

**DEVELOPMENT OF
A COMPREHENSIVE POLICY
TO FIGHT CHILD POVERTY
IN TURKEY**

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INTRODUCTION:

Poverty is about a lack of economic, social, physical, environmental, cultural and political resources that prevents people of all ages from fulfilling their potential. The prosperity that the global economy is currently enjoying has not managed in eradicating poverty all over the world. More than one billion children suffer from severe deprivation and over 600 million suffer from absolute deprivation(Gordon et al,2003). These findings indicate that children are growing up without the resources or services to develop into healthy, productive, and free adults who are able to realize their full potential in life. Child poverty is a problem present in both poor and rich countries. Recent data show that the proportion of children living in poverty has risen in a majority of the world's developed economies. The 2005 review of child poverty in rich countries from the UNICEF Innocenti Research Center finds that child poverty has risen in 17 out of 24 OECD nations over the last decade(UNICEF-IRC, 2005).

As childhood is a critical period of development in life, poverty experienced during this period may cause serious damages all through the life cycle. Deprivation during the childhood, even for relatively short periods, can have major long-term and irreversible consequences. It is observed that usually poor children grow up to be poor adults, that is they pass on their poverty to their children. To break this vicious cycle, children must be provided with the appropriate food, shelter, health care, education, other public services and they must have a voice in the community (UNICEF, 2005).

Turkey being a medium income country, has made considerable progress in economic development and improved her social indicators during the last two decades. However disparities between region and gender are large and the country faces significant inequalities in income distribution. The neo-liberal policies implemented during the 1980s, the effects of 2001 financial crisis and the process of globalization have caused new forms of social stratification, urban residential forms and cultural dynamics to emerge. Rapid demographic transition has raised population growth and skewed the age structure toward the young. In the last three decades most of the population growth is occurring in urban areas. In parallel with the global trends, a radical transformation away from labor-intensive agriculture toward industry and services, is taking place and it has coincided with the rapid increase in the working age population of the country. As a result of these social, demographic and economic transformations, the incidence of poverty has increased and the children being the most vulnerable group in the society, have been deeply affected.

At the beginning of the Millennium, 37 per cent of the children under 15 years of age were living with food and non-food poverty in Turkey(Turkstat, 2003) This means

that their parents or care takers had no sufficient means to feed, clothe, shelter and educate them properly. Children most at risk of poverty are those that are born into large families, who live in rural areas having limited access to major markets, who belong to single-parent families, whose families have recently migrated to the cities, whose parents work in unregistered or casual jobs and who have no regular income, whose parents have little or no formal education and whose parents are long term unemployed.

Given this background this paper has two objectives: First it aims to give a general overview of the poverty profile in Turkey. The focus will be on child poverty but as children are not poor by themselves but are dependent on their care takers, the paper will examine the situation of the family and the social environment that have direct impact on the children's well-being. To give a general view of the situation of children in the country, child and maternal health, education of children and the issue of child labour will be analysed.

The paper will also present an assessment of the Turkish welfare system, investigate the effects of formal and informal social mechanisms that currently exist and examine the distributional effects of conditional cash transfers on child poverty. After discussing the impacts of existing social mechanisms on child poverty, the second objective will be to discuss the social, political and economic possibilities and limits for the development of a new and comprehensive policy to combat child poverty in Turkey. The capability approach as a new paradigm to struggle against child poverty, its applicability and the functionality in the development of a new comprehensive policy will be considered and examined.

THE POVERTY PROFILE OF TURKEY

The year 1980 has been a turning point in the economic history of Turkey. After a deep balance of payment crisis in the 1970s Turkey started to implement a new structural adjustment program aiming to stabilize and liberate the economy and shift it onto an outwardly oriented course. The components of the new economic policy were its structural reorientation towards more liberalization both internally and externally, less state involvement in productive activities, privatisation, promotion of export-led economic growth and restrictions on public expenditure. The economic program was expected to result in a more flexible and efficient financial system. However this was not the case. Turkey was struck with 1994 and 2001 financial crises, the outcomes being drastic regressions in the real incomes of the working masses, decreases in the employment opportunities and increases in the inequality of income distribution.

These economic developments have affected the poverty profile of Turkey deeply. The impacts of the 2001 financial crisis can easily be observed from the findings of Poverty Study 2004 conducted by the Turkish Statistics Institution (Turkstat). The findings for the years 2003 and 2004 show that the deep effects of 2001 are being remedied gradually. Food poverty (being 1.35 per cent in 2002 has come to 1.29 per cent

in 2004), does not constitute a significant problem for the country, however as the poverty threshold is raised, the poverty rates increase dramatically. It has been found that 30.3 per cent of the population was living on less than 4.30 \$US a day for the year 2002. The same study finds that in 2004, 25.6 per cent of the population, which is 17,991,000 in numbers, are suffering from food and non food poverty which is quite a significant rate for a middle income country.

The same study also reveals that there are pronounced disparities between urban and rural areas in relation to the ratio of poor: although the overall rate of poverty dropped from 28.1 per cent in 2003 to 25.6 per cent in 2004, the improvement is very-much urban based since the poverty rate for rural families increased to 40 per cent. This means that 7.2 million urban and 10.9 million rural people have no sufficient means to food, clothe and shelter (Table 1).

Table-1- Poverty Incidence in Turkey under Different Methodologies
Years 2002-2003-2004

Methodologies	Ratio of Poverty (%)								
	Turkey			Urban			Rural		
	2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004	2002	2003	2004
Food poverty	1,35	1,29	1,29	0,92	0,74	0,62	2,01	2,15	2,36
Food and non-food poverty	26,96	28,12	25,60	21,95	22,30	16,57	34,48	37,13	39,97
Abs. Poverty Int. std.($<1\$/a$ day)	0,20	0,01	0,02	0,03	0,01	0,01	0,46	0,01	0,02
Abs. Poverty Int. std.($<2.5\$/a$ day)*	3,04	2,39	2,49	2,37	1,54	1,23	4,06	3,71	4,51
Abs. Poverty Int. std.($<4.3\$/a$ day)*	30,30	23,75	20,89	24,62	18,31	13,51	38,82	32,18	32,62
Relative Income Poverty**	14,74	15,51	14,18	11,33	11,26	8,34	19,86	22,08	23,48

Source: Turkish Statistics Institute-Poverty Study 2004, Ankara, 2006 (www.tuik.gov.tr).

*For the year 2002, 1 \$= 618.281TL, for 2003 1 \$= 732 480 TL and for 2004 1\$= 780 121 T L (PPP) has been taken.

**For every person, 50% of the median value of the consumption is accepted.

The same study indicates that poverty in Turkey is linked mainly to education and employment status. An increase in the level of education decreases the poverty risk. Household heads that are illiterate represent 10.22 per cent of the Turkish population but account for 45.11 per cent of the poor households. As the education of the person increases, poverty incidence drops dramatically (Table 2).

Table 2- Poverty* Incidence of Household Individuals by Status of Education (2004)

Status of education	Share of Population**			Rate of Poverty		
	Turkey	Urban	Rural	Turkey	Urban	Rural
Total	100,00	100,00	100,00	25,60	16,57	39,97
Less than 6 years of age	10,03	10,22	9,73	34,19	24,93	49,64
Illiterate	10,22	8,18	13,46	45,11	32,82	56,99
Literate w/o diploma	20,13	18,89	22,10	33,67	23,74	47,16
Primary school(5 years)	30,15	27,39	34,54	24,36	15,18	35,92
Primary education (8 years compulsory education)	6,25	6,40	6,02	25,49	15,77	41,91
Secondary & vocational level	5,45	6,37	4,00	13,00	9,38	22,15
High & Vocational level	12,99	16,02	8,17	8,28	6,35	14,30
University & post graduate	4,77	6,53	1,98	1,33	1,03	2,90

Source: Turkish Statistics Institution-Poverty Study, 2004, Ankara, 2006. (www.tuik.gov.tr)

* Local cost of basic needs basket including non-food**Ratio of cited groups in the total population

Labor market status is another important correlate of poverty. The risk of poverty is highest (38. 7 per cent) for households in which the head is unpaid family worker. Households of unpaid family workers are even more vulnerable to poverty than the unemployed. The second group for which the risk of poverty is high is for households in which the head is employed in seasonal or casual jobs (37. 5 per cent) (Table 3).

Table 3- Poverty* Incidence of Household Individuals by Status at Work (2004)

Status at Work	Share of Population **			Rate of poverty		
	Turkey	Urban	Rural	Turkey	Urban	Rural
Total	100,00	100,00	100,00	25,60	16,57	39,97
Wage & salary earners	13,66	17,88	6,96	10,35	8,79	16,71
Casual employee	3,02	2,56	3,74	37,52	28,65	47,15
Employer	1,55	1,86	1,07	6,94	3,82	15,58
Self-employed	7,32	3,74	13,01	30,48	16,13	37,04
Unpaid family worker	6,60	1,08	15,38	38,73	11,30	41,79
Not employed	3,12	3,55	2,43	27,37	22,74	38,12
Economically non-active population	36,08	40,87	28,46	20,95	14,10	36,59
Less than 15 years of age	28,65	28,46	28,95	34,02	24,22	49,34

Source: Turkish Statistics Institute- Poverty Study-2004, Ankara, 2006. (www.tuik.gov.tr).

* Local cost of basic needs basket including non-food. ** Ratio of cited groups in the total population.

The report prepared by the World Bank based on 1987 and 1994 Household Income, Consumption and Expenditure Survey (HICES) data indicates that Turkey is a country with large and entrenched inequalities. Income differentials across regions and social groups are wide and persistent. When measured by the Gini coefficient, inequality in Turkey is close to the levels observed in some highly polarized economies such as Peru or Russia (World Bank, 2000).

According to the poverty research carried out under the auspices of the UNDP, it appears that there is an increase in “new poverty” in Turkey – poverty which is long-term and not easily remedied by access to traditional support networks such as family and friends. Social groups affected by the ‘new poverty’ perceive the existing conditions as being more or less permanent and see no longer any solutions to their problems (Buğra & Keyder, 2003). Another study conducted by the World Bank in 2001, has reached similar results. The coping mechanisms of the poor, such as assistance from traditional channels, especially relying on the relatives for in-kind or cash-assistance have come under stress and have dropped in size (World Bank, 2003).

The study prepared by State Planning Organisation (SPO) examines the incidence of poverty at the regional level and finds that the rate of poverty is lowest in the Aegean region (3 per cent) and highest in the Southeast Anatolian region (18 per cent). (DPT-SPO, 2001).

Being a candidate country for membership in the European Union, the incidence of poverty in the country must also be compared with the trends prevailing in Europe. According to a study of Eurostat in 2004, relative poverty, measured by less than 60 per cent of the median income in the country, is 23 per cent for Turkey. This is the highest figure among all the EU old and new members and also among candidate countries. The same comparison holds in the area of income distribution, where Turkey’s Gini coefficient of 0.46 is the highest again among the old and new member countries. Turkey has a very serious task of eradicating poverty and income inequality on her way to EU membership (Buğra & Keyder, 2005).

In relation to human development (HD) Turkey has made significant improvements in certain spheres (such as infant mortality), however the country’s overall HD performance has been somewhat erratic and at times even disappointing. In 1965 she was within the low human development category and moved to the medium development category in 1972. She was doing quite well during the 1990s. Turkey ranked 70th in 1990, the following year she dropped one place and ranked 71st. According to the Human Development Report of 1995, Turkey’s ranking was 66 among 174 countries. These results were pointing to an optimistic outlook for the country. Had that trend continued, Turkey today could be among the ‘high development countries’ or at least close to making its way into that group. Unfortunately, that upward trend did not continue, to the contrary Turkey lost considerable altitude with respect to its relative HDI rank (UNDP, 2004).

Ranking 85th out of 174 countries in 2002, Turkey dropped to the 96th rank in 2003. As the HDR of 2003 is prepared using 2001 data, this drop may be explained by the effects of the 2001 financial crisis. After Turkey has recovered from the negative effects of the 2001 crisis, her rank again rose to 88th out of 177 countries in 2004. However Turkey, again lost altitude and could get a rank of 94th in the 2005 Human Development Report. This ranking is not commensurate with the country's potential or with the self-image of its people. International comparison shows that countries with less income levels have managed to achieve higher levels of human development. As can be seen from Table 4 countries with lower GNP per capita than Turkey, have managed to rank higher in HDI. They have performed better in relation to literacy and school enrollment than Turkey, which means that Turkey has not been successful in converting her economic growth into the individual's quality of life.

Table 4- HDI Indicators for Turkey and Selected Countries

	HDI rank	Life exp. At birth	Adult literacy rate	Combined school enrolment ratio	GDP per capita (PPPUS\$)	HDI value
Cyprus	29	78.6	96.8	78	18.776	0.891
Bulgaria	55	72.2	98.2	78	7.731	0.808
Romania	64	71.3	97.3	72	7.277	0.792
Albania	72	73.8	98.7	69	4.584	0.780
Ukraine	78	66.1	99.4	86	5.491	0.766
Peru	79	70.0	87.7	87	5.260	0.762
Armenia	83	71.5	99.4	72	3.671	0.759
Jordan	90	71.3	89.9	78	4.320	0.753
Turkey	94	68.7	88.3	68	6.772	0.750

Source: 2005 Human Development Report-UNDP

Additionally, gender disparities and variations among geographical regions and social groups are observed in terms of health, education, employment and political representation. Education continues to be a major factor underlying gender disparity; there is still a gap in literacy between males (93.6 per cent) and females (80.6 per cent) (Turkstat, 2000). With regard to women's health and fertility Turkey is far behind the industrialized countries. Although total fertility rate has declined significantly in the last 25 years (4.33 in 1978, 2.23 in 2003-HUNEE, 2005), it is still high and there is much variation among geographic regions and social groups.

Only 28.1 per cent of women are employed (OECD, 2004), compared to 70.6 per cent of male employment. Although women were given suffrage in 1933, twenty-four women out of five hundred and fifty seats were elected to the parliament, holding only 4.4 per cent of the seats in the 2002 elections. Although Turkey has made improvements in women's living standards in the last 25 years, with the exception of life expectancy, all other social indicators tend to be worse for women than for men and generally Turkey does worse on gender indicators than comparable middle-income countries.

National Human Development Report (NHDR) of Turkey for 1997, illustrates the extent of male and female HDI by province. High male human development is present in about two thirds of the country, largely in the east, centre and the southwest, while high female human development is concentrated in the more urbanized areas and in western parts of the country. In general women have lower HDI values than men (0.648 for women and 0.824 for men). The male-female HDI is the largest in the province of Diyarbakir, in the South-east region of the country (UNDP, 1997).

CHILD POVERTY IN THE COUNTRY

A child growing up without access to the economic, physical and environmental resources needed for survival and development is experiencing childhood poverty. It covers both the material and non-material deprivation experienced by many children and young people. As adult poverty, childhood poverty is a multidimensional concept, constituting nutritional, educational, health related needs and more subjective factors such as security, affection and other emotional development needs. However, it is different from the adult poverty in that childhood is the most vital period in the individual's mental, physical and social development. Deprivation during childhood in terms of nutrition, health care, affection and security even for short periods of time can have long-term, irreversible consequences. Taking this point into account, development policies should focus to protect children from all forms of deprivation. Policy should be directed at improving the conditions and opportunities for children and their households currently living in poverty. Appropriate policies are those which facilitate investment in the capabilities of both the children and their families.

Emphasis is being placed on children's rights and well-being by the international community. In 1995 the World Social Summit in Copenhagen helped to raise awareness and lend public support to the anti-poverty campaigns by the civil society. At the beginning of the 21st century the United Nations and the Governments of 189 countries adopted the Millennium Development Goals, three of which are directly and the remaining ones indirectly related with the child well-being. The Convention on the Rights of the Child which is almost universally ratified is also another example of the international community's concern with the children's problems.

However all these developments do not suffice to end childhood poverty. 10 million children still die each year from mostly preventable diseases, 150 million are estimated to be malnourished, and more than 100 million-the majority being the girls- are not in school (Gordon et al, 2003). Despite the economic growth of the 1990s, child poverty and poverty in general remains to be an alarming problem for the whole world.

In Turkey, similarly, two decades of market led economic growth has not been successful in reducing poverty in general. Being one of the world's fastest growing economies, it is hard to argue that the benefits of economic growth are shared evenly.

The economic and social policies of the recent years and the effects of globalization together, have caused a major transformation in the social and economic structure of the country as a whole. The role of the state in the economy has been modified and formal employment opportunities both in the public and the private sector have become limited. As a result a large section of the labour force is either employed as family workers or in the informal sector, and thus does not have social security. The unemployment rate has grown considerably, particularly during the last economic crisis. The current official unemployment rate is 10 per cent. All these social and economic conditions have caused an increase in poverty in the late 1990s. Being the most vulnerable groups, women and children are deeply affected from the recent developments.

Maternal and Child health in Turkey:

Although Turkey's annual population growth rate has dropped to 1.5 in 2003 (it was 2.17 per cent during the 1985-1990 and 2.0 per cent in 1990), she still has a young population structure. According to the Turkish Demographic and Health Survey for 2003, 29 per cent of the population is less than 15 years of age (HUNEE, 2005). It is expected that the annual population growth rate will continue to drop slightly so the ratio of the young in the total population will be stable in the coming years. Urbanization has accelerated in the last 50 years and currently 67 per cent of the population lives in the cities. Rapid urbanization and its unplanned nature have caused various social, cultural and environmental problems in the cities.

Having such a great number of young people brings a great responsibility and burden on the public sector. Provision of health and educational services at the regional level, especially in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the country, is hindered by problems of access and security. Government initiatives are facing serious financial problems and unemployment continues to rise in the urban areas. High rates of migration from the rural areas to the cities also put pressure on daily social services carried out by the municipalities.

Although there have been steady improvements in relation to child and maternal health the issue still continues to be marked by serious problems due to the persistence of broad geographical, economic and cultural disparities at the national level.

With 1.5 million births each year, Turkey has the highest number of newborns in Europe. Infant and maternal mortality rates are high in Turkey compared to other middle income countries and they are among the highest in Europe. Although a great deal has been done to reduce child mortality rates during the last 25 years there is still room for improvement. The Turkish Demographic and Health Survey for 2003 (HUNEE, 2005) reveals that infant and under five mortality rates are still 40 per cent high above the national average in the north and eastern regions. Levels of malnutrition also follow the pattern of urban/rural inequality: the stunted growth rate for under five year old is recorded as 9 per cent in urban areas, 18 per cent in rural areas, 6 per cent in the West and 22 per cent in the East (HUNEE, 2005).

Overall rates of incomplete immunization are high and 52 per cent of the children below one year are not immunized against major diseases. Although infant mortality rates (IMR) have declined dramatically in the last years there are significant differences between the western and eastern parts of the country. In addition 56 per cent of the deaths occur in the first four weeks of life.

Rates of malnutrition in the east are almost three times higher than in the western and southern parts of the country, with up to 50 per cent of the children showing signs of stunted growth. Some 8 per cent of the children in Turkey are underweight. Maternal mortality rate continues to be high as 70 per 100.000 live births, reflecting problems in both the education and the quality of antenatal care and care at delivery.

The TDHS 2003 underlines the strong link between the survival chances of children and the level of education of their mothers by pointing out that the IMR for children of mothers who have never completed primary education or who have no education at all is 51 per cent whereas it is only 18 per cent for children of mothers who have secondary or tertiary level education. Roughly 6 million Turkish mothers between the ages of 14-44 are illiterate.

WHO certified Turkey polio free in 2002 but there is still much room for improvement in coverage rates for routine vaccination. The high concentration of health care facilities and professionals in the west in comparison to the east and southeast where health care centers are severely understaffed also contributes significantly to urban/rural variations in child and maternal health outcomes.

Turkey has achieved dramatic reduction in infant mortality rates: from 150 per 1000 live births in 1970 to 29 per 1000 in 2003. Although a remarkable success, it is still too high in comparison to countries with similar income levels and HDI rankings. In fact a number of countries (e.g. Republic of Moldova, Vietnam, Syria, Indonesia and Honduras) which have substantially lower HDI rankings than Turkey have performed better in reducing infant mortality rates (Table5).

Moreover there is much variation in urban/rural and Western/ Eastern parts of the country in relation to infant and child mortality rates. For urban areas IMR is 23 per 1000 live births whereas in the rural areas it rises to 39/1000. IMR is 22/1000 in the Western parts and it rises to 41/1000 in the Eastern parts of the country (HUNEE, 2005).

Table 5- Infant Mortality Rates- International Comparison

Some Middle Eastern Countries	IMR	HDI rank	Some other countries (ranking higher in HDI)	IMR	HDI rank	Some other countries (ranking lower in HDI)	IMR	HDI rank
Turkey	33	94	Romania	18	64	Rep. of Moldova	26	115
Saudi Arabia	22	77	Bulgaria	14	55	Vietnam	19	108
Tunisia	19	89	Bosnia & Herzegovina	14	68	Indonesia	31	110
Jordan	23	90	Malaysia	7	61	Honduras	32	116
Syrian Arab Republic	16	106	Ukraine	15	78	Jamaica	17	98

Source: Human Development Report-2005 UNDP

The Turkish health system is fragmented, having public, private, semi-public organizations, including Ministry of Health (MoH), universities and health professionals providing health care service. A significant proportion of the population (Household Consumption and Income Survey about 36 per cent) is not covered by any of the existing insurance schemes. Currently the Government is working on the Health Transition Program with the support of World Bank. The Government aims to shift to universal health insurance, which would operate on the principles of solidarity and risk pooling, and provide coverage to the entire population. The Health Transition Reform law has been passed from the Turkish Parliament in March 2006.

Turkey has ratified the International conventions in relation to children and women's right such as the International Convention on the Rights of the Children (CRC) and The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Since the 1990s, Turkey has included in its programs the revision of internal procedures, withdrawal of the reservations and development of policies consistent with international organizations such as UN, The European Council, ILO, OECD and the European Security and Co-operation conference regarding women and children. The General Directorate for Women's Status and Problems was established in 1990 and since then has been implementing a national program for the enhancement of women's integration in development, to raise women's social status, to increase the level of education and to enable them to take part in the working life and decision making. As part of these efforts, the minimum marriage age for girls was raised from 15 to 17, a juvenile justice is being established for children and the youth and a new civil code giving women equal rights on matrimonial property has been accepted.

Education in Turkey:

The Turkish Government adopted the Basic Education Law in August 1997, which mandated 8 years of compulsory education and increased the supply of primary education class-rooms by 30 per cent, making room for an additional one million students. The overall objectives of the original Eight Year Basic Education Program were to expand opportunities for all children to attend grades 1 through 8, to increase the quality of education so as to encourage both the regular attendance and the completion of the 8th grade. The Government's investments for the Basic Education program yielded a dramatic increase in education coverage. Whereas the net enrollment rate of primary school aged children had actually declined in 6 years prior to the law (93 per cent in 1991 to 89 per cent in 1996), net enrollment in grades 1 through 8 rose from 81 per cent to 90 per cent (Hoşgör, 2004).

Despite the rapid expansion in primary school enrollment and the significant improvements in the access of the poor and of girls to school, gender and poverty gaps in education continue to have an effect on Turkey's education indicators. Thousands of children, especially girls and children of extremely poor households, are still not enrolled in basic education. Aggregate education statistics indicate that roughly 10 per cent of

Turkish children aged 6-14(the compulsory age group) are currently not enrolled in basic education. Large shares of this population belong to two groups: girls and the poor (Hosgor 2004, Mete 2004). When looked at regionally, North East Anatolia, East Anatolia and Southeast Anatolia are the most problematic regions vis-à-vis gender differences in primary education enrollment rates. More than 70 per cent of the children who are not enrolled in primary school are female, and more than 55 per cent have illiterate mothers. These children tend to live in rural areas (67 per cent) and they tend to be poor (53 per cent) (World Bank, 2006).

With regard to pre-school education, less than 14 per cent of children aged 4 to 6 were enrolled in pre-school in 2003, which is a significantly lower rate than middle-income countries (it is about 40 per cent in middle income and 36 per cent in lower middle income countries). Furthermore access to secondary school continues to be limited by the availability of the school places, especially in rural areas, as well as family choices. In addition gender differences in educational achievement remain high: one in three high school-aged girls does not attend school, compared to only 1 in 10 boys. This is the largest gender gap among the EU member and candidate countries. The situation in the Southeast where in 2003 only 14 per cent of girls attend secondary school, is even more frustrating (WB, 2005).

Another problem in regard to education is that, Turkey has not been fully successful in achieving consistent distribution of educational resources across its schools and regions. A great number of children living in villages across the East, Southeast and in marginalized urban areas throughout the country are enrolled in schools that do not provide the minimum conditions needed for students to reach the next level of schooling. Sizable differences exist in both physical and human resources across the primary and the secondary schools all over the country. Teachers in the poor East and Southeast regions have on average, one-half to one-third the teaching experience of their counterparts in other areas. Differences in primary school quality have, moreover, direct implications for students' access to secondary school and ultimately to tertiary school.

Turkey's pattern of education expenditures differs substantially from those of other countries. Total education spending (public plus private) as a proportion of GDP was approximately 7 per cent in 2005, 65 per cent being public finance and 35 per cent private. Turkish households have to spend more on education than any other OECD countries, except for Korea and the United States. This has serious implications for low income families who cannot afford basic education expenditures for their children. Although primary education is free in Turkey, hidden costs of education-such as clothing, transportation, meals and tutoring- may be quite high. Annual school expenses can reach to 1,937 lira (1,300\$), as 71 per cent of families live on less than 500 lira a month, it appears that household income would not suffice to cover the hidden costs of education. This situation may also explain the high rates of drop outs from the Turkish education system at all levels (UNICEF, 2006, www.unicef.org/turkey).

Compared to the countries of Europe and the OECD, however, Turkey allocates a smaller share of governmental spending to education: 4.3 per cent in 2002. Turkey's total spending on education is high due to exceptionally high private spending.

Turkey, recognizing the problems in her education system, has started new projects to improve the quality and the equity. The 1997 Basic Education Program and the 'Support to Basic Education' projects are financed partially by the World Bank and the European Union, the '100 % Support to Education Program' providing tax incentives for the private sector to invest in education.

'Come on Girls, Let's Go to School' project which has been launched in June 2003, in Van, one of the poorest provinces in the eastern part of the country, is being implemented in collaboration with the UNICEF and the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). At the first step the campaign focused on 10 southeastern provinces with the lowest enrollment rates for girls. Another 23 provinces were added in 2004, and in 2005 the campaign became fully nationwide by expanding to include the last 28 provinces. The project aims to achieve gender equity in primary school enrollments. Through the activities carried, primary schools have successfully enrolled quite a number of students, mostly girls all over the country. The priority provinces have been defined as İstanbul (75.000 girls out of school), Diyarbakır (45.000), Şanlıurfa (40.000) and Van (40.000) (UNICEF, www.unicef.org/turkey).

In general Turkey has increased her educational achievement over the last 40 years, as measured by all indicators, in spite of political and economic stability. In order to develop education to meet Europe averages, targeted strategies to increase enrollment should be initiated at all education levels especially in 4 important regions of East Black Sea, North Eastern Anatolia, South Eastern Anatolia and East Anatolia. The education system should also be reviewed according to the needs of the country and its prospects for EU membership (Hoşgor, 2004).

Child Labor in Turkey:

As in other developing countries the issue of child labor carries great importance for Turkey. Recent economic developments, population growth, migration from the rural areas to the cities and the unplanned urbanization, traditions in agricultural community and the growth of the unregistered sector have all contributed to the problem of child labor in the country. Turkey has ratified most of the International Conventions and Recommendations such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Children, European Social Charter and the ILO Conventions related to child labor such as Convention Number 15, Number 77, Number 123, Number 39, Number 138 and Number 182 and currently is trying to harmonize her national legislation with international conventions.

According to the Child Labor Survey of 1999, Turkey has a population of 16,088,000 children in 6-17 age group, of which 1.635.000(10.2 per cent) are working. 61.8 per cent of the working children are boys and 38.2 per cent are girls. 57,6 per cent of the economically active children are working in the agricultural sector. In the same age

group 78.8 percent attended schools. (ILO & Turkstat, 2000). The same study has found that 21.4 per cent of the children of age 6-14 has been working in 1994 and this has dropped to 19.3 in 1999. Although there is a 2.1 decrease in the amount of working children in five years time, analysis on gender basis gives a pessimistic view. The percentage of girls working in domestic chores has increased from 33 per cent in 1994 to 39.6 per cent in 1999. This increase affects the percentage of total working children negatively.

On the other hand, according to a report published by Ministry of Labor and Social Security, 8.5 per cent of children between the ages of 6-14 years were engaged in some form of economic activity and 23.9 per cent were engaged in domestic labor. Of the 11.9 million children between the ages of 6-14 years, 1.495.000 or 12.6 per cent are child workers based on the study of Economically Active Population. 14 per cent of child workers in Turkey are under 10 years of age (ILO-IPEC,2001).

In 1992 Turkey has been one of the initial six countries that undertook direct action to combat child labor through IPEC (International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor) programs. As part of IPEC, various activities aiming to increase the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security's (MoLSS) related departments, to raise public awareness on the issue and activities to contribute to the effective implementation of ILO Convention Number 182 have been carried out in cooperation with the Ministry, employers' and workers' organizations and trade unions. The MoLSS established a child labor unit and trained labor inspectors throughout the country specifically in child labor matters. Through the project 50.000 children have been reached, 60 per cent of them have been withdrawn from work and placed in school. Alongside institutional and policy development activity, direct support is given to working children in a variety of projects. In collaboration with the employers' associations, trade unions, employees' associations and municipalities work is being carried to improve the working conditions in small enterprises and the training activities. As a result Turkey's efforts are now accepted as good practices in combating child labor. Although great progress has been achieved still there are serious problems to be solved. According to 2000 statistics 11.3 per cent of 12-14 age group is still working and the percentage of 6-14 age group children that are not attending to primary school is still high (OECD, 2003).

In the 8th Five Year Development Plan (2000-2005), the Government states that the problem of child labor is an integral part of the general social and economic structure of the country. To solve the problem the Government aims to increase family income, provide social security and reduce the cost of education to the families. Ensuring the full implementation of 8th year compulsory education Turkey has accepted in 1997, is also accepted as an important factor to combat child labor (DPT-SPO, 8th Five Year Development Plan, <http://plan8.dpt.gov.tr>).

Household income & poverty, household assets, intra and extra-household bargaining power, parental education, education and compulsory attendance are the main determinants of child labor in the country (ILO & ÇSGB,2005). There is a close

relationship with education and child labor. After the extension of the minimum term of education to 8 years in 1997, a 30 per cent increase in school enrolment has been observed. Various studies on the issue indicate that education is a dissuasive factor in preventing child labor. On the other hand children that are working are mostly going to drop out of education. The low quality of the educational curriculum, the hidden cost of education being high and the family's low educational level are the main factors causing high drop outs from the educational system in Turkey.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEMES IN TURKEY

Social protection in Turkey consists primarily of limited formal systems in pensions and social assistance, supplemented greatly by informal mechanisms. Formal elements of social protection are the pension (social security system) system and the Social Assistance and Solidarity Encouragement Fund (SYDTF). The Fund, established in 1986 was created 'to help the citizens in the state of poverty and destitution...and to take measures that will enforce social justice by ensuring fair distribution of income'. Especially since the mid 1990s the Fund has distributed a non-negligible amount of resources to provide health and education support as well as to satisfy the urgent needs of those in extreme poverty, mostly through in-kind transfers of fuel or food. It also provides small interest-free credit, in cash or in kind, especially to the rural poor. The establishment of the Fund was in many ways a response to a series of international and domestic developments which have modified the socio-economic environment and led to the emergence of new forms of poverty that could no longer be managed by the existing, basically informal mechanisms of social protection (Buğra and Keyder, 2004).

The resources of the Fund include shares to be taken out of income and incorporate taxes, operation taxes, traffic fines and TV advertisement incomes. The Fund was conceived as an umbrella organization covering 931 local Social Solidarity Foundations (SYDVs), established in 81 provinces and 850 districts, managed by representatives of the central government at the district level (such as the governor) with the aid of the board of directors comprised of the mayor and other prominent members at the local level. Besides the allocation of resources to educational activities and various rural area development projects, health expenditures constitute the largest item in the Fund's budget. This is mainly due to a scheme called the 'Green Card System' established in 1992 to provide health services to people who are not covered by any social security assistance program either directly or indirectly. It is estimated that about 13 million Green Card holders currently benefit from this program. The second largest item in the Fund's budget is allocated to students at different levels, including scholarships, provision of school supplies, meals and snacks for school children (Government Document, 2004).

After the 2001 financial crisis, increases in unemployment and the incidence of poverty, has led the State to adopt a proactive attitude in combating against poverty and the resources transferred to the Fund have been increased. In August 2001, the

Government transferred substantial resources to the Social Solidarity Fund to finance back-to-school packs for 1.05 million poor children. Additionally, the Social Solidarity Fund expanded its food and fuel assistance for the winter. These measures, while important, were limited to a single payment.(WB, 2003).

Recognising that the poor needed more systematic assistance, the Government started allocating financial resources through the Social Risk Mitigation Project (SRMP) which was supported by the World Bank. Conditional Cash Transfers(CCT) in the country were first adopted under the SRMP in 2001 to provide an incentive to the poor to keep their children in school. It targets to reach the poorest 6 per cent of the population and, through the coordinated work of The Ministry of Health(MoH) and the Ministry of National Education(MoNE), cash transfers are made to the poorest in order to provide them with basic health and education services. The expectant mothers and the families who have children 0-6 years of age receive small amounts of money when they visit health centers for regular check-ups. The Government declares that this initiative would be effective especially in the eastern and southeastern parts of the country, ensuring birth registration and informing families about effective methods of family planning. The CCT is currently a pilot project, being implemented in certain provinces and its nation-wide implementaton is expected to follow.

Another form of payment is made on educational basis. SYDTF is providing a conditional cash transfer for poor families who send their children to school with an extra 20 per cent incentive for girls(www.sydtf.gov.tr).

CCT, a novel instrument for the reduction of poverty, is an important phase in Turkey's social politics. Being the first of this kind CCT is designed to minimize the negative effects of the 2001 financial crisis, to prevent the social exclusion of the poorest segments of the population from the society and to prevent the burden of poverty to be transferred to the children as malnutrition and drop outs of school.

In the school year of 2003 the Government also started a new application and elementary school textbooks were made available to all students free of charge. This is an important step taken to eliminate one of the worst consequences of poverty whereby the education of the children would be interrupted because poor families could not pay for the school supplies (Buğra & Keyder, 2005).

The Directorate of Social Services and Protection of Children(SHÇEK), is designed to provide services mainly to children in need of protection for material as well as social and pschological reasons. However targeted groups also include the elderly, the disabled, the women exposed to violence and families with problems in general. The Directorate provides institutional care services, foster family services, child adaptation services, social assistance for child care, nursery and daily child care services. Being the coordinating agency for the implementation of the CRC in Turkey, the Directorate launched a child rights campaign in 2000 to mark the 10th anniversary of the signing of the CRC. The Directorate currently runs child care centers, child protection institutions,

rehabilitation centers and currently 41.982 children are receiving service in the Directorate's Child and Youth Centers(www.shcek.gov.tr).

It can be argued that the state has adopted a proactive attitude after the 2001 financial crisis in relation to the policies implemented for the reduction of poverty in Turkey. The financial resources provided through the Social Solidarity Fund have been increased after 2001 and Conditional Cash Transfers have been implemented as a new form of social assistance.

In recent years Turkey made some changes in her tax policy, launched new projects that can affect the distribution of income. Introduction of unemployment benefits, the expansion of social assistance to the poor and a large reduction in VAT on basic food items and health and education services all seem to have favoured low income segments of the society (For a summary of the policy changes and its effects on various groups Table-6).

It is also known the Government is planning to restructure the social security system as a whole. Work is being carried out to bring all social security systems under one institution, to expand the Green Card scheme of health care coverage to the entire population and to provide social security to every child under 18 years old.

The Government of Turkey has a number of social assistance schemes to address poverty in general and child poverty in particular. However the problem is that these social security measures often do not reach poor families and children in need. Many of the poor children who are suffering extreme poverty come from families who work in informal sector or unemployed and therefore are not covered by any of the social security mechanisms.

In order to break the vicious circle and to provide support and protection for the most vulnerable sections of the society, the Government has to develop a strategic, coordinated approach to child poverty which would involve the capacity to accurately define and measure child poverty, so that a detailed poverty map of the country can be prepared; analyse the links between macroeconomic and fiscal policies and child poverty and to reduce inequality levels to help improve universal access to basic health and education services.

Table 6-Summary Table of Policy Changes for Turkey

Change in policy	When(year)	Groups affected	Likely effect on income of bottom20%	Likely effect on income of top 20%	Income share of bottom20% relative to top 20%
Unemployment benefits introduced	March 2002	Unemployed	Increase	No change	increase
Expenditure tax introduced(on selected goods above the VAT rate)	June 2002	All tax payers	No change	decrease	increase
SRMP launched	April 2003	Poor families	increase	No change	increase
Lowest income tax band increased by 20 %	Dec 2003	Tax payers	increase	No change	increase
Social support project for rural areas introduced	2003	Livestock farmers	increase	No change	increase
Coal benefit to poor families	2003/2004/2005	Poor families	increase	No change	increase
Building tax for those with low income, especially those reliant on social benefits reduced to zero	2004	The poor	increase	No change	increase
Pensions paid by SSK raised by 21 %	2004	pensioners	increase	No change	increase
Advance payment on VAT refunds to pensioners reduced/from 5% to4% of receipts)	March 2004	pensioners	decrease	No change	decrease
Transfers from the budget to the SYDTF	2003,2004	The poor	increase	No change	increase
Top income tax rate cut by 5%	Dec 31, 2004	High income earners	No change	increase	decrease
VAT rate reduced on education related goods and services as well as for some basic food items	Dec 31, 2004	All	Increase	increase	uncertain

Source: Network on Social Inclusion and Income Distribution(European Observatory on the Social Situation-Applica),December 2005.

CAPABILITY APPROACH: A NEW PARDIGM TO FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY

Unlike the one-dimensional monetary approach, the capability approach, developed by the internationally reputed economist Amartya Sen, to poverty adopts a multi-dimensional methodology. Sen criticises welfare economics and utilitarianism for taking into account only incomes, choices and feelings that are too narrow to cover all aspects of well-being and the quality of life. His capability approach includes additional categories, such as particular characteristics, capabilities and functionings, to enable us to see the range of relevant dimensions of life options that people have. Sen's theory of development, as the expansion of basic human capabilities, is the starting point for a human based development approach. According to him, the success of a society must be evaluated mainly by the substantive freedoms, the capabilities that the members of the society enjoy. His analysis of development treats the freedom of individuals as the basic building blocks and concentrates on the expansion of capabilities of people to lead the kind of lives the value or reason to value (Sen, 2000).

Development for Sen, is the expansion and promotion of valuable capabilities. Connecting the concept of capabilities to poverty, Sen argues that poverty must be seen as the deprivation of basic capabilities rather than lowness of income. His notion of capabilities is to indicate a space within which comparisons of quality of life are most fruitfully made. The advantages of capability approach to standard income based poverty assessment can be listed as follows: Poverty can be identified in terms of capability deprivation, the approach concentrates on deprivation that are intrinsically important (low income is instrumentally significant), it enables us to see other factors affective on poverty other than income and instrumental relation between low income and low capability is variable between different communities and even between different families and individuals (Sen, 1997). The third issue is especially important for the poverty reduction programs. The relationship between income and capabilities would be strongly affected by age, gender, social status, geographical location etc. Sen gives examples of handicaps such as age, disability or illness, which reduce one's ability to earn income. But these factors also make it harder to convert income into capabilities (as they need more money to achieve the same functionings) therefore this may create a serious concern in assessing public action to assist the elderly or handicapped people (Sen, 2000). According to Sen growth of GNP or individual incomes can be important means to expand freedoms but freedoms depend on other social and economic determinants (such as education, health care facilities) and also political and civil liberties.

Sen does not provide a list of basic capabilities, but there have been attempts at creating an objective and non-culturally biased list. The most influential list of basic capabilities was put together by Martha Nussbaum. She lists ten central capabilities, which she defines as combined capabilities and she argues that economic policy or developmental activities should aim to expand them. Her list includes life, health, bodily integrity, senses, emotions, practical reason, affiliation, respect for other species and living with other species, play and control over ones environment, politically and

materially. Like Sen, Nussbaum emphasizes that it is the promotion of capabilities not functionings which forms the objective of development and it is the individual whose capabilities should be enhanced rather than the community or the family. Nussbaum's basic capabilities list can be used as indicators to identify the level of poverty and the needs of the poor, to design poverty reduction policies that will address the needs of the poor, and to establish criteria to evaluate the results of the anti-poverty strategies.

As mentioned in the previous parts of the paper, due to international and domestic developments that modified the social and economic structure of the country after the 1980s, the incidence of poverty and inequality in income distribution have increased all over the country. Although the state has adopted a proactive attitude and have increased the financial resources provided through the Social Solidarity Fund and started to implement Conditional Cash Transfers as a new form of social assistance, significant disparities in access and inputs in relation to education, health and employment opportunities still continue to exist between genders, social and economic classes and geographical regions. Another study comparing the social inclusion and poverty situations of the EU and the candidate countries, indicates that Turkey has both the lowest level of GDP per head and by far the highest rate of poverty of all the countries considered in the report (Social Situation Observatory, 2005).

The Eight Five-Year Development Plan, which is the official document indicating the macro policies to be implemented during 2000-2005 period, addresses the following issues as the main objectives for eradication of poverty:

- The main principle will be to implement economic and social policies in harmony which aim at increasing economic growth, eliminating absolute poverty, alleviating relative poverty and approximating the income of the poor segment to an average welfare level.
- The transfer system will be restructured with a view to ensuring a more effective redistribution of income to the poor or those who are at the poverty line.
- In order to alleviate disparities among regions, along with economic investments, investments on education, health and social services shall be increased
- Social services and social assistance systems shall be made more accessible to the poor population. Local administrators, private sector and NGOs shall be encouraged to be more efficient in programs combating with poverty in collaboration with public institutions (<http://ekutup.dpt.gov.tr/program/2005.pdf>).

Although The Eight Five-Year Plan addresses some important points for the elimination of poverty, in practice, combating poverty generally has taken the form of ex post interventions and little is done to define the causes of poverty and unequal distribution of income with all dimensions in Turkey. Almost all efforts have been geared toward alleviating effects of these disparities and poverty in the society. Although some successful projects have been developed in this regard, the fact that the causes of

these problems can not be eliminated without adopting a multi-dimensional approach and making structural changes, has not been given full recognition. The plan stresses the importance of economic growth for the elimination of poverty which is a necessary but an inadequate condition for the solution of the problem.

In relation to the child poverty, despite the childhood being the most vital period in the individual's mental, physical and social development, the importance of childhood poverty is not always recognized by policy makers. Assumptions are often made that policies that are good for adults will also be good for children of every age and for both sexes. However this is not always the case. Different people in different places and at different times have different needs and may experience different aspects of poverty. Differences between the income and non-income dimensions of poverty should be acknowledged. In addition children of different ages and gender have different problems and needs. Therefore policies designed to struggle poverty must recognize the multi-dimensionality of poverty, must develop targeted strategies for the changing needs of different social groups with different ages and gender. In order to be effective and have long-term effects in reducing poverty among children the policy should take full account of relevant social, economic and political contexts and thus, be integrated within broader poverty reduction approach. Moreover it should recognize the multidimensional character of poverty and ensure that human development can have a persistent effect on the reduction of poverty.

Capability approach, defining poverty as a dynamic concept recognizes its multidimensional nature. It adopts a combination of macro and micro, qualitative and quantitative methods to explain and define poverty. The approach in a way increases its horizon by adding the qualitative variables on the economic factors to understand and explain poverty. The strength of the approach comes from the point that multidimensional variables such as cultural and natural environments, plurality of symptoms of deprivation and dimensions of well-being and circumstances that may generate poverty, have all to be taken into account for a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Better understanding of the poverty problem will help to develop sound, dynamic and comprehensive policies. Therefore Turkey, in order to develop a comprehensive policy to fight against child poverty, has to adopt a perspective that will enable to view all the dimensions, forms and causes of the poverty problem.

Until quite recently, the problem of poverty has been alleviated through the goodwill of friends and relatives offering cash or in kind support in the country. However this form of social solidarity has been weakened by factors such as individualisation, urbanisation and fragmented family structures. Social assistance should no longer be left to the family or to the charity organisations but should be a fundamental component of the welfare regime. Therefore the Government of Turkey has to adopt a strategic and comprehensive approach to combat poverty in general and to struggle against child poverty in particular and should develop the necessary social assistance mechanisms as part of the social policy. By accepting the child poverty a political priority and taking the necessary steps to develop the social security system so

that all the families and their children are covered and protected, the Government will be investing in both the present and the future of the country.

Conclusion:

In this paper the manifestation of poverty in contemporary Turkey has been examined in relation to the socioeconomic transformations that have led to the emergence of poverty. After the poverty profile of the country is given, child poverty in the country is examined in relation to maternal and child health, child education and child labour. It has been observed that although Turkey has made improvements in her social indicators during the last decades, the situation of women and children continue to be marked by problems due to the existence of geographical, economical and cultural disparities all over the country. An assessment of the social protection mechanisms currently existing in Turkey is presented with special reference to the policies adopted after the 2001 economic crisis. It has been observed that the recent economic developments had forced Turkey to adopt a proactive role in struggling against poverty.

Although Turkey has a growing problem of poverty, it is difficult to argue that there is an effective policy to abate it. On the contrary the existing anti-poverty programs are rather too narrow as they are constructed during the financial crisis. This paper, argues that the capability approach as a particular method to understanding and explaining all forms and dimensions of poverty, offers a comprehensive framework and a sound theoretical approach for the development of anti-poverty policies.

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