

IN 2008 THE STATE OF CHILDREN IN TURKEY With Special Reference To The Right Of Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine what happens in Turkey in terms of implementation of the CRC (The Convention on the Rights of the Child) in general, with special reference to the right of education and to develop suitable recommendations in order to add some contribution to solve the main problems in early child development. A CRC-based approach and CRC Implementation Checklist have been used as a mean and criteria for assessments of the data obtained. This is a descriptive study which utilizes both qualitative and quantitative data obtained from related statistical knowledge on national and international, especially official web-sites updated (until 2008). On the basis of the fact that early childhood care and education is an essential component of basic education, this study has been concluded with some suggestions and recommendations to solve the main problems regarding the rights of the children in Turkey.

Key Words: Child, Rights, Implementation Checklist, Early Childhood, Education, Turkey

INTRODUCTION

Turkey is located at the intersection of three continents (Asia- Europe- Africa) and five regions (the Balkans, Mediterranean, Black Sea, Caucasus and the Middle East) and plays an especially important role in a sixth region (Central Asia).

Historical and cultural ties with Balkan, Central Asian and Middle Eastern countries date back to the Ottoman Empire, with Turkey's secular parliamentary democracy serving as a model for some countries in Central Asia. For the last two decades, Turkey has played an important economic role in Central Asia and the Balkans, and provided educational and technical assistance (know-how and financing) in both regions (UN,2000).

Over the ruins of the Ottoman Empire, after the national war for independence against the imperialist occupation and colonization, The Turkish Republic was founded in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who instituted an ambitious programme of reforms designed to orient the political, social and economic structure of the country towards Western cultures.

Today, as a developing country Turkey takes place in the CEE/CIS (Central and Eastern Europe/ the Commonwealth of Independent States) and Baltic States regionally (UNICEF, 2001a). Turkey was recognized as a candidate for membership in the European Union at the European Union Summit held in Helsinki in 1999 (UNICEF, 2001b).

Turkey is one of the 20 most populous countries in the world. The total population in 2007 was 74 million and it has expected to have exceeded 80 million by 2015, the target year for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). (Turkstat, Mid-year population projections by age groups, 2000-2020, www.tuik.gov.tr/, 2007). The geographical distribution of the population has shifted over the last eighty years from being three quarters rural in 1927 to being two thirds urban at present. A pattern of increasing internal migration from villages to urban centres can be traced back to the 1950s and the development of Turkey's industrial base in the Northwest and Western regions. (Turkstat, City and Village Population, 1927-2000). The phenomenon of migration has had a marked effect on development. The high rate of migration to urban centres also puts increasing pressure on municipal councils, straining resources for social services and housing.

The economy has been unstable throughout the last six decades of the Republic. A system of IMF-backed reforms helped to restore stability and the economy has grown by a third since the crisis (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Economic survey of Turkey 2006, <www.oecd.org/eco/surveys/turkey>, 2007).

Turkey signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) during the World Children's Summit in 1990 and ratified the CRC in 1994, with the reservation of her right to interpret articles 7,29 and 30 in accordance with the Lausanne Treaty and the Turkish Constitution. The Convention was published in the Official Gazette no. 22148 on 27 January 1995. The Convention on the Rights of the Child treaty spells out the basic human rights that children everywhere - without discrimination - have:

- the right to survival;
- to develop to the fullest;
- to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation;
- to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.

AIM

The purpose of this study is to determine what happens in Turkey in terms of implementation of the CRC (The Convention on the Rights of the Child) in general, with special reference to the right of education and to develop suitable recommendations in order to add some contributions to solve the main problems in early child development in Turkey.

METHOD

This is a descriptive study which utilizes both qualitative and quantitative data obtained from related statistical knowledge on national and international, especially official web-sites updated. A CRC-based approach and CRC Implementation Checklist have been used as a mean and criteria for assessments. The results have been revealed through evaluation of the findings.

A CRC-based approach introduces the notion of the legal and the moral obligation and the accountability of the State and the institutions regarding to meet the basic needs of the people in a country. It affirms that children and women are subjects of rights and that this better guarantees the sustainability of development programs. The Convention on the Rights of the Child Implementation Checklist which has been prepared based on the "Implementation Handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child" prepared by UNICEF, is an evolving document which will be updated regularly to monitor the latest development on CRC implementations in Turkey.

As in the (UNICEF,1991) Basic Reference Document, it is a requirement of the article 44, to keep the implementations under control continuously. The provisions of the Convention have been grouped under different sections, equal importance being attached to all the rights recognized by the Convention. In this study, the focus has been on especially the Article 6 in principles and the Article 18 in Family Environment & Care:

General Principles	Family Environment
Non-discrimination (art. 2)	Parental guidance (art.5)
Best interests of the child (art. 3)	Parental responsibilities (art.18)
The right to life and development (art.6)	Separation from parents (art. 9)
Respect for the views of the child (art.12)	Family Reunification (art. 10)

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

I. Facts About Children's Rights in the World at a Glance

The world has not solved the problem of hunger yet. Chronic undernutrition impairs the mental and physical development of children and economic development of countries. Reducing undernutrition is a moral imperative and helps alleviate poverty.

Achieving The Millennium Development Goals will mean that the lives of around 30million children and 2 million mothers will have been spared between 2005 and 2015.It will result in hundreds of millions of children, women and men being relieved of hunger, utilizing safe water,obtaining basic education...The targets are all reachable in time if the political will, necessary resources and required strategies are put in place in order to unite for children (The State of World's Children,2008).

The prevalence of chronic undernutrition is a relevant and valid measure of endemic poverty and is a better indicator than estimates of per capita income. The global map in the following shows the distribution of chronic undernutrition at national and subnational levels using stunting in growth among children under five years of age as an indicator (www.povertymap.net ,2008).

On the map of poverty, the percentage of stunted children changes from one region to another in Turkey.

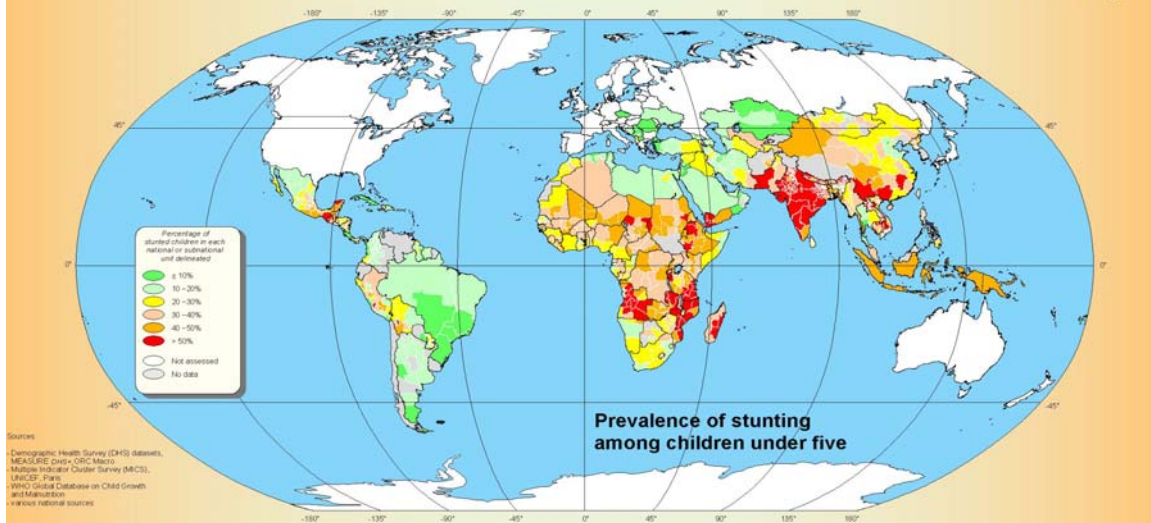
The percentages of stunted children in Turkey :

Less than 10% in the western part of Turkey;

Between 10_20 % in the middle of Anatolia in Turkey;

Between 20-30% in the eastern part of Turkey.

Chronic Undernutrition among Children An Indicator of Poverty



source: www.povertymap.net ,2008.

Although the rights of the children are not separable, the facts about the rights have been tried to be summarized into four basic titles in the world as in the following (Table1):

Table 1. The Situation in the World about Children’s Basic Rights

To survival	To protection	To develop	To participate
<p>Approximately ten million children under five died in 2006 as almost 10 million die each year, whereas most causes of death in children are prevented. The world’s population of children under 15 increased to almost 2 billion. Improved breastfeeding practices and reduction of artificial feeding could save 1.5 million children a year. Measles accounts for more than 7% of all deaths of children under five around the world, half of them among infants under the age of one. Approximately 15 million girls aged 15–19 give birth every year, accounting for more than 10% of all babies born worldwide. The risk of death from pregnancy-related causes is four times higher than for women older than 20.</p>	<p>Approximately half of the 40 million people displaced by conflict or human rights violations are children. Each day, countless numbers of children are exposed to dangers that hamper their growth and development. 2.4 billion people lack access to adequate sanitation. Iodized salt is the world’s leading cause of preventable mental impairment. Skilled prenatal and delivery care plays a major role in reducing maternal mortality and morbidity. Fewer than 50% of births have a skilled attendant present. Fewer than 50% of children are registered. More than 25% of girls under 5 years old are underweight. More than 10 million children -15 have lost their parents to AIDS.</p>	<p>Of the world’s 875 million illiterate adults, almost two thirds are female. Over 120 million children are denied the right of education, the majority is female. One in three children in developing countries doesn’t complete 5 years of primary education. More than 20% of primary school aged children in developing countries are not in school. Malnutrition among pregnant women is a major factor in the stunting of an estimated 177 million children. Because of malnutrition, 30% or more under-5-year-olds suffer from severe or moderate stunting. One third of all births are not registered – these children are likely to be denied access to basic services and miss out on health care and education.</p>	<p>If the child is female she’s subjected to double discrimination. Discrimination on the basis of gender is a worldwide problem. Whereas Girls’ Education - the critical link. Children in situations of crisis and instability often are denied their right to education. Girls are particularly affected by this phenomena. Girls’ education is inseparable from child protection policies, from increased registration of infants at birth to reduction of child labour and sexual exploitation. Learning begins at birth, yet the playing field is uneven from the start, and girls often receive less care and attention, including nurturing and food. Malnourished girls often grow into undernourished mothers, in turn more likely to give birth to low - birthweight infants.</p>

(Source:UNICEF,2003-2008)

II. Facts About Children's Rights in Turkey among the Countries in the World

Turkey's human development rank that has an impact on Children's Rights, is 84. and Turkey takes place at the level of the medium human development among the other countries as in the following tables:

Table 2 . 2007/2008 Human Development Index Rankings

High Human Development	Medium Human Development	Low Human Development
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Iceland</u> 2. <u>Norway</u> 3. <u>Australia</u> 4. <u>Canada</u> 5. <u>Ireland</u> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 84. <u>Turkey</u> 85. <u>Suriname</u> 86. <u>Jordan</u> 87. <u>Peru</u> 88. <u>Lebanon</u> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 173. <u>Mali</u> 174. <u>Niger</u> 175. <u>Guinea-Bissau</u> 176. <u>Burkina Faso</u> 177. <u>Sierra Leone</u>

Source : Human Development Report,2008

Since 1990, UNDP has been publishing Human Development Indexes (HDI) every year together with the Human Development Reports. The HDI is a summary composite index that measures a country's average achievements in three basic aspects of Human Development: health, knowledge, and a decent standard of living. Health is measured by life expectancy at birth; knowledge is measured by a combination of the adult literacy rate and the combined primary, secondary, and tertiary gross enrolment ratio; and standard of living by GDP per capita (PPP US\$).

Table 3. Turkey's Human Development Index 2005

HDI value	Life expectancy at birth (years)	Adult literacy rate (% ages 15 and older)	Combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio (%)	GDP per capita (PPP US\$)
1. Iceland (0.968)	1. Japan (82.3)	1. Georgia (100.0)	1. Australia (113.0)	1. Luxembourg (60,228)
83. Armenia (0.775)	84. Lebanon (71.5)	68. Malta (87.9)	107. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (68.9)	65. Thailand (8,677)
84. Turkey (0.775)	85. Turkey (71.4)	69. Turkey (87.4)	108. Turkey (68.7)	66. Turkey (8,407)
85. Suriname (0.774)	86. El Salvador (71.3)	70. Dominican Republic (87.0)	109. Albania (68.6)	67. Brazil (8,402)
177. Sierra Leone (0.336)	177. Zambia (40.5)	139. Burkina Faso (23.6)	172. Niger (22.7)	174. Malawi (667)

Source : Human Development Report,2008

Education is measured by the adult illiteracy rate. And a decent standard of living is measured by the unweighted average of people without access to an improved water source and the proportion of children under age 5 who are underweight for their age. Tables show the values for these variables for Turkey and compares them to other countries.

Table 4. Selected indicators of human poverty for Turkey

Human Poverty Index (HPI-1) 2004	Probability of not surviving past age 40 (%) 2004	Adult illiteracy rate (%ages 15 and older) 2004	People without access to an improved water source (%)2004	Children underweight for age (% ages 0-5) 2004
1. Chad (56.9)	1. Zimbabwe (57.4)	1. Burkina Faso (76.4)	1. Ethiopia (78)	1. Nepal (48)
86. Brazil (9.7)	101. Samoa (6.6)	70. Dominican Republic (13.0)	108. Albania (4)	123. Tunisia (4)
87. Turkey (9.2)	102. Turkey (6.5)	71. Turkey (12.6)	109. Turkey (4)	124. Turkey (4)
88. Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (8.8)	103. Moldova (6.5)	72. Malta (12.1)	110. Ukraine (4)	125. Singapore (3)
108. Barbados (3.0)	173. Iceland (1.4)	164. Estonia (0.2)	125. Hungary (1)	134. Chile (1)

Source : Human Development Report,2008

Table 5. Turkey 2007/2008 Selected Human Development Indicators

01. Human development index		
Human development index value, 2005	0.775	
Life expectancy at birth, annual estimates (years), 2005	71.4	
Adult literacy rate (% aged 15 and older), 1995-2005	87.4	
Combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary education (%), 2005	68.7	1
Life expectancy index	0.773	
Education index	0.812	
02. Human and income poverty: developing countries		
Human poverty index (HPI-1) rank	22	
Adult illiteracy rate (% aged 15 and older), 1995-2005	12.6	
Population not using an improved water source (%), 2004	4	
Children underweight for age (% under age 5), 1996-2005	4	
03. Demographic trends		
Population, total (millions), 2005	73.0	
Population, annual growth rate (%), 1975-2005	1.9	
Population, urban (% of total population), 2005	67.3	
Population under age 15 (% of total population), 2005	28.3	
04. Commitment to health: resources, access and services		
Public expenditure on health (% of GDP), 2004	5.2	3
Private expenditure on health (% of GDP), 2004	2.1	3
One-year-olds fully immunized against tuberculosis (%), 2005	89	
Births attended by skilled health personnel (%), 1997-2005	83	
05. Water, sanitation and nutritional status		
Population using improved sanitation (%), 2004	88	
Children under weight for age (% under age 5), 1996-2005	4	
Children under height for age (% under age 5), 1996-2005	19	2
06. Commitment to education: public spending		
Public expenditure on education (% of GDP), 2002-05	3.7	
Current public expenditure on education, pre-primary and primary 2002-05	40	56
Current public expenditure on education, secondary (% of all levels), 2002-05	32	56
Current public expenditure on education, tertiary (% of all levels), 2002-05	28	56
07. Literacy and enrolment		
Adult literacy rate (% aged 15 and older), 1995-2005	87.4	
Net primary enrolment rate (%), 2005	89	
Net secondary enrolment rate (%), 2005	67	7
Children reaching grade 5 (% of grade 1 students), 2004	97	
08. Technology: diffusion and creation		
Telephone mainlines (per 1,000 people), 2005	263	
Cellular subscribers (per 1,000 people), 2005	605	
Internet users (per 1,000 people), 2005	222	
Patents granted to residents (per million people), 2005	1	
Researchers in R&D (per million people), 1990-2005	341	
09. Inequality in income or expenditure 2003		
Share of income or consumption, poorest 10% (%)	2.0	
Share of income or consumption, poorest 20% (%)	5.3	
Share of income or consumption, richest 20% (%)	49.7	
Share of income or consumption, richest 10% (%)	34.1	
Inequality measures, ratio of richest 10% to poorest 10%	16.8	
Inequality measures, ratio of richest 20% to poorest 20%	9.3	

Source : Human Development Report,2008

The Human Development Index - going beyond income, provides a composite measure of three dimensions of human development:

1. living a long and healthy life (measured by life expectancy),
2. being educated (measured by adult literacy and enrolment at the primary, secondary and tertiary level)
3. having a decent standard of living (measured by purchasing power parity, PPP, income).

The HDI for Turkey is 0.775, which gives the country a rank of 84th out of 177 countries with data above.

Children's and Women's Rights in Turkey

In spite of the fact that women received right to vote in 1930 and to stand for election in 1934, their seats in Turkish parliament were 4.4 % last year (2007). Without the benefit of a quality basic education, let alone access to secondary or tertiary education, women are relegated to secondary roles within their families, excluded from the job market and participation in political life. Women represented only 26% of the registered labour force in 2006. Participation of women in central or local levels of government is poor: only 24 out of 550 seats in the national parliament were held by women in 2006. Following the latest general election in 2007, the number of female members of parliament increased to 50, representing 9.1% of the total seats.

Low levels of education, entrenched social attitudes and customs also affect the protective environment for children of both sexes, especially the most vulnerable. Although there has been no systematic monitoring of the situation to date, available research and anecdotal information indicate that incidence of child abuse, neglect and deprivation of parental care is on the increase. The lack of preventive measures, policies and poor enforcement of legislation reflects a weak institutional response in this respect.

Whereas Turkey signed the related Status of human rights instruments:

1979 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1985;

Elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation - Convention 111, in 1967;

Abolition of child labour - Convention 138, in 1998

Status of labour rights conventions: Abolition of child labour - Convention 182, in 2001.

Turkey signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the 14th of September 1990 and ratified it on the 4th of April 1995. The Optional Protocols on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and on the involvement of children in armed conflict were ratified by Turkey on the 8th September 2000 (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, <www.ohchr.org>, 2007).

A series of legislative packages between 2002 and 2004 brought family law closer to the standards of the CRC, namely:

amendments to the Penal Code (Act No. 5237) and the Criminal Procedure Code (Act No. 5271), which entered into force on the 1st of June 2005, making provision for:

raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility from 11 to 12;

a probation system as an alternative to deprivation of liberty;

increased remission of sentence for children;

the Child Protection Law (Act No. 5395), which entered into force on the 3rd of July 2005, aimed at integrating international standards into the procedures and principles regarding children in need of protection, including:

special arrangements for the sensitive treatment and protection of child victims; an increase in the number of child courts; provision of protection for children by civil society organisations (Committee on the Rights of the Child, Forty-second session, CRC/C/OPSC/TUR/CO/1, <www.unhchr.ch>, 2007).

Turkey signed the European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights on the 7th of May 1999 and ratified it on the 10th of June 2002. 27 States parties to the Convention are obliged by paragraph 4 of Article 1 to specify at least three categories of family cases before a judicial authority to which the Convention will apply. Turkey applies the Convention to the following categories:

Turkey also acceded to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), ratifying the Convention on the 20th of December 1985 and the Optional protocol recognising the competency of the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women which was signed on the 8th of September 2000 and ratified on the 29th of October 2002 (United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, <www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/2007>). Ratification of the Optional Protocol constitutes an important step since it opens the way for personal applications to the Committee. Amongst the most important legal reforms in line with CEDAW was the amendment of Article 10 of the Constitution in May 2004, making the State responsible not only for ensuring non-discrimination between women and men, but also for taking the necessary measures to provide equal rights and opportunities in practice for women in every field (<www.unhchr.ch>, 2007). Other modifications improving the status of women have been made to the Civil Code although the social status of women has yet to reach the desired level of gender equality.

Turkey was one of the first six countries to undertake action to combat child labour through the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) in 1992 and is a state party to six ILO conventions directly related to children, including the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention in 1999. (ILO, Geneva (<www.ilo.org/public/english/region/eurpro/ankara/conv/ratified.htm>, 2007). However, the successful elimination of child labour will require a concerted effort by government, civil society and the private sector -- particularly employers of informal labour.

The Situation Of Women And Children In Turkey

Fulfilling the right to education provides a critical link to the fulfillment of other rights for present and future generations of children. Across the life cycle of a child, girls' education is instrumental in creating the opportunities for the child to develop to his or her full potential (UNICEF,2003a). Since Women's status and children's status are inextricably linked, Girls' Education is the critical link to solve the problems of children.

"The Jomtien Declaration on Education for All states that learning begins at birth and confirms that early childhood care and education (ECCE) is an essential component of basic education. This trend is, in part, motivated by brain research finding that the foundations of human development are laid during the child's early years. The positive correlation between quality early childhood experience and performance in primary school is well established. Research also has shown that investment in the early years outperforms other public policy options in terms of savings on remedial programmes. For children from poor families, Early Childhood is a time-bound opportunity to break the cycle of poverty"(UNESCO,2003).

Early childhood is the most rapid period of development in human life. Early Childhood is no longer viewed merely as a preparatory stage assisting the child's transition to formal schooling but has gained importance in terms of its impacts on the child's development and learning. Supports for parents have been an integral part of early childhood services and a policy by placing Early Childhood within the broader context of social development and gender equity in the society.

Women's literacy rates – a proxy for their empowerment and advancement – are key to improving the health, nutrition and education of families and children. Women's status and children's status are inextricably linked. Education of mothers is very important to prevent violence. Violence against women is often equivalent to violence against children, because women status=children's status. UNICEF's work in education has indicated that a focus girls' education is often the most effective inroad to education for all children. UNICEF is making it a top organizational priority to focus on girls' education as a key strategic entry point towards Education for All (UNICEF,2003a).

Children are Turkey's largest demographic group. The current estimated total of 27 million people under 19 years of age represents 36% of the total population with under-fifteen-year-olds and under-five-year-olds constituting 28% and 9% of the total respectively. The proportion of children is expected to decrease slightly to 33% by 2015. (Turkstat, Mid-year population projections by age groups, 2000-2020). The population increase ratio began to fall but 37,3 million people making up 57% of the population belong to 0-24 age group"(MEB,2003a). In brief, the ratio of population between 3-14 (at the age of pre-primary and primary schools) can be approximately 20 % of total population.

Table 6. Distribution of Population on the Basis of Age Groups Related to Education

Demographic indicators	1995	2000	2005
3-5 Age Group	6,36	5,89	5,89
6-13 Age Group	17,98	15,85	14,63
14-16 Age Group	6,60	6,29	5,53
17-20 Age Group	8,15	8,28	7,68

(Source: SSI, SPO,2005)

The 21st of June 2002 proved to be a milestone in child survival in Turkey when the country was certified polio-free as part the WHO European Region -- no further cases of wild virus transmission having been recorded since November 1998. Measles immunisation coverage rates reached 97% following two successful campaigns of national immunisation days during the winters of 2003 and 2004.

Good overall progress was made in reducing infant (IMR) and under-five (U5MR) mortality rates...According to the latest Turkey Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) published in 2003, IMR was reduced from 43‰ live births in 1998 to 29‰ live births during the previous five years. The IMR has since dropped further to 26‰ live births in 2007, indicating a positive general improvement in child health when viewed together with the U5MR, also substantially reduced from 52‰ to 37‰ by 2003. The TDHS also showed a drop of 8.3% to 3.9% in under-five-years-old who are moderately or severely underweight and 1.4% to 0.6% in under-five-years-old who were severely underweight. The TDHS also showed a strong correlation between the education of the mother and the chances of child survival(www.unicef.org Turkey,2008).

The series of reforms encouraged by the EU accession process have contributed to many positive changes for women and children although their situation continues to be adversely affected by broad geographical, economic and cultural disparities. Notably, the 40% poverty rate of children in rural areas represents only a minute drop by comparison with 2002. (Turkstat, Poverty rates of household members according to employment sector, 2002-2005 , <www.tuik.gov.tr/ 2007).

Table 7. Basic Indicators & The Rate of Progress

Country	Under-5 Mortality Rank	Under 5 Mortality Rate			Adult Literacy Rate		At Birth Life Expectancy 2001-2006
		1990	2001	2006	2000 -2006		
					Male	Female	
Turkey	79	78	43	26	90- 94	77- 80	70 -72
Regional Summary							
CEE/CIS and Baltic States		44	37	27	99 - 98	96 - 97	69 - 68
Developing Countries		103	89	79	82 - 87	66 - 76	62 - 66
World		93	82	72	85 - 87	74 - 78	64 - 68

(Source: UNICEF,2003b & 2008)

Table 8. The Last Basic Indicators	
Under-5 mortality rank	96
Under-5 mortality rate, 1990	82
Under-5 mortality rate, 2006	26
Infant mortality rate (under 1), 1990	67
Infant mortality rate (under 1), 2006	24
Neonatal mortality rate, 2000	22
Total population (thousands), 2006	73922
Annual no. of births (thousands), 2006	1378
Annual no. of under-5 deaths (thousands)2006	36
GNI per capita (US\$), 2006	5400
Life expectancy at birth (years), 2006	72
Total adult literacy rate, 2000-2005	87
Primary school net enrolment/ attendance2000-2006	89%
% share of household income 1995-2004 lowest 40%,	15
% share of household income 1995-2004 highest 20%,	50

Source: The State of the World's Children 2008

The phenomenon of child labour is evident in the informal urban economy, seasonal agricultural work and domestic labour -- particularly girls in the latter case. The last survey of child labour by the State Institute of Statistics (Turkstat) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in 1999 revealed that 1.6 million children between the ages of 6 and 17 years of age were economically active. Turkstat in 2007 indicates that 958,000 children aged between 6 and 17 were engaged in some form of economic activity in 2006 — some 5.9% of the total number of children in this age group. Among children aged 6–14, 320,000, or 2.6%, were engaged in economic activity. 124,000 of these were not attending school.(Turkstat, Child Labour Statistics, 2006 <www.tuik.gov.tr/>, 2007).

Increasing numbers of children are resorting to street life, either as a means to support their families or to escape the stressful effects of poverty in the home. Already vulnerable and running a high risk of coming in contact with the law, the dangers of abuse and exploitation for children engaging in street life are doubled in the absence of proper guidance and care of a responsible adult. Many of them are from rural families who have moved in search of a better quality of life in urban centres only to find that opportunities for well-paid employment and better access to basic services are at a premium (Akşit, B., Karancı, N., Working Street Children in Three Metropolitan Cities: a rapid assessment, International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), Geneva, 2001). Children working on the streets often drop out of the education system. Although this is not by any means an inevitable consequence, those who continue their studies are severely compromised in their capacity to apply themselves.

Education and Children

Turkey was among the countries in which, proportion of children enrolled in or attending primary school is between 75-89 % and women's literacy rates are between 60-89 % UNICEF, 2001a. But in 2006 primary school enrolment ratio is 92% for male and 87 % for female; young women's (15-24years old) literacy rate has been raised to 93%; the ratio of population between 3-14 (at the age of pre-primary and primary schools) can be approximately 20 % (UIS 2006 - Unesco Institute for Statistics)

Pre-Primary Education

Pre-primary education involves the education of children in the age group of 3 to 5 who have not reached the age of compulsory primary education, on an optional basis. Pre-primary education institutions may be established as independent infant schools or, where considered necessary, as nursery classes within a primary education school or as practice classes affiliated to other related education institutions.

The objective of pre-primary education is to ensure that children develop physically, mentally and emotionally and acquire good habits, that they are prepared for primary education, that a common environment of upbringing is provided for children who come from a disadvantaged background and that they speak Turkish properly and correctly.

Table 9. Number of School, Enrolment And Teacher In Pre-Primary Institutions

Level of Education	School	Enrolment			Teacher
		Total	Male	Female	
Pre-primary education	20,675	640,849	334,252	306,597	24,775
Kindergartens (public&private)	1,369	100,168	52,757	47,411	5,105

Source: The Educational Year 2006/2007 , www.meb.gov.tr

Primary Education

Primary education involves the education and training of children in the age group of 6 to 14. The objective of primary education is to ensure that every Turkish child acquires the necessary knowledge, skills, behavior and habits to become a good citizen and is raised in accordance with the concept of national morals and that he/she is prepared for life and for the next level of education in accordance with his/her interests, talents and capabilities. Primary education is compulsory for all male and female citizens and is free at State schools. Primary education institutions consist of eight-year schools where continuous education is provided and primary education diplomas are awarded to the graduating students (MEB, 2003b).

The enrolment ratios in 1999-2000 academic year (Table 4) have reached 9.8 % in preschool education, 97.6 % in primary education(MEB,2003a). The rise in enrolments at all levels of education has brought about a new understanding of schools with a view to raising the quality of education. This new understanding and model envisage a school structure which is student-centred, self-upgrading, continuously developing and has the participation of every individual in education. The continuity of this developing school structure is ensured by means of the “planned school development” model. The studies for the implementation and expansion of this model in pre-school, primary and secondary schools are ongoing (UN, 2001).

Table 10. Quantitative Developments in Schooling Ratios

Levels of Education	2003-2004		2004-2005		2005-2006	
	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %	Male %	Female %
Primary Education	93.41	86.89	92.58	86.63	92.29	87.16
Secondary Education	58.08	48.43	59.05	50.51	61.13	51.95
Higher Education	16.62	13.93	18.03	15.10	-	-

Source: www.meb.gov.tr 2008.

While roughly 7% of girls and boys attended pre-school in 2001, there were gender gaps of 8% in primary education and 17% in secondary education in the same year.(Otoran, N. et al.A Gender Review in Education, Turkey 2003, (UNICEF),<www.unicef.org/turkey/gr/ge21b.html>, 2007.

Country data shows that the primary school completion rate dropped from 89.7% to 87.8% between 1991 and 2004. The estimated drop of 3% in pupils starting grade 1 and reaching grade 5 was more or less consistent across both genders (98.1% to an estimated 94.9% for boys in 2003 and 97.1% to an estimated 94.3% for girls in 2003). However the drop in completion rates for all eight grades of compulsory education between 1991 and 2004 shows a much larger gender gap: 0.1% for boys against 3.7% for girls.¹⁵ It should be noted that the compulsory term of primary education was extended from five to eight years in 1998, prior to which time the two measures were commensurate. Nevertheless, the disparity reflects a popular tendency to withdraw girls from the education system at the onset of adolescence.

The gender gap in primary education has since closed by 15% thanks to the commitment of the Ministry of National Education (MONE) but a great deal of work remains to be done if the MDGs of universal primary education and gender equality are to be achieved.¹⁶ A comparison of the gender parity index (GPI) for all three education levels shows that the gender gap in education becomes much more pronounced in higher education: the GPI for primary enrolment was 0.94 in 2004 whereas it dropped to 0.75 and 0.73 respectively for secondary and tertiary education in the same year (UN Statistics Division, Millennium Development Goals Indicators)

National and International Activities

A broad based cooperation of national and international organisations were ensured within the framework of the plan of action prepared to implement the World Declaration on the survival, protection and development of children. A national program is prepared to realise the commitments in the plan of action. Activities are carried out with the cooperation of public agencies and organisations, local governments, civil society organisations, universities, public sector and community volunteers to reach the goals of this program.

Indicators on the situation of children are monitored by analysing the data collected through routine program activities within the context of the programs implemented. The indicators that are not covered by the routine activities are monitored by surveys, with cooperation of international organisations (UNICEF,2000a):

Table 12. Cooperation of International Organisations

In The Field Of Health	In The Field Of Education	In The Field Of Difficulties
<p>In Cooperation With UNICEF-WHO ; Activities are held to address issues like preventing the causes of child mortality, child survival and health; The program on “Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses” as a broad strategy, which covers all interventions both in the health institution and at home, is being implemented.</p> <p>“Safe Motherhood and Newborn Care Programs” In cooperation with UNFPA Programs to improve reproductive health services and to increase the quality and accessibility of Family Planning services are being carried out ; “Project on Awareness Raising and Training-Communication Support”“Program to Strengthen Mother and Child Health and Family Planning Services” was conducted with the aim of rendering MCHFP services more comprehensive</p> <p>In cooperation with JICA (Japanese International Cooperation Agency) to improve community training on mother and child health and family planning. In cooperation with GTZ (German Technical Cooperation Agency)</p>	<p>Basic Education Program: Continuous Eight Year Compulsory Primary Education has been adopted on a national basis and the Basic Education Program implementations has been started with the World Bank</p> <p>Catching-up With the Age in Education 2000 Project: to ensure parallel development in national education and the “Catching-up With the Age in Education 2000 Project” have been initiated.</p> <p>Network of Schools Promoting Health Project: The project is being carried out with the cooperation of World Health Organisation, the European Council and the European Union Commission.</p> <p>Social Assistance Project: The project is launched to ensure that the goal of continuous eight-year compulsory primary education is achieved successfully and the transition is accomplished with minimum problems.</p> <p>Preparing Students for Life and Vocational Guidance Project: The project, especially launched in the Regional Boarding Schools.</p> <p>Intersectoral Volunteers Training Activities: UNICEF to enable all agencies and organisations aiming at improving the status of children and women.</p> <p>International Activities: Youth Exchange Programs have been carried out with foreign countries including France, England, Egypt, Japan, Malta, Georgia, Palestine ...</p>	<p>Children In Need Of Protection Considering that these activities involve activities held by all public agencies and organisations as well as community interest, a “Higher Council of CRC Monitoring and Evaluation” and “Sub-Committee for Monitoring and Evaluation of Child Rights” are established under the secretariat of SHÇEK to accomplish the its tasks of monitoring and coordination of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.</p> <p>Love Chain Project: The project aims at supporting the physical, psychosocial development of children in SHÇEK institutions through providing them the opportunity to benefit from public and private childcare institutions.</p> <p>Save the Kite: The project aims at keeping the 0-12 age children of convicted mothers away from the unfavourable conditions in the detention houses with the cooperation of the Ministry of Justice and SHÇEK.</p> <p>You Hold the Other Hand: The project aims at ensuring that children in need of protection benefit from the system of “Foster Families” and alternative care. Child and Youth Centers are established to assess the situation of children living/working on the streets and o provide training, guidance and consultancy to children and their families</p>

The Overall Strategy About Children In Turkey

The overall strategy about children in Turkey focuses on the following titles in brief (UN,2000):

Table 11. The Overall Strategy

Health	Education	Water&Sanitation	Children in difficulties
to ensure continuous, consistent and efficient health services; to reinforce primary health care services at all levels; to expand maternal and child health care and family planning services in the referral services system.	to ensure that children gain basic knowledge, skills, behavior and practices in order to reach their full potential, and to prepare them for higher education.	to provide access for all to safe and adequate drinking water and sewage systems, in order to prevent the spread of contagious diseases .	to protect the children physically and mentally disabled in conflict with the law, in the street and working children, victims of substance abuse and other children in difficult circumstances

Special Programs For Child Survival, Development And Protection

Among these programs the first study is in order to ensure the implementation and monitoring of the principles and provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a “CRC Check List” has been prepared under the coordination of SHÇEK and in line with the views of related agencies and organizations (UNICEF, 2000b).

Table 13. Special Programs For Child Survival, Development And Protection

1. Implementation and Monitoring of the Convention on the Rights of the Child
2. Fighting Childhood Diseases Through Strengthening Cost Effective Treatment and Primary Health Care Services; Prevention of AIDS and Giving Priority to AIDS Treatment; Ensuring Universal Access to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation; Ensuring the Control of Diseases Caused by Water
3. Prevention of Malnutrition Through Measures Including the Development of Strategies for Household Food Security and Employment and Improved Income Generating Opportunities; Disseminating Information; Providing Support for Increased Food Production and Distribution
4. Improving the Status of Girls and Women and Ensuring Their Access to Health, Education, Training, Loans, Agricultural Extension, Family Planning, Prenatal, Delivery and Other Services
5. Ensuring Support to Families and Other Care Takers in Providing Care and Attention to Children; Provision of a Proper Alternative Environment, Family or Institution, for Children if They are Parted from Their Families
6. Ensuring that Early Childhood Development Gains Priority; Ensuring Universal Free Access to Basic Education; Reducing Adult Illiteracy; Preparation for Vocational Training and Work; The Opportunity to Obtain Additional Information, Skills and Values Through All Available Media
7. Paying special attention to Children Living Under Difficult Circumstances by Eliminating the Exploitation of Child Labour and Combating the Abuse of Drugs, Tobacco and Alcohol
8. Follow-up of the World Summit Targets, Preventing Environmental Degradation Through Developing Respect for the Natural Environment and Changing the Tendency to Exploit in a Destructive Manner
9. Paying Attention to Poverty and Foreign Debt Issues; Mobilising Financial Resources for Development; Preventing Net Transfer of Funds from the Developing Countries to the Developed Countries; Ensuring that Children Have Priority in Economic and Social Development

(Source:UNICEF,2000a)

Table 14a. Specific Issues in Implementing Article 6

No	Indicator	+	?	-
1	Is the general principle reflected in article 6 included in the State's legislation?	X		
2	Have appropriate measures been introduced to reduce rates of infant and child mortality for all sectors of the population?	X		
3	Have the rates of the infant and child mortality consistently decreased over recent years, including disaggregated rates?	X		
4	Is the rate of abortion recorded and reported, including by age?	X		
5	Where abortion is permitted, is its use appropriately regulated?	X		
6	Where abortion is permitted, is there no discriminatory variation in the term at which it is Permitted,(e.g. dependent on identification of disability)?	X		
7	Is the State satisfied that there is no infanticide, in particular of . girls? . disabled children?	X X		
8	Is the rate of child pregnancies recorded and reported?	X		
9	Have appropriate measures been undertaken to reduce the number of child pregnancies?	X		
10	Are there circumstances in which the death penalty may be applied to children?			X
11	Are there appropriate arrangements to ensure the registration of, investigation of and reporting on the deaths of all children and their causes?	X		
12	Are homicide rates analyzed by the age of the victim in order to identify the proportion of children of different age groups who are murdered? . Does the crime of infanticide exist in the legislation of the State? . If so, has it been reviewed in the light of the Convention's principles?	X X		
13	Are suicides by children recorded and reported and the rates analyzed by age?	X		
14	Have appropriate measures been taken to reduce and prevent suicide by children?		X	

(Source:UNICEF,2000b)

Table 14b. Specific Issues in Implementing Article 18

No	Indicator	+	?	-
1	Does legislation support parent's primacy of responsibility for children's upbringing and development?	X		
2	Is parental responsibility defined in legislation?	X		
3	Does legislation make clear that the exercise of parental responsibility has the best interests of the child as its basic concern?	X		
4	Are parents provided with education programmes on the exercises of their responsibilities?	X		
5	Are laws, administrative systems, tax and welfare measures and public education aimed at supporting both parent's common responsibilities for, and active participation in, their child's upbringing?	X		
6	Does the law enable fathers of children born outside marriage to assume parental rights and responsibilities (compatible with the child's best interests)?	X		
7	Is there a presumption in law that children's best interests, unless proved to the contrary is in maintaining contact with both parents?	X		
8	When parents separate, does legislation ensure that the grounds for allocating parental responsibility are based on the individual child's best interests?	X		
9	Are all parents provided with the following assistances where necessary . financial support? . housing? . appropriate child-care equipment? . day care and respite care? . advice and counselling?		X X X	X X
10	Is good quality day care available for all working parents?		X	
11	Are parents of disabled children provided with appropriate additional forms of assist.?			X
12	Are disabled parents provided with appropriate additional forms of assistance?	X		
13	Are mothers entitled to maternity leave?	X		
14	Are fathers entitled to paternity leave?		X	
15	Are parents entitled to take leave if their child is sick?	X		
16	Does the State pay for parental leave where necessary?	X		
17	Does the State encourage employment conditions, which assist working parents in the exercise of their parental responsibilities?			X

(Source: UNICEF, 2000b)

A Nutrition and Health Survey was conducted in cooperation with UNICEF in order to identify the problems and possible solutions pertaining to the nutritional status of women and children.

The project on "Training Teachers for Pre-School Education Institutions" has been initiated in line with a protocol between the Ministry of National Education and the Anatolian University to meet the need for pre-school teachers.

The Parent and Child Training Project was launched in the period 1997-1998 with the aim of improving the educational status of women, interest and awareness raising among young girls, women as well as family members on child care, family planning; Productive Women Project is being implemented by the Girls Vocational Training Institutes. It aims to provide training for young girls and women, who have migrated from the rural areas to the urban slums and who are deprived of educational opportunities, on issues that suit their interests and abilities.

The Care Givers Training Program designed to provide care services to working mothers has trained 6,403 women. This approach allows the care of children in their own houses by professionals who know about the child's physical, intellectual, emotional and social development and how to act consciously when caring for a child" (UNICEF, 2000a).

Early Childhood Development and Pre-School Education Project was launched in 1991 within the framework of Turkey-UNICEF cooperation to raise the living standard of children and meet the requirements of the principle of giving priority to children. With the aim of developing alternative models to reach the families and children faster and in a cost efficient manner, a Multi-Purpose Pre-School Education Research Center was founded in 1998. Also, Child-to-Child Training Programs were conducted.

With the cooperation of the Ministry of National Education and Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV), programs were carried out in 5 provinces where children were supported in their school and home environments to ensure their healthy development.

The project Education of Children Who Cannot Benefit From Pre-School Education Institutions provides free preschool education services to 61-72 months old children in unfavourable physical and family environments. The project provided 41,628 children with free preschool education in the 2,165 pre-school classes. The Mother Child Training Program jointly carried out by MONE-UNICEF and AÇEV was initiated in 1993. The Project to Improve National Education was implemented in 59 provinces during the school year 1999-2000. It's training provided benefits to 86,490 mother-child pairs during the period 1993-2000.

Country Programme of Cooperation 2001–2006

As an intergovernmental agency, UNICEF works with its public and private sector partners through a five-year cycle or programme of projects agreed with the government of the host country. As seen on the Table, UNICEF in Turkey has been active mainly in three areas(UNICEF, 2003d):

Table 15. Primary Areas in Child Development

1.Early Childcare	2.Child and Adolescent Development and Protection	3. Policy Development Social Mobilisation
Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses (IMCI) Prevention of Prenatal and Neonatal Mortality (PPNM) Mother and Child Nutrition Activities Breastfeeding Support Family and Child Training (FACT)	Child-Friendly Learning Environments (CFLE) Girls Education. HIV/AIDS Prevention Protection of Children Living and/or Working on the Streets Improving the Juvenile Justice System	Local Capacity Building in Basic Services Advocacy and Social Mobilisation (ASM) The Children and Women's Information Network (CAWIN) Emergency and Disaster Preparedness (EDP)

Girls' Education

UNICEF is leading a drive to achieve gender parity in primary school enrolment by mobilising families, school personnel and administrative authorities under the banner of Haydi Kızlar Okula! (Lit: Let's go to School, Girls!). The UNICEF-supported girls' education campaign succeeded in reducing the number of girls who are out-of-school by 15% in the first year after its launch in 2003, and succeeded in reducing the number of out-of-school girls by approximately 35 per cent between 2003 and 2006. It also achieved a great deal in terms of raising general awareness of children's issues, particularly the negative effects of widespread female illiteracy on development, and contributed to increased debate on gender discrimination and the urgent need for gender equality at all levels of Turkish society. Interestingly, the campaign has also been successful in bringing broader public attention to the issue of gender discrimination in general.

Effective parenting in Turkey

Only 12 per cent of children under six in Turkey benefit from ECD services since fees are prohibitive for the average Turkish family. But since 1994, the Government and UNICEF have worked together to build a family- and community-based system of ECD as an alternative to the more expensive, centre-based pre-schools. The Mothers' Training Programme, operating in 24 provinces, is one part of this approach. With all family members contributing to a more stimulating and interactive learning environment in the home, children score better in language and developmental tests. Plus the overall family environment is enhanced. To reach as many families as possible, UNICEF joined with the media to produce a series of child development videos, The Better Parenting Initiative, covering the first eight years of a child's life. The videos reach a broad audience through national television broadcasts, and print materials linked to the videos are used to train the wide range of providers who work directly with families and young children. These video films have also become important components of the Mothers' Training Programme, which reaches over 80,000 mothers in the country (UNICEF,2001a). The FACT programme, an important element of the ECD programme in Turkey, was re-configured as My Family within the EU funded Children First project. Designed to positively influence parental behaviour towards children under the age of six, the programme reached 25,000 parents directly with training and another 50,000 with effective parenting messages in 2006. Feedback from the implementation of FACT/My Family showed that there is a considerable demand for family training related to adolescent issues. A version of the My Family package for families with children between 7 and 19 years of age is currently under development. The package will focus on communication and life-skills training for children and parents.

The Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHÇEK) is responsible for monitoring and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child CRC in Turkey. Since Turkey ratified the CRC in 1995, SHÇEK has been successful in raising public awareness of children's rights and the rising number of children in difficult circumstances. UNICEF supported SHÇEK in running a year-long campaign to raise awareness of the CRC in 2000. The campaign culminated in the First Children's Forum where delegates reviewed the campaign and discussed the way forward in promotion of children's rights. The Children's Forum has become the annual highlight of the children's rights agenda, held on the anniversary of the United Nations adoption of the CRC. At the Seventh Children's Forum in 2006, a new child-led campaign was launched to promote children's rights in 25 provinces.

Throughout the previous CPAP, UNICEF supported Turkey's efforts to ensure that legislation is in line with both the CRC and CEDAW, including an important parliamentary enquiry by an alliance of policy and decision-makers into gross violations of children's rights. Outcomes included a report on children living and/or working on the street, increased allocation of resources for child protection and the drafting the new child protection law, which was passed in July 2005.

UNICEF worked with the Ministry of Justice on the drafting of the Child Protection Law which, in tandem with reforms to the Penal Code, has led to major improvements to the juvenile justice system, including:

- the minimum age of criminal responsibility raised from 11 to 12;
- provision of free legal assistance;
- introduction of a probation system as an alternative to deprivation of liberty;
- increased remission of sentence for children;
- more sensitive treatment and protection of child victims;
- increased numbers of child courts;
- provision of protection for children by civil society.

The new family law introduced a number of amendments for the protection of children's rights including: raising the minimum age of marriage to 18 years for both girls and boys; children born out of wedlock are accorded equal rights to those born within marriage.

A set of 25 Quality of Life Indicators (25QLI) has been developed under the leadership of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and the Turkish Statistical Institute (Turkstat). The 25QLI will monitor child development on a provincial basis using a Turkish version of the DevInfo system (DevInfoTürk) has been developed for data collection and assimilation.

The Latest CPAP (Country Programme Action Plan) for the Period 2006-2010

The goal of the 2006-2010 CPAP is to ensure the effective implementation of social and economic policies for the reduction of poverty and inequality in Turkey by 2010.

The CPAP will promote and support national priorities of expanding quality basic social services for vulnerable groups in hard-to-reach areas, enhancing child protection, equipping adolescents with knowledge and skills, implementing policies and legislation for children and women and increasing resources accordingly. Targeting areas with low human development indicators and low-income families in general, the CPAP aims to:

- close the gender gap and reduce drop-out rates in primary education;
- further reduce IMR and U5MR;
- establish and strengthen minimum standards of institutional care;
- make institutions and individuals accountable for violations of children's rights;
- foster a protective environment for children and encourage the adoption of policies, laws and monitoring systems for their better development and protection.

The mix of CPAP strategies includes:

- strengthening national data collection and analysis to inform and provide strategic focus to support policy and institutional changes;
- building the capacity of professionals, local authorities, community leaders and civil societies to achieve positive change for children and women;
- strengthening local planning processes to identify problems in health and education service provision and encourage appropriate solutions;
- scaling up successful gender-sensitive and child-friendly models;
- reinforcing alliances with partners, including the media, to further mobilise resources for children.
- The combination of rights-based initiatives and accurate, disaggregated data monitoring the state of women and children will not only reduce disparities and improve the well-being of this vast section of the population but also contribute to Turkey's long term development objectives. The renewed partnership between UNICEF and the Government will contribute to:
 - Turkey's compliance with the CRC and CEDAW;
 - the European Commission's recommendations on Turkey's progress towards accession
 - and Turkey's achievement of the MDGs as well as the goals of Section VI of the Millennium Declaration by 2015.

The participation of children and their families will be essential as advocates of their own rights, sharing knowledge, ideas and skills with their peers, influencing policies and promoting change.

Activities to raise awareness and respect for children's rights will continue with the promotion of rights-based reporting through the Child-friendly Media network.

The CPAP will be implemented in partnership with other UN agencies as part of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), contributing to the goals for children in education, health and protection of Turkey's National Plan of Action (NPA) and Five-Year Development Plan. The CPAP contribution to UNDAF will help to:

- strengthen individual and institutional capacity for democratic and environmental governance at local and central levels;
- develop social and economic policies for poverty reduction and improved provision of quality basic social services for vulnerable groups;
- provide a more protective environment for women, children and youth.

UNICEF Turkey has firm goals in the five priority areas of immunisation, early childhood development, girls' education, HIV/AIDS prevention and protecting children from violence, exploitation, abuse and discrimination. UNICEF and the Government's new Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP) for 2006–2010 focuses on child protection, education and early childhood development, targeting areas with low human development indicators and low income families in general. The CPAP aims to:

- close the gender gap further in primary education and to reduce drop-out rates;
- continue progress made in reducing infant and under-five mortality rates;
- establish and strengthen minimum standards of institutional care;
- make institutions and individuals accountable for violations of children's rights;
- foster a more protective environment for Turkey's children
- and encourage the adoption of policies, laws and monitoring systems for the better development and protection of children.

The Best Start in Life

The best way to ensure healthy growth and development is to exclusively breastfeed a child during the first six months. However, rates of exclusive breastfeeding are very low in Turkey as with most of Europe and the rest of the world in general. UNICEF is working closely with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and local NGOs to establish baby-friendly hospitals and mother support groups in order to increase exclusive breast-feeding rates.

Child-friendly Schools

Child-friendly Schools (CFS) criteria define a school that has good facilities, a child-sensitive and non-gender-biased curriculum and zero tolerance of violence. Child-friendly schools encourage the involvement of children, parents and the wider community in the running of their local school. The twin objective of the CFS system is to improve the quality of basic education by providing children with a healthier, happier environment to learn and develop thereby increasing enrolment rates, reducing drop-out rates and meeting international teaching standards. UNICEF and the Ministry of National Education (MONE) are working to ensure that child-friendly schools criteria will soon be adopted and practiced in at least 30 per cent of primary schools in urban areas.

Early Childhood Development

Children who are stimulated to learn and socialise at an early age have better chances of succeeding later in life since 80 per cent of brain development is complete by the age of six. For example, children who have attended pre-school enjoy more opportunities to develop to their fullest potential when they enter the formal education system. UNICEF is working to increase the number of children who have access to pre-school by leading a social mobilisation campaign to encourage good parenting practices, including better inter-familial communication, positive methods of discipline, timely registration of births and good primary health care.

Protection of Children and Adolescents

Turkey's population of some 13 million adolescents represents the country's largest demographic group. The next generation of adolescents, currently under ten years of age, is only fractionally smaller. Since the national birth rate is decreasing only very slightly, Turkey's child and adolescent population will remain significantly larger than any other age group until the target year for achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015. The well being of this large section of the population is crucial not only to the realisation of their individual potential but also to the country's immediate and future development agenda. UNICEF works with law enforcement officials, the judiciary and social services to strengthen systems that protect children from abuse and exploitation and promote their survival, health and well being — particularly children who are living outside of parental care and also those who are most at risk of coming into contact with the law. There are a reported 80,000 children living and/or working on the streets and approximately 18,000 children live in institutions, roughly half of whom are economic orphans — children whose parents are alive but who are unable to support them within the family environment. Adolescent girls and boys have limited access to information and life skills to protect themselves from violence, substance abuse UNICEF is seeking to address these issues with eight major projects, some of them have been summarized in the following:

The Health of Young Children

Vaccination against the major childhood diseases within the first twelve months is essential to ensure the well being of every child.

Goal :The Health of Young Children focuses on improving the health of young children within the framework of Turkey's new health reforms.

Results achieved so far :Eighty-five percent of under-five-year-olds are routinely immunised against the major childhood diseases. Fifty-five out of Turkey's eighty-one provinces have been certified Baby Friendly under the Baby-friendly Hospitals Initiative (BFHI). Eighty-seven per cent of hospital deliveries are attended by skilled personnel in Baby Friendly Hospitals. One hundred and twenty-two Mothers Support Groups have been established in 22 provinces to encourage exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months, thereby promoting the improved cognitive development of young children.

Project Partners: The Ministry of Health (MOH), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), The World Health Organization (WHO), EU, the private sector and media.

Young Child Development and Effective Parenting

Eighty percent of brain development is complete by the age of six, which is why pre-school educated children consistently perform well at all higher levels of education.

Goal : Young Child Development and Effective Parenting focuses on the development of young children through the provision of preschool education and the promotion of effective parenting. The project aims to have a pre-school completion rate of 30% for children in urban areas by 2010.

Results achieved so far : My Family, a gender sensitive and user-friendly parenting education and training programme aiming to increase the knowledge, skills and attitudes of parents with children under six years of age has been established nationwide.

Government reports show that over 100,000 parents and care givers, including many from socially excluded groups, have completed the programme. Twenty-five per cent of children between 5 and 6 years of age are now attending pre-school classes — a marked increase from the baseline of 15.6 per cent in 2003. Learning achievement of pre-school children is expected to increase following revision of the Pre-school Education Curriculum. The Ministry of National Education (MONE) has drafted a sector policy on Early Childhood Education. The Government has launched a nationwide Early Childhood Development Communication Behaviour and Social Change strategy.

Project Partners : MONE, MOH, the Ministry of Interior (MOI), the Social Services and Child Protection Agency (SHCEK), councils, NGOs, local media, universities and the private sector.

Social Investment for Children

Goal: The primary objective of Social Investment for Children is to strengthen the ability of parliamentarians to advocate on critical issues affecting children by providing them with evidence-based information. The second objective of the project is to build the capacity of eight municipalities to develop and manage appropriate tools for monitoring the state of children locally and to take corrective action when needed.

Results achieved so far: The Ministry of Interior (MOI) has developed and implemented a set of 25 Quality of Life Indicators (25QLI) measuring the well being of children and progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) along with a complementary monitoring system, DevInfoTürk.

Data based on the 25QLI for the years 2003–2007 is currently being assimilated in preparation for a nationwide roll-out of the DevInfoTürk system in the first quarter of 2008.

A Child-friendly City Standard has been developed and is being piloted in eight cities.

Project Partner : MOI, SHCEK, Ministry of National Education (MONE), and the Ministry of Health (MOH).

PUTTING CHILDREN FIRST!



A campaign to promote the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was launched in Parliament on International Children's Day, 20th November 2006, by delegates to the Seventh Children's Forum. Goal : Development and Participation of Adolescents seeks to provide improved knowledge and life skills to children and adolescents throughout Turkey.

Results achieved so far : A gender sensitive Life Skills Based Education and Training Programme and peer-led implementation model to increase the skills, attitudes and knowledge of adolescents both within and without the school environment has been developed and is being piloted. A gender sensitive and adolescent-friendly version of the My Family parenting education and training programme, which aims to increase the knowledge, skills and attitudes of families with children between seven and eighteen years of age has been established. Project Partners : The Ministry of National Education (MONE), MOJ, SHCEK, local NGOs, EU, the media, child-led Provincial Children's Rights Committees, adolescents and their families.

UNICEF will contribute to the following expected results in Turkey by 2010:

- Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) reduced to less than 25 per 1,000 live births;
- Gender parity in primary school enrolment achieved;
- Primary school drop-out rates reduced by 10%;
- 30% of children aged 3-6 complete pre-school education;
- Exclusive breastfeeding rate of 40% for infants aged 0-6 months achieved;
- Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD) eliminated and iron deficiency anaemia reduced;
- Measles eliminated;
- 30% of parents and caregivers using positive child rearing practices;
- Minimum standards for children in need of special protection adopted and implemented;
- Adolescents empowered to protect themselves from violence, exploitation and HIV/AIDS.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Education is a human right and the key factor to reducing poverty and child labour and promoting democracy, peace, tolerance and development. While progress has been achieved in recent years, Turkish children's rights have not been claimed in accordance with available resources. Although the legal infrastructure has been strengthened, there has been insufficient implementation in Turkey (UN,2008) :

Main Problems Overall

- An effective policy on children could not be developed.
- Sufficient level of cooperation could not be ensured among all the sectors that provide services to children.
- Collection, analysis and interpretation of all data related to children are insufficient in quality and quantity.
- The share allocated from the national budget to agencies and organisations providing services for children is inadequate.
- Participation and sufficient support of local governments in services provided for children could not be ensured.
- The quality of personnel to be employed in units providing services to children has not been sufficiently taken into consideration and personnel mobility has been extremely high.
- The value judgements pertaining to children in the community as well as the family could not be altered at the desired level.

Future Actions Overall

- Laws to secure conformity with the Convention on the Rights of the Child will be passed and the Convention will be introduced and promoted on a nationwide basis to ensure community ownership and to facilitate its monitoring.
- A permanent child policy will be formulated in order to improve the quality of the life for children, within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The current laws will be reviewed and rendered pro-children.
- The high interests of children will be considered a priority in any law to be adopted and enforced. Based on the principle "Family is the basis of the society and the child is its future" the child and the family will be considered a whole. Psycho-social, social, economic and other support programs will be carried out for children and their families on issues related to the healthy development of the child in the family environment.
- The regional disparities in the rate of population growth will be eliminated.
- A balanced and equitable distribution of income will be secured.
- The share of education and health in the budget will be increased on a continuous basis.
- Income generating activities for families will be expanded.
- The social status of women will be improved and strengthened.
- Gender equality will be secured.
- Efforts will be made to provide correct information on child issues to publishing and broadcasting institutions to get maximum benefits from their potential.
- Enrolment of all children within the age group 6-14 in educational institutions within the context of eight-year basic education will be ensured. Attendance will be monitored and actions to violate the implementation will receive effective response.
- The introduction of arrangements in the formal education system will prevent the children within this system from dropping out of school.
- Parents will be provided with the necessary basic information on child health through training activities at the national and local levels.
- Measures against unemployment will be introduced. The family will be provided with a temporary or continuous income in cases of conviction, unemployment and illness.
- Mass media will be utilised to inform, raise the awareness of and sensitise the community on child labour.

Table 16. Educational Outcomes

Problems	Basic Policies and Strategies	Goals and Objectives
<p>Literacy rate has not reached the desired level.</p> <p>The desired rate of enrolment could not be achieved at any school level.</p> <p>The lack of physical infrastructure and human power at all levels of education continues.</p> <p>The insufficiencies in the number of teachers and their unequal distribution could not be overcome.</p> <p>The use and expansion of modern technologies in education could not be improved sufficiently.</p> <p>There are inadequacies in creating opportunities for training and education for all, in preventing the concentration in transition to tertiary education, in ensuring equal opportunities in education and in establishing an effective orientation system.</p> <p>A system to generate a demand for vocational training could not be established.</p> <p>The number of schools for special education has remained insufficient and transition to mixed education could not be accomplished at the desired level.</p> <p>The educational status of girls and women remained below the targeted level.</p> <p>Despite all measures, not all children at school age could benefit from the eight-year compulsory primary education</p>	<p>Pre-school education will be expanded and standards will be set to eliminate the disparities between institutions providing pre-school education.</p> <p>The necessary infrastructure to extend compulsory education to 12 years in the long run will be laid.</p> <p>The improvement of the educational system will continue in the international platform.</p> <p>The opportunities provided by technology will be utilised at all levels of education..</p> <p>Practices of double shifts, crowded classrooms and multigrade classes will be ended.</p> <p>To assess the achievements of educational institutions, a model based on performance evaluation will be developed</p> <p>Technological activities to develop creativity will be encouraged</p> <p>Vocational training will start with a broad-based basic education program.</p> <p>Female literacy rate will be increased. ensure the active participation of women in education</p> <p>assistance to families</p> <p>Involvement of local governments, voluntary organisations and private sector in universalisation of education will be ensured.</p> <p>The conditions to enable education and training for all will be created.</p> <p>Equal opportunities in education and the establishment of an effective orientation system will be ensured.</p>	<p><u>Short-Term</u></p> <p>Settlements with the lowest rate of enrolment will be given priority and emphasis in expanding pre-school education</p> <p>A pre-school class will be set up in every primary education school.</p> <p>The number of teachers in pre-school education will be increased and methods of distance education</p> <p>The educational programs will be developed to meet the requirements of professional life</p> <p>Computer-assisted education will be developed and expanded.</p> <p>School libraries will be set up and the practice will be expanded.</p> <p>By 2005, the rate of enrolment will reach 25 % in pre-school and 100 %, in primary education .</p> <p><u>Long-Term</u></p> <p>Enrolment in pre-school education will be increased to the level of European Union and OECD.</p> <p>Double shift in education will be completely abandoned.</p> <p>The needs pertaining to physical infrastructure and human power will be met in all types and levels of education.</p> <p>Compulsory education will be extended to 12 years with full enrolment.</p> <p>The number of students per classroom will be reduced to 30 and regional disparities in quality will be eliminated.</p>

Source : (UNICEF 2000a)

Recommendations to Solve Problems

I. General Recommendations

- Geographical and intra-urban disparities should be eliminated;
- Decentralized integrated planning and mobilization of community participation in the planning and monitoring of programs for women and children should be promoted;
- The worst forms of child labour and of child labour in general should be eliminated in the short and in the longer term respectively.
- Gender disparities, especially in the fields of education and employment should be eliminated;
- An integrated approach to survival and development within the framework of early childhood care for survival, growth, and psycho-social development should be implemented;
- Emerging issues which relate to child protection from abuse and exploitation, adolescent health and development, and teenage pregnancy and early marriage should be addressed more effectively;
- Instruments and tools for monitoring implementation should be created
- The state, civil organizations, community and family should be mobilized in the implementation of the CRC (UN,2000).

II. Detailed Recommendations

As in the Report of Concluding Observations by the Committee of Children’s Rights , first of all, it has been noted with concern the reservations to articles 17, 29 and 30 of the Convention. The Committee also notes that, in some cases, in particular in the fields of education and, freedom of expression and the right to enjoy their

own culture and use their own language, these reservations may have a negative impact on children belonging to ethnic groups which are not recognized as minorities under the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923. The Committee encourages Turkey to consider withdrawing its reservations to the articles above in question. However this withdrawing can be in contradiction with the International Treaty of Lausanne. The other recommendations are:

Legislation

Continue its efforts on law reform with a view to ensuring full conformity of domestic legislation with the provisions and principles of the Convention, and take the necessary steps to end disparities between law and practice, in particular with reference to pre-trial detention of children

Coordination

Provide adequate human and financial resources in order to strengthen coordination and make it more effective and decentralize some aspects of the process of democratic decision-making.

Allocations of budgetary resources

Identify clearly its priorities with respect to child rights issues in order to ensure that funds are allocated to the maximum extent of available resources for the implementation of the rights recognized in the Convention.

Independent monitoring structures

Pursue its efforts with a view to developing and establishing an independent and effective mechanism, easily accessible for children.

Data collection and analysis.

Develop a system of data collection and indicators consistent with the Convention and provide additional support to the Child Information Network.

Dissemination of the Convention

Promote knowledge of the Convention at all levels, including the administrative authorities and civil society, especially non-governmental organizations and the private sector, and develop more creative methods to disseminate the Convention, in particular through audiovisual aids such as picture books and posters, in particular at the local level and adequate and systematic training and/or sensitization of professional groups working with and for children, such as judges, lawyers, law enforcement personnel, teachers, school administrators and health personnel and integrate fully the Convention into the curricula at all levels of the educational system.

Right to life

The development and effective implementation of an awareness raising and education campaign to combat effectively discriminatory attitudes affecting girls.

Family environment and alternative care

Parental responsibilities

Review the system of institutionalization of children, as well as ensuring the periodic review of children placed in institutions; promote alternative care and further improve the quantity, quality and efficiency of foster care; develop measures to raise awareness on the harmful effects of corporal punishment and promoted alternative forms of discipline in families, to be administered in a manner consistent with the child's dignity and in conformity with the Convention. It is also recommended that the ban on corporal punishments in schools and other institutions be enforced effectively.

Education

Undertake appropriate measures to ensure regular attendance at school and the reduction of drop-out rates, in particular for girls; continue its efforts to introduce pre-school education and to take further steps to ensure the enrolment of children in secondary schools; continue to strengthen the teacher-training programme in order to increase the number of trained teachers and improve the quality of teaching and to direct education towards the aims mentioned in article 29.1 of the Convention and the Committee's General Comment on the aims of education (UNICEF, 2001d).

In addition to these recommendations , since there is nothing more urgent than saving a child's life, it will be an important requirement for Turkish Republic to contribute achieving the Millennium Development Goals before the deadline 2015 , at least for Child Survival as in the following :

- Create a supportive environment for maternal, newborn and child survival and health,
- Develop and strengthen the continuum of care across time and location,
- Scale up packages of essential services by strengthening health systems and community partnerships,
- Expand the data, research and evidence base,
- Leverage resources for mothers, newborns and children,
- Make maternal, newborn and child survival a global imperative.

(Source : The State of the World's Children,2008)

Finally, The founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, has dedicated 23'd of April, date of the establishment of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 1920, to children. Since then, every year, April 23 is celebrated as Children's Day in Turkey. Thus for the first time in the world a national day has been dedicated to children. One of the objectives of the Children's Day is to draw the attention of the public to the problems of the children in difficult conditions. These celebrations also provide the opportunity for better

understanding the need to give priority to children, as well as evaluating the work done for the children in this field (Gemici, 2002). Furthermore, for the last 30 years, Turkey has been celebrating 23 April Children's Day as an "International Children's Festival".

At the end of this study, as in Atatürk's words on significance of education "Our most important and most productive task is the national education affairs. We have to be successful in national education affairs and we shall be. The independence of a nation is only achieved by this way" (Palazoğlu,1999), it should be emphasized that education for children's rights has to be a shared responsibility among adults in Turkey and in the world.

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