İstanbul, Mardin and Şanlıurfa in May, on the issue of school drop-out and substantial input for the field work of the school- drop-out survey was provided through the information and opinions expressed in these workshops. The work enthusiasm of the groups went down due to the idle period until September, as well as the stress and the events starting in the Southeastern Anatolia before the Newroz and extending over a period of several months. The activities started once again in September and advocacy meetings were held in Mardin and Şanlıurfa in October. This was the first time that these two provinces found the opportunity to announce their practices to the civilian and local administrators of their respective provinces. In this year, it was planned to work on the issue of school drop-out within the context of the Project as well; the academics were requested to prepare a report on this subject and the Civil Monitoring Groups were oriented towards activities and monitoring on this issue. The reports prepared on school drop-out were submitted during that year's National Conference and the Civil Monitoring Groups took an active part at this meeting by referring to the respective drop-out issues in their provinces. The members of the Civil Monitoring Group objected to the positive picture painted by the representative of the Ministry of National Education and stated that this picture is not accurate. Thus, the targeted and expected impact of the Civil Monitoring Groups started to be perceived.

Positive Aspects

The most positive aspect of this year was that the significance and the priority of the drop-out issue were put forward. While the activities underlined that the school enrollment ratios have considerably increased; on the other hand, it was stated that this increase has not been sufficient and the school drop-out issue was becoming a problem. The measures to be taken and the priorities were pointed out. A further significant development is that the Mardin and Şanlıurfa Civil Monitoring Groups communicated their subject to the local and civil authorities through advocacy meetings conducted entirely by them and consequently gained experience on this issue.

Challenges

There were also some problems which had a negative impact on the activities in 2006:

• The Assistant Coordinator of ERI who worked in the proposal preparation of the Project, who played an important role in the integration of civil monitoring concept and activities in the scope of the Project and who took an active part at many occasions including the workshops, left the Project owing to an assignment abroad. Furthermore, the expert who acted as the key liaison between the provinces and the Project Team changed her post as well. The fact that the new expert had to get to work down in the middle and that the job hand-over process was not adequately done due to the workload had impacts as a consequence.

• The stress and the events starting in the Southeastern Anatolia before the Newroz and extending over a period of several months in 2006 had negative impacts over the CMA. Both the Civil Monitoring Groups were unable to conduct regular meetings and activities under stressful circumstances; and the advocacy activities of the groups failed to attain the required attention since the priorities of the local and civil administrators were different.

• İstanbul Civil Monitoring Group chose Ümraniye as the pilot region, giving up the idea of dealing with the entire İstanbul. While the reduction in the group and in the field of work had been advantageous for working actively at this point, the efforts of the İstanbul Civil Monitoring Group extending over a period of two years came to nothing and the work almost started from scratch.

• The representative of the Mardin Civil Monitoring Group moved out of the city, and this occasion led to disturbances in the established structure.

Naturally, the impacts from all of the above differ from each other. The reassignment of the project expert who had supported the Civil Monitoring Groups with regards to CMA activities led to the loss of relations and particularly of the individual ones and -in a sense- to an obligation to start all over again. The challenges in the job transition process led to a further difficulty; the transition not being interrelated and gradual enhanced the level of certain issues which are inevitable in every transition such as the adaptation period. Likewise, the departure of the ERI assistant coordinator who had been assigned during and after the project proposal preparation caused a loss in the accumulation of information and experience and led to a further increase in the workload of the Project Team.

The Structure of Relations (Individual)

• In-group relations of the members of the Civil Monitoring Group: There were positive developments and the Civil Monitoring Group identities came into prominence while the effects of the corporate identities relapsed.

• Civil Monitoring/Project Team relations: The reassignment of the project expert had an impact on these relations and entailed a new start in a sense as well as certain amount of alienation until the parties come to know each other. Particularly after 2005, the participation of the assigned person from the Project Team alone was not sufficient; the absence of the representatives of the three partner institutions of the Project was perceived as a negligence of the work carried out by some of the group members and this perception led to certain negative feelings like annoyance.

Another challenge was a new trend which developed in some of the group members. Especially in Mardin, a judgment cropped out such as the implementation of the cultivated solutions being also under the responsibility of the group –a process referred to as "going into the field" by the group. The Project Team indicated that this is out of the limits of the concept of Civil Monitoring and that "going into the field" could be carried out under a distinct identity. This, in turn, led to critics of the Project Team by some members of the Civil Monitoring Group.

Comments and Recommendations

The fact that the general environment became tense with the incidents occurring in Southeastern Anatolia at the beginning of 2006 and the negative impact of this on the CMA process is obviously an inevitable situation. Generally, nothing is done in this situation except waiting. The fact that the Civil Monitoring Groups have maintained their existence in spite of the situation is a positive result. Since the problem related with the İstanbul Civil Monitoring Group is linked to the Project proposal preparation, nothing could be said on this matter. The incidents encountered by the Mardin Civil Monitoring Group on the other hand, reemphasizes the significance of the trainings which could have been given during the preliminary phase. It is possible to enhance awareness and the skills for problem solving and planned work through trainings; and in case of problems, it increases the groups' chances for resolving them and attaining more efficient results.

The most significant deficiency associated with the Project Team is linked to the departure of the assistant coordinator who had made efforts for the Project since the first day and the incidents experienced during the reassignment process of the project expert who is responsible for the Civil Monitoring Groups. While a transition scheme was planned by taking the significance and impact degree of such changes into account; it has not been implemented. Implementation of such a scheme however, would have prevented the subsequent problems and time loss.

c) 2007

The most important issue influencing the Civil Monitoring activities was the rescheduling of the parliamentary elections for July 2007 which had been planned for November 2007. Since this situation had the potential for inhibiting the planned advocacy practices, the groups were compelled to a change of strategy. Upon this, the Project Team suggested that interviews could be held with the parliamentary candidates. The Mardin Civil Monitoring Group carried out this activity, while the Şanlıurfa Civil Monitoring Group issued a press release targeting to communicate their demands to the parliamentary candidates on the subject of education and the Group was hosted in a program at a local TV channel. The Diyarbakır Civil Monitoring Group made a press statement targeting the parliamentary candidates, which included their demands on education and this statement aroused great interest in the local media. Selecting Ümraniye as the pilot region in İstanbul did not have positive consequences and just a small number of participants were left in the group. Nevertheless, some positive activities were launched – although being different from the planned ones- which are detailed in the following sections. There was a loss of interest in some groups near the end of the Project as well, with some of the members withdrawing; however, there were also new participations.

During the second half of the year, the Project Team decided to carry out an evaluation survey in order to look into the impacts from the entire process at one hand, and to analyze their own work on CMA which has broken new grounds in the field of education on the other. In order to enhance the objectivity of the practice, an external review of the process and the activities was preferred. The activities which serve as a resource for this report are conducted on the basis of this decision of the Project Team.

Positive Aspects

The efforts and activities of the Civil Monitoring Groups before the elections led to positive results. The interviews carried out by the Mardin Civil Monitoring Group with the parliamentary candidates for instance, initialized constructive relations and at the start of the school year 2007-2008, the group served as an intermediary in overcoming the transportation problem in the bussed education system in their province with the support from the elected parliamentary members. The activities of the Diyarbakır and the Şanlıurfa Civil Monitoring Groups caught the interest of the media; and in this manner, the issue was brought to the attention of wider masses. A distinct activity was started in the İstanbul-Ümraniye Civil Monitoring Groups, which was considered to be advantageous –although being apart from the planned.

The fact that the Project Team had considered that an activity is required with the purpose of reviewing the accomplishments on Civil Monitoring and had demanded an evaluation which has led to this report is a positive attitude. Thus, an informative document was produced both for the group and for other bodies which are/would be implementing similar projects. Since many people were interviewed and their opinions on the subject were taken, various information and attitudes were attained. Additionally, the fact that the Project Team consulted them for the evaluation of the CMA process was considered greatly positive by the interviewed individuals. During these interviews, the members of the Civil Monitoring Groups offered to organize a further meeting. Upon this proposal, a meeting in the form of a 2-day workshop was held in Diyarbakır in April 2008 with the participation of the Civil Monitoring Groups, the Civil Initiative and the Project Team. Experiences were shared at the workshop; the groups found the opportunity for a self-assessment and contributed to the production of a significant element. This new product referred as the Guide for Establishing Civil Monitoring Groups was prepared under the light of the opinions and suggestions put forward during the mentioned workshop.

Challenges

The most important motive for this year's problems was the rescheduling of the elections. Consequently, the priorities changed and it was not possible to carry out the planned advocacy work. On the other hand, while holding interviews with the parliamentary candidates was recommended, these interviews could only be carried out in Mardin. Since the motive for the problem is completely uncontrollable; it is not possible to make any comments.

The Structure of Relations (Individual)

There are no indicators in the direction of any major changes in 2007. The activities which are also the subject of this report and which were launched in October as well as the subsequent workshop held in April 2008 in Diyarbakır with a broad participation allowed all the groups involved to meet each other and/or to get closer and an environment which could lead to warmer relations was generated through knowledge- and experience sharing. The outlook of the Civil Monitoring Group members on the Project Team which had become negative due to the reasons explained in 2006 'The Structure of Relations' section seemed to change direction.

Comments and Recommendations

It is obviously required for the Project Team to meet for evaluating the situation and for conducting activities with the purpose of finding a new way when conditions which could lead to the deviation of the activities from the due course. Upon the rescheduling of the general elections, the Project Team recommended that the activities should focus on interviews with the members of the parliament with the purpose of benefiting from the election environment. Moreover, the implementation of the evaluation work which led to the production of this report has been an approach not to be underestimated due to reasons underlined before and the time period chosen for this has also been appropriate with regards to accessing as much information as possible.

d) Civil Monitoring Groups

About the end of the Project, the discrepancies between the Civil Monitoring Groups had become highly evident. Therefore, it has been considered that a clearer picture would be revealed by discussing the provinces individually in the following section. The underlined phrases further include the opinions and comments on the "sustainability" issue and the potential structures following the end of the Project.

Diyarbakır

The structure of the Civil Monitoring Group has been settled and the members have internalized the concept. In addition to the other practices, activities have been implemented through the group's respective means and efforts. A brochure was published and distributed; while billboards with the Project logo and with the slogan "Education for Girls –It's our binding duty" were produced. In 2007, with the contribution of the municipality the billboards were posted free of charge at key locations across the province. The impact and worth of such a practice is very prominent and this is a striking example of the things possibly done with the willpower and efforts of only a handful of people. **Deciding to carry on and going into a very serious work pace, the Diyarbakır Civil Monitoring Group has been resolute on maintaining their existence. The problem which had been experienced at the start of the process with regards to the failure to break off from their respective nongovernmental organizations was overcome and the Civil Monitoring Group identity was adopted. As far as the cooperation with the other Civil Monitoring Groups is considered however, this crystallizing new identity has been a reminiscent of a phenomenon similar to the one at the beginning of the process –only with a new name. Individual manifestations at the beginning which could be summarized as "our nongovernmental organization" were now being displayed as "our Civil Monitoring Group". In case the group acts in an inward-oriented manner and fails to be greatly enthusiastic about maintaining an attitude based on cooperation, candidness and sharing towards the other Civil Monitoring Groups and about supporting them, the group's contribution to the whole would be reduced. However, since the group is a high-capacity, passionate and consistent one, it is only a matter of seconds for them to get aware of the situation and set measures.**

İstanbul

Participation in the Civil Monitoring Group activities was greatly reduced around the end of the Project period and the number of total meetings to be conducted throughout the Project remained far below the planned number. The remaining few individuals went beyond the purpose of Civil Monitoring by getting into a distinctive practice; nevertheless bringing about an unexpected and positive output. An activity has been started in Ümraniye region which was an exclusive application of a guidance counselor and which –through various activities in the schools-targeted to raise awareness in students with regards to getting acquainted with the other sex and on gender perception. **While this small but committed group would like the İstanbul Civil Monitoring Group to be maintained following the end of the Project; this seems to be impossible in the current situation.**

Mardin

The group structure which had not been completely settled yet in the earlier times of the Project started to falter as a result of the departure of the group representative from the city and was completely disturbed when another person dropped-out of the activities. At the time when this report was written, they were apparently at a real turning point. **While the group seemed enthusiastic about maintaining their presence, they were also clearly articulating that they are in need of "support". Since their current office would be closed down with the finalization of the Project, they would be requiring a new location for the meetings and activities. This situation would have a negative impact on the sustainability with regards to the financial aspect as well. Guidance from the Project Team would be influential for the maintenance of the group and their activities. Recognizing that they are on a hair line currently, the group has attained the proficiency to clearly see and express their requirement for support.**

Şanlıurfa Civil Monitoring Group had problems throughout the CMA. A majority of the group members are not from Şanlıurfa. Challenges have been communicated such as the penury in spite of the wealth in the province and the failure to distinguish their starting point due to the abundance of issues in relation to the education of the girls. Another factor preventing them from becoming a "group" has been the presence of an environment where there is a habit of conducting things through personal relations. **While the members of the Şanlıurfa Civil Monitoring Group would like the group to be maintained, they have also accepted the difficulty of this. At any rate, during the Project term, diverse institutions and individuals have acquired the experience of working together; the positive aspects of this have been realized and awareness has been raised on the aspects which require improvement/change. Hence, the members of the Şanlıurfa Civil Monitoring Group are no longer on the same point where they stood in the first day of the Project and the efficiency of a new project they would start would be much higher.**

e) National Monitoring Group / Civil Initiative

The National Monitoring Group was designed and integrated in the scope of the Project as a structure for evaluating the observations, information and suggestions from the Civil Monitoring Groups; for communicating them to related authorities and especially to the Ministry of National Education (MEB) by integrating them with academic information and studies; for conducting advocacy activities as well as following up the results. A further task of this group was to communicate the progress on the national level to the Civil Monitoring Groups and to ensure that the locals are informed through their channel. In short, it was planned as a group to monitor and influence the policies on national level on girls' access to education.

With the launch of the Project, various nongovernmental organizations and academics were summoned in order to establish the National Monitoring Group. The National Monitoring Group was set up with those who replied in the affirmative. One representative from each of the four Civil Monitoring Groups attended the National Monitoring Group as well; thus the Civil Monitoring Groups were both represented in the activities held by this body and functioned as a direct information source from the provinces as well as communicating the activities of the National Monitoring Group to their respective Civil Monitoring Group members. The National Monitoring Group implemented its first fit-for-purpose activity by significantly contributing to the constitution of the conceptual framework of the 2005 Civil Monitoring Group Annual Report.

However, there was a serious decline in the group's pace in 2006 and the Project Team summoned the organizations which have been implementing campaign activities on education. A prospecting meeting was held with the participation of some members of the National Monitoring Group and those who replied this call in the affirmative. As a consequence of the meeting, the group adopted a mission, referred to as the "information + pressure group building" in short; connoting a group which gathers information, designs corrective measures in accordance with and/or targeting the gathered information; communicates those to the authorities in the form of requests and puts pressure in support of their implementation. The group comprising 14 active nongovernmental organizations and five individual academics changed their name into "Civil Initiative" and started their practices. No longer restricted to the four provinces within the scope of the Project, the conducted practices were transformed into a structure wherein monitoring and influencing the education policy were focused upon. The Civil Monitoring Group members were not included in the Civil Initiative activities.

Following a great deal of hard work, the Civil Initiative prepared a manifesto, entitled "Equality in Education; Priority for the Girls!"[6] Some 14 parliament members and 6 top-level bureaucrats were visited within the scope of the advocacy process of this manifesto. Presentations were submitted and advocacy work was carried out; which received positive reactions and ensured important steps to be taken. During this period; the President of the TBMM (Turkish Grand National Assembly) External Affairs Commission, the President of the TBMM Petitions Commission, the President of the TBMM Human Rights Investigating Commission, the President of the TBMM Commission on Health, Family, Labor and Social Affairs, AKP Group Deputy Chairman, CHP Group Deputy Chairman, MHP Group Deputy Chairman were visited; as well as two members of the parliament from AKP, three from CHP and one each from DTP and MHP. As for the bureaucrats, MoNE's (Ministry of National Education) General Director of Primary Education, the President of the MoNE Strategy Development, the President of the MoNE Board of Education and Discipline, the General Director of MoNE Preschool Education, the General Director of MoNE Special Education and Guidance Counseling and the General Director of Status of Women were interviewed.

Some of the outputs attained both through the manifesto produced by the Civil Initiative –which had started their activities under the name of National Monitoring Group formerly- and through its communication to the authorities by means of presentations and advocacy activities are listed below:

- The inclusion of certain articles in the National Action Plan for Combating Violence against Women prepared by the General Directorate of Status of Women;

- The request from the Board of Education and Discipline to the Civil Initiative, both for the analysis of the curriculum with regards to gender disparity and for the training of the institution experts on the subject;

- The issue of girls' school enrollment being brought up on the agendas with the support from the members of the parliament, both in the TBMM and elsewhere;

- The opportunity for updating all the members of the parliament about the subject;

- Gender training planned by the Board of Education and Discipline for their experts.

The abundance and attributes of the institutions and individuals participating in the Civil Initiative, as well as their employed efforts and attitudes on behalf of a mutual product also embraces significant positive characteristics. Receptiveness with regards to reaching a consensus and the capacity to put the good of the general (public) at the forefront are some of these attitudes. Both the manifesto itself and the very significant results of the advocacy work -of which only some have been explained above-, as well as the gracious attitude and the efforts are worth a lot.

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6 Please see **www.kizlaricinegitim.net** for the manifesto.

- 5 -
Other Actors

National Education Community

Two MoNE executives on the level of the general directorate and presidency were interviewed while the report was prepared and one of them was noted to have participated in the 1st and 2nd National Conferences and have chaired a session in the 3rd National Conference. This person however, asserted that he is not well-informed about the Civil Monitoring Groups. The other executive stated that while he was informed since the general information n the CMA and the Project has been communicated to him, he was unable to attend all three of the conferences held as Project activities due to his schedule. This executive was noted as having information on the definition and tasks of Civil Monitoring.

An opportunity for interviewing only one director of MoNE was found. No interview requests were placed, since the İstanbul Civil Monitoring Group did not implement any activities including the Provincial Directorate of National Education. A Provincial Director was appointed to another province and the efforts to interview him in his new location of duty were useless. The interview organization with the Provincial Director of another province could not be attained. The interviewed Provincial Director illustrated that he was involved in the issue and his level of interest was high. He maintained that he had attained a great deal of information both through the interviews held with the Civil Monitoring Groups and through the National Conferences, that he has been guiding the headmasters and teachers in the schools across the province for being more sensitive with regards to this matter, and that the associated practices would be taken into consideration during the annual assessments. All these are clues as to how the positive attitude and practices from the Provincial Directorates of National Education could expedite the expected results and broaden the scope of the practices.

While they are few in number, a comment deduced from the interviews mentioned above would be that in order for the civil monitoring to attain its objective of influencing the policies and generating an inductive impact through laws and practices, the relations with the Ministry of National Education should be reinforced; further interviews should be claimed by taking the demanding work pace of the MoNE executives into consideration, and efforts should be made to increase their level of information and interest by submitting presentations, delivering annotations, researches and reports.

It has been noted that a small amount of data was obtained on Provincial Directorates of National Education which hold a significant place in the activities conducted on province level and which have a direct impact on the rate for attaining positive results through the support they provide. On the other hand, while the fact that -in spite of all efforts- it had not been possible to make interviews with two out of the three Provincial Directors to whom interviews requests were placed appears to be disappointing; it also reemphasizes the requirement of efforts for enhancing the information and interest level at the Directorates of National Education.

Government Executives and Local Administrations

The levels of interest in both the government executives and the local administrators have positive and negative impacts on attainment of expected results through the activities. During the interviews, it was expressed that the greatest impact with regards to this issue is determined by the attitude of the governor, especially in the provinces other than İstanbul. It has been noted in the activities conducted in the Project provinces, that the domain of the activities expands and the motivation of the project partners is enhanced when the Project is watched closely and promoted by the governor. Since the support from the governor leads to direct or indirect interest for the CMA from other individuals, corporations and institutions in the province, the established multiplier effect further aids in approaching the target. The challenge in terms of the governors' support to the CMA activities is the requirement to start the promotion activities all over again with the appointment of a governor to another province at the end of his/her term of duty. All of the above are also valid for the district governors, while being narrower in scope.

It has been possible for the municipalities to contribute directly or indirectly to the civil monitoring activities. The involved municipalities have aided in matters such as finding a meeting location for this Project and for others and have provided indirect support through approaches such as paying premium to their staff who send their daughters to school or punishing those who commit violence towards the women. The activities required more exertion in provinces where such support was not lent.

The individual approach and behavior of the village/district headmen and religious officers have been influential upon the attitude of the community they represent; thus, their contribution has been provided in this manner. Local bodies such as the Public Education Centers have lent their support by way of providing locations for meetings or steering the participants through the activities to be implemented.

As far as the statements in the interviews are concerned, the executives of various public institutions and local administrations including the headmen and those from the national education community in particular, are summoned to meetings for numerous causes, virtually becoming unable to do their own jobs. The presence of several activities conducted by different institutions on similar issues creates *fatigue* in the bodies mentioned in this section in particular and in the society in general. *It is a mutual responsibility of the nongovernmental organizations which work on the same issues, to develop and implement measures to prevent this.*

- 6 -
Achievements

The achievements throughout the Project could be listed under two main headings:

To begin with, there are *tangible* achievements during the term of the Project. Some of those are:

- The nongovernmental organizations which constitute the Project Group as well as having representatives in the Civil Monitoring Groups and in the Civil Initiative started to work together and share information;

- Decentralized information started to reach larger masses for the first time through National Conferences;

- Through the workshops, the challenges with regards to girls' access to education were noted to have different priorities than the presuppositions;

- Increasing awareness and activities in some provincial organizations of national education concerning the issues on access to education and school drop-out;

- Declaration of the issue of girls' access to education to the media once again, through the advocacy work, press conferences and productions such as brochures and billboards;

- Production of the Civil Monitoring Groups' 2005 report; thus enabling a conceptual overview on gender disparity in education as well as compiling the obstacles facing girls as well as solution recommendations on the level of project provinces;

- The contribution of civil monitoring groups to the school drop-out survey which marked the 2006 National Conference.

The achievements through the manifesto entitled "Equality in Education; Priority for Girls", issued by the National Monitoring Group which was regenerated around the midway of the process by summoning numerous nongovernmental organizations, being renamed as the Civil Initiative, and through its communication to the authorities by means of presentations and advocacy activities are important indicators which demonstrate that the objective of inductive impact has started to be attained. The initial results concerning these achievements are summarized below:

- The inclusion of certain articles in the National Action Plan for Combating Violence against Women;

- The analysis of the curriculum with regards to gender disparity;

- The initiatives to bring the issue up on the agendas both in the TBMM and elsewhere;

- The opportunity to communicate the issue to all the members of the parliament;

- Plans for a gender training for the experts of the Board of Education and Discipline.

The second achievement has been the awareness which could be summarized by the phrase "We're all learning" as frequently articulated in the interviews and in the widely participated workshop held in Diyarbakır on 26-27 April 2008. This statement which expresses a key achievement is an output of formation which is first of its kind in Turkey. An assignment was carried out by means of the outputs from an exclusive activity as well as using the implemented criticism/self-criticism activities and generated suggestions in the cited meeting and the key points were identified which would provide an answer to the question of "How to Set up a Civil Monitoring Group". The "Guide for Establishing Civil Monitoring Groups" which was prepared by utilizing these outputs as well, will be able to provide a substantial starting point for all institutions and corporations which are/would be implementing similar activities and shed light to more efficient activities through the sharing of the acquired experience by means of the CMA in this Project with wider masses.

Furthermore, certain points should not be missed while scrutinizing the achievements. The point attained by the Civil Monitoring Group of each province is different from another. Certainly, various reasons have been effective for this difference; yet, two of those appear to be noteworthy. One of these is *the variation in terms of activities' starting points*; and the other is *the amount and quality of the efforts from all those who are concerned stakeholders*.

Variation of the starting points of the activities: The levels of approach, perception and experience on the first day of the Project were different from each other. Hence, the starting point and the attained level of the civil monitoring group in a province should be taken into consideration as well as the visible outputs at the end of the Project. For instance, it is possible that the infrastructure might have been so advanced in spite of the fact that the identified and expected outputs have not been attained; that the efficiency of a future activity would be guaranteed. The key threat here however, is the fact that it would be impossible to maintain equilibrium at the achieved point and that -on the contrary- slipping back would be inevitable, lest the issue is not advanced on. However the improvements might be minimal, we do not have the luxury to lose what has been attained. These apparently small achievements could be conveyed to substantial results in further projects.

The amount and quality of the efforts from the stakeholders: Throughout this Project, there has been an input of vast efforts by numerous people which played an important role on behalf of the achievements. Another factor for maximizing the level of achievement is the extent of the *efficiency* of the work above and beyond the extent of the hard work. Efficiency is an issue not to be overlooked considering the current severe conditions which demand more work with fewer resources. Analyzing considerable outputs in terms of efficiency does not mean underestimating them but utilizing them as learning tools instead.

In short, neglecting to review each achievement from the aspect of efficiency might lead to similar losses insomuch as omitting apparently small achievements.

- 7 -
Conclusion

The efforts, the intense work, the time and the efforts spent have led to the attainment of numerous objectives whether perceived or unperceived, including one ancillary output apart from the targeted ones. Above and beyond all these accomplishments, the fact that certain issues and aspects which had been unknown previously have been acknowledged now, appreciating the value of the attained experience, as well as being aware of and ready to share this value in order to convert it to a real achievement are all specific assets.

As indicated in the previous sections, it is almost certain that one of the provinces would be maintaining their activities while another gives the impression that it would become stronger and could be maintained with the condition of being supported. This should be perceived as a result which should not be underestimated, since, as asserted by some of the interviewers:

*"These practices constitute an effort which could last for generations in the direction of a **mindset change**."*

However, we must *understand that -while we are acknowledging the fact that this could last for generations- we do not have the chance for waiting for generations; thus, without disregarding apparently small achievements, but also without ignoring to view each achievement with the eye of "how we could have done better"* we must attain the required results much faster.

Paradoxical but required; difficult, yet inevitable.

Nevertheless, for expressing the manner about the activities, we would like to use a description by an interviewer on the elimination of disparities in education:

"It might be that we are trying to dig a pit with a needle; yet, apparently it is very important even to take up the needle and it takes courage to do it".

Apparently, each individual and/or institution who had taken a part in this practice would go into their next project much stronger; work much more efficiently and get much closer to their target. A body which would intend to implement some or any of the subsections such as civil monitoring, advocacy or cooperation of diverse institutions would be able to get prepared more consciously and the chances of attaining the target would be much higher. And this is nothing but a significant and worthy "RESULT".

Once again –Congratulations!"