

Girls' Access to Primary Education

Best Practices from Turkey

Tuba Çameli

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*The project "Raising Women: Reducing gender disparity in education through functional and political literacy, parent training, collective action and advocacy" is being financed by the European Union as part of the "Grant Program on Integrating the Gender Issue into Development Cooperation."
It does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.*

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the 65 resource persons I interviewed in August 2007 as well as to other resource people who participated in the focus meetings within the scope of this study for sharing their knowledge, experiences and insights with me. This book is written through their testimonials.

*I would like to thank to the team of 1000 Witnesses to History - Oral History Project who let me to acquire experience on oral history studies; to Ertan Karabıyık, UNICEF Education Program Project Assistant who lent his support in choosing the best practices as well as in all phases of this study; to **Yakut Temüroğlu Sundur**, UNICEF Education Program Project Assistant who shared her campaign experiences with me; to **Fatma Özdemir Uluç** UNICEF Education Program Supervisor who guided me with her vital reviews; and to **İbrahim Er**, General Director of Ministry of National Education (MoNE) Primary Education who allocated a Sunday morning for me to share his experiences and insights. Thanks to **Hilal Kuşçul** from **AÇEV** and **Zeynep Kılıç** from **ERG** who -starting from the deskwork- adamantly listened to all my mid-term evaluations in the subway, at home and at work and who aided me in all the phases of fictionalization, to **Çiğdem Aydın** from **KA-DER** (Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates) who contributed to the texts during the fictionalization phase with her critical interventions; to **AÇEV** volunteers and staff who transcribed the audio records; to **Batuhan Aydagül**, **ERG Assistant Coordinator** who established the framework of the study; and to my friend journalist **Hasan Tahsin Benli** who edited the texts.*

*My thanks are due to the entire academic and research staff who -through their studies- supported projects and campaigns targeting the achievement of girls' access to primary education, special thanks to sociologist Ass. Prof. **Ayşe Gündüz Hoşgör** and Training Expert **Dr. Nur Otaran** who fostered the projects analyzed in this book with their knowledge and experiences, for broadening my horizon through the reports and articles they have written*

The fact that the study has been solely limited to “best practices in the field” and that it has been implemented during a particular period of time, as well as the fact that some of the resource persons were absent from the mentioned cities due to being on leave or changes in post, hindered the inclusion of all the testimonials in this book. Furthermore, hours of abridgement efforts with the intention of making the text simple and clear, have excluded some of the narrations from the compiled texts. As a result of all the above, this book should be considered a brief summary of the achievements demonstrated by bodies, institutions and individuals who have contributed to the local implementations on behalf of attainment of girls' access to primary education.

Tuba Çameli

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Foreword

The book on “Girls’ Access to Primary Education -Best Practices from Turkey” has been implemented as one of the activities of “Attaining Gender Equality in Education and Social Participation Project”, the ultimate aim of which is to influence policies. This Project aims to deal with as well as to implement interventions in relation the attitudes, practices and policies which negatively affect and hinder girls’ and women’s access to educational services as well as their participation in social life in Turkey. Within the scope of this project implemented with EU support under the partnership of Education Reform Initiative, Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates (KA-DER) and Mother-Child Education Foundation (AÇEV), activities have been carried out which supported the generation of local and national policies targeting gender parity in education, along with the achievement of public support through attaining social support by way of effectuating individual transformation and raising awareness about girls’ education in general.

In recent years, numerous campaigns, initiatives and projects have been implemented in our country with the aim of ensuring gender equality and 100% school enrolment. Particularly from 2004 onwards, all the projects and campaigns implemented with the lead of both non-governmental organizations and the governmental institutions together with the media demonstrate strong features as the best practices; with each one of them dealing with a different aspect of the girls’ school access issue. (Within the framework of our project, some of the projects implemented during the mentioned period have been compiled in a report by Tuba Kancı: <http://www.kizlaricinegitim.net>). Various projects and campaigns have been implemented by the Ministry of National Education, in collaboration with institutions such as UNICEF, ILO and the European Union. Among the examples are “Haydi Kızlar Okula” Campaign (Girls’ Education Campaign Turkey), Support to Basic Education Program and 100% Support to Education Campaign. Besides these, there are many activities put into practice by non-governmental organizations. Significant examples among them are “Contemporary Girls of Contemporary Turkey” project implemented by the Association in Support of Contemporary Living with Turkcell (*mobile phone service provider*), and “I Have a Daughter in Anatolia; She will Become a Teacher” project conducted in collaboration with various establishments. The most wide-scoped one among the campaigns generated by the media has been “Daddy, Send Me to School” campaign implemented by Milliyet newspaper. There are also a great number of institutions and projects dealing with this issue, which have not been mentioned here. All the cited campaigns, projects and initiatives have played an important role both in sensitizing the public and the media on girls’ education and in enabling the girls to overcome obstacles to access education.

We set forth from the idea that it is important to raise the number of current examples and to generate new horizons for those working in this field, with regards to influencing the policies and guiding further implementations. With the inspiration that the substantiation and expansion of best practices would contribute to the generation of creative solutions, we intended to put this book together which includes some of the best examples from Turkey. Among the projects put into practice in recent years in our country, this book focuses upon those which have been implemented by the public on policy level with regards to school enrolment of girls. The subject is recited in a manner reflecting the dynamics of the process through the eyes of those involved in the implementation.

Three out of the four implementations considered in this study are from the three provinces wherein “Haydi Kızlar Okula” Campaign was implemented. Each one of these provinces became prominent with their respective characteristics within the same campaign and attaining efficient results, they put their signatures under exemplary practices. The provinces of Adıyaman, Aydın and Van have been considered best practices within the context of the “Haydi Kızlar Okula” Campaign. The fourth best practice is focused upon the “School Enrolment of Children Working in Agriculture” project implemented through the collaboration of Ministry of National Education and International Labor Organization in the Karataş region in Adana, targeting the children who cannot go to school or cannot continue to attend school as they or their families are working as seasonal workers in farming.

Within the scope of the “Haydi Kızlar Okula” Campaign, Van is considered a best practice for **organizational activities generating public mobility** in attainment of access to primary education, and for the **active collaboration generated by the national education authorities with the local and national media**. The province of Adıyaman is acknowledged as an exemplary practice due to the fact that it created a difference with its **database that was developed as a guide for the identification, persuasion and enrolment processes**. And Aydın is evaluated as a best practice from the standpoint of **generation of active collaboration of civil society and the state through the involvement of non-governmental organizations in the process** of attainment of access to primary education.

These three provinces within the framework of “Haydi Kızlar Okula” Campaign have been considered with regards to the active employment of key actors and tools in the primary education enrolment. Crucial key themes such as collaboration with the media and non-governmental organizations, database development and organization had been addressed in these provinces.

The project for the “Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor in Seasonal Commercial Farming through Education” conducted in the Karataş region of Adana has been specified as the fourth sample case. This project has been included in the best practices on account of its **attributes which include the most underprivileged group of children in our country had been targeted, that efficient work skills had been demonstrated while working with the children within the scope of the project and that the sustainability of the project had been ensured**.

Currently, girls in our country constitute the highest risk group in terms of completing primary education. Notwithstanding the various campaigns, initiatives and projects, it is obvious that there still is a significant way to go from the point attained. We consider that sharing the best practices with regards to the girls’ access to primary education with as extensive a stakeholder group as possible as an expansion and initialization in terms of the enhancement of the same. Furthermore, we also believe that this book will set an example in the writing process for the campaigns, initiatives and projects which contribute to this objective as best practices.

We expect that Turkey will achieve the Millennium Target of 100% school enrolment in primary education as soon as possible...

Project Team

Starting

The key outset point of the survey consists of contributing to the discussion and augmentation of exemplary practices established in Turkey on enabling girls' access to primary education. In the technical meetings held during the construction phase of the survey, care has been taken in selecting projects which were reproducible, which had been carried out with the participation of key actors and which had retained public adoption and priority in terms of sustaining the generated impact.

Numerous sample cases have been analyzed while planning the field work which served as a resource for the book and the conducted activities have been evaluated one by one, prioritizing issues such as organization, establishing a data system, implementation which meets the requirements of the target group, collaboration with the media and nongovernmental organizations in specifying future policies.

As is known, many projects have been implemented in recent years on enhancing primary education access and particularly on enabling girls' access to primary education. It is acknowledged that the projects considered within the context of this book have been influenced by

this commitment while also influencing the same commitment; and that projects in the direction of common targets have sustained one another although their objectives may differ.

The survey which commenced in August 2007, was designed to include three phases. Within the first phase, four provinces which are in line with the requirements above have been identified among the projects conducted in the field. The practices implemented in the specified provinces have been assessed as "best practices". The implementation reports and particularly the field researches and results from the projects conducted in the provinces have been analyzed and organized into a timeline. A press survey has been conducted for each province and the press coverage for best practices has been compiled. As a consequence of this study, a framework of questions has been generated by taking into account the projects, key actors and the provinces. Key actors/resource persons who undertook tasks and responsibilities during the project implementation have been identified and the interview lists have been prepared. At this stage -bearing in mind the key roles of the decision makers, local administrators

Table 1 Selected Provinces within the Scope of the Study, Best Practices and Projects

Province	Good Practice	Project
Van	Organizational activities generating public mobility in attainment of access to primary education; the collaboration with the local and mainstream media.	Support Campaign for the Education of Girls ("Haydi Kızlar Okula" Campaign)
Adıyaman	Database developed as an aid for the identification, persuasion and enrolment processes in access to primary education; monitoring and evaluation practices	Support Campaign for the Education of Girls ("Haydi Kızlar Okula" Campaign) Support to Basic Education Project
Aydın	Involvement of non-governmental organizations (NGO's) in the process of attainment of access to primary education; State-NGO collaboration	Support Campaign for the Education of Girls ("Haydi Kızlar Okula" Campaign)
Adana	Developing practices aimed at the requirements of the target group in attainment of primary education access; demonstrating a team performance capable of working with underprivileged groups; establishment of a sustainability mechanism.	Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor in Seasonal Commercial Farming through Education Project in the Karataş region of Adana

and educators in providing access to primary education- the supply aspect has been focused upon; practices aiding the generation of demand have also been emphasized.

Within the scope of the study, “best practices” between the years of 2003 and 2007 from the provinces of Van, Adıyaman, Aydın and Adana have been analyzed.

In the second phase of the project, a field study was conducted in the selected provinces using the oral history¹ method and resource people have been interviewed. In line with the principles of the oral history method, the witnesses have been given a brief on the subject and the topics have been recorded with permission. Within the framework of the study, a total of 65 persons have been interviewed in one month, excluding the focus meetings. All of the resource people have been listed in the beginning of the chapters.

The final stage has been the formation of the texts under the light of the compiled information. While the statements of the resource persons have been passed on faithfully, the errors in grammar and expressions have been corrected in order to ensure that the text is comprehensible. The statements of the resource persons have been edited and brought together in accordance with the stages of the implementation. Names of the resource people and their tasks during the witnessed period have been indicated in the footnotes. Intervention of both the interviewer and the author has been minimized during the writing process. Underscoring the testimony of the interviewee rather than the consideration of the author has been intended with this method. Family names of the interviewed parents and children have not been disclosed in the best practices’ texts considering that it might be inconvenient for the children and their families in

the future due to privacy rights.

Furthermore, those who accepted to be interviewed but did not wish their names to be disclosed have been indicated with their family roles as “the father”, “the mother” or “the daughter”.

In the best practices texts within the scope of the study, no suggestions except the statements of the resource people have been offered about the obstacles and proposed solutions with regards to the girls’ access to primary education. For those who would like to obtain information on this subject, it might be useful to refer to other reports and books issued within the scope of “Attaining Gender Equality in Education and Social Participation Project”. Furthermore, the evaluation reports on the associated projects would provide information about this matter.

Prior to the best practices, information on the projects has been given in order to aid in comprehending the practices. The cited information has been prepared based on the data from the related institutions or projects. Following the introductory chapter, the reader may respectively read the information note on the “Haydi Kızlar Okula” Campaign, the texts on the provinces of Van, Aydın and Adıyaman which are analyzed within the context of the campaign, the description of the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor in Seasonal Commercial Farming through Education Project in the Karataş region of Adana and finally the text on the province of Adana.

A section selected from the interview with Ministry of National Education (MoNE) Primary Education General Director is included as the conclusion.

¹ Oral history is an interdisciplinary field of study and a method dating from 20th century, formed with the intention of writing history –besides written documents- through the memory-based statements of living individuals and including the ordinary people, daily life and subjectivity into the research field of history, and supported by the development of the audiovisual recording technologies. Primary purpose of oral history is to create an archive by recording biographical statements of individual through audio and/or video media. This archive comprises the main material of the artifacts to be prepared by the social scientists on specific historical periods or subjects depending on the field of interest. A designated individual, family, community, neighborhood, event or region might also be the theme of oral history.



Support Campaign for the Education of Girls

“Haydi Kızlar Okula” Campaign²

Box 1 How was the Campaign Launched?

“An analysis form on gender parity in education had been delivered from the regional office of UNICEF. This form constituted the beginning of the process. We started to work on the “Review of Education in Turkey from the Gender Viewpoint”, with Nur Otaran and her team³. The idea of a campaign emerged while we were discussing the outcome of the analysis. Our first counselors on the field were volunteering academics and attorneys...The right people came together at the right time for this campaign”⁴ The below phrases from the analysis report prepared by Nur Otaran and her team were indicating at the key problem in the girls’ access to education: “(...) The issue goes beyond expanding the education opportunities provided for girls. This is the preliminary point. The most important thing however, is to systematically eliminate the obstacles facing the girls in heading for and succeeding in school. In plainer words, I am talking about stopping gender imparity. The boys and the girls have to enjoy equal opportunities.”⁵

The results have been calling for a total intervention for girls’ access to primary education. The outcome of the analysis has been shared with the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). In 2003, it was decided to start the campaign under the leadership of MoNE in 10 selected provinces. Attaining girls’ access to primary education required the contribution of many institutions and bodies besides MoNE. An organization to meet this requirement was rolled out both in the central and in the local regions. “When I started to work for the Ministry in 2004, “Haydi Kızlar Okula” Campaign was under my responsibility. Inspiration was generated through the campaign organization we rolled out and various institutions were involved. This task could not be undertaken solely by the educators. Governors at provincial level and district governors in the districts were involved in the process. 2004 and 2005 were the years when this enthusiasm hit the highest point...”⁶ 23 provinces have been included in the campaign in 2004. Project assistants and field supervisors from MoNE and UNICEF participate in the project.

“Haydi Kızlar Okula” Campaign’s aim has been specified as ensuring -with the participation and contribution of governmental organizations and agencies, non-governmental organizations, local governments and volunteers- school enrolment of girls who are in compulsory schooling ages (6 to 14) but either have never been enrolled or were not attending while enrolled particularly in those

provinces where girls’ school enrolment and attendance is lower, and therefore closing gender disparity in schooling at the level of primary education.

While the focus is on girls within the scope of the campaign, the target group also includes boys who have been identified during the activities as out of the system. Started in 2003 in 10 provinces

² The information in this chapter were compiled from the official website of “Haydi Kızlar Okula” Campaign www.haydikizlarokula.org and from the booklet “Information Pack” written within the framework of the campaign.

³ Working Group Coordinator Dr. Nur Otaran, Ayşe Sayın, Feride Güven, Prof. Dr. Ipek Gürkaynak and Sati Atakul ⁴ Fatma Özdemir Uluç, UNICEF Turkey Country Office, Education Program Supervisor ⁵ Dr. Nur Otaran, Evaluating Education in terms of Gender, Turkey, 2003 ⁶ İbrahim Er, Ministry of Education, General Directorate of Primary Education, General Director

Map 1 Campaign Provinces in 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006

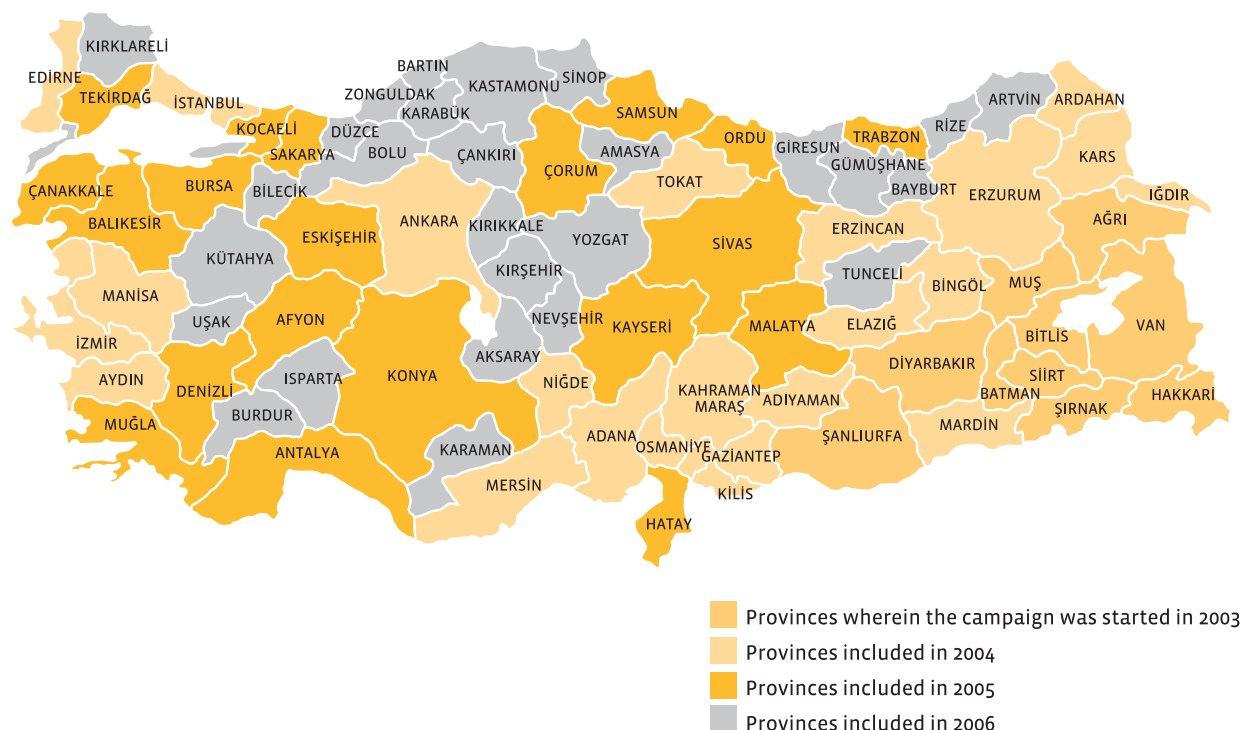


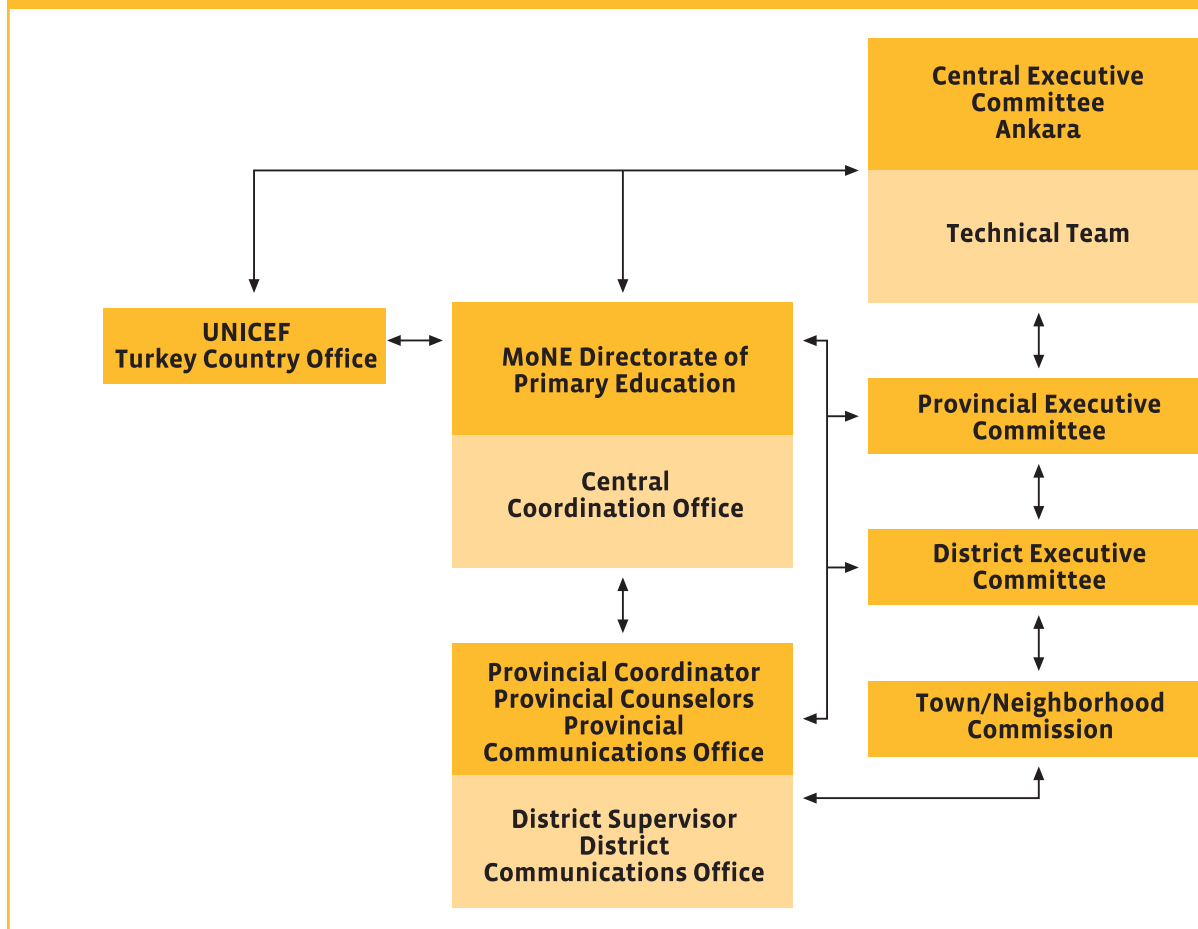
Figure 1 Campaign Stages rolled out by the Teams with Expanded Capacities at Provinces



where gender disparity in education is the most intense, the campaign has been expanded across the country with the inclusion of 23 provinces in 2004, 20 provinces in 2005 and 28 provinces in 2006.

Visits to campaign provinces in 2003 proved that the field staff faced difficulties in persuading the families to send their daughters to school and they lacked required equipment and facilities. Whereon the MoNE and UNICEF decided to include the “Trainers’ Training” component in the campaign in January 2004. Accordingly, MoNE’s General Directorate of Special Education, Guidance and Consulting helped for the preparation of “Teacher’s Handbook”, “Trainer’s Handbook” and “Guidebook for the Volunteers” in collaboration with UNICEF, and instituted a Central Training Team comprising experts from various universities and from MoNE. The Central Training Team provided training for 476 psychological counselors/guidance counselors (Provincial Training Teams) from 81 campaign provinces through 3-day trainings organized in June 2004, May 2005, June 2005 and April 2006. The Provincial Training Teams consequently gave a series of trainings to other guidance counselors, teachers, civil servants and volunteers.

Figure 2 Campaign Organization Chart from the Central to the Local Levels



Central Executive Committee: The committee consists of MoNE Deputy Undersecretary (Chairman), Ministry of Internal Affairs Deputy Undersecretary, Ministry of Health Deputy Undersecretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs Deputy Undersecretary, Ministry of Labor and Social Security Deputy Undersecretary, Social Services and Child Protection Agency General Director, General Directorate on the Status of Women General Director, Department of Religious Affairs Vice President, Social Aid and Solidarity General Director, UNICEF Turkey representative and MoNE Primary Education General Director. Ensuring the coordination of the project, the committee designates the roles and responsibilities of the institutions wherein the committee members are assigned in relation to the enhancement of primary education access and provides a basis of implementation.

UNICEF Turkey Country Office: UNICEF Turkey Country Office supports the campaign primarily through its representative and through the

program coordinator, project supervisor and field supervisors. UNICEF provides technical and financial support in the campaign stages of development, implementation, monitoring and assessment. The institution advocates and promotes the campaign on an international scale.

Central Coordination Office: It is incorporated within the body of MoNE's General Directorate of Primary Education. The office coordinates campaign activities in relation to the administrative operation at ministry level; prepares the annual work plans and sets up the data pool that is used in monitoring and assessment.

Provincial Executive Committee: Chaired by the Deputy Governor in charge of national education, the committee further consists of provincial director of national education, head of the primary school supervisors, provincial director of health, provincial director of agriculture, provincial chief of police, a representative of the regional directorate of the Ministry of Labor and Social

Security (if applicable), head of the provincial registry office, mayors and deputies, provincial mufti, provincial director of social services, agencies of the nongovernmental organizations as well as those of the visual and printed media, provincial campaign coordinator and provincial counselors. Besides the institutions indicated above, the provinces are free to incorporate further institutional agencies deemed suitable in accordance with their respective resources. The committee acts to mobilize all the institutions and bodies for the implementation of the campaign on a provincial basis; it also prepares the provincial work plans and reports to the central office. Additionally the committee identifies and mobilizes the available local resources to be used for requirements which may arise.

Provincial Communications Office: This office is established within the body of the provincial directorate of national education and is allocated an independent location if available. The provincial communications office handles activities such as the coordination of correspondence, systematic registration of the data from the districts and the preparation of periodical reports.

Provincial Counselors: Affiliated with the Provincial Campaign Executive Committee, the provincial counselors work in cooperation with the provincial coordinator and provincial communications office, giving advice for the campaign on topics such as capacity building, training, identification and social mobilization. The counselors receive training support on technical issues from the Central Coordination Office.

Provincial Coordinator: The provincial coordinator is responsible for the implementation of all the campaign-related activities at the provincial level. S/he conducts campaign activities in collaboration with the

provincial counselors, under the knowledge and coordination of the Head of the Provincial Campaign Executive Committee and the deputy governor in charge.

District Campaign Executive Committee: Headed by the district governor, the committee further comprises the district director of national education, district director of agriculture, the director of the public training center, health group chief, district security director, head of the district registry office and the district mufti. When deemed suitable, the districts are free to incorporate the representatives of public, professional, local administration, nongovernmental and media institutions and bodies. The committee acts for the mobilization of all institutions and bodies for the campaign implementation in the district; prepares district work plans and reports to the provincial executive committee. The committee identifies and mobilizes the available local resources to be used for arising requirements.

District Campaign Communications Office: Handles work conducted at district level. The office is established within the body of the district directorate of national education. The District Campaign Communications Office conducts the work of provincial communications office at district level.

Town, Village and Neighborhood Campaign Executive Commission: Headed by the schoolmaster of the respective town, village or neighborhood, the commission consists of the town mayor, headman of the village or the neighborhood, imam and a representative of the village council. The commission organizes the identification and persuasion activities to be implemented at town, village and neighborhood level.

Table 2 Girl Students who were enrolled through the Campaign between the Years of 2003–2006⁷

2003 (in 10 provinces)	2004 (in 33 provinces)	2005 (in 53 provinces)	2006 (Overall Turkey)	Total Sum
40.000	73.200	62.251	47.349	222.800

Van

Best Practice referred to in the Study

Organizational activities generating social mobilization; collaboration with the local and the national media

Resource People Interviewed within the Scope of the Study

Yahya Yıldız, Provincial Director of National Education; Bahri Yıldızbaş, Primary Schoolmaster; Aynur Çolak, Classroom Teacher; Şükran Çelik, Branch Teacher; İzzetin Laleci, YİBO (Regional Boarding Primary School) Schoolmaster; Şükrü Yetkin, Ocaklı Village Honorary Religious Officer; Ali Rıza Malay, Ocaklı Village Headman; Yakut Temüroğlu Sundur, UNICEF Training Unit Project Assistant; Ferit Hayva, Prestij Newspaper; Ali İhsan Öztürk, Anatolian News Agency; Sıtkı Yıldız, Cihan News Agency; Fahrettin Gök, Doğan News Agency; Ahmet Saatçi, Turkish Radio and Television Institution (TRT); Fatih Sevinç, NTV TV channel; Feyat Erdemir, Doğan News Agency, Hürriyet newspaper; Medine, Nevin, Ömer, Yıldız, Primary School students.

“We have wasted the past here; let’s not waste the future as well ...”

On June 16, 2003, news sent out to the editor’s offices of various newspapers in Van was carrying similar head titles:⁸ “‘Haydi Kızlar Okula’ Campaign Nobody knew then that this call had been the first step of a mobilization process which would provide the enrolment and attendance of thousands of children to school. News went on with the statement of ‘Haydi Kızlar Okula’ Campaign organized with the collaboration of UNICEF Turkey Country Office and MoNE has been launched in 10 provinces.” The cited campaign aiming the enhancement of girl’s access to primary education was initially launched in Van. The journalists who had been invited to the opening ceremony respectively wrote down the statements of Hüseyin Çelik, Minister of National Education; Carol Bellamy, UNICEF General Director and Edmond McLoughney, UNICEF Turkey Representative at that time. Bellamy said, “Implementation of the right of every girl to attain

quality primary education is the key to achieving parity between men and women”. The Minister of National Education Hüseyin Çelik expressed his feelings by saying, “If you do not build schools and eliminate ignorance, then you will be condemned to obscurity. It is our fault if nearly 50% of our women are illiterate. It is my fault as the Minister of National Education. We have started this campaign thinking that it is never too late. A woman is an individual, a person above all”. It was announced that at the first stage, the campaign will be rolled out in Ağrı, Batman, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Hakkâri, Muş, Siirt, Şanlıurfa and Şırnak, which are other provinces where school enrolment of girls constitute a problem as in Van. Within the scope of the campaign, raising public awareness and persuading the parents were planned through realization of activities such as training handbooks, TV and radio spots, and regional meetings.

“We had not believed that such an endeavor would be made...”

All the journalists in Van who worked for the mainstream and local media had been invited to the opening ceremony. Sıtkı Yıldız had been among the journalists who followed up the news: “The initial news story on school enrolment of girls was made on the launch day at the Hotel Urartu. A lot of talking goes on and promises are made when politicians come into the forefront; and you do not really believe them. We did not imagine that this campaign would be expanded and that this much of an endeavor would be made. Evidently we made the news. This was how the news entered: ‘Girls will be going to school henceforth’.”

In spite of the determination at the launch, the campaign did not achieve the anticipated organization and public mobility in its first year in Van. MoNE and UNICEF in Ankara decided that the campaign should be supported with regards to local organization and dissemination strategies. Within this process, the field supervisors assigned by UNICEF in the headquarters took office for monitoring the province-based progresses. Yakut Temüroğlu Sundur who had become acquainted with UNICEF during the 1999 Marmara earthquake was assigned as Van field

⁸ 16 June 2003, News released by Anatolian News Agency and Doğan News Agency, also the source for the quotes used in the rest of the text.

supervisor in the headquarters: “Nobody was proclaiming that ‘girls may be excluded from the system’; nevertheless they were not aware of the significance of girls’ education. We analyzed the data from the provinces with MoNE and identified new strategies to organize the field work. We wrote down the campaign guidelines; prepared implementation handbooks and composed a text pointing out the importance of public mobilization. All parties had to be incited; we decided to hold trainings targeting the counselors and coordinators in the provinces.”⁹

In April 2004, MoNE and UNICEF called in the provincial coordinators and counselors for a training session in Ankara. Van was among the invited provinces: “MoNE branch manager Nesim Alkan called and said, ‘Mr. Yıldızbaşı, I would like to have a discussion with you’. I went to him the same day. He asked me whether I knew about the HKO campaign. Nobody was aware of it in the province since the anticipated mobilization had not been generated in the initial year. I myself had a brief idea about it. Mr. Nesim said, ‘They call for two of our friends for a meeting to be held in Ankara, would you like to participate in

the seminar and become a provincial counselor?’. We set off with Yaşar Şen to attend the meeting in Ankara”.¹⁰ The participants of the meeting obtained a great amount of information which would be of assistance in the organization, communications and persuasion activities. During the sessions where gender parity was discussed, the fact that the gap between school enrolment of girls and boys in primary education is around 7% on country basis has been emphasized. In other words, the number of girls at primary education age who are not attending school is 600,000 more than the boys in the same condition.¹¹ Provincial counselors Bahri Yıldızbaşı and Yaşar Şen returned to Van after the seminar. “We were off to Van. On the plane I said, ‘Look Yaşar; first we will do some planning and set a schedule. We will start with the schoolmasters and then we will visit all the districts. Van has got 12 districts including the city center. We will also talk to schoolmasters in the districts; than with the village headmen and imams...’. I was imagining these on the plane and was writing those down at the same time. We were benefiting from the training we got in Ankara of course.”¹²

“We were very surprised when the figures emerged...”

Bahri Yıldızbaşı who had been the schoolmaster in Vali Tahirpaşa Primary School during those years set off to look for teachers¹³ who would work with him in establishing the teams for identification and persuasion. One of the teachers he spoke with was Aynur Çolak who was a classroom teacher at the sub-provincial village of Çitören: “I met Bahri Hoca (TN: ‘Hoca’ signifies ‘Teacher’ in Turkish) in the Directorate of National Education when I was appointed to Van in 2003. He called me a year later and said, ‘We have got a project; I would like you to work on it as well’. I accepted without hesitation.” Like all the other teachers, Aynur Çolak attends in the briefing meetings held in the province

center. “I too decided to hold briefing meetings in the districts. We designated those who would participate in the meetings. I indicated that, ‘District governors, district health group chiefs, district directors of agriculture, muftis, imams and headmen of neighborhoods at the districts should be participating’ in the letter which would be distributed by courtesy of the governorate. I got it read by the Director of National Education and signed by the Deputy Governor Süleyman Özçakıcı. Mr. Özçakıcı was a genuine ‘Mülkiyeli’ (TN: graduate of the School of Political Science of the University of Ankara); he lent us a great deal of support. In the meanwhile, we started to give trainings for the teachers who would be working

⁹ Yakut Temüroğlu Sundur, UNICEF Training Program Project Assistant ¹⁰ Bahri Yıldızbaşı, Schoolmaster, HKO Provincial Counselor ¹¹ Source: <http://www.unicef.org/turkey/> ¹² Bahri Yıldızbaşı, Schoolmaster, HKO Provincial Counselor ¹³ Bahri Yıldızbaşı: “I called many of our teachers such as Helin Yarcel, Hülya Düzova, Sema Güler, Ergenç Eltas, Mehmet Sarı, Sinan Aydın, Nedim Erdin, Derya Şahin, Haluk Özkan, Abdullah Damarseçkin, Havva Başoğlu, Mahmut Kavuk, Nusret Çiçek, Mahir Yalçınıyigit, Aysun Hınıslı, Fırat Sat and they joined our team.”

in the persuasion teams. And consequently we set up the provincial and district teams. Our team which consisted of 110 persons was expanded to 222 in the second year. Thus, there were HKO supervisors in every district, school and village”¹⁴

By the 2004–2005 school year, the organization in Van had been accomplished across all stages and the public mobilization had been initiated. “A miracle took place in Van. Bahri Hoca had aroused the whole of Van. The fact that he had worked as an educationist in Van for many years as well as the fact that his origins were from Van was very influential in this process. He knew the region very well. The factors that generated this miracle were that he was so good in his relations with people and particularly that he was committed and devoted to this issue. Bahri Hoca created an organization single-handedly. Initially he set up his own team which consisted of teachers. He assigned each district to those teachers. Those people in turn organized various teams in the districts and those teams went from house to house participating in the persuasion process. This core team actually did the same job as we did in the provinces, by constantly visiting the districts. In the meanwhile, the schools were interconnected by employing the coordinator schools¹⁵ in the province center. Thus an organization on the basis of schools was also established. The provincial director of national education was replaced around those days. A new governor was assigned. Niyazi Tanılır took office and immediately adopted the project. With



Persuasion at the fountain.
Van, Bahçesaray.
Van HKO Campaign Archive

this support, Mr. Yıldızbaşı began to work even harder.”¹⁶ The governor and the schoolmasters –two key actors defined in the respective legislation¹⁷ adopted the campaign. According to the data from the school year of 2004–2005 however, 33,968 girls had been still left out of the system in spite of the fact that they are of primary education age.¹⁸ The data was demonstrating the immensity of the problem and that solving this issue solely through the efforts of the parties had been impossible. “When the campaign was launched we imagined that there should be some thousand children in the province center who could not attend school due to migration. The actual figures emerged when the teachers identified the children out of school; we were very surprised, we did not know so many children in our province were not going to school.”¹⁹

Van is lining up

One of the teachers who are in charge of the sub-provincial villages is Şükran Çelik. In a short while, Şükran Çelik was to be called “Çalikuşu Feride” (TN: the heroine who is a young and idealist village teacher in the novel ‘Çalikuşu’ (The Wren), written by prominent Turkish author

Reşat Nuri Güntekin) by the journalists in Van due to the achievements she was demonstrating in the persuasion activities. “The action plan was prepared. Bahri Hoca called me following the trainings. He said, ‘Come on; we are going on to the field, we are going in to the villages’.”²⁰

¹⁴ Bahri Yıldızbaşı, Schoolmaster, HKO Provincial Counselor ¹⁵ Coordinator school: 16 schools in the province of Van including the bussed primary schools and 4 schools in the district of Erciş are assigned as coordinator schools. The coordinator schools provide the required support throughout the campaign, by actuating locating and inducement teams in the schools linked to them and they compile the field work results to be submitted to the provincial counselor and coordinator. ¹⁶ Yakut Temüroğlu Sundur, UNICEF Training Program Project Assistant ¹⁷ Articles 52–57 of the Primary Education and Training Law No. 222 ¹⁸ In 2004–2005 school year 198,338 students were enrolled in primary education in Van. Of those students, 116,153’ü were boys and 82,185 were girls. The 33,968 variance between the number of girls and number of boys gives the number of girls who are out of primary education. (Source: http://www.haydikizlarokula.org/uygulama_illeri2.php) ¹⁹ Ahmet Saatçi, TRT correspondent ²⁰ Şükran Çelik, Branch Teacher, HKO Inducement Team

“Şükran (Çelik) and I were in charge of the sub-provincial villages. We started to visit the village schools. We were getting information from the schoolmaster and the teachers; discovering about and writing down the student population, the differentiation between the number of girls and boys, and how many children were left out of the system. Information from the villages was starting to come in on children who were not enrolled or were not able to attend to school. We decided to pay visits to the houses and to implement an active persuasion activity in order to support the efforts of our teachers who were in charge of the villages and neighborhoods.”²¹

The Governorate also supports the teachers’ field activities. *“Our Governor (Niyazi Tanılır) lent us great support during this process. He organized coffee meetings within the scope of a project he called ‘A Cup of Coffee’, wherein provincial directorate of health, social solidarity foundation and the directorate of national education participated under the leadership of the governor or the deputy governors. My team and I attended these meetings as well. The men at the coffee houses in migration-receiving neighborhoods which faced issues of adaptation were given information on health, on social solidarity and particularly on the education of girls”²²* A further element which supplemented the organization

had been the establishment of the system of the coordinator schools which interlinks the schools. The regional boarding primary schools (YİBO’s) founded especially to introduce the children living in settlements lacking schools have been the driving force of this process. *“We were designated as a coordinator school. 16 coordinator schools were designated province-wide including the bussed primary education schools in the villages. Four schools were linked to us. We were doing field survey with them as well, and reporting to the provincial coordinator. Furthermore, through identification activities, we identified and enrolled children who could not benefit from transportation (bussed primary education) and who lacked schools in their villages.”²³* Physical infrastructure deficiencies were raised when years of negligence merged with current issues such as migration from villages and hamlets evacuated in the 90’s; shut-down village schools due to lack of teachers or investments. This fundamental obstacle against school enrolment had to be eliminated. The investments are increased by means of the support arriving from Ankara. *“Together with its districts, villages and hamlets, Van received the largest share from education during the last four years; with an expenditure of 206,000 YTL.”^{24,25}*

Best Practice in Citizen Journalism

Girls’ education as articulated for years by the local media which holds an authentic agenda on Van’s issues, was now being approached through the participation of all parties: *“We have started this sort of calls in our newspaper in 1998. We believed that social transformation could only be attained by reflecting educational criterion on all segments of the society in equal conditions but in a qualified way. Minister of Education Hüseyin Çelik was one of authors in the previous years; we have been raising the issue of women’s education and parity upon the agenda for many years.”²⁶*

The journalists as architects of the social mobilization generated across the province –and even across Turkey- had set an example in citizen journalism. Journalists from the mainstream media also had supported this endeavor which had not been solely limited to the local media. *“Before the launch of the campaign we were not able to make news on the constraints in education since we were working for TRT. This was because those problems had been the negative aspects of the educational policy. Adoption of the issue by the Governor and other authorities impelled us as well.”²⁷*

²¹ Şükran Çelik, Branch Teacher, HKO Inducement Team; ²² Bahri Yıldızbaş, Schoolmaster, HKO Provincial Counselor ²³ İzzettin Laleci, YİBO Director, Coordinator; Schoolmaster ²⁴ Some 206,000 YTL is spent on education between the years of 2003-2007 through 1.566 classrooms, 253 lodgings, an accommodation with a capacity of 5.229 beds, 12 gymnasiums and renovation of 151 schools (Source: Golden Years of Education in Van; Publication of Van Directorate of National Education; 2007) ²⁵ Yahya Yıldız, Van Provincial Director of National Education ²⁶ Ferit Hayva, Prestij Newspaper ²⁷ Ahmet Saatçı, TRT correspondent

Box 2 Citizen Journalism

*"The primary principle in citizen journalism is attaining as many news sources as possible and conveying the news through the viewpoint of the citizens, the community and the public rather than the official viewpoint. When working as a citizen journalist, you have to focus upon the content and the generation process of the news instead of the journalist or the source of the news. Accordingly, the "citizen" who is the main target audience, or who is the very source of the news has to feel that the cited news is "his/her own news"...In such a case, the journalists targeting citizen journalism –subsequent to the individual activity of attaining new stories/information- brings the subject of the new together to discuss the issue with the journalists. The solutions as well as the cause/reason of the issue are evaluated. The citizen journalist does not consider himself/herself as solely undertaking the task of lending information to the citizen, but also demands the actual realization of this legitimate claim on the extent and matters where the citizen is rightful. Citizen journalism acts as an "ambassador" between the citizens and the state. And when this is achieved, the reader's/citizen's trust in his/her newspaper and the journalist is definitely enhanced. By the way, citizen journalism certainly possesses an ideology; and this consists of defending the rights of the citizens based on phenomena and facts, as well as meeting their expectations by way of the media."*²⁹

Besides the individual volunteering of the journalists, the demand from the decision makers in newspapers and TV's was also mounting. Turkey had remembered the long-neglected girls, bringing up these issues on the first pages –even on the headlines. "Believe me, we were not really aware of the splendor surrounding the Lake Van or Mount Süphan, as there were so many news stories about terrorism. Hakkâri, Bitlis, Muş, Bingöl and Ağrı are also linked to Van news offices. We were not dealing with issues such as how people make a living in the villages, whether the village people were sending their kids to school, the literacy rate in this region or how the women were living; there was no such demand from Istanbul..."²⁸

The perception of the media as a solution partner by the identification and persuasion teams in Van, proliferates the participation of the media in the process: "Bahri Hoca personally came to our office and announced, " Pal, there is such and such place; there is a problem in such and such village; come and support us". We were going to the villages together. Each girl attended school set an example to other children and families; thus increasing the number of the children going to school."³⁰

*"The most critical matter for us as journalists in Van was this: "There is a very good activity going on in here; let's give all the support we can provide.' We were setting forth at the crack of the dawn and returning late in the evening. There had also been times when we were not able to find any news; we still went."*³¹ *"Our primary job as a journalist is to inform the public –to raise awareness of the public."*³² *"The impact of the media and especially the TV's was considerable in the field activities. When the news was on TV, that did not only trigger the families who were not sending their child to school, but also those who were responsible for this matter."*³³ *"The camera has this function of expediting the decision making –it effects people in the persuasion process."*³⁴ *"The news initially triggered action from the authorities. It generated consciousness in the people. And when the people become conscious, they know how to go and demand what they lack."*³⁵

The journalists in Van had followed the outcome of the news stories they made by implementing one of the most important constituents of the citizen journalism. "Do the kids who were enrolled still attend school; were the promises kept –we followed up. This was based on the aspiration for being a fine

²⁸ Ragıp Duran "Citizen Journalism", *Amidst Journalism and Reporting*, Sevda Alankuş (compilation) Istanbul, IPS Foundation of Communication Publications: 7, The 'Handbook of The Reporter' Series: 4, 2003 ²⁹ Feyat Erdemir, Doğan News Agency ³⁰ Ali İhsan Öztürk, Anatolian News Agency ³¹ Sıtkı Yıldız, Cihan News Agency ³² Fahrettin Gök, Doğan News Agency ³³ Bahri Yıldızbaşı, Schoolmaster, HKO Provincial Counselor ³⁴ Fatih Sevinç, NTV Correspondent ³⁵ Ahmet Saatçi, TRT Correspondent

journalist.”³⁶ “These activities should set an example before the other provinces. Van did this job and carried it through. And of course there was contribution from the journalist, the teacher and the statesmen.”³⁷

Collaborating with the journalists, on the other hand, is a unique experience for many teachers as well. “It was my first collaboration with the press. We accomplished some great tasks. I still visit those journalist friends of mine today.”³⁸ During the same days, Bahri Yıldızbaş whose articles had been published by Şehrivan Newspaper comes up with a further demand particularly from the local newspapers: “Do not put news of the problems in education on the same page with our news about the campaign. Print them nonetheless; however, do not let them to obscure the good things achieved through the campaign.”³⁹ The newspapers published in the province do not refuse this request, the impact of the news on the campaign thus being enhanced.

The achievement of the female teachers

“A teacher who was trying to convince a mother for instance, was saying: “Listen auntie; let’s say that you got sick. You go to the doctor and he prescribes you lots of medicine. You come back home and you do not know how many pills you should be taking at what time. Your daughter is also illiterate, so she cannot help you either. And there is this other mom who sent her daughter to school and the daughter in turn, is able to take her to the doctor and hand over her medicine’. Upon hearing this the woman was thinking for a while and saying, ‘OK. I will send her’. These people are convinced when given a good example. They are particularly influenced by nurses and teachers, taking them as an example.”⁴⁰

“As soon as we entered their houses, we told them we were teachers. They would hesitate a little when they saw the folders in our hands. First they were thinking that we were assigned to that place. We were saying ‘We were told



Şükran Çelik: “I must have traveled to nearly 400 villages and enrolled 1,600 students. We in fact have made a cut into a significant part of the crust. On seeing me on the street, the kids are calling “Come on girls, come on girls!”
Van HKO Campaign Archive

that you have a daughter who does not attend school. We want to enroll her’. We were never telling them that this has an enforcement –a sanction. We were making speeches covering the importance of education for the girls. Then we would use ourselves as an example. What most surprised me in these visits had been the attitude of the girls. They were saying, ‘I do not want to attain schooling,’ finding many excuses. Especially the girls over the age of 10 were saying, ‘I am too old. I would be embarrassed to put on a uniform’. Most of the time, when the parents’ were looking the other way, these girls were whispering ‘I would like to go to school very much; but don’t tell this to my mom/dad. We were registering those we convinced and handing these over to the teachers at the village/ neighborhood school. Sometimes the kids were afraid of failing. Then we told them that they would be accepted into compensation classes. A significant part of the students who were of



Şükran Çelik; "When we went into the villages, the families were hiding the girls, knowing that the "Haydi Kızlar Okula" Campaign team has arrived. And since we knew this, we did not go into the houses, finding the girls in the stables or behind the stones piled in the yards instead."
(Van HKO Campaign Archive)

higher ages were enrolled to compensatory education.⁴¹

The core team meeting in Bahri Yıldızbaşı's school in the days subsequent to the field activities specifies diverse strategies targeting the emerging new situation. "We took a decision like this for instance; We should not include the economic aspect when trying to convince the families to send their daughter to school. You know, a conditional cash transfer is granted. The fathers who sent their daughters to school started to withdraw them after a certain period of

time. They said, 'We should receive some of that money; we will send the children to school only after then'. Thus we did not mention the grants as long as we were not obliged to."⁴² "The resistance from the families was not the only reason keeping the girls from education. There also were families who wanted to send their child to school who did not know the means for it or who lacked the required financial support. There were no schools, no classrooms in the places they dwelled..."⁴³ "We were splitting into several groups in the villages. I wanted to see that smile in the girls' eyes as a consequence of the persuasion. Sometimes the discussions were prolonged and the girl would be waiting desperately. We kept on talking with the dad. Fathers are very problematic; in fact, the mothers want their daughters to go to school. The mothers in this region would like their daughters to get educated perhaps more than the mothers in the west; since they are aware of the nuisance."⁴⁴ Another motive for the success of the persuasion team is that there were teachers who spoke Kurdish. Talking in Kurdish provides a great deal of benefits, especially in communication with the mothers and elderly people. "The impact from the woman teachers was so enormous that nobody could have been so successful -even including the military or any other organization. We had a lady teacher for instance; she had learnt Kurdish just to get in touch with the women to let them send their daughters to school. She was so selfless in approaching the people of the region."⁴⁵ Field activities are focused upon in accordance with the action plan updated with the newly received data. The accelerating work pace has led to certain sacrifices from the teachers in the team: "We were acting with an extremely limited budget through the field work. The teachers were using their own cars along with the official cars. There were times when they were spending their own money."⁴⁶

41 Aynur Çolak, Classroom Teacher, HKO Inducement Team 42 Şükran Çelik, Teacher, HKO Inducement Team 43 Bahri Yıldızbaşı, Schoolmaster, HKO Provincial Counselor 44 Sıtkı Yıldız, Cihan News Agency 45 Sıtkı Yıldız, Cihan News Agency 46 Fahrettin Gök, Doğan News Agency

“Ocaklı (Çom) Village became an icon”

“As work progressed, we noticed that a lot of girls were not sent to school in some locations although there was a school. The teachers there were trying for persuasion but somehow there were no results. This village of Ocaklı (Com) was among them. Only two girls were attending school in this village located 40km from the province center. I had learnt that the school built in 1973 was facing difficulties in terms of girl students. The village with 75 households was emigrating. There also had been an incident of vendetta in the past years which led to some households abandoning the village. I went to the village to talk with the teacher and returned to Van after discussing with the teacher and the villagers. Recognizing why the children were not attending school usually defines how an intervention would be carried out. I was also informed of a sheikh coming frequently to this village from Mardin”⁴⁷

Bahri Yıldızbaş decides to go to the village once again with his team. *“It was September, only a several days left for schools to open. We decided to go to the village as a team. That village became the icon of the project later.”⁴⁸ “A religious misguidance was conducted in the village, saying that ‘It is a sin to get the girls educated’. The village therefore, was indicative of a common issue in the region. We had to deal with the problem on-the-spot. The achievement here was to set an example before whole Van.”⁴⁹*

The journalists as a part of the team had been also informed. *“Bahri Hoca came the day before and said, ‘We are going to the villages tomorrow. There are only two girls going to school in one village; we have to augment this number; give us a hand pals’. We agreed on the place and time to meet. The other day, we visited another village on the way. We enrolled a girl to school there as well. We took some shots of happiness. The girl and everybody were happy –including us of course. Our second stop was in Ocaklı.”⁵⁰*

The persuasion team has talks with the teacher, headman and the honorary religious

officer. Ali Rıza Malay who attended this discussion had been the headman of the village for the last 11 years. *“The state did not look after us; we did not have any water or any road. Hence, we did not send our kids to school. Well, Bahri Yıldızbaş came to talk with us, he explained. And we were convinced.”⁵¹ Şükrü Yetkin, the honorary religious officer of the village for the last 47 years, also participates in the discussion: “Previously nobody was sending their daughters to school. As the imam and the headman, we got together with the team workers and they convinced us.”⁵² Following the identification activities, it became apparent that the headman did not send his grandchildren to school either. “If it was not for Bahri Hoca and his team, we wouldn’t have sent the girls to school. We sent them for their sake.”⁵³*

Knowing that there would be other families to convince besides the headman, the teachers start to visit the houses. In the meanwhile, the news was heard that the sheikh from Mardin was in the village as well. *“We found out on the way that the sheikh was in the village too. Everybody in the village heard about our arrival; the sheikh got the news as well. We talked to the girls at the fountain. We got the names of the children who were sent to school and started to visit the houses.”⁵⁴ The sheikh who had been visiting the village regularly every year was getting a rest in another house. He had been disturbed by the activities in the village and the presence of the journalists. “Bahri Hoca who wanted to have a talk with the sheikh, went to the house where he was staying. The sheikh refused to see the whole group since there were women. He sent us a word ‘The journalists should not come either’. According to what was told by the journalist friends who were accepted to the meeting, the sheikh has said, ‘It is religiously sinful to let the girls sit side by side with the boys; thus they should definitely not be sent to school’.”⁵⁵ All the villagers and particularly the headman had believed in what the sheikh told. The headman did not share the same opinion*

⁴⁷ Bahri Yıldızbaş, Schoolmaster, HKO Provincial Counselor ⁴⁸ Şükran Çelik, Teacher, HKO Inducement Team ⁴⁹ Bahri Yıldızbaş, Schoolmaster, HKO Provincial Counselor ⁵⁰ Fahrettin Gök, Doğan News Agency ⁵¹ Ali Rıza Malay, Ocaklı Village Headman ⁵² Şükrü Yetkin, Ocaklı Village Honorary Religious Officer ⁵³ Ali Rıza Malay, Ocaklı Village Headman ⁵⁴ Aynur Çolak, Classroom Teacher, HKO Inducement Team ⁵⁵ Şükran Çelik, Teacher, HKO Inducement Team

with the identification and persuasion team. *"Our sheikh comes from Kızıltepe, Mardin and enlightens us about religious issues –he gives advice. The allegations are groundless; he says*

*that the girls should get educated –his children attends school as well. The family origin of these people is Arabia. He does not write talismans whatsoever."*⁵⁶

"I won't be sending my daughter to school even if you hang me to death ..."

Being told by a girl, 'There are kids who do not go to school in our house too', the team decides to visit yet another house. *"The events went out of control in the third house. Just as we managed to convince the father of the girls in the house, the uncle came and started to shout in fury. This was exactly what he said: 'Are you introducing new tricks to old dogs, buddy? I won't be sending the girl even if you hang me or cut me to death. Where are you taking a 15-year old girl to?'; and he started to yell and act aggressively. The incident broke off at that moment in that turmoil."*⁵⁷ *"Despite Bahri Hock's comforting words, he started to yell and shout; he was a big sturdy guy."*⁵⁸ The persuasion team leaves the village around five in the evening. Unaware that the next day would be one that would change the course of the campaign, they finalize the day's assessment in the province and leave for their homes dead tired. *"In the morning, here it was! Wham! When it was on*

*every newspaper like 'Van...Van...Van'; Turkey, the Ministry, everyone rose to their feet. And that was what I really wanted"*⁵⁹ *"Fahrettin's news took the headlines on the first page of Radikal: 'I won't be sending the girl even if you hang me or cut me to death.' The people are influenced when coming across such an example. The news was even circulated on the TV's all day long. The TV channels were also aware of the delicacy of the matter; only two girls were attending school at this age ..."*⁶⁰

Starting from Ankara that day, all in charge had been mobilized for school enrolment of girls in Ocaklı. *"All administrators and particularly our Governor visited the village and decided to resolve the issue. The day before their visit –which would actually be the schools' opening date– repair work was conducted in the school during the night. We started registering the children the next day, on a table placed in front of the school; I even recall that the wives of the Police Chief and the Governor had assigned themselves as custodians for the registered children. We managed to register 66 students that day. In the meanwhile, a planning was made with regards to the infrastructure issues of the village. The road to the village was constructed and potable water was brought to the village in a short while."*⁶¹

With girls attaining school at numerous villages like Ocaklı, many people like the religious officers and headmen starts to lend support. *"I might seem like talking against particularly the honorary religious officers of the past but, their approach was like: 'Don't educate your kids; it is a sin'. Then tell me this imam; why are you educating yours then? The imams of the current day are making persuasive speeches in favor of girls' education."*⁶²



The enrolled girls who in front of the school building, following the persuasion activities in Ocaklı Village. Van HKO Campaign Archive

⁵⁶ Ali Rıza Malay, Ocaklı Village Headman ⁵⁷ Fahrettin Gök, Doğan News Agency ⁵⁸ Aynur Çolak, Classroom Teacher, HKO Inducement Team ⁵⁹ Bahri Yıldızbaş, Schoolmaster, HKO Provincial Counselor ⁶⁰ Feyat Erdemir, Doğan News Agency, Hürriyet ⁶¹ Bahri Yıldızbaş, Schoolmaster, HKO Provincial Counselor ⁶² Ali İhsan Öztürk, Anatolian News Agency

Box 3 “I will Become a Teacher”

An identification activity was implemented in 2005, in the emigrant neighborhood of Tebrizkapı at the foot of the Van Castle. The team came across two siblings –aged 11 and 13. Upon noting that the children are not attending elementary school, the identification and persuasion teams conferred with the kids’ family.

Aged 11, Nevin is a third grader living in the Roma neighborhood of Dom across the Van Castle. Having immigrated to Van from Yüksekova when she was 20 months old, she had grown up in a family with six siblings. Her mother and her older sister are working as “farmhands” in the fields in order to provide for the family. Medine, yet another older sister of hers, is looking after the house, caring for her brothers and sisters. **“I was selling harmal seeds at the Castle when a man came and took my picture to put in the newspaper. Bahri Hoca was here; he took me to school. We went to the bazaar; they bought me outfits and all and registered me at school. Then we visited the Governor.”** Conducting persuasion negotiations with the family following the identification



Photo: Tuba Çameli

phase, the team registers Nevin and her older sister in school. She starts in the first grade in the school year of 2005–2006. **“I was so happy the day I went to school –I was very excited. I’ll finish school if we can afford it. I will too give lessons to the kids; I will become a teacher.”**

With the number of girls attending school in the village surpassing that of the boys in the year of 2006, news of this sort was published in the newspapers of the day: “The number of girls in the school which was only two just two years ago has now surpassed that of the boys with reaching 69. Yahya Yıldız, Van Provincial Director of National Education tells that action was taken in collaboration with the Directorate of National Education and the Provincial Mufti’s Office in order to attain success with the campaign and that the headman lent a great deal of support as well. Telling that success was achieved as a consequence of the activities implemented, Yıldız says ‘There is great contribution from the teachers and the students’ families as well. We are conducting promotion activities in order to ensure that the same achievements are realized

in other villages. We visit village schools with every opportunity we find, trying to supply their stationery material requirements and to mitigate their shortcomings in terms of equipment. We are going to employ all our facilities. We are extremely ambitious and enthusiastic regarding this issue.”⁶³

In Van –just as in many other settlement locations- there are challenges in terms of primary education enrolment of girls and of the participation of women in the social life. It is trusted that the children –each one an individual hope- who had been enrolled to elementary school and were expected to complete their education would be changing the destiny of women in Van... The campaign had ensured school enrolment for thousands of children; and the most important thing is that the teachers and

Box 4 "I would Attend School if my Father Sends Me"



Photo: Tuba Çameli

Aged 11, Yıldız lives in the village of Ocaklı. She was enrolled to school when she was 8. She is a 4th grader now. **"Neither my father, nor my mother went to school. My mother does not understand Turkish either, I translate the TV serials for her in the evenings...First there were two of our friends going to school. Some people came to the village. We became pupils when our teachers came and registered us. I was afraid when the teachers came to our house; I didn't know why they came for. Then they told me. They told that we would go to school. They put our names down. They gave me a uniform, now I've outgrown it. I went to school without a uniform this year. Fathers of my other friends are not sending them to school. There was this Aysel; now her father is not sending her. Older girls do not go to school. They say that they don't want to come, because their parents are old they and help their parents. We made circles and lines in the first days of school. Then gradually we learnt how to read and write. I would attend school if my father sends me. I want to become a teacher."**

journalists undertaking responsibility in the persuasion teams acknowledge the existence of this problem throughout their daily routine and employing their experiences for the solution:

*"Now we ask each child 'Do you go to school?'. I follow up the attendance status and the problems of my students at school more closely now. I would like to work for further projects in our province; there is yet a lot to do."*⁶⁴

The journalists also are concerned about whether the children quoted in the news are still attending school and they inquire about this. They still go after the received information. They even put forward some suggestions targeting the future in school enrolment adventure of the girls. *"This country will not develop, democracy will not be established, the feudality, the territorialism will not come to an end as long as the girls are not educated. Backwardness*

*in terms of family in this country will not be eliminated. The violence carried out on women, incest, illegitimate practices, fellow wifehood, second wifehood, prostitution will not be over... We have wasted the past here; let's not waste the future as well...The preschool and secondary education as well as the primary education should be considered and should be invested in. Yes, the campaign was implemented; the schools are being built. They couldn't manage to enhance the quality of education however. The substantial construction does not entail quality. This is the grim reality. Founding a university in each province does not solve the issue. When seen from Ankara, from Istanbul, the things done seem to be best practices. Indeed they are...However, the socioeconomic problems of Van should be resolved and the quality of education should be enhanced in order to ensure the sustainability of this impact."*⁶⁵

Aydın

Best Practice referred to in the Study

Involvement of the NGO's in the process

Resource People Interviewed within the Scope of the Study

Alp Aslanargun, Deputy Governor ; Süleyman Karakaya, MoNE Branch Director and HKO Provincial Coordinator; Nuri Aktakka, Provincial Director of Culture and Tourism, HKO ex coordinator of province; Yaşar Badur, Söke Regional Director of National Education; Ömer Faruk Türkan, Kuşadası Regional Director of National Education; Fatma Ceren, Guidance Counselor and HKO Provincial Counselor; Çiğdem Karael, Guidance Counselor, Söke Guidance and Research Center (RAM); Eşref Bilal, Deputy Schoolmaster, Zübeyde Hanım Primary School; Tülay Aydın, Chairwoman of the Council of Turkish Women; Saadet Kavasgil, Board Member of the Association of Turkish Women, Aydın Branch; Ertan Karabıyık, Project Assistant, UNICEF Turkey Office Educational Program; Pervin, Primary school student; Pervin's mother

Pervin's success

*"I am fourteen. I will be in 6th grade this year; I passed with a certificate of excellence. I want the summer to be over and school to start right away."*⁶⁶ Pervin lives in Fevzi Çakmak, one of province's neighborhoods established by emigration. She was born in Aydın as the third child of the family. She further has three younger siblings. *"The boy was born here, Pervin as well... It has been 20 years since I came here from Muş as a bride. Her father's relatives are all here. I came, I worked at home, I worked in the cotton fields and I hoed the soil. Now I'm ill. . The boy and his sister are working..."* Hence is the 20-year summary of life of the mother of Pervin, who was unable to attend primary schooling due to lack of school in her village. Then she continues with school enrolment process of her daughter Pervin: *"They came to our house two years ago. Pervin was not at home; she was working in the fields. They asked for the kids. They said, 'Send the kids to school'. And I said, 'My financial situation is not good; I am not able to send them'. I told them, 'Also because she is rather old; she is old for school'. Her brother said, 'No really mom, Let her go (to school)'. They registered her for school. Their father was injured in an construction accident and cannot work. The boy dropped out of school in fifth grade. The older*



HKO Provincial Counselor Fatma Ceren from the team which enabled Pervin's school enrolment monitors her attendance in school: *"Since Pervin is a very successful student, her teachers are supporting her a lot, never letting go. We too, lent support as a team. I would be after her should they not want to send her to high school."* (Photo: Tuba Çameli)

*sister has never gone to school; we didn't have the means for it."*⁶⁷

Eşref Bilal, Zübeyde Hanım Primary School Deputy Schoolmaster who had participated in the identification and persuasion activities implemented within the context of the HKO campaign, later recalls the day they have first met Pervin who turned out to be one of the most successful students in school: *"We found her in*



Pervin: *"I took a computer course. They visited the Schoolmaster's office. I was in the English class when they called me. I had done well in the course."*(Photo: Tuba Çameli)
Eşref Bilal: *"Pervin has become very successful; she was virtually the symbol of the work we had implemented two years ago."* (Photo: Tuba Çameli)

one of the houses we were visiting randomly. She was 12. Her family didn't want to send her to school using their financial constraints as an excuse but we convinced them. Then she took an exam and we verified her status. She started compensatory education in our school." Pervin who still preserves the glimmer of those days in her eyes learned how to read and write during the first three months of compensatory education. "The course started and we started to attend the classes; eventually we learnt how to read and write. Besides teaching how to read and write, they were also talking about hygiene. Those days were full of fun; I never wanted them to end but unfortunately they ended it. I took an exam and was accepted to the third grade. The teachers were very nice to us. They were trying to teach us reading and writing as much as they can do; and

we were trying to learn it." Advanced to the upper classes due to the success she achieved at school, Pervin goes to fifth class in the school year of 2006–2007. Participating in the computer course the same year, she is successful province-wide. I take photos of Pervin with her teachers, her mom and her sister at the end of our conversation. Just as we were saying goodbye to each other, I find out that Pervin is still working as a contribution to the house allowance. "I haven't had much of a life since I was 10. The house needs financial support. I work in the summers. I have been working as an errand-girl in the ready-to-wear business. Now I've got the foreman position." Pervin, who became the symbol of the campaign conducted in the province, wants to complete her education to become a lawyer for –in her words- "defending innocent people."

There had been no problems in school enrolment until the 2000's.

In 2004, it was decided to implement the HKO campaign throughout 33 provinces with the inclusion of a further 23 provinces in its scope. Most of the selected provinces have been those where problems in the primary education enrolment were experienced along with the emigration received. Aydın which was one of the hubs of inter-provincial immigration in the Aegean region was included in the campaign. "Aydın is founded on abundant soils. Having an extremely rich past culture; the province also saw the birth of a very important political trend, led numerous politicians to Ankara and is among the provinces with the highest literacy rate.⁶⁸ How come such a city has turned into one where some girls are not attending school? Emigration is the answer to this question –heavily starting in the 70's, emigration continued in the 80's and 90's with an ever-increasing rate."⁶⁹ Deputy Governor Alp

Aslanargun, who is one of the key implementers of the campaign in the province, lends a further bit of information: "Emigration to Aydın was also existent during the first years of the history of Republic. There had been immigration to Aydın after the Dersim events. Those coming during that period however, accommodated themselves to the city in time. The problems in harmonization are observed in the group arriving after the 80's." Born in a village of Germencik, Aydın, UNICEF Field Supervisor clarifies the source of the problem which left some of the girls in the 2000's out of the system: "The problematic areas of Aydın had been so clear. The issue is based on the emigration and the presence of the Roma population. The problem becomes major, particularly in districts like Söke, Nazilli, Incirliova and Germencik as well as in specific locations in the province center."

⁶⁸ School enrolment rates according to the data from the official website of Aydın Governorate: Preschool: 37% countrywide -50% in Aydın; primary education: 89% countrywide -95% in Aydın; secondary education: 68% countrywide -72% in Aydın; literacy rate: 82% countrywide -92% in Aydın. Source: <http://www.aydin.gov.tr/tr/sg.asp?ID=215> ⁶⁹ Alp Aslanargun, Deputy Governor

There are many reasons for emigration

"The people are coming to Aydın mainly from Muş and Bitlis during the recent years. Emigration expanded particularly after the mid 80's. Some of them are coming due to a vendetta, some because their villages are evacuated, not being able to find work. They migrate as a whole family and generally take refuge with their relatives who had arrived previously. And there are some coming seasonally. They are organized by the so-called 'dayıbaşı' (chief) in their provinces. They initially stay with their relatives. Then they build themselves a shanty house somehow. Those working in the farming tasks live in tents or in unsound huts. They buy or construct a house in a short time. Aydın has this characteristic of being

*very fertile; it is possible to do farming virtually four months around the year. Now it's the end of August, figs are just over; we'll be having olives next, then there's cotton and again with the summer come the fruits and vegetables of the season. Women and children are working in the fields. The men generally work in construction. As far as I saw, the newcomers are not happy to leave their homeland and settle in others land to work there. Since they bring the culture from over there and live together, they are not able to accommodate themselves to the city. Obviously, the locals do not sympathize with them either. We therefore were criticized by the local citizens sometimes while conducting the campaign."*⁷⁰

"We started field survey in September 2004"

The guidance counselors selected from the provinces are trained in Ankara in line with the dissemination strategy for the HKO campaign. *"We went there as two people representing Aydın. There was a briefing about the campaign. And we gave trainings to the guidance counselors here when we returned. They have told us during the trainings that it is possible to cooperate with the NGO's; thus we communicated this matter to our friends during the trainings."*⁷¹ The informing process of the guidance counselors has an impact on the campaign's provincial organization as well and the guidance counselors become the driving force for the process in the province of Aydın. As in all the other provinces, organization and capacity enhancement comprised the first step of the campaign.

Nuri Aktakka, who worked in the Directorate of National Education as the Branch Manager in 2004, tells about the initial days of the campaign: *"When I found out that the campaign would be launched in our province as well, I first talked to the schoolmasters. I asked them 'Who would be*

working cordially?' They gave me the names of Ms. Fatma (Ceren) and Ms. Figan (Dinçözkan). Ms. Fatma had been in similar activities before."

Planning meetings were held in the provincial communications office established in the building of the Provincial Directorate of National Education. *"We first set up our working scheme. Mr. Ertan (Karabıyık) from UNICEF came from the province center and held a meeting with us. It was April 2004, we tried to comprehend the process mostly and we rolled out the organization. The real work started in September."*⁷² The equivalents of the provincial execution committees are established in the districts. These districts are those with a varying population due to emigration, where migrant seasonal workers in the sectors of farming, construction and tourism lived such as Söke, Germencik, Nazilli, Kuşadası, Didim, etc. Following a field survey which lasted three months, 371 girls were identified province-wide who were not attending school.⁷³ *"Then we talked with the headmen. We tried to figure out where the leaks could be. And as a consequence of*

⁷⁰ Fatma Ceren, Guidance Counselor, HKO Provincial Counselor ⁷¹ Çiğdem Karael, Söke RAM Guidance Counselor, HKO Master Trainer ⁷² Fatma Ceren, Guidance Counselor, HKO Provincial Counselor ⁷³ Assessment reports for the province of Aydın

this work we found out that there were no leaks in the villages. In other words, the headman is acquainted with everyone; he knows every birth. The leaks are in the settlement units which are

made of people who are emigrated. The headmen were saying that they cannot know who is coming to or leaving those places.”⁷⁴

“I was angry both with the public and myself”

Provincial coordinators and counselors start the neighborhood surveys. “We visited the houses in the neighborhoods established with the emigration. We went into the streets, talked with the kids and their families. They said ‘We need money’; pointing out to their children they said ‘they go to work in the cotton farming, to hoeing work, to the fields. That’s why we couldn’t send them to school’. They said, ‘We arrived here through immigration. Two or three years have past, the child has drifted apart from school, and he/she has grown older. Then we couldn’t register them in school –we couldn’t send them’. Some of them also said, ‘We were late, the kid has grown up. He/she doesn’t know how to read and write –would be embarrassed if we take him/her to school’.

We classified all these data one by one. Then we thought how we could be of assistance when we called these children to school.”⁷⁵ “And obviously we saw this fact: The children older than the age of ten could go to the fields. The other younger girls were looking after the still younger ones, as well as caring for the house. Some children did not have birth certificates. Four or five families live together. We go and register the kids; two months later, they are not there. They’ve gone to Söke, to Manisa. Aydın and its surroundings has got a very dynamic population. Furthermore, the mothers do not know how to read and write –they often do not understand Turkish... The most important of all, when we visit them we tell these people living in extremely difficult conditions that ‘(the children) should go to school, they should get educated’ but they don’t have any examples to follow. The girl looks around –looks at her older sister, to her mother.

She would be getting married and continue working in the fields. Should her husband be well off, she would stop working in the fields and stay at home. They don’t have good examples. You should note this; people in Aydın are not able to go to school not because there is no school there or nearby like in the Southeast, but because the whole family has to work.”⁷⁶

During the conducted field survey, particularly the female teachers witness the severe living conditions of women: “The decision to immigrate is not made by the woman. The man decides. The woman however, has to bear the consequences of the immigration. There was this woman whom I couldn’t ever forget; she is very significant in that she represents the other women in this process... When I visited her home, she talked with me by the door. She was pregnant; she had little kids pulling at her skirts. She was able to stand only by leaning on the door sill. I tried to ask her whether she sends her children to school and so forth; but in fact, I couldn’t get over how desperate she looked as a woman –as a human being and –by the answers she gave- how she had assimilated this fact. This affected me a lot -I mean, it made me sad and angry at the same time. I was angry at the society; I was angry at myself. This was a reality of the system, of this country, of this place, of our own –but nobody cared. Her listening to me with leaning on the wall with eyes half closed...I don’t recall her name. Now that I visualize the door front, the door and all; that face, or that woman is there...I even don’t know whether she later had the power to ponder upon the things that I have told her. She was only trying to survive –simply trying.”⁷⁷

Nongovernmental organizations have been invited

“During the period when schools were opened, we allocated the neighborhoods across Aydın to our fellow colleagues, telling them, ‘Visit them one by one’. We noticed that full support for this issue could not be received. The teacher thinks that his/her job is in the class -in the classroom. We couldn’t receive the support we had expected.”⁷⁸

The fact that the support from the public fails to maintain the expected level, prompts the campaign team to look for new sustenance. *“Then we thought about whom we could present this issue to, who would be involved and we choose particularly the teachers from nongovernmental organizations – we considered the retired teachers as well. We sent invitations to them and they came. Actually I saw that the NGO representatives were getting involved with this matter both in a conscious way and with their hearts.”⁷⁹* *“We opted for NGO’s working on the fields of woman, child and education. They really worked competently. I was very happy by their involvement in this campaign. Together we visited the houses; they provided parent training and opened evening courses. Thus it was easier to convince the mothers. They were covering the stationery material expenses and buying uniforms.”⁸⁰*

The common characteristic of the NGO’s involved in the organization for the HKO campaign was that they were acquainted with the province of Aydın and its problems and that they had previously conducted successful projects across the province on education and on woman. Tülay Aydın who is the branch manager of the Association for the Council of Turkish Women⁸¹ is a retired English teacher. She is on the board of numerous associations across the

province... Besides her tasks in the associations; she also works as a voluntary English teacher in the orphanage. As an association, they previously had provided financial support and offered grants for students across the province: *“I heard about the HKO campaign from the media. They invited us to the Directorate of National Education to have a talk with Mr. Nuri and Ms. Fatma. We were thoroughly briefed on the phases of the campaign during the meeting. Then we explained it to our members and issued a board decision. Our members were thrilled and they said, ‘Let’s consider it a reward if we attain even one girl for that end; we are ready to do whatever our part is on behalf of our association’. In the next meeting with National Education, we planned what we would be doing and prepared a work schedule. We had previously participated in the ‘Support for National Education Campaign’ led by the wife of our Ex-Chairman. This experience was very beneficial... What inspired us with this campaign is that school enrolment of girls –rather than teaching how to read and write- is targeted with the ‘Haydi Kızlar Okula’ Campaign. We specified a volunteering team of fifteen. Our education committee volunteered. A seminar was organized for us in Mustafa Kiriş Primary School. We acquired practical training on subjects like house visits, communications, persuasion, etc. Our members got nervous considering this is a huge task. I told them, ‘Don’t worry, everything is all right. We will be going to the familiar neighborhoods of Aydın to talk to the kids and their families. They actually demonstrated a performance far superior than what I really expected.”⁸²*

⁷⁸ Nuri Aktakka, Former HKO Provincial Coordinator ⁷⁹ Nuri Aktakka, Former HKO Provincial Coordinator ⁸⁰ Fatma Ceren, Guidance Counselor, HKO Provincial Counselor ⁸¹ The Association of the Council of Turkish Women as described by President Tülay Aydın: “Our association is based in Ankara, with founders from the academicians and with 12 branches. The association targets the enhancement of woman’s socioeconomic structure in every field of life. Aydın branch is active since 1997 and currently has 80 members. The former chairperson was a lawyer, thus members from that field were affiliated. I am a teacher, so we have registered teacher members. Our members are educated woman professionals.” ⁸² Tülay Aydın, President of the Council of Turkish Women

NGO's: On the field, in persuasion process and everywhere...

Aydın Branch of the Association of Turkish Women is among the associations in this endeavor wherein NGO's with no previous experience in working in cooperation with each other are coming together.⁸³ Saadet Kavasgil is a board member of the Association of Turkish Women. She is from Aydın and she has been a member of the association since 1993. She has been working on issues of women and education in the province since the establishing of the Aydın Branch. *"The Association of Turkish Women carried out major projects in terms of contributing to education in the province. We have taught reading and writing to hundreds of women in Aydın. We are organizing seminars targeting women, in cooperation with Adnan Menderes University. We give information about rights of woman. Together with the Health Director, we are trying to inform the women on a topic specified each year."*⁸⁴ I couldn't resist asking

which resources they had been using for all these tasks: *"Our resources are the donations and what we obtain from the events"* she explains. As all the other nongovernmental organizations, they too are involved in the process by issuing a board decision. They assign a committee to organize the campaign related work. *"We had already been going on literacy surveys through the neighborhoods. We allocated three days of the week to committee activities. Then the field activities were initiated. In the meanwhile, we didn't identify just the girls but also the adults –the latter were given training later."*⁸⁵ NGO representatives are surprised with the results of the field survey: *"Aydın holds a sound position in terms of education or universities. I was shocked initially. Since my student years, everybody had wanted their children to get education. I was surprised to see that so many girls were out of the system in Aydın."*⁸⁶

We started adaptation courses

"When we went to the field in the first days, they thought we were politicians –from the political parties. Then sometimes they thought that we came there for coal support. We had great difficulties with some of the houses. Most of them however, were women who were waiting for somebody who would lend a hand. Nevertheless, I realized instantly that the problem was with the husbands. There were the issues of multi-children and polygamy. We also encountered numerous social problems. During a ceremony, our Governor aroused the interest of the audience with a warmhearted experience of his own by telling that he was unable to exchange letters with his mom during the years when he was a student, since his mother was illiterate. Following this incident, we also tried to offer examples from

*our own experiences particularly during the field survey and persuasion activities. Other aspects of our achievements were that we had been focused on the problem when we were with the people with whom we had established a relation and that we had been trying to ensure that this process would proceed as a communications success in any case. We were quickly accepted by the local people during the field survey. The only reason for that was that we had been trying to understand what they thought and how they lived by empathizing with them."*⁸⁷ *"Together with our members, we agreed that initially the parents, i.e. the adults should be extensively informed about the issue. We took support from people who are involved in psychology. This support facilitated the communication with the families. When*

⁸³ The Association of Turkish Women as described by Board Member Saadet Kavasgil: "Education –educating children as well as the education and employment for women- generates solutions providing them with the ability of surviving in their respective economic and social lives. The Association of Turkish Women has 73 branches. We have 108 members in Aydın. Most of them are leading women who want to be a part of the solution." ⁸⁴ Saadet Kavasgil, Board Member of the Association of Turkish Women, Aydın Branch ⁸⁵ Saadet Kavasgil, Board Member of the Association of Turkish Women, Aydın Branch ⁸⁶ Tülay Aydın, President of the Council of Turkish Women ⁸⁷ Tülay Aydın, President of the Council of Turkish Women

we faced difficulties in inducing the families during our visits to the neighborhoods, we were taking support from other individuals esteemed by those families.”⁸⁸ The NGO’s take further responsibility in the compensatory training conducted across the province in accordance with the results of the field survey. Particularly the retired teachers teach reading and writing in the adaptation courses organized. “Aynur Hoca, Ms. Reyhan and others were there. Adaptation courses were started in their lead.”⁸⁹ A further

group of volunteers take care of the catering for the students attending the adaptation courses, preparing treats for the alimentation breaks. “I was very happy to see that our 60-year old members, ladies who had not gone out to anywhere –neither to a government office, nor to the post office- carrying food to the school each day. The late-risers among our friends were getting out of bed early in the morning to get prepared, being in school just in time to rush the treats to children.”⁹⁰

The cooperation of state-association

Articulating that they did not face any difficulties in general while working with the public sector, the representatives of the NGO’s underline that the differentiation between the public sector’s manner and methods of working and those of the nongovernmental organizations is an aspect which should be understood by both parties. “We didn’t encounter any problems with the governmental offices in general. Now and then, -since they do not take part in the NGO’s- the executives in the public establishments are likely to underestimate the nongovernmental organizations and their activities. We didn’t lose heart however; we explained ourselves over and over and worked very hard. We studied the legislation on primary education, for instance. Interlinking our current activities with the campaign, we transferred some contacts and sources to the campaign. We demonstrated an

excellent state-association cooperation and we are still following up this issue.”⁹¹ “There are 6-7 associations dealing with the issue of woman in Aydın. We meet several times a month as women’s associations under the lead of one association... We are developing projects to be implemented cooperatively. We supplied the essential basic needs of a school and set up a library last year. We celebrated the Women’s Day on March 8 together. We have established a union of forces. There is no competition between the NGO’s which established this coalition –we consider ourselves sister associations; nobody is attempting to come into prominence.”⁹² Frequently coming together with the representatives of the associations, Deputy Governor Alp Aslanargun cooperates with them on further issues of the province. Undertaking responsibility in a nongovernmental organization to implement his projects is among his retirement plans: “Nongovernmental organizations bear a significant position within my sense of democracy. This is a very pleasing situation –great developments are being gradually experienced in Turkey in the field of civil society. There is an advance in quality. Anybody is able to specify the society’s problems, to share them with everybody, is able to discuss them freely on any platform and therefore –in my opinion- is able to propose a solution and to take part in this solution. When I retire, I would be taking the chair in a current or future foundation on education.”⁹³



Tülay Aydın, Chairwoman of the Council of Turkish Women (Photo: Tuba Çameli)

Saadet Kavasgil, Board Member of the Association of Turkish Women (Photo: Tuba Çameli)

⁸⁸ Saadet Kavasgil, Board Member of the Association of Turkish Women ⁸⁹ Tülay Aydın, President of the Council of Turkish Women ⁹⁰ Tülay Aydın, President of the Council of Turkish Women ⁹¹ Tülay Aydın, President of the Council of Turkish Women ⁹² Saadet Kavasgil, Board Member of the Association of Turkish Women ⁹³ Alp Aslanargun, Deputy Governor

Box 5 Requirements of NGO's

The “union of forces” comprising the NGO's brought together by way of the campaign in Aydın is ready to undertake responsibility for the solution process of other issues in the province. In order to do this, they need support with regards to several matters: **“As NGO's, we would like our capability in terms of attaining funding resources to be enhanced. Both our internal and communication skills need to be advanced. We would be able to obtain information about the best practices in the other provinces –even in other countries- and take lessons, should there be a publication documenting the achievements of the NGO's in the field. We also wish to read the assessment reports on the implemented projects. It is of key importance that those reports are available for sharing. Although we have been embraced by the local people, the public still lacks the required information as to the deeds of the NGO's and their social significance. Raising their awareness on this matter is required as well.”**⁹⁴

“It is important if we attain even one child”

To reinforce the support provided by the Governorate of Aydın all along, an incident takes place in the second year of the campaign and Alp Aslanargun is appointed the Deputy Governor in charge of education. *“I had assumed the tasks related to National Education and I had been dealing with them for around 22 months. The HKO provincial counselors who came to see me, presented me a file and summarized the campaign.”*⁹⁵

*“He didn't even open the folder we had presented. ‘I'm not interested in numbers’ he said; this project is very important even if we attain a single child; everybody should be involved in this’. We were all very surprised. We said ‘Alas! There's this deputy governor who would not care to adopt this campaign’...”*⁹⁶ After a while, Alp Aslanargun held meetings with all parties in the province which could be possibly mobilized for the primary education enrolment of girls. The HKO provincial team was surprised with his speeches during these meetings. He was well-informed on

every issue and had knowledge of the campaign at least as they did. *“I had to do it; this campaign had been very important for Aydın. I thought that some of our girls are not being educated and that we are obligated to get them educated –to attain schooling for them somehow. And all bodies and institutions should cooperate to this end; this is not a job which could be done only through the National Education system.”*⁹⁷

The meetings held with schoolmasters, health staff, headmen, religion officers contribute to the mobilization of the public. Meetings were also organized in the neighborhoods besides the ones held at the province center. *“We went to the neighborhoods accompanied by senior public executives. I don't think that at any time in the history of Aydın had a governor visited a neighborhood for any reason whatsoever. The people embrace the issue when they see the authorities there –they want to see that the executives with them.”*⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Compiled from the notes of the focus meetings held with NGO representatives ⁹⁵ Alp Aslanargun, Deputy Governor ⁹⁶ Fatma Ceren, Guidance Counselor, HKO Provincial Counselor ⁹⁷ Alp Aslanargun, Deputy Governor ⁹⁸ Alp Aslanargun, Deputy Governor

The problems of Söke and Kuşadası are dissimilar

While this positive progress takes place in the province center, the campaign efforts of the Guidance and Research Centers (RAM's) and the teachers in the districts start to bear fruit. *"Children with no birth certificates were registered in the civil registry office. Before that we got the civil marriages of the parents performed. We held communal weddings. In the meanwhile, we also got support from the NGO's in the districts."*⁹⁹ *"We assigned our teacher counterparts in Söke to be convincing during the house visits. We also took along our friends from the NGO's. Our friends from the Association of Turkish Women came along –there were friends coming along from the Association in Support of Contemporary Living and the Atatürkist Thought Association. We enrolled about 100 students to school. We launched adaptation courses here as well."*¹⁰⁰ Seasonal migration for farming is very influential in Söke, while in Kuşadası tourism based migration gives rise to other negative impacts. *"Families break apart in Kuşadası mainly due to men's relation with or marriage to foreign women. The women do not have any source of income or education, thus the lives of the children are impacted. The problems and constraints associated with parted families are intended to be dealt with in the schools as far as possible. Furthermore, the children are unable to attend school due to seasonal migration associated with*

*the construction and tourism businesses. We send the transfer certificate of a certain student when he/she is leaving; the same student returns here before the certificate arrives in the other school... We are discussing these issues and calling for support in the recurrent meetings we hold with the participation of Turkish Mothers' Association, Charity Association, Lions Club, Rotary Club and our parents, as well as with the representatives from the parent-teacher associations."*¹⁰¹

The Roma children living in the neighborhoods of Söke and Aydın on the other hand, –as in throughout Turkey– are facing difficulties in terms of school attendance as well as in school enrolment. I visit the Söke Çayeli Community Reserve to conduct interviews on this matter. I meet Roma people living in hovels built in a dry watercourse. All the families have shut down their houses and gone working in the fields together with their kids and all. I find the opportunity to talk with Cemal İnan, the deputy schoolmaster of the primary school about school enrolment rates of the girls. İnan tells me that while all the children have been registered at school, the students were not attending and thus the achievement levels are reduced consequently. Making their living by tent-weaving owing to their skills acquired in weaving wicker, these families also work in the fields as day laborers as well.

Remedial suggestions

Aydın becomes prominent among the campaign provinces due to the established cooperation with the NGO's. *"Nongovernmental organizations were mobilized through huge efforts of the provincial coordinators and counselors. The problem was located with precision and the common strategies targeting solution particularly in the province center were clearly defined. Hence, Aydın became one of the exemplary provinces."*¹⁰² Within the framework

of "Haydi Kızlar Okula" Campaign, 2,000 students who either had not been registered in or were not attending school were identified in the province center, districts and municipalities based on the Aydın provincial data. Some 823 of these students were registered to school or put into adaptation courses. According to the results of a survey conducted across the province in June 2007, 61% of the registered students were identified to be continuing their education.¹⁰³ The children

⁹⁹ Fatma Ceren, Guidance Counselor, HKO Provincial Counselor ¹⁰⁰ Yaşar Badur, Söke Directorate of National Education, Branch Manager, HKO District Supervisor ¹⁰¹ Ömer Faruk Türkan, Kuşadası Director of National Education ¹⁰² Ertan Karabıyık, UNICEF Turkey Office Education Unit, Project Assistant ¹⁰³ Provincial Counselor Fatma Ceren's statements and HKO campaign reports

whose school attendance could not be ensured even after all these efforts had to be attained just the same. The identification and enrolment of the new coming children due to ongoing immigration as well as the monitoring of their attendance were among the essential tasks to be conducted. The province of Aydın is capable of

overcoming this issue by way of the experience and cooperation networks acquired through the HKO campaign. Within this context I asked the ultimate question below to all the implementers and supporters: What could be the key to the sustainable solution for the primary education enrolment of girls?

Box 6 “What is the key to the sustainable solution for the primary education enrolment of girls?”
The answers to this question are significant in that they would cast light upon the central and local implementations in the future; so I leave the word to them:

Yaşar Badur, National Education, Söke Branch Manager: “The Law No.222 on Primary Education and Training was issued in 1965, before I was born. This law cannot be applied properly. Neither by me, nor by my friends –there are deficiencies in some aspects. Education on the other hand, is losing its significance; an intervention is required at this point. Previously, it was prestigious for a person to have a profession, to be educated. Nowadays riding luxury cars and living in expensive houses are prestigious. I’m more prestigious than a doctor or a judge if I’m riding a luxurious automobile. Being a teacher was prestigious once. Now prestige is equivalent to the amount of money you have in the bank, the car you are riding and the clothes you wear.”

Fatma Ceren, HKO Provincial Counselor: “We have implemented the HKO campaign. The thing I’m concerned about is this: I would be very happy if something sustainable is established through these activities. My achievements in the province was acknowledged. I would be delighted if a letter is sent by the Ministry to provide guidance for the future.”

Nuri Aktakka, HKO Provincial Coordinator: “To begin with, a scrupulous follow-up is required for this matter – the headmen’s records or the records for the children should be very clear, precise and sound. Family training is also required. This is possible on the level of schools since the schools are informed about the situation of the parents.”

Alp Aslanargun, Deputy Governor: “As you also know, the Law No:222 is very clear –the civilian administrative authorities are held responsible for monitoring primary education enrolment. Not one children in Turkey would be excluded from the system should this key task has been executed. On the other hand, primary education enrolment is included in the provincial criteria also within the viewpoint of the ‘Prioritized Indicators for Quality of Life¹⁰⁴ project initiated during the term when I was assigned in the Ministry. Most of these problems would have been overcome should the civilian administrative chiefs have been granted the certificate of capacity due to performance. Everything done on the level of province should be benchmarked against the indicators for the quality of life –there wouldn’t be any problem then.”

Tülay Aydın, President of the Council of Turkish Woman: “I figured out a group of five in consequence of the activities: The schoolmaster, the village’s imam, the headman, the guidance department of the school and –as the fifth source- the fathers (men) –since 99% of the women says, ‘my daughter should be educated’; they say, ‘she should because I couldn’t. My child should get educated’. The fathers are resisting. This group of five should be sustained to be transformed into a part of the process.”

¹⁰⁴ Demonstrating the status of 81 provinces with regards to “Prioritized Indicators for Quality of Life in”, the matrix within the framework of the Government of Turkey-UNICEF Cooperation Program came into force for the period between 2001-2005 by being approved by the cabinet. The cited project was prepared by the Ministries of Health, National Education, Justice, Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Labor and Social Security, as well as the representatives from Social Services and Child Protection Institution, Undersecretariat of the State Planning Organization and the Turkish Statistical Institute, under the coordination of the General Directorate of Provincial Administration. The project comprises the monitoring and assessment of specified indicators on education, social services, water treatment, etc. in all provinces. The last phase of the project includes the releasing of the results for the project implemented by the civilian administrative authorities, mayors and the authorities in charge in the provinces.

Adıyaman

Best Practice referred to in the Study

Generating a database as a guide for the identification, persuasion and enrolment processes; monitoring and assessment practices

Resource People Interviewed within the Scope of the Study

Abdulgafur Büyükfırat, Provincial Director of National Education; Ali Tanrıverdi, National Education Branch Manager, HKO Provincial Coordinator; Mehmet Öztuncer; Primary Education Inspector, Team Leader of the Support to Basic Education Program (TEDP) and HKO Provincial Counselor; Suphi Turhan, Primary Schoolmaster, HKO Provincial Counselor; M.Emin Yücekaya, Classroom Teacher, HKO Provincial Counselor; İsmail Dolaş, Supervisor of the Management Information System for Provincial and District Directorates of National Education (İLSİS), HKO Provincial Counselor; Naci Güzel, Primary Education Inspector; Abdullah Remzi Akgül, Director of the of District Public Training Directorate; Mustafa Çiçek, HKO Kâhta District Supervisor; Bilal Zemin, Branch Teacher; Emin Dünder, Primary School Headmaster; Abdurrahman Karadoğan, Kâhta Director of National Education; Yaşar Hallaç, School Deputy Schoolmaster; Vakkas Bozyılan, Classroom Teacher; Orhan Arslan, Primary School Headmaster; Mehmet Güven, Primary School Headmaster; Esin Karayılan, Headmistress of the Anatolian Vocational School for Girls; Emine Çiftçi, Deputy Headmistress of the Anatolian Vocational School for Girls; Nebi Tok, Religious Officer; Ertan Karabıyık, UNICEF Turkey Office Education Unit, Project Assistant; families and children interviewed in the district of Kâhta and in the neighborhood of Malazgirt in Adıyaman.

“Had my mother been literate, she would have been considered on equality with Lady Judge.”

“In 2004 Adıyaman was incorporated to the HKO campaign. Since Kâhta was also among districts where primary school enrolment issues were present, it was agreed upon initiating an activity here as well. I was then Branch Manager in the National Education. Nobody had volunteered when our Director of National Education was assigning tasks, so I went for it”. This is how Abdullah Remzi Akgün, Kâhta District Public Training Director starts his words as I visit him in his office. And he goes on without me having to ask why: ‘The reason is that my mother was an illiterate woman. I suffered from this significantly. My father was a head clerk in the courthouse –i.e. a court head clerk. My father was a graduate of those times’ secondary school. He had started to work in the courtyard as an attendant and well, then he is promoted as a clerk eventually...Then he was appointed to Kâhta as Head Clerk. My father did not take my mother into consideration and he didn’t appreciate her very much. And we were noticing this when we were kids. Well, when I was in high school we moved into the lodgings of the courthouse. There were two woman judges in the lodgings. My father was at their disposal. I was seeing that my mother was a woman just as the judges were. My father was at their disposal when he was out of the house while he was acting as the king at home...I say now, had my mother been literate, she would have been considered on an equality with the Lady Judge and we would have been in a different position.” Just like A.

Remzi Akgün, many people working for the HKO campaign account for the source of performance they have been demonstrating through similar incidents in their personal histories. Either their mothers or sisters couldn’t attend school or they had to overcome many obstacles on their way to primary education enrolment. They have demonstrated a distinctive sense of duty compared to their colleagues while working in village schools with inadequate resources, showing effort with an idealistic attitude in terms of school enrolment of children. In short, for whatever reason, numerous people from diverse professions like education, social work, journalism, etc. met at the same viewpoint that gender parity would only be ensured with men and women benefiting equally from the education opportunities and have considered the campaign a tool for fulfilling their desires in this area. Therefore, in the interviews conducted with the resource people across the provinces, I tried to trace back the connection between the various methods and practices developed during the course of the campaign and these people’s life stories. Following a method to emphasize this connection while putting down the Adıyaman best practice into writing, I evaluated the best practices in common with the histories, experiences and professional lives of the resource people. I conveyed to the text the HKO campaign team’s life stories from before they got together as well.

Aggrieved by the GAP: Adıyaman

This is my second time in Adıyaman. I had been here to shoot on location during the years I worked as a journalist. I did not have the time to get acquainted with the city then, as I was blinded by Nemrut’s charms. I realized that the city I was visiting within the scope of a survey had rather changed. The roads had been renovated and trees had been planted. Prior to

visiting the Directorate of National Education located in the Governorate building rising –as in so many towns in Anatolia- on the main street, I was trying to grasp the immigration process in this city –a process that transforms the rural Adıyaman people into migrant seasonal workers. The process which changed the city’s destiny had started with the GAP (Southeastern Anatolia

Project). More than forty villages, one district and over 100 settlements of Adıyaman had been submerged in water when the Atatürk Dam was built. Furthermore, these lands had been fertile fields where irrigated farming was carried out. The farmers whose key source of income had been farming and animal husbandry started to immigrate towards the city center from the villages. And this has led to the establishment of the neighborhoods surrounding the city today.

Adıyaman which had ranked in the intermediary segments countrywide in terms of national income before the Atatürk Dam was built, fell to the bottom of the ranking. The shortest route from Central Anatolia and the South to connect to the East had passed through Adıyaman. GAP virtually turned Adıyaman into a blind alley. And the ultimate shock to the people of Adıyaman came from the tobacco policies. Tobacco fields are the mainstay of a number of families. They provide a living both for the landowner and for the so-called 'sharecropper' working in tobacco farming, who shares the income from his tobacco yield with the landowner. The restrictions to –and even the complete extinction of– tobacco farming impelled

these people to immigrate and particularly to work as migrant seasonal workers in other cities. Even Nemrut with loads of photos displayed in the posters advertising Turkey failed to generate the expected boom for the city. Tribal interrelations –although being about to be resolved– still maintaining an influence as well as the cultural formation shaped through false religious disciplines are further factors defining school enrolment of the children –and particularly the daughters– of these people immigrating due to various reasons. I recall the evaluations of Ertan Karabıyık, Project Assistant to UNICEF Education Program during my visit to obtain information prior to my trip to Aydın: In the whole province, *the province center, Kâhta, Gerger and Şincik are the districts where problems regarding girls' school enrolment are densely present. Some of the obstacles are the fact that the key source of income is seasonal work, that there is no access to some villages and hamlets during the winter and the trend in the families in the direction of not sending their daughters to school. The most important reason for girls not being sent to school in the province is the poverty and deprivation of the families.*"

“We too had been going to cotton fields in Adana”

Ali Tanrıverdi, National Education Provincial Branch Manager, And HKO Provincial Coordinator: *“I was born in 1959 in a subcentral village of Adıyaman. We were not well off. Our mainstay was tobacco. We were five siblings. I went to a school in another village during my first grades of primary education. Then we immigrated due to job opportunities. I completed my primary education in Adıyaman Paşamezrası Primary School, by walking at least 15km a day. I went through secondary education and high school living in a house nearby the school –a house with no electricity or water, with a toilet on the premises of a neighbor next to us. We ate the ‘bulgur’ pilaf cooked without any fat –the conditions were so difficult during my education... Just as most our children within the scope of the*



HKO Campaign Provincial Coordinator Ali Tanrıverdi

campaign going to Adana for harvesting cotton, to the Black Sea for hazelnuts or to other places for harvesting apples and apricots, we had been also going to Adana with the whole family. I also went on my own for several years. I had always liked teaching so I became a teacher completing Isparta Training Institute in 1983. During my military service, I was appointed to Mardin's Yolağan village. I was a branch teacher then. I had a total of 52 students and –if I'm not mistaken- 16-17 girl students. The village had restricted water...I loved and deeply understood the students since I came from a similar environment myself. I therefore

started working with a lot of enthusiasm. I found out that there were illiterate girls, women, men –even elderly people- in the village. I talked to the headman, the prominent people and the imam of the village. I had established a very good communication with them. I summoned the village people for literacy courses during the weekends and on everyday after schools were over.” Mr. Ali has continued his career going by similar activities, as Adiyaman National Education Branch Manager.

“It’s a great shame that numerous children are left out of the education system”

Mehmet Öztuncer, Primary Education Inspector, TEDP Team Leader, And HKO Provincial Counselor: Mehmet Öztuncer was born in Adiyaman in 1956. Starting his professional life as a teacher, he continues his career as inspector following his studies on training management and planning in Gazi University

between the years of 1981 and 1985. He works as the National Education Deputy Director and the Head of the Supervisory Commission. “*In my opinion, inspectorship is a very serious job. There are however, certain problems rooting from deficiencies in inspection and from the system. Also there are these ‘dust and pose’ inspectors...*



Mehmet Emin Yücekaya : (Right to left) “The one who set up and maintained this team is Mehmet Öztuncer, called ‘Mr President’ by the others in the team. İsmail Dolaş, there is not one single place where he cannot manage to go in or a single door which he cannot open. He has a significant share in the implementation of the campaign with solid steps. Suphi Turhan is a perfect icon of diligence. I, Mehmet Emin, is just a volunteering counselor who wrote around 20 projects and obtained grants on behalf of various institutions, whose target is to turn Adiyaman into a paradise of projects ...”

They arrive in a school, look if it's dusty assumes some poses and leave. Imagine that you go to a school in a wild and remote place, the training period of the teacher has come to an end...He-she acquires the initial professional support from you; you guide and inform him/her –you may even be the first colleague he ever met until that day. In this sense, we have serious tasks in terms of guiding teachers...In line with the Law No. 222, the state is responsible for the primary education enrolment of children. The Law assigns the headman saying that he has to carry out an identification process before the registry period and informs the schoolmaster of the kids at schooling age. The schoolmaster in turn, shall conduct the registry process accordingly and monitors attendance. Furthermore the Law states that civilian authorities, the inspectors shall follow up this process. Evidently, a certain loop in this chain failed to execute its tasks for such a long time. You can call it negligence, you can call it indifference or whatever. It's a great shame on behalf of education that numerous children are left out of the system –I've always thought that

there should be an intervention. Thus, starting from my first years of inspection, I've taken into account the proportion between the number of girls and boys in a class when I visit a school. And I've put this down into the inspection report I prepared. We also conduct administrative inspections besides inspections on teachers –we analyze the enrolment issues and try to solve them here as well.” Öztuncer was appointed to the province of Adıyaman as a consequence of his works conducted in various provinces. He is held responsible for the inspection of several schools in the province center of Adıyaman and in the districts of Kâhta and Şincik. There are about 250 schools included in his area of duty. His observations from the schools he has inspected at least two times a year, lead the practices involved in the future projects he is charge with. His experiences and the education staff he has met during the inspections on the other hand, enables the setting up of the project teams both in the Support to Basic Education Program and the HKO Campaign.

“Once I learned how to use the computer, the first thing I did was writing a lesson planning program”

Suphi Turhan, Schoolmaster, HKO Provincial Counselor: Suphi Turhan was born in Muş Malazgirt in 1966. Initially he did not want to be a teacher but then he loved the job very much. He was assigned in Gölpınar village of Kahramanmaraş in the first years of his job as a teacher and learned about the legislation and planning during this period. *“I had 43 students and only three of them knew how to read and write. I on the other hand, didn't know about teaching. There was this veteran colleague of us which I would never forget –he was an extraordinary teacher. I learned about managing and planned working all from them. Then I left them on account of trailing spouse status.”* He was assigned in Gözebaşı, a subcentral village of Adıyaman. He and his wife worked in different villages for a temporary period of time. There were 30 students in his class and only seven of

those were girls. Abdulgaffur Büyükfırat who had been the deputy director at the Adıyaman Provincial Directorate of National Education at that time told him that he was going to assign him to the same location with his wife only if he would be able to increase the number of students in the village which holds a larger student potential. *“I went around the village house by house and registered the students. I had 57 students now. Some 23 of them were girls. There had been older children among them –I registered them as well. We were not only working on lessons; I was also playing games with them at school-like blind man's buff, rag tag or ball games. Then my wife also joined me. We stayed in the village of Gözebaşı for 12 years. In 1994, Mehmet Öztuncer with whom I'm working presently, came to inspect me. Something else happened in my life that year: I was introduced to the world of computers with*

a PC I've got from a newspaper campaign...Just like all teachers, I had written plans manually for many years. I decided to facilitate this in 1998, by managing the issue through computer. We started to write a program named 'Lesson Planning Program' with my friend Mehmet Kiraz,

a computer teacher who is currently working at the EU Projects Coordination Center in Mersin Provincial Directorate of National Education. In the meanwhile, we had raised the kids and left the village. I was appointed to Adıyaman Malazgirt Primary School in 2001."

"I designed the first soft report card – I was awarded by the ministry's inspector"

İsmail Dolaş, Supervisor of İLSİS*; HKO Provincial Counselor: Mr. Dolaş was born in Adıyaman in 1960. He has completed the Department of Mechanics of the Technical Training School at Gazi University. Like all the other members of the campaign team, he was appointed to his homeland Adıyaman in the later years of his professional career. "I worked in schools until 1990, assigned as schoolmaster, deputy schoolmaster, department chief. Then I designed the first report card on the computer, i.e., the soft report card. The Provincial Directorate granted an award and sent me to a computer course at the Bilkent University. Then I left teaching and was transferred to the Directorate

of National Education. I'm working as the İLSİS supervisor in the Directorate for around 12 years." Having been acquainted with the computers since before the İLSİS data system was established, Mr. Dolaş also teaches computer usage to hundreds of educators across the province. "İLSİS is a database initially established by the MoNE to keep record of the personnel affairs of the teachers. With teacher appointments and students' data being entered later on, now it's a gigantic database with 45 servers...The reason I'm in the project teams at the village is that I am equipped to access the provincial statistical data and to make evaluations in relation to these data."

"First I've wanted to be a 'Mülkiyeli' (civil servant), then a journalist; being a teacher was my last option"

Mehmet Emin Yücekaya, Classroom Teacher, And HKO Provincial Counselor: "I was born in 1972 in Kâhta to a family of 9 children. I completed the first four grades in the village. Then I changed six schools during my fifth grade, secondary and high school education. We were in the animal husbandry business therefore we lived liked nomads traveling between the upland pasture and the village; we were settled permanently only after then. My mother was weaving local carpets and my father was selling those. My mom doesn't know Turkish or how to read and write. My older sister couldn't go to school either. All

my other siblings however, have completed their education." His father wanted Mehmet Emin Yücekaya to be a religious officer, so he makes his school preferences accordingly. "My father wasn't from Nurcu order but was fond of them as they were religious. So he sent me to their dwellings, I went to the 'imam hatip' school (TN: In Turkey, an Imam Hatip school is a secondary education institution. As the name suggests, they were originally founded in lieu of a vocational school to train government employed imams) Finding out that their concept of education didn't suit me, I went to regular high school later. In fact, when I

look back and see that most of my friends from the ‘imam hatip’ took on very good universities, I wonder if I did the right thing... I was always interested in literature and Turkish grammar lessons throughout my student years. I wanted to go to the ‘Mülkiye’ (School for Civil Servants), being a teacher was my last option.” During an inspection at a village of Diyarbakır which was his first place of duty, the inspector criticized Mr. Yücekaya was for having only one girl in his class and said that he is going to award him adequate points only if he manages to increase this number.

Mr. Mehmet Emin (Yücekaya) in turn, visited each and every house, failing to convince the village people to send their daughters to school. Spotting the opinion leader of the village and enrolling his child to school, he ensures schooling enrolment for every child in the village. He was appointed to a village of Kâhta district in 1997. Besides teaching, he started to work as a journalist in a local channel. “Mr. Mehmet (Öztuncer) called me one day and asked, ‘Do you know English?’ I said, ‘Yes’ and he told me that he had put my name down for the Support to Basic Education Program.”

Starting the Support to Basic Education Program

With the primary school access being extended to 8 years in 1997, elimination of the deficiencies related to the infrastructure and quality of education across the country gains further prominence and implementation of the “Basic Education Reform Program” is agreed upon. The preliminary work for the “Basic Education Reform Program” (TEDP)¹⁰⁵ run by the MoNE and supported by the European Commission started. The program with a budget of 100 million Euros would be implemented in 24 provinces including Adıyaman. The methodology includes arranging target oriented province teams to write down and implement province projects. Inspector Mehmet Öztuncer was assigned as the team leader in the province of Adıyaman. He settled on setting up a core team to work with and conducted a province-wide evaluation. “Furthermost I needed a teacher an administrator- who is acquainted with the legislation, so I called Suphi Turan. Additionally, he knew about the computers and this was very

important for us particularly when putting down the project in writing. We needed the statistical data from the province while writing the provincial project; therefore I notified İsmail Dolaş, the Supervisor of LESS. I also called Mehmet Emin Yücekaya since he knew English and he is capable of writing texts.” Getting trained on project cycle management within this period, Mehmet Öztuncer conducts a detailed analysis on the current status with his friends, identifying the respective issues of the province on access to basic education. The next stage is the writing procedure for a project which would be conducted across all stages between the years of 2002 to 2007, targeting the solution of the province’s basic education problems. A survey and interviews held with the stakeholders is helpful in designation of the scope of the project. Trainings for religious officers, headmen, schoolmasters and teachers who would be utilized during the HKO campaign process, are planned within the context of this project.

¹⁰⁵ TEDP’s objectives: Enhancing physical capacity and improving the standards for education opportunities through the mitigation of economic constraints leading to disparity between the rural and urban regions in terms of access to education; enhancing the quality of basic education through ensuring the sustainable development of educational content and management, access to technology and teaching conditions; acquiring public support through public awareness raising on the significance of education. (Source: www.tedp.gov.tr)

Box 7 The projects were interlinked

The activities under **TEDP's** second component included; **'planning and implementing programs to particularly increase girls' access to education'**. Within this scope, TEDP and HKO campaigns were interlinked in Adıyaman, since both projects were steered by the same team. Numerous missions were accomplished within the framework of the local campaign in the province such as the construction of annexes for girls' Boarding Primary Schools (YİBO's); 'trainers' training' targeting the imams, headmen and teachers; production of TV and radio programs and distribution to the media."¹⁰⁶

And the HKO campaign is launched two years later

In 2004, during the second year of the TEDP project, it was decided to implement the HKO campaign in Adıyaman as well. Just like in TEDP, arrangement of a province team was required for the HKO campaign. In accordance with the instructions contained in the official letter from the General Directorate of Primary Education, now Ali Tanrıverdi, the Branch Manager of Directorate of National Education was appointed as the HKO Campaign's Provincial Coordinator. In order to benefit from their experiences, Ali Tanrıverdi assigned the trainers in the TEDP team as provincial counselors. During the capacity enhancement meetings held subsequent to the organization stage -as in other campaign provinces- the issue of inaccessibility with regards to provincial health data of children who had not enrolled in school at all or who are not attending to school emerges. *"In the meanwhile we started to get organized. We brought the schoolmasters, the headmen together. We issued circulars to all the responsible bodies with the signature of our*

*Governor. We reminded everyone of their duties, summarized how they were going to accomplish these and indicated that proceedings will be started against anyone who neglected these duties. In fact, like in many provinces, we were also not able to obtain the required data from the schools, from the headmen initially. We wrote to the Head of the Inspection Committee and requested the inspectors to get involved. They participated in the survey as well."*¹⁰⁷

The campaign team struggled to see the big picture in the province by bringing together the data from the schools with the results from inspectors' identification process. These data however, were not sufficient either! Considering that there should be more families and children who were not contacted, they collected all the data across the province, by analyzing the household identification forms at the health directorates, the records from the police force and the data from the urban information system.

To see the big picture

"Well, when we acquired the initial data, we figured out that this cannot be done like this. I was sitting in front of the computer and I had some figures at hand, but it was impossible to see a snapshot of the province by looking at them. Since we had acquired the data, we should have seen the obstacles to school enrolment in the province,

the target group and this group's characteristics. I started to enter the compiled data to Excel. It wasn't satisfactory, so transferred the data to another program -that didn't work either. I looked up a new formulation in Visual Basic. I got support from Mr. İsmail (Dolaş) and my friend Kemal Kiraz on certain matters. We finally had a database in

the second year of the campaign after we settled its logic. Which children was where, whether he/she has been registered at school, what was the problem, how was it solved, what is his/her address, who are his/her parents, in which district he/she lives, the school nearby and the school she is registered -today you are able to see all these in the database we have prepared. We can gather cross-data and graphs. We can process 16 types of queries.”¹⁰⁸ During the interviews I held in the province, I noticed that everyone is talking by referring to mathematical data. Lists were taken out and the statistical data fulfilled all the questions like how many girls are living within the education zone of which school, what was the scope of the persuasion activities, etc. I find out

that the entries in the database are the fruit of a very serious teamwork embracing the province, the districts and the villages. “We set up persuasion teams of seven in the province and in the districts. We set forth with a team of around 200 across the province. Each persuasion team was headed by a schoolmaster. Most of the persuasion teams had headmen and imams. We entered the students we accessed, identified and registered in the province center and the districts to the database. With these processed data, we are now able to access as far as the address of these students when required. The database facilitated our work –we can see what we have accomplished and what is left out. We continue to update the system through the newly-acquired data since that time.”¹⁰⁹

Box 8 Adiyaman was one of the Provinces where the Campaign Processes had been best executed

“In my opinion, Adiyaman ranks as the province where the system established by the ‘Haydi Kızlar Okula’ Campaign has been executed the best –throughout its all dimensions. I mean, we can call Adiyaman an exemplary province where a serious organization has been set up, capacity enhancement has been conducted in line with this organization, where relations at the local level have been built with EU’s ‘Support to Basic Education’ project, where the public has been mobilized through the identification survey in accordance with this organization building and capacity enhancement, where analyses have been carried out corresponding to the identification surveys, where these analyses have been compiled in a database, where the persuasion process has been planned by way of the analyses, where the records have been monitored and studies targeting further organization have been conducted subsequent to the persuasion process, and in accordance with this, where the public –including media, including the tradesmen- has been urged to get involved in that process, where the campaign has been executed on all the levels, where –in the meanwhile- assessments have been made eventually on seasonal farm work although certain constraints have been experienced in terms of generating solutions.”¹¹⁰

Families who do not send their children to school are identified one by one through the information provided from the database. Criminal action was taken in two districts. “We arrived at the stage of imposing the penalty in the province center once; but we remitted it for one-time since the families are poor. We already knew that they were incapable of paying the 1,500-2,000 YTL fine enforced by the Law No: 222. We therefore let it go for this time. They knew that we would be going over this once again next year. We declared our determination on this subject both to the parents

and to the schoolmasters... A further point is that –through the identification process with regards to the students going for seasonal farming- we were now aware of how many students we have and where they are going to –we have about 3,000 such children. We have sent these lists to many provinces like Adana, Malatya, Niğde, Kayseri, etc. We wrote letters to Governorates telling them that so many students are coming in such and such months, please provide them with the opportunity to be educated. We also informed the Ministry. We would be focusing on these issues this year.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Suphi Turhan, Schoolmaster, HKO Provincial Counselor ¹⁰⁹ Ali Tanrıverdi, National Education Branch Manager, HKO Provincial Coordinator ¹¹⁰ Ertan Karabıyık, UNICEF Turkey Office Training Unit, Project Assistant ¹¹¹ Ali Tanrıverdi, National Education Branch Manager, HKO Provincial Coordinator

A theater performance in Kâhta

The problems associated with the immigration from the villages of Kâhta district to the province center due to lands being submerged under the waters from the Atatürk Dam, with the impacts of this immigration and with the loss of the cultivatable fields which have been the mainstay of the people could be estimated as the visible obstacles against the primary education enrolment of girls. The influence of the family elders who are still effected by 'töre' (traditional code of conduct) as well as religious misguidance comprise the greatest impediments facing girls being sent to school. The district of Kâhta started to get organized as well from the first year of the campaign. Remzi Akgül, National Education Branch Manager and the Director of the District Public Training at that time, volunteered to undertake responsibility for the project in the district. Together with Mustafa Çiçek who would put his heart and soul to work voluntarily like him, they devised the district planning and went to the field. They worked out a genuine concept with regards to the social mobility which is intended to be generated subsequent to the identification and persuasion activities in the district: "We got acquainted with the artist Mustafa Çetinkaya. It occurred to me to ask him this: 'We have been dealing with the families of illiterate girls within the scope of the campaign for a long time now. We've had come a long way together with the teams to convince them. Nevertheless, would you be able to write a drama demonstrating the challenges of the girls to staged for top-level executives –could we put on a show?' He said, 'Of

course, I would both write it and play a role in it'. We also took along four girls from our students in the folk dance team. He wrote the drama, we presented it; the play ended with applause –well, it was very moving and all...The story was about an illiterate mother losing her child as a consequence of giving her the wrong medicine when she was sick...It was that sort of a tragedy...It aroused a great interest."¹¹² Indicating that he has been still surveying the schools regularly, campaign supervisor Mustafa Çiçek then decided to design a project for women in the province. "We still go on with initiating further projects...We had a meeting with Mr. Abdullah Remzi Akgül with regards to the efficiency of the generated projects. Since there would possibly be more women who we have not accessed yet, we agreed upon founding a training center nearby the most deprived neighborhoods of the province. This institution the 'Public Center' will give trainings as an affiliate of the Provincial Directorate of Social Services. The 'Public Center' was founded through support from the District Governor Mr. Kadir Sertel Otçu. About 50 women are attending various courses in our center. Furthermore, children of underprivileged families are continuing the etudes here. Our combat with ignorance has been started with the 'Haydi Kızlar Okula' Campaign. We traveled around all the villages of our district and tried to convince people one by one. We came across various life stories in every place we visited. And this proved to us how much the campaign had been beneficial and meaningful. This of course, has been the greatest reward on our behalf."¹¹³

Could Emine go to high school?

Following our interviews with the HKO district executives, the schoolmasters and teachers in Kâhta, we decide to visit the house of Emine who was enrolled in school during this process. We were welcomed with open arms as soon as we knocked on the door. Emine who had completed primary education this year came and sat by my side straight away. The father who had 14

children as far as I have learned from our talks had two wives. One of the children was disabled due to a disease he had suffered in childhood. By chance, Emine's brother who is a graduate of business administration school and his wife who had given a break to her university education as she refused to take off her hijab were also in the house coming from Istanbul. I started to talk with

Box 9 Deputy Governor Hasan Şıldak¹¹⁴

Support from other public institutions in the province play a key role in the generation of the social mobilization in the province. Hasan Şıldak, the Deputy Governor at that time is the one who has initiated the efforts to get the public institutions involved in the process. **“Hasan Şıldak is one of those people who contributed the most to the success of this campaign. He invited us to his office once a month to take a report. He was involved in all the processes of the campaign. He didn’t just give instructs but also discussed the strategy with us. Apparently this issue has been a real heartache for him. He didn’t complain; he said ‘the state will do it’ instead. He knew the figures by heart and he was acquainted with the whole geography from the villages to hamlets. It was a great opportunity on our behalf to work with such a Deputy Governor”.**¹¹⁵

Emine. “I’m 14. I left the school in the fifth grade. The district directors came to talk with my father and convinced him. Only then did my parents send me back to school. I studied for three more years in the school. I was successful; I mean, I was doing very well in the classes. Well, then school was over and again they’re not sending me to high school now. My schoolmasters in the school want me to go to high school as I had been successful before. The schoolmaster of the boarding school came to talk with my father and to take me to school, but my family didn’t allow me to go. I have prayed a lot. I would very much like to go to high

school, but they don’t let me. I mean, there is this old tradition they have. I’m the only one to finish eight years of education until now.” The care of her disabled brother at home, the fact that her mother has aged, the responsibilities that await her at home and her father’s negative perception with regards to the education of girls constitute the impediments Emine faces for continuing her education. When we left the house, the requirement of demonstrating the same efforts which had been demonstrated for the access to primary education were once again discussed in reference to high school education.

Box 10 There is no problem in the Alevi villages

During the interviews I find out that there are no issues in terms of access to primary education in the Alevi villages. I ask primary education inspector Naci Güzel about the conditions which bring about this status: “The Alevi community has a challenge to live on its own –to survive alone. This situation has been the same from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic. Following the foundation of the Republic, they’ve gradually started to move from those villages and rural regions to the cities. Attending school man and woman alike, getting an education is an outcome of this challenge to survive –of becoming self-sufficient. And it was the ‘dede’s (honored elder) who have led us on this matter. Of course, I haven’t done a research on this subject. My own lovely ‘dede’ always said this; ‘A man is another man –both have been created by the God. It might be that they were born biologically different; but they have the same rights’. The Alevi people came down to this day by practicing this concept and naturally it has repercussions on education as well. I’ve heard the ‘dede’s saying ‘Particularly get your daughters educated’.”¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Following his post as the Deputy Governor, Hasan Şıldak has been appointed as the District Governor to Çal, Denizli. He was assigned civil service inspector around the time when the study was conducted; therefore, he could not be interviewed since he was not in the province. ¹¹⁵ Mehmet Emin Yücekaya, Classroom Teacher, HKO Provincial Counselor ¹¹⁶ Naci Güzel, Primary Education Inspector



Mehmet Emin Yücekaya: "Gender disparity feeds on phenomenon of heroism, on nationalism, on perception of religion, on the sanctified culture the education thereof has been considered a disaster and all these have been adopted as the unifying cement of this society and have been exploited for years" (Photo: From the archive of Adiyaman Provincial Directorate of National Education)



Children at the intensive course in a Roma neighborhood of Adiyaman province center. (Photo: From the archive of Adiyaman Provincial Directorate of National Education)

Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor in Seasonal Migrant Temporal Farming through Education Project in the Karataş region of Adana

Background

Data on the negligence and abuse of children demonstrate that child labor in the world and in Turkey is a centuries-old issue. In order to eliminate this problem in our country, the International Labor Organization (ILO) has been conducting a program to combat child labor since 1992, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (ÇSGB) and the associated public institutions, trade organizations, civil administration and nongovernmental organizations. Under the coordination ÇSGB Department of Working Children', a "Time-bound Policy and Program Framework to Prevent Child Labor" has been developed within the scope of the practices targeting the "eradication of worst forms of child labor" as provided in the

ILO Convention 182. Specifying "the worst forms of child labor" as involving health risks and withdrawal from education, the cited framework program defines these as:

- Working on the streets
- Working in demanding and dangerous jobs at small and medium scale enterprises
- Working as migrant and temporary paid workers in agriculture (children working in cotton-harvesting) with the exception of familial chores. Within this scope, the employment of child labor in farming sector as the most common practice in Turkey is addressed as the principal area of concern.

Adana Karataş becomes the center of combat in the farming sector

In October 2002, an extensive survey was conducted in the district of Karataş, which encompasses the greatest cotton farming lands in all of Çukurova. The objective of the survey was to obtain quantified data on children working as migrant temporal workers in cotton agriculture and the results of the survey were published as a report in 2003, entitled 'Turkey Baseline Survey on Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Agricultural Sector: Children in Cotton Harvesting in Karataş, Adana'. "In order to make

a living, households with small land or no land at all which are unable to earn enough from their agricultural enterprises are forced to move on a temporary, seasonal basis to places where agricultural work is more abundant. Some urban families which cannot attain adequate means of living do the same, in order to supplement their limited means of subsistence. Due to the specific characteristics of agricultural production, these workers are employed under severe conditions and simply try to survive. For economic and

social reasons, children of seasonal migrant households accompany their parents from job to job. Thus, in order to contribute to the household subsistence, the children work in agricultural activities which are not suitable to their age. Seasonal agricultural work in Turkey is concentrated mostly in such industrial crops as cotton, tobacco and sugar beets. Of these, 'cotton' requires the most seasonal

agricultural labor. Children of households which spend from three to seventh months of the year away from their permanent settlements for hoeing, harvesting and doing other tasks in other products comprise the group that works in the worst conditions of employment in the agricultural sector in terms of physical, psychological and educational development.”¹¹⁷

Fight against child labor in agricultural sector is started

A 'support program' comprising the framework on the elimination of worst forms of child labor in agriculture sector was prepared by the ILO. "The Worst Forms of Child Labor in Agriculture: Action Plan on the Elimination of Migrant and Temporary Child Labor and Improving the Conditions in Cotton Harvesting in Karataş, Adana" was established within the scope of this program. The basis of the sustainable, reproducible and locally suitable Adana-Karataş project was established through the action plan written by Asst. Prof. Ayşe Gündüz Hoşgör and Ertan Karabıyık. The below objectives are targeted within the context of the program where a series of actions triggering each other have been specified.

- Establishing the infrastructure enabling the implementation of the action plan on local, regional and national scale;
- Withdrawing 1,000 children in cotton harvesting from labor, preventing 1,750 children in the risk group from being included in the child labor and reinforcing 600 households which send children to cotton harvesting;
- Raising awareness on provincial/district level, enhancing local capacity and mobilizing local resources within the scope of the issue of children working in cotton harvesting;
- Within the context of the worst forms of child labor, mobilization and awareness raising of national institutions and implementing legal regulations on the axis of children working in the agricultural sector for harvesting cotton;

- Establishing a Social Support Center (SDM); disengagement, hand-over, ensuring and disseminating social and financial sustainability.

The **Project for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor in Seasonal Commercial Farming through Education in the Karataş region of Adana** implemented between the years of 2005-2007 with the collaboration of the International Labor Organization and MoNE's General Directorate of Primary Education, targets to prevent the children accompanying their families to Adana Karataş from working in the cotton fields and to enable them to continue their education starting from the stage where they dropped out.

The collaborating institutions within the framework of the project are:

National Level: Ministries of Labor and Social Security, Health, Internal Affairs, Justice and Agriculture & Rural Affairs as well as the Parliament.

Provincial Level: Governorates, Metropolitan Municipality, Provincial Directorate of National Education, Provincial Health Directorate, Provincial Directorate of Social Services, Provincial Directorate of Agriculture, nongovernmental organizations.

District Level: District Governorate, District Directorate of National Education, Municipality, District Health Group Department, schoolmasters, teachers and headmen.

¹¹⁷ *Migrant Temporary Seasonal Agricultural Labor, Employment and Consequences of Child Labor in this Area*, Asst. Prof. Bülent Gülçubuk, Ertan Karabıyık and Dr. Ferdi Tanır, 2003.

Project Team

- Provincial Coordinator -Selim Can (Branch Teacher)
- Assistant Coordinator-Simge Gökkoyun (Archeologist)
- Social Worker-Ayşegül Özbek (Sociologist)
- Social Worker -Kazım İlkan Kertmen (Branch Teacher)
- Social Worker -Remziye Kozan (Chemist)
- Social Worker - Canan Evlekoğlu (History Teacher)

In order to implement the project, a Social Support Center was established in the village of Yemişli located 10km from Karataş, where seasonal agricultural workers have been densely settled. While contributing to primary education enrolment of children in a challenging area where child labor employment is traditionally

approved, the project also achieved to accompany the families and children in terms of further vital requirements. Attained results through the implemented activities by the project team demonstrating cooperation skills and generating trust-based relations with the target groups has enabled the project to be held up as an example in all platforms. The fact that the project was set up based on qualitative and quantitative data within the framework of an action plan, the support from ILO and MoNE throughout each project stage as well as the adoption of the issue by the executives in local regions have been further elements influencing the success of the project. This valuable experience of two years was handed over by the Provincial Directorate of National Education to District Directorate of Public Training in June 2007.

Box 11 The Status of Children from the Migrant Temporary Seasonal Worker Families coming to Adana Karataş Region:¹¹⁸***Of those children:***

- 74% are currently working and 26% are under the risk of being employed in the agricultural chores;
- 95% stay in tents and 5% stay in shacks with their families;
- 56% suffer from diseases;
- 86% suffer from lack of electricity;
- 84% suffer from lack of water;
- 81% suffer from lack of toilets;
- 44% suffer from lack of bathing facilities;
- 79% suffer from pests and insects;
- 55% suffer from malnutrition;
- 30% suffer from lack of playgrounds;
- In this region where they have come in to be put to work, 71% of the children do not attend school, 24% attend school regularly and 5% attend irregularly;
- 71% feel obliged to work, 29% are forced to work;
- 90% harvest cotton;
- 74% hoe the ground;
- 3% work in greenhouses;
- 77% work in thinning, look after siblings, carry water, etc;
- 85% complain from the daily working time;
- 97% complain from the strenuousness of the chores;
- 54% complain from the verbal and physical violence practiced on them;
- All of them complain from the heat;
- All of them are giving their earnings to their families;
- 100% want to get a decent education and to get settled. Many of the children expressed a desire to become a teacher, policeman, doctor, judge, nurse, lawyer, carpenter or a football player.

118 From the results of the survey conducted by Social Workers Remziye Kozan and Kazım İlkan Kertmen between 1 and 15 July 2007 on 200 children attending SDM or interviewed during the identification process at the tents. Criteria on sampling selection was not indicated in the report evaluating the survey results. However, it may be assessed as valuable data in terms of portraying the status of 200 children and enabling the reader to visualize the conditions of the children.

Adana

Best Practice referred to in the Study

Developing practices aimed at the requirements of the target group; demonstrating a team performance capable of working with underprivileged groups; establishment of a sustainability mechanism

Resource People Interviewed within the Scope of the Study

Atilla Gülsar, Adana Provincial Director of National Education; Selim Can, Project Coordinator; Özkan Biter, YİBO Director; Ayhan Arzuman, Tuzla Primary School Deputy Schoolmaster; Ayşegül Özbek, Social worker; Remziye Kozan, Social worker; Kazım İlkan Kertmen, Social worker; Adults and children interviewed in Tuzla permanent tents at the Yemişli Village.

“On Fertile Lands...”

“This is the season when the cottonseed called ‘çiğit’ is sowed into the ground. There are still four or five weeks until the Tilling Time. The big landowners have sent messengers and heralds to the east provinces [to announce that]... there is a lot to do in Çukurova this year Weekly wages would be higher than they could ever imagine! Only after several weeks, exodus of farmhands incessantly brought in from the lands from Urumia to Damascus starts. Thousands of women, men, spawns and kids, young people and elderly people, with their tattered clothes... Man has no pity, neither has the God. These are people long-forgotten by the God! The prophet has fetched them books-load of patience, trust and contentment. Patience, trust and contentment which are good for nothing –which would never be of use!”¹¹⁹

It’s August...An afternoon on the fertile lands of Adana...The evening breeze is still warm although the sun has abandoned the place. Having just arrived with the trucks coming from the fields, the workers are trying to catch their breaths in front of the tents. The men have already started to chat; joyous voices are rising from the groups formed by the children and the young men. The women are in front of the earthen oven, baking bread prepared with a bit of flour, water and oil; the girls are helping them. In front of the washed out tents of nylon and cloth in various colors, the spreads are at the mercy of dust and mud...We are at the Yemişli tents, located at the nearest point to the support center founded by the project¹²⁰ initiated about two year ago. I am with Remziye Kozan and Kazım İlkan Kertmen, who traveled every inch of the Karataş region by visiting virtually each tent. Everybody knows them. The children approach them running –the project had ensured school enrolment for some or provided for the school requirements of some others. Most

of the younger ones call them “teacher” since they have been attending the center while their families are on the fields. The migrant temporary seasonal workers staying in this area with about 30-40 tents had mainly come from Şanlıurfa. There are clusters of tents along the both sides of the 40-kilometer road between Adana and Karataş. “People are coming to Karataş generally from Urfa, Diyarbakır, Adıyaman, Hatay and Maraş’ to harvest cotton. The ones in the Tuzla region mainly come from Batman, Siirt, Şırnak, Mardin for the greenhouses...Most of them are organized through fellow hometown connections. There are those called the ‘elci’ (foreman) who enable the dialogue between the landlord and the farmhands. They bring in their own relatives and neighbors. They build their tents side by side – therefore, those living in the tent groups are either relatives or neighbors. A great majority arrive by trucks. They bring along their essentials, stoves and utensils. They travel under extremely unsound conditions. Several families are dumped into the back of the truck -kids and all- and they are covered with tarpaulin since it is not allowed to travel like that. They come and leave the same way. They arrive here lest they do not fall victim to an accident. In order not to face transportation problems, they build their tents nearby fields designated by the landlord. There is no electricity, water or toilets in the tent grounds. In fact, the workers want to put up their tents in the village to benefit from health facilities, but the village people don’t want them. They start working early in the morning. The landowner never communicates with the workers directly – he only talks to the ‘elci’. The ‘elci’ is prominent among the tents. If there is a chair, a table in someone’s tent or if a tent is better than the others, then you would know that he is the ‘elci’. And of course, one is an ‘elci’ if he is sending his kids to school.”¹²¹

“Homeland is where the bread is”

We approach a tent with our friends from the team, requesting permission to sit down. A girl who I later learned to be the eldest daughter of the household is clearing the table. I explain my reason for being there and realizing that the issue is about school enrolment of girls, the father aged around forty starts talking, pointing out to his daughters: *“For one thing, the kids’ birth certificates were not obtained on time. We were not in Urfa then; we were on foreign lands, working in Niğde Aksaray region –again, we were in the tents like this, we didn’t have the opportunity to register them. We had been working in the sugar beet farming.”* I ask the father his name –even though he doesn’t want to tell me, he agrees to be interviewed. *“I got married after my military service when I was 22 –my wife was about 17 then. Our official marriage ceremony was held 7-8 years later; hence, the birth certificates of the children were belated.”* He had not been able to send his older daughter to school but he is ambitious about ensuring the schooling of his younger daughter under any circumstances. *“They shall go to school –she may go somewhere one day, she would know herself... Ways of the world are unpredictable –I am going to send them to school as long as I’m not dead... We were born in mud and it looks like we’re going to die in mud as well –at least they would be saved...”* As the interview goes on, I find out that he is spending eight to nine months of the year away from Urfa. When I address the younger daughter who is attending the nearest primary school as guest student through the support of the project, she starts to talk: *“I go to school – at school they realize that we are laborers. A first, they kept at distance. There are 20 laborer’s children in our class, I’m playing with them.”* I ask whether this exclusion in school was also valid for the village. The father answers, *“I have been coming to this village since 1982. You see this place we’re living –there are 500 workers living here. For instance, I have known the man I work for since he was a kid... We came here from Urfa this year, we waited*

*in the truck until the evening –they didn’t want to let us a place. I have to find a job to provide for the household. It doesn’t have to be in Urfa –anywhere in Turkey would do. Homeland is where the bread is.”*¹²² We depart saying our goodbyes. The ‘elci’ of the group of tents in the meanwhile, is handing out some pieces of paper to those who would be going to the field the next morning. These papers are counted when the workers are returning to their homelands, and the money to be paid is calculated. The daily wages change each year. Most of the workers are telling that they have been getting 14-15 YTL for many years though. *“They’re given 14–15 YTL daily during tilling time. Even the 10-12 year old kids who go for tilling get the same wage. All the family goes for cotton-picking and then they earn money over the kilos the family has picked. During that period, young children go to the fields as well, in order to pick up more. There is such a mechanism in farmhand system: They are contacted by the landowner in the winter and they receive an advance payment. They spend this money since they are unemployed during the winter and they arrive in Adana in debt. They are able to calculate their earnings only when the price of cotton is disclosed. The farmer generally pays their money after he sells the cotton. In the meanwhile they return to their homelands; the ‘elci’ gives the money he has taken from the landlord a while later. The ‘elci’ takes a commission both from the worker and from the landlord –this is about 10%. The ‘elci’ doesn’t work on the fields since he is continuously in the organization business. He has to take care of the health incidents of the workers; he is also responsible for water transportation with tank trucks. Trucks come to the tent site and everybody buys their food and drinks from those.”*¹²³

Kerosene lamps have started to burn in some of the tents –we leave the tents to the darkness of the night with the faint lights from the kerosene lamps. The mosquitoes are patrolling the area. No one will be concerned with these people until

the trucks arrive in the morning to take them to the fields. We part with our friends working in the support center, making an appointment to meet the next day. I arrive in the Karataş district to stay for the night. Even though Karataş is the ultimate point where Adana embraces the sea, the district has failed to become a coastal town. Their mainstay is some fishing and agriculture. The headlights of the car I am in lights the camping site on the coast –the holiday makers have already set up their snacks and refreshment in front of tents made of green or blue tarpaulin... The ways of life is so different from each other

–summer villas, tents of the vacationers and tent towns where migrant temporary seasonal workers live...During my ride to the support center 10km away from Karataş next morning, I see many cotton fields along the road –it is nearly harvest time. The support center is on the left of the road –it is a two-floored white building with its façade adorned with a mural painting showing the links in the production process in Çukurova as well as with the colorful handprints of children. The joyous voices of boys and girls playing together in the garden greets the newcomers...

Social Support Center is founded

The first activities with regards to the **Project for the Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labor in Seasonal Commercial Farming through Education in the Karataş region of Adana** commenced on January 1, 2005. This date particularly corresponds to a time 15 days before a rather smaller group of seasonal migrant temporary agricultural workers arriving to work in the greenhouses at the Tuzla region starts working. The project team's inception in the field lasts until April-May. In the meanwhile, the trucks bringing in new workers to Çukurova have already set off. The land waits to be hoed for cotton. *"A group of workers come in May for hoeing cotton. They usually bring their kids in the secondary education stage, since the younger ones cannot hoe. The whole family comes by the end of summer to harvest cotton."*¹²⁴ A team of six starts to work in the project implemented through the collaboration of the ILO and MoNE's General Directorate of Primary Education. The team comprising the coordinator, assistant coordinator and four social workers established a Social Support Center (SDM) in the village of Yemişli as a first step. They convert the ex-health clinic to a

project office and support center within a short period of time. *"I learned about the objectives of the project when I talked to Mr. Şevket (Yakar) from the General Directorate of Primary Education. I could summarize the project's objective as saving the children working in the agriculture sector through education. Afterwards, when we reviewed the quantitative targets we saw that 2,750 children and 600 families were to be contacted in two years. We decided to go out to the field as soon as possible. I myself rode in the project car during the project. We had acquired a car from the District Governorate. It was a 96 Renault –we were providing the fuel from the project budget. We went to the tents in the second day. We saw hundreds of children there –we met around 500 children in one week. First we decided to conduct a division of labor within the team. But then, we realized there was much to do and everything was changing so quickly. Everybody had to be informed about the progress. So we came together in weekly meetings. We worked without having a specific job description or without any time concept."*¹²⁵

Database is formed

While the works for the establishment of the Support Center were going on, the project team started to visit the tents around Karataş regularly, in order to conduct a field survey. Mr. (Selim) Can did not participate in the field survey as he was coordinating the tasks within the Adana- Ankara- SDM triangle following the first month of the project. The other members of the team conducted field survey with teams of two. They set out to identify the unregistered or non-attending children dropped out of the primary education system, guiding them to the primary schools around Karataş. In the meanwhile, they were meeting the schoolmasters assigned in the primary schools, telling them about the project and requesting support. They had to set up a database to identify the children who are to be enrolled in school and to monitor their attendance. A detailed questionnaire was

prepared: “We were going to the tents and we would greet one another. They didn’t know about the ILO –so we were explaining the project over National Education. We were asking about the schooling conditions of the children and conducting the survey. We were very cautious of our attire and wording. We were even taking care not to wear eye-glasses. We were trying to prevent them from feeling estranged from us.

We were putting down any sort of information about children aged 6–14 in the questionnaire such as where they were living, their income, child’s level of education, parents’ level of education, etc... We set up a database. We had a database with information entered on 3,000 children at the end of the project.”¹²⁶ The center was officially opened on 15 June 2005. The schools are out around the same time which means that the students attending the school could also go to

Box 12 “The Girls Are Not Allowed To Go To School In Our Village”

While I was reading the notes I had taken about the project at the end of our first day of our survey in Adana-Karataş, Remziye (Kozan) and Kazım (İlkan Kertmen) handed over the draft of a book they had written with the support of their friends from the project, telling me that I could read it before retiring at night....Such a transference of experiences is generally sought after in projects; however, the accumulated information –the experiences- could not be noted down –are not written- in the hustle and bustle of the project. The project team had put their experiences in a book. They were considering to get it published after working on it for a while. They had written about their memoirs subsequent to an introduction to the project and assessments of the parties. One of the titles was “THE GIRLS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO GO TO SCHOOL IN OUR VILLAGE”! The text went on like this: “It’s not possible to stay indifferent towards them when you see that glimmer, enthusiasm and ambition to learn in their eyes, their insatiable desire for knowledge and the love flowing out of their hearts. Perhaps they would remind us about the love we have long forgotten...They would cast in our teeth the facts we had been indifferent to each time. Yes –I’m talking about the children. The children –the most beautiful, the most innocent and the purest beings on the world...During our tent visits, one says, ‘The girls are not allowed to go to school in our village’. Another says, ‘I have to work –my brothers cannot go to school if I don’t’. With which hands are they going to work? How would those tiny hands grasp the hoe? Is it that they get used to it by getting calloused? Or is it that those tiny hands get stronger in time to carry the hoe? Nevertheless, they all want to go to school. One has written this in the computer class: ‘The only thing I want is to go to school to attain a profession’. Another wrote, The thing I want most is to have a decent life’...Well, children are both similar and unique beings.”

the fields. Summer school activities are started at SDM in order to prevent this. Contracted teachers give basic lessons such as Math, Turkish, etc. The activities of the SDM were not been restricted to these tasks. *“There was a lot going on... When we went to the tents, for instance, children had no birth certificates; so we struggled to register them. The parents had not been officially married; so we described them how to apply for marriage certificate. There were times when we collected data until very late in the evening. We were taking registries under torchlight. We even held identification, persuasion and support activities out of Karataş. Tuzla for instance, wasn't included in the project field; after a while, we started to go there...There is a bridge across the Bebeli site; Yumurtalık is on the other side –that was not included in our field of duty. We've had no*

permission from the district governorate to work in that district. We could have easily gotten into trouble with the gendarme. So what...It's just before the school season and we've got clothes and packs of stationary items. We told ourselves that the one over there is also a child and we started to proceed. There was a tent when you go on 200-300 meters, then there is another one a little bit farther –we couldn't work it out and went to the district governorate. God bless, the District Governor greeted us at the door and the Director of National Education told us, 'You are doing our job; let our teachers help you'. We had a sufficient budget; nevertheless, we traveled shop by shop in order to procure materials for some more children. We were required to reach 2,750 children within the context of the project –we reached 3,780 children exactly.”¹²⁷

“The center is working in support of us; we could go there whenever we run into trouble”

The children got used to the center along with the summer school activities held in the first months of the project. The parents' trust was gained through various social events. In order to ensure this, the teachers to be assigned to work in the support center were nominated with great care: *“I explained the situation to our teachers. One child entails another. We have to ensure that they are unconditionally happy over here. The working conditions are severe –the children and particularly the younger ones don't know Turkish...They are coming from the tents –they lack toilet training and hygiene. They are not able to wash themselves since there are no baths in the tents. I explained all these and I told them not to come if they had any hesitations.”¹²⁸* A kindergarten was set up at the center as well. *“The kindergarten was rather like a nursery. The concept was this: Nearly all of the older age group goes to the fields. The age group of 8–10 doesn't go to the fields as a rule, taking care of their*

younger siblings at the tents. Well, to be able to register those kids to the summer school we were also taking their siblings to the kindergarten.”¹²⁹ Health surveys conducted in collaboration with the Directorate of Health further reinforce the relations at the tents. A health room was set up in the center. *“They started to trust us. They were coming to the center when they had health problems, since we were providing support for the treatment of the families as well. Our doctor had a private clinic in the district and he told us with his own initiative, 'Bring those with health problems to me in any case' –so we did take them over there and he treated them without any charge. The whole family started to think like this: 'The center is working on our behalf; we could go there whenever we're in trouble.’”¹³⁰* Compensatory courses targeting the children were opened in the center. Students who were still illiterate even though they were attending school were taken preferentially in these courses.

¹²⁷ Kazım İlkan Kertmen, Social Worker ¹²⁸ Selim Can, Project Coordinator ¹²⁹ Remziye Kozan, Social Worker ¹³⁰ Remziye Kozan, Social Worker

“The project slogan: Education before anything else for a cotton-white future”

Before the schools are opened, the project team starts persuasion activities in August and September in order to register the children in school or to ensure their attendance. *“A child means cash on the fields. We therefore, had to convince the families in terms of boys as well. We faced the greatest difficulty with regards to the girls. We were explaining in detail –the female teammates were setting themselves as examples. Sometimes we managed to convince the family by offering a schoolbag, a uniform or several notebooks. As far as the girls were concerned, comments such as ‘She is going to get married and leave anyhow; there are boys in the school; girls do not go to school in our region’ were being made...Another thing is that the girls are married very young. The dowry to be paid for a girl when*

marrying is about 10-20,000YTL...Think about it –you take about 20-40,000YTL away from a man’s pocket when you register two of his daughters in school. And there’s also the money from the work of these girls in the fields. The issue is an economic one in this respect...”¹³¹ ‘In fact, the families do not opt for sending their daughters to school after the age of 10. They would either bring her along to the fields or let her to do the house chores. The general opinion is like this: ‘What has a girl got to do in school.’”¹³² “Furthermore, they are afraid to lose control over the girls in case they send them to school.”¹³³ “I was thinking like this: Some 80% of these families would send their kids to school should they be disposed of poverty. This ratio however, might be reduced to as low as 40-50% as far as the girls are concerned.”¹³⁴

Box 13 Even Play Is A Great Luxury For Them

“The children working in the cotton fields are taken away from school during the hoeing season in May and June, as well as during the harvest season in September and October. They are not in school during four months of the year. The kids work for about five months in a year. They are in the fields for twelve hours a day. This is a phenomenal struggle gone through under the sun with only an hour of rest. They often are exposed to verbal or physical violence. The children are constantly compelled, since the income is proportionate to the quantity of cotton picked. Even playing as their most basic requirement is a great luxury for them. Agricultural work is the most difficult for children. They while away this period when their lives are taking a form in the fields. Again, the ones who get sick are mostly the kids. They are constantly suffering health problems under these unsanitary conditions. They are not treated properly ...”¹³⁵

Primary education enrolment of some children is ensured through numerous methods practiced and with success being achieved at times, or with the solution being postponed until the later months of the project. Ayhan Arzuman, Deputy Schoolmaster at the Tuzla Primary School, who had cooperated with the project supporting it

throughout this process tells about the school status of the children who work as seasonal migrant workers: *“The total number of students at our school is about 600. This figure goes up to 950 when the migrant child workers arrive. The number of students per class increases to 70-75 from 40. These students are here for two months*

¹³¹ Kazım İlkan Kertmen, Social Worker ¹³² Ayhan Arzuman, Deputy Schoolmaster ¹³³ Remziye Kozan, Social Worker ¹³⁴ Ayşegül Özbek, Social Worker ¹³⁵ From the book draft by Remziye Kozan and Kazım İlkan Kertmen wherein their experiences within the context of the project are compiled.

(September and October); then they leave to return by February. Subsequently, the family finds a job at somewhere else for May and they leave again to come back later. We cannot find the chance to say goodbye to each other most of the time –the parents come to school to fetch the child and nobody could say anything. When you talk to the children; they are generally in favor of going to school. The parent however, lets them to school for two days and take them to work for three days after they are 9-10 years old. And this has an impact on their achievement in school. The younger kids are not able to talk Turkish and this is very difficult for the teacher. This is also a significant problem...The children are discriminating among themselves so we try to build an equilibrium by distributing these children to all the classes. The child however, sits together and plays with those who came temporarily like himself/herself. We set up a

football team and a folk dancing team in order to intermingle them...Furthermore, the children are not able to do homework since there is no electricity at the tents. We track the children who are absent from the classes, but they reside at the tents –we find out that they are long gone when we arrive there. There are also those who receive transfer certificates; but the system doesn't work. There are significant constraints on the teachers' part. Imagine this; the term is over and you have brought the students up to a certain level –and then the new students arrive and moreover, their levels differ greatly." Extra classroom facilities were built in the Tuzla Primary School within the scope of the project. Donations and charities (school equipment, stationary items, uniforms, etc.) acquired by means of contacting projects conducted on the national level are delivered to primary schools requiring support such as the Tuzla Primary School.

Box 14 From Mother To Daughter

Ayşegül Özbek, designated a part of her post graduate thesis prepared through her experiences in the project, to the primary school enrolment of girls: "In the thesis, I am asserting the below on this issue: 'Poverty is an obstacle in front of educating both boys and girls. However, cultural motives constitute a further obstacle to girls' schooling. The most important of all is the lack of schooling for the mother. This is a vicious cycle transferred from the mother to the daughter. The intervention against this would be loosening the traditional cultural values. And this is only possible through the inclusion of the girls in the education system. We must include the girl somehow in the education system so that she could break this chain -this may be the older sister, this may be the younger one or whatever- in order to offer an altered life to the next generations, to her own children as well.' The projects conducted in the field are very significant in this sense..."¹³⁶

Project – school cooperation

In order to ensure incessant attendance for the child during this seasonal traffic, the project team devised a further formula and registered the children to the YİBO's (Regional Boarding Primary Schools) in Adana. "During September, we tried to register as many children as we may at the boarding schools. For instance, if the child is coming from Urfa, we registered the child at the boarding schools in Urfa. There were families

residing in Adana; we registered their children at the boarding schools in Kozan, Mustafabeyli and Karataş. The reason for that was since the state compensated for all the expenses of the children, they were no longer a burden over the family and furthermore, they were having the opportunity to attend school from September to June. They were also trained besides getting an education. Particularly the families who sought to

send their children to school but weren't able to do so accepted our suggestion immediately... We organized for a vehicle to transport them. The bus was to leave from Yemişli; you had to see how the families were hugging their children and crying –even the fathers were crying. There were some giving 5-10 millions to their kids –some couldn't do even that, so they've prepared snacks for the journey. There were also kids who said that they wouldn't leave at the last moment..."¹³⁷ It takes time for the children to get used to the school and the parents to this new situation. A solution to facilitate this process was worked out and the families were taken to the YİBO's. Özkan Biter who had been appointed as deputy schoolmaster at the Tefik Ayser Canpolat Primary School at that time tells about the adaptation period: "Some 60 students arrived from the Support Center in 2006 during the second year of the project. They had adaptation problems at first; however, as teachers, we've always supported and guided them. There were times we fed them; and in order to give them toilet and bathing training, we explained how to use the toilets and take a bath with the help of our woman teachers... For instance, when I was going about the dormitory, I saw a child who was sleeping on a blanket he placed on the floor. I talked to the child in the morning and when he said 'This is a habit; it's the only way I can go to sleep', so I couldn't say anything... There were three of us as male teachers; there had been a time I was on duty successively for 11 days... There's one incident I will never forget; the school was closed for the Ramadan holiday. A child remained in school. The child's father was in Tuzla. He didn't come. So I put the child up in our house as a guest. Then I delivered the child to her father. He greeted us very calmly when we arrived –it was like he never worried. I found it strange at first –and he was glad to see his child as well... We have been informed about the project and the activities; we worked in cooperation for the achievement of the children." "There have been best practices also; but we faced a great deal of trouble for the persuasion of both the families and the

administrators in the schools. The education level of the children coming from the tents is low; you take kids who have spent half of their lives in tents and put them in a completely different arrangement, into the middle of crowds. They have to eat all together, they have to stay in the dormitories, they have to manage their own hygiene and they have to adapt to the lessons..."¹³⁸ Based on the information in the database they have set up, the project team cooperates with the provincial directorates of national education in order to keep attendance of the children in the provinces they have gone to. During this process, they observed that the directorates were not adequately aware of the issue of seasonal migrant workers. This observation would be guiding them later, while planning the activities targeting the institutionalization of the project. The summer school activities implemented regularly each year were extended in terms of scope of impact, with the further inclusion of several primary schools. This in turn, enables the attendance of further children in the summer school. All through this process, the primary schools in the vicinity of tent regions have been left open during the periods between June-September 2005 and June-September 2006 in accordance with the instructions from the General Directorate of National Education. Classroom teachers and kindergarten teachers were assigned in line with the student population. Meanwhile, activities to provide the children attending the summer school with basic skills for life were emphasized and excursions are organized. "In order to let these children –who were unable to go to anywhere besides the fields or to play games due to cultural coercions- to observe other lives and to prevent them from remaining alienated; in order to get them acquainted with concepts like having a vacation, having fun or traveling; we took them to a summer camp in Alanya –we had picnics; organized evenings and went to a cinema once. Of course we might have not witnessed it during the initial event; however, with the on-going activities, we have observed positive impacts of the process over the children."¹³⁹

Including the adult's trainings into their agenda, the project team announced the literacy courses and professional trainings for families and young people in the district, by organizing informative meetings targeting families. It was agreed to move some project activities to Şanlıurfa, the province which sends quite a lot of workers to the region. In line with this, the families were informed with regards to the vocational courses. The objective here was the employment of the adults who had attained skills in the province to prevent them from leaving the province, thus trying to ensure incessant school attendance for the children. However, the families working for 8-9 months away from the province were not quite interested in this organization

held in Şanlıurfa. It has not been possible to generate social mobility in the province in this sense. On the other hand, while it had been stipulated in the action plan, participation of the stakeholders which would be negatively influenced by the results of the project, could not be provided. *"No matter how we tried, the landowners never got involved with the project. It is not possible to see most of them here anyhow. Furthermore, we have not been able to include the 'elci's in the project. In fact, we did cooperate with several 'elci's, but the majority of them did not lean towards the project. Neither did the headmen –actually, most of the headmen are also landowners."*¹⁴⁰

Box 15 Something Like Superman...

One of the key factors influencing the success of projects is indeed the gathering of people who are able to cooperate to generate work and teamwork: ***"The pieces had been put together in our project. We were young and we worked hard. Ms. Ayşegül (Özbek) for instance, had come from a youth project conducted in Urfa and furthermore, she could speak Kurdish with the people at the tents -this has been very advantageous for us. Ms. Remziye (Kozan) had worked in the youth projects of 'Development Initiative' and 'Local Agenda 21'; she was living in Adana; she knew how to use a computer and she was taking photos. Mr. Kazım (İlkan Kertmen) is a gym teacher. He possesses a manner of telling and persuasion skills he was also from Adana. Canan Evlekoğlu who had worked with us during the start of the project had been building a good communication with the children owing to her experiences as a teacher."***¹⁴¹ ***"Mr. Selim (Can) was a coordinator as the title implies –a coordinator to the core. He was something like a Superman."***¹⁴² ***"The support provided by the MoNE and ILO was also quite influential in addition to the things we have done. The Provincial Directorate of National Education also worked hard in terms of adopting the project."***¹⁴³ ***It might be for the atmosphere of Ankara –their relations have always been good with us. Whenever something negative arose, they would call either the province or the district to resolve the problem."***¹⁴⁴ ***"I've never seen any mind-set like that of the ILO. They are capable of analyzing both the examples from the world and Turkey very well. They've always encouraged us. Both Mr. Nejat (Kocabay, National Coordinator to ILO-IPEC Project) and Ms. Gülay (Aslantepe, ILO Turkey Director) along with everybody else have lent us a great support."***¹⁴⁵ ***"The perspective of Mr. Servet (Özdemir, General Director of National education at that time) changed everything. He was telling us, 'Solve the problem and don't get tangled in the procedures –that is for us to work out'. We were able to call him directly for any problem. Mr. Selahattin (Şahin, Deputy General Director) is an incredible educationist. When there was a problem –let alone calling by phone- he would come here right away, and try to solve the problem. Mr. Şevket Yanar from the General Directorate had been expediting the process in Ankara. Let's say there was an emergency; and we had sent a letter to the General Directorate of Primary Education for instance, and the respective deputy general manager was absent –he immediately delegated another one to get an approval, accelerating the process. He also worked hard during the directive process..."***¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁰ Kazım İlkan Kertmen, Social Worker ¹⁴¹ Selim Can, Project Coordinator ¹⁴² Kazım İlkan Kertmen, Social Worker ¹⁴³ Ayşegül Özbek, Social Worker ¹⁴⁴ Ayşegül Özbek, Social Worker ¹⁴⁵ Selim Can, Project Coordinator ¹⁴⁶ Kazım İlkan Kertmen, Social Worker

“Will there be commissions for preventing child labor?”

The activities in the field were implemented for a second year, with particular emphasis on targeting institutionalization. Within this scope, a ‘Provincial Action Committee’ meeting was held. The cited meeting paved the ground for the construction of the sustainable mechanism of the project. Within the framework of activities extending from the local to the national level, a workshop is organized in 2006, with the participation of all parties which endeavored to prevent child labor. Results from the mentioned workshop were published as a report. *“We invited 61 national education directors from all over Turkey to Adana. We showed them the tent sites; they couldn’t believe their eyes. Administrators from provinces like Hatay, Şanlıurfa are faced with*

*emigration from their own provinces to Adana and yet, they were not aware of the dimensions of the issue. We implemented the workshop. We drew out the results from the workshop as a report, to be issued as a directive by the MoNE. Everything was organized; however, the administration at the General Directorate of National Education changed and the administration before the current one was appointed.”*¹⁴⁷ In the mentioned report, ‘establishing commissions for preventing child labor’ had been prescribed and mobile education, adult trainings targeting the families, guidance of the children towards the YİBO’s as well as conduction of active identification actions had been proposed.

Box 16 1301 Children Are Not In The Fields Any Longer

AA-Adana-The child at the other end of the telephone line is saying, “My father has come; he is going to take me away”. Thereupon, a conversation is held with the father immediately. The father who says, “I will take her to work for 20 days and then I will bring her back again”, is convinced and the child is taken back to the class...

Even though scenes like the above are occurring time to time during the “For a Cotton-white Future” project conducted in Adana with the collaboration of the MoNE and the International Labor Organization (ILO), currently 1301 children have been enrolled in school by being saved from working in the cotton fields Nejat Kocabay, the Projects Coordinator for the International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor, pointed out that the closing stages were almost reached in the project in Adana, which has set up an example for school enrolment of further children working in the agriculture sector. Indicating that although the time period of the project ended in January 1, 2007 where actual works had started in May 15, 2005, this period has been extended to June 1, 2007; Kocabay asserted that 3,338 children working in the cotton fields have been accessed. Kocabay elucidated that out of these, a total of 730 children (571 girls and 159 boys) has been enrolled in primary education. Kocabay also stated that some of the children have been registered in the primary school in the vicinity of the their tents, while those whose families have been convinced, are registered in Regional Rooming or Boarding Primary Schools. Furthermore, Kazım İlkan Kertmen from the project team asserted that school attendance of the children is monitored. Indicating that particularly the children staying in boarding schools have been living virtually in a nightmare lest their families would come to take them back to the fields, Kertmen said, “Our mobile phones are on for 24 hours. When the fathers come to take them, the children notify us by phone, saying, ‘My father is here to take me’. And we step in immediately. The father says, ‘I will take the child to work only for 20 days and then bring her back; but we refuse this through persuasion efforts.”¹⁴⁸

Box 17 Project Results In Figures¹⁴⁹

- **6000 (2691 girls, 3309 boys):** Number of identified children at the age of primary education who are working or are facing the risk of working;
- **4800 (2151 girls, 2649 boys):** Number of children enrolled in school and ensured to continue, after being supplied with educational supplies (clothing, stationary items, transportation, lunch, etc.);
- **3780 (1731 girls, 2049 boys):** Number of children enrolled in school and ensured to continue, after being supplied with educational supplies, through activities conducted before the project hand-over;
- **1020 (420 girls, 600 boys):** Number of children enrolled in school and ensured to continue, after being supplied with educational supplies, through activities conducted following the project hand-over;
- **172 (97 girls, 75 boys):** Number of children supported through the “Will You Be My Custodian?” campaign;
- **725 (285 girls, 440 boys):** Number of children attending the summer school compensatory trainings conducted at the Social Support Center and the village schools during the summer terms of 2005, 2006 and 2007;
- **1528 (220 children at the age of primary education, 1308 persons comprising adults and children under 6 years of age):** Number of individuals gone through health scan;
- **4:** Number of kindergartens opened in the village schools for supporting education and training;
- **2:** Number of additional classrooms built in the Tuzla Primary School where student population increased with the arrival of migrant workers;
- **1:** Number of the canteens built in the Tuzla Primary School

¹⁴⁹ Data are from the Project database, April 2007

Will the established system be maintained?

The Project was finalized in June 2007 and the Support Center was linked to Adana Directorate of Public Training. Servet Çırakoğlu, Deputy Director at Karataş Public Directorate was appointed as the head of the Center. Mr. Çırakoğlu who comes from an educationist family, has diligently analyzed the experiences from the project and he considers to diversify the activities targeting families. He is determined to work until all the children at the tents attain schooling. On the last day of the survey, I meet with Remziye (Kozan) and Kazım (İlkan Kertmen) who continue to work with the specialist training staff at the Social Support Center. The current transition period has allowed them some time and they seek to complete the deskwork to go back on the field. In the meanwhile, they have made preliminary arrangements to conduct a fund drive and they intend to call the attention of the private sector to this issue. On the other hand, they also have a project proposal they have submitted to the European Commission –should this project be accepted, they will be conducting further activities targeting the families. They have planned to contact the Provincial Directorate of Health and private hospitals in order to find out partial solutions to the health problems at the tents. While summarizing the planned activities, Remziye (Kozan) says, ‘We could have enrolled more children if this project had a development leg. Remziye and Kazım continue to work at the Social Support Center, while Ayşegül Özbek plans to carry this issue to further platforms by publishing her thesis. Selim Can has started to work in the project for enhancement of enrolment in secondary education. The same day, I visited the Provincial Director of National Education Atilla Gülsar in his office, to find out how the sustainable mechanism would be

carried on henceforth. Appearing glad about the outcome of the project, the Director of National Education informed me about the next period: *“We attempted to guide the primary school-age children of the migrant worker families towards the YİBO’s particularly through the activities we have conducted last year. We convinced the families of this as well and we made sure that they see each other once a month...When the seasonal workers arrive in Karataş, the student population in the classes gets crowded. We are conferring on with the Ministry. We proposed to build prefabricated classrooms. Next year we hope that we would be adjoining a prefabricated building comprising three or four classrooms. We would like the project implemented in Karataş to continue. We have handed over this project to the Directorate of Public Training. We are trying to support the training of the community over there as well. We have talked to our Governor as well; we are going to provide all their requirements. Numerous projects had been implemented here; however, they haven’t turned well. This final project we implemented however, was really a great success. They put up a very great team work. They were also concordant with the circumstances and they convinced the people. They also focused on social activities. The football tournament for instance; they organized various excursions... In the meanwhile, we prepared and submitted an EU project to be implemented in the same region. We are considering capacity enhancement if this project is approved.”*¹⁵⁰ At the end of our interview, I was thinking what Mr. Gülsar meant by the words **‘In fact, a permanent solution must be brought to this issue’** was that the problem could be resolved by providing employment for these people at the places where they come from.

There is a message from the Social Support Center

I received an e-mail from Remziye and Kazım while I was writing this book. This message responds –if partially– to the question of “Will the sustainability of the project be provided”:

“We have been given a new car and we have completed the documentary on this region. We are working on the book. Our Director of National Education and our Governor watched the documentary and appreciated it very much. They are supporting us for the activities to go on full speed. After you left, we enrolled some 140 children to school in September, also provided their school supplies. Furthermore, 156 children have been registered at school and we are working on to provide their supplies as well. 138 of our children continued to attend the summer school. And we have placed 32 children to the YİBO’s. We went to Istanbul to present our film and we got a promise from a jeans company there, to provide for the supplies of the children. Everything is all right...”



The kindergarten at the Social Support Center

Remziye Kozan: “I was taking their photos and they were posing in front of me, saying, ‘Me too, take my photo too’. They never told me to give them the photos. We handed out the photos one day. They got very happy. After that, they started to ask for the photos. They were taking along the pictures they’ve been drawing in the Center. Or the teachers were making kites and et cetera in the kindergarten; they were taking those to the tents as well. They didn’t want to leave them here. And sometimes they wrote poems for us. There were some writing mottos and bringing them along. We have child writing letters. She mails them once in a while from Urfa.” (Photo: Social Support Center Archive)



Project team interviews the children in a cotton field.

Remziye Kozan: “One day I was chatting while walking on the way with a child attending the Center. Out of the blue, ‘Ma’am teacher’ she said; ‘Say, one day perhaps I will become a doctor, a teacher. Teaching kids like me; say I am a doctor, treating sick children. Say I am a pilot, flying in the air.’ I got the goose bumps at that moment. I was very pleased with her last words: ‘I would be a pilot and fly...”
(Photo: Social Support Center Archive)



Football Tournament organized by the Social Support Center

Ayşegül Özbek: "Sometimes I think to myself that of course there had been kids whom we couldn't manage to bring to school despite all our efforts. Nevertheless, the project paved the way for activities which would be a nice memory in their future lives." (Photo: Social Support Center Archive)



Children enrolled at the Tabaklar Village Primary School with their teachers and the social workers
(Photo: Social Support Center Archive)



Health survey for families living in the tents
(Photo: Social Support Center Archive)



Children enrolled at the regional boarding primary schools
(Photo: Social Support Center Archive)



*Children attending the Social Support Center
(Photo: Social Support Center Archive)*

Box 18 Those who do not have houses in their homeland : Permanent Migrant Workers



Tuzla permanent tents interviews

Hatice Hanım is 45 years old. She was born in the village of Çadırılı, 20km away from Şırnak. She couldn't go to school as there was no school in their village. She had been married when she was 15. She is the mother of 8 children. The whole family migrated to Cizre in 1989 when their village was burnt down...Fadime is Hatice Hanım's daughter. She is 21. She couldn't go to school although there was a school in Cizre, since she was traveling in between provinces with her family who had been working as migrant agricultural workers. As I was trying to communicate with the women of the tent in Turkish or in Kurdish, the father started talking and told about their story which brought them to the Tuzla permanent tents: **"We had been minding our own business. We were engaged in animal husbandry. We were handling a livestock of 1,500 as our mainstay. These incidents came along. We were left between two fires. Our village was burnt down; so we immigrated to Cizre to save our lives and then, we came here..."** In order to learn about the process which led them here, I asked the oldest son of the house about how they came here: **"Somebody from our village came here first and told the others that there is work here –he was planting watermelons, melons, tomatoes, etc. and he told us that this was the most peaceful place. Then we came here and started to work. We've spent 10 years here summer and winter. We don't have a house in our own village anyhow. We built a simple house in Cizre; however, it was expensive to move between here and there –the electricity bill, the water bill kept coming and there were no jobs or anything...So we came here and we now live here as a household of 8-9."** As soon as I ask about why they do not build a house here, he retorts, **"They won't let a place to us here. They won't sell us a lot even if we attempt to buy it. They say, 'We're not letting in strangers'. We're here for ten years and nobody has come to check us. We need headman services; we are about 200 people here. The headman doesn't give us a residence certificate which is necessary to obtain an identity card. We have to go to our hometown for the 'green card' –we deal with the formalities over there. The other day, I registered the kid here –I made up an address. And where do your letters come in ? "Normally the coming letters are delivered to the landowner."** He notices my astonishment and continues talking without giving me the opportunity to ask how they managed to live on a nylon base covered with cornstalks, on the bare earth for summer and winter: **"Well, we want to settle down in a place if we could afford it. We are working very hard from dawn to dusk –we're not sure how long this would go on. Our earnings go to the doctor anyhow."** The brother has four children –two boys and two girls. Telling us that he would be sending them all to the school; he says, **"I don't want them to remain ignorant like us –look at us, we are uneducated now and we don't know what to do..."** The statement about Tuzla in Ayşegül's thesis is like this: **"The actual motive for child labor in this region is compulsory immigration, the subsequent poverty and severe exclusion by the local community faced by the family as well as the failure to benefit by the citizenship rights..."**

Box 19 A family Photo



Photo: Tuba Çameli

Gülistan Aged 14, she is an 8th grade student at the Tuzla Primary School. She lives in the Tuzla permanent tents. She does her homework under the light of a kerosene lamp. Gülistan goes to the fields like everybody in her family. She wants to go to high school to continue her schooling and ‘to be a doctor to take care of people’.

I am not able to find out what the **mother** is thinking since I cannot speak Kurdish. She is good-humored but worn-out...She gave birth to 7 of her 9 children in the tents.

Gülizar (Gülistan’s older sister) has been managing the house chores and looking after her siblings since her childhood. She tells me that she has to do laundry three times a day in their tent covered with dust and mud. Pointing out at her sister Gülistan, she says, “I hope that she makes it”...

Ibrahim Bey, the father says, “I will send Gülistan to school”; he tells that they were obliged to live in Karataş where they came 10 years ago when their village was evacuated.

Box 20 What Was It Like To Be A Child?

Photo: Social Support Center Archive

“Ahmet, Fatma, Ali, Turhan, Filiz, Zehra...It goes like that; for what seems like eternity. I met 6,000 children in this region –all with different stories, different lives and different dreams. The only common thing in their life is their superhuman toiling in the fields for 12 hours a day... I met people young in years, yet they were old –all were of school age. They have long forgotten what it was to be a child –they do not have the time for it...Thousands of them with their hands calloused, scrawny by the toil, broken out with illnesses. After a brief moment of estrangement, they start telling their stories, their lives. You are left speechless when they say ‘My father didn’t send me to school for I’m a girl. When my brothers arrive from school, I hug their notebooks –do you know what it is like?’ You choke up when they tell you, ‘I’m 13 and my uncle offers 20,000YTL to my father for his permission to marry me to his son. But I want to get an education’. You remain silent when Zehra says, ‘My father stayed back in the homeland and we came here to work with my mom and my four siblings. My father called recently –he has fallen in love with some girl. He needed 6,000YTL to get married. He told my mother, ‘work harder and send me the money required for my marriage’. You realize that you’re at that point where no words are left to say...They are 6,000 bright and shining children with 6,000 stories, 6,000 dreams of their own. They are all getting lost in the cotton fields...These are kids who work while they are not legally allowed to work. These are kids who should be in school by law; but yet, they’re in the fields. These are kids whom their mothers braided their hair just yesterday and today they are forced to get married and they become moms in their own childhood. Girls who wait for the dark for six months, as there are no toilets in the tents. These are children who are hurt when their hands are pricked with thorns, with their backs hurting from plucking the weeds, fainting in the heat, getting beaten when they are left behind for they are tired during the work, and who are insulted when they pick less cotton. What greater cruelty could a tiny child be exposed to throughout all his or her life?”¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ From the book draft by Remziye Kozan and Kazım İlkan Kertmen wherein their experiences within the context of the project are compiled.

In Conclusion...

*I say, all the flowers of the world,
Bring all the flowers here.
Bring all my students here
Bring all the village children
Who are just like the crocuses blossoming by the rocks.
I will give them a final lesson
Sing my last song to them.*

*I say, all the flowers of the world,
I want the flowers of the prairie and the mountains.
Our destinies are the same
They bloom in solitude; nobody is aware of them
Their scents get lost over the vast plains
The beloved and anonymous flowers of my country,
I yearn for all of you –come and see me.¹⁵²*

Efforts made in the field by many people such as the deputy governors, schoolmasters, teachers, journalists, members of associations who served as a resource for this book by sharing their experiences and knowledge are not so distant from the aspiration of the poet who yearns for all the flowers of the world (the children).

I have intended to submit a short review which is expected to aid in the discussion of several best practices conducted between the years of 2003 and 2007, through the testimonies of the people who endeavored with heart and soul for school enrolment of the beloved and anonymous flowers (children) which bloom in solitude with no one being aware of them, as well as the girls and their families. I made an effort to give voice to each person interviewed as much as I could do.

While the book was being designed, a letter arrived from Pervin whom I interviewed by visiting their home in Aydın within the scope of the survey. She was expressing thanks in her letter to everybody who helped to enroll her in school. She was heralding that her lessons were good and adding, “Don’t worry, the efforts spent on me will not go down the drain –I will become a lawyer.”

Finally, we leave the word to İbrahim Er, General Director at the MoNE General Directorate of National Education, the most significant address in terms of the institutionalization of all the projects and campaigns reviewed in the book. We believe that this section quoted from the interview conducted with İbrahim Er in August 2007 within the scope of the survey will provide a basis for the discussion of further strategies and approaches.

Tuba Çameli: Will you please tell us about the next step/steps in the enrolment of girls’ access to primary education?

İbrahim Er: Many activities and projects have been implemented on this issue and many of them are still being carried on. The key tool I require at this stage however, is the conduction of further surveys

¹⁵² Quoted from the poem titled “All the flowers of the world” by poet Ceyhan Atuf Kansu.

in order to set up new strategies. We have to develop new strategies targeting the groups which are more difficult to be enrolled in primary education. We are in need of research on the factors with negative impact on school enrolment of these groups as well as the requirements of these groups. We would be setting up policies in accordance with the specified factors; therefore, the attitudes, concepts and perceptions of the target group which forms the basis of the policy are of key importance...During the recent years, school enrolment of a significant amount of girls have been ensured through the HKO campaign and other projects. In fact, the campaign had informative aspects on our behalf –we have noticed that the solution would be difficult through the centralized policies we set up. We intend to convert the province –even the school- to a structure which is capable of mobilizing the center, urging to open the lines of communication by developing policies on school enrolment and quality.

Within this context, we are developing a system which perceives the school as a whole, specifies the standards and enables active, qualified monitoring and assessment. We have named this “minimum standards” for the time being. We seek to create a difference by ensuring the schools to render services in line with these standards.

T.Ç.: Are you going to develop new models as in Karataş, by analyzing the groups excluded from the system?

I.E.: Not a single model for all of them. Diverse models will be generated and implemented in accordance with the variables impacting each group. As a matter of fact, new models in line with the requirements should also be formed; hence, we are striving to do this –to achieve such a structure- in our General Directorate as well.

T.Ç.: Are you planning to extend primary education to 12 years?

I.E.: That is the objective. There is the issue of infrastructure, however. And it's not only the infrastructure –the superstructure is also required. Initially hundred percent school enrolment must be obtained.

T.Ç.: The institutions have to prepare their own databases in accordance with the address-based population registry system. As the MoNE, you have covered ground by launching the “e-school” application by processing students’ information in the computer with their ID numbers. Will you please tell us about the further developments on this issue?

I.E.: Unfortunately, we have had no sound data on primary school education up to the present. Today, it is possible for us to identify the children out of the system including even their addresses, by means of the database established through the census conducted by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) and the General Directorate of Population and Citizenship and through the subsequently developed e-school databases implemented by the Ministry of National Education. These data will enable their access to school and in the meantime, our capacity will be enhanced in terms of developing policies targeting the solution of the problem. Furthermore, this would also enhance our capacity to intervene at the levels of provinces, districts, villages and even school neighborhoods, in addition to the central level.

T.Ç.: Will the e-school application be beneficial in terms of ensuring school enrolment and attendance of the children whose families –for instance- work as migrant workers?

I.E.: Let me give an example –let's say there's this child coming from Cizre to Karataş, Adana in March. And he is registered at the school in Cizre –registered with his ID number. The schoolmaster of the school in Cizre will be able to follow up this child through the system. The child starts in the Tuzla Primary School in Adana. His status at this school will be as a guest student. We are developing a further project for this; we are working on monitoring and assessment process through the e-school system. Absence of the children will also be processed in the e-school.; hence, we will be able to monitor the attendance status.

T.Ç.: You are working on the compensatory classes education program (YSEP) in order for the children aged 10-14 excluded from the system to be enrolled in primary education. How significant is this program in terms of the enhancement of access to primary education?

I.E.: It is a key factor...With this program which would be implemented within a specified time frame, we are targeting school enrolment of all children between the ages of 10 to 14 who are left out of the system. Think about it –what would happen if this compensatory classes education program is not implemented? Some of the children will be left out of the system. With YSEP however, the child has still got a chance. A student who has attended the compensatory class education and consequently placed in a respective grade will find the opportunity to complete primary education –in line with his or her own efforts, of course. Currently, a significant portion of the children left out of the system consists of the children who had not been able to go to school as their villages had been evacuated –and I’m saying this for the East and the Southeast- due to terrorism. With YSEP, 10 years from now, we won’t be discussing children left out of the system anymore.

T.Ç.: Access to primary education is associated with the secondary education, vocational education and even the university education. Would you please briefly tell about your opinions on these issues?

I.E.: Our people and particularly the parents of the children in that underprivileged group would send their kids to school in order to enable them to attain a profession. In fact, the focus point of the issue lies here in my opinion. This is related to the macroeconomic equilibriums of the country. Higher education exerts a great deal of pressure over secondary education. Vocational education has to be reviewed within this scope. There is a serious gap between the vocational schooling and the business world. Restructuring of higher education as well as the restructuring of the secondary education consequently entails a requirement for the restructuring of education as a whole. This structuring will allow the teachers to be trained in accordance with the new curricula in primary education. We are recruiting the graduates of teachers colleges. It is possible for the teacher to graduate from school without acquiring the proficiency required by the constructivist approach. There is a gap here –this is a crucial contradiction influencing the quality of education. Restructuring of education by taking it into consideration within a holistic system extending from pre-schooling to higher education would eliminate many problems.

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İstanbul, June 2008

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