



Legacy of the poor

Poverty is the most comprehensive kind of violence which has the longest history. Moreover, it is inherited by children from their parents. It remains for generations on. Children of poor families learn the tips of living in poverty from their family, such as cooking with limited materials, using electricity or water without paying bills, or treating illnesses without seeing a doctor.

Poverty causes similar violence and traumas on people regardless of their age, sex and race but those who are most violently and permanently damaged by poverty are children. Their basic needs are not satisfied even when they are in their mother's womb and most of them die at birth or before they are one. These children whose basic needs such as feeding, housing, heating, or health are taken from them always live in need and when they are adults they become angry and reactive to the society.

Naturally, women as the oppressed sex are also more oppressed under poverty. Poor women have to deal with problems which are very different from those that the rest of women do. Such differences make it more difficult for women to discover the oppression of their own sex and they remain as a handicap before women's struggle for freedom.

Many years ago scientists found out that the conflict between the oppressors and the oppressed is the main conflict. Different theories were written and different systems were tried but this conflict could not be solved

in the modern world. Moreover, the globalizing world still increased the global poverty. Considering that the oppressors are the few and the oppressed are billions, it is hard to understand why this circle cannot be broken.

In my opinion, the main problem lies in the fact that the oppressed cannot organize this conflict. We cannot stop a few people, those in governments of states, from starting war whenever they want, even if we know that in all of those wars, without exception, the poor kill each other. This

great conflict classifies women and that is why makes it impossible to struggle against patriarchy. Thus, a few men keep practicing a systematic patriarchy on the whole humanity.

Even if this has been the way things are so far, it should not continue the same way. In order to struggle against poverty, which turns life into a torture for billions of people, except for a small minority, we must find more comprehensive, effective

and rapid solutions. We must stop inheriting poverty to our children. We must eliminate poverty as our fate. We, the oppressed, must organize this great conflict.

Fatma Nevin Vargün

STGMD (Civil Society Development Center Association)
Executive Board Substitute Member, Member of the Journal Amargi Editorial Board and Member of FeministBiz.

THE SUN RISES IN THE POOR AND SETS IN THE RICH





12 August International Youth Day

It was declared by the United Nations in 1995 and has been celebrated through various activities since then. The fifth International Youth Congress organized by the International Peace Child Organization and supported by the United Nations, was held in Istanbul between 1-12 August. 1400 young people from 147 different countries participated in the congress.

Dialogue

Private sector - civil society dialogue

Cooperative activities between NGOs and the private sector have quite increased in the last few years. As well as there are successful ones among these activities many of which are introduced as institutional social responsibility activities there are ones which are no more than an average promotion activity. Nevertheless, considering the fact that NGOs in Turkey have limited access to sufficient funding, the importance of these activities is noticed again. We, as STGM,

have started our activities to strengthen the dialogues between NGOs and the private sector, to determine the ethical principals and enable them to be adopted and practiced both by the private sector and NGOs. When we plan our activities, we take the experiences and suggestions of other NGOs in this field into consideration. If any other NGOs have activities, experiences, or suggestions to share with us, they can reach us at istanbul@stgm.org.tr.

Human Rights

Poverty is a violation of human rights. We do not check the Universal Declaration of Human Rights to accept this fact. According to Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ratified in 1948, "Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection." In Article 25 it is stated, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old

HURRY!
I HAVE
5 LIRAS!



I ONLY
HAVE
5 LIRAS!



age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."

The European Commission declared 2010 to be the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion, because just like in Turkey, poverty is a major problem in the whole world. Thus we allotted the 24th issue of Siviliz to the topic of poverty and wanted to share the activities and opinions of civil organizations in this field.

Our colleague Emre Murat Ermiş who is responsible from communication with Eskişehir Local Support Center and his wife had their baby son, Selim, on 14 May. We wish them a very happy life.



"NGOs must act to change social reality"

Ö. Faruk Akyüz, the Project Coordinator of Life and Hope House of Nefel Association for Solidarity with the Poor and Combating Poverty, which activates in Batman, informed us about their activities.

What kind of necessities caused Nefel Association to be opened in Batman and what are its activities?

Nefel was founded in 2006 with the support of NGOs in the region and local governments. We are carrying out some social projects especially for the victims of forced migration who live in quite disadvantaged conditions in poverty-stricken areas of the city. We try to involve especially the local governments actively into this process so that we can heal the deep break created by poverty in society. We also aim to carry on activities on local and national levels to raise the consciousness of general public.

Through our campaigns we supported 62851 people who were affected by the disaster of flood in Batman which happened one year after our institution was founded. Our employees in the association and some other volunteers distributed packages containing the same necessary materials to thousands of families. In the following course of time we continued to distribute the same materials especially to women and children.

We revealed social, economic, and cultural conditions of families who are the victims of forced migration in Batman in our face-to-face interviews with them and we carried out the "Poverty Mapping Project" which will finance the sustainable development activities in the scope of combating poverty. The project was funded by EU and we carried out capacity developing activities which aim to eliminate socio-economic exclusion. In this scope we also carried out "Life and Hope House Project" which includes various artistic activities and in which 9 people; 2 nurses, 1 psychologist, 4 social gender expert and 2 teachers worked. At the end of the project, we prepared a Poverty Analysis Report about the effects of forced migration on poverty and submitted it to the central government.

What do you think are the duties of the state about poverty?

The state has now turned into a governmental mechanism which is structured on security paranoia and which allots most of its finance in this direction. We can see that the sources of the state are not used in the right place and no proper



Before the closure of the congress a document named as "The Movement Plan of the Youth" was approved. International Youth Congress is held in every 2 or 4 years in a different country.

needs analysis is made. Aid-in-kind packages distributed by the government, especially in election periods, do not help reducing poverty; on the contrary, they deepen it. Such practices rupture the connection of the individual from production and make them dependent. Instead of a dependent society created by aid-in-kind, poverty and destituteness must be eliminated through sustainable investments. The state must first of all pay attention to the suggestions of NGOs which develop policies aiming to eliminate poverty and destituteness and take steps in this direction.



What are the duties of NGOs?

Sometimes the aid-in-kind supplied by NGOs give a short relief from poverty. NGOs have an important role in making policies to eliminate poverty. Efficient activities must be carried out in proper administration and use of public sources in order to eliminate poverty and differences in development levels between regions. The most important duty of the NGOs in this process is to direct the poverty eliminating policies. They should not only interpret the existing social reality, but also change it and thus act in a way to offer a more just and democratic world to the people living in the region.

"The poorest in Turkey are the victims of forced migration"

Selahattin Güvenç, the Executive Board Chairman of the Association for Science, Culture, Social Aid, and Solidarity for People who Migrated to the Mediterranean (Akdeniz Göç-Der) which carries out activities to support victims of forced migration who settled especially in Adana and Mersin.

Can you inform us briefly about your activities in combating poverty?

The target group of Mediterranean Migration Association is the victims of the forced migration. These victims are also the poorest in Turkey. The main problems of this group of thousands of people are unemployment and poverty. Our association carries out activities to call attention to the social problems created by unemployment and poverty. Our local activists regularly inform us about the problems of the victims of forced migration.

In the scope of the Law on Compensating Damages Due to Anti-Terrorism issued in July 2004 numbered 5233, we counseled victims of migration in applying and availing themselves of the law. We directed 2000 families so far to the cities where their properties were damaged, gave legal counseling to 200 families so that they could apply damage identification commissions in Mersin and helped them make a proper application to Mersin Governorship according to the procedures. We collected and recorded information about the present 200 families. Our commission of law continues to give legal counseling to the victims of migration about the law of compensation and other general legal issues.

We went to the Administrative Court about cancelled green cards¹ of 35000 people, most of whom are the victims of migration and the results were positive. Just after we won these lawsuits, our association informed the media about this social problem and applied to the Ministry of Labor and Social Security. Our association informed the public about the cancelled green cards through meetings in local tea-houses. As a result of our activities, the governorship of Mersin reinvestigated the files of green cards and many green cards were returned to their holders.

We supplied food aid to 350 families, most of whom lost their families or close relatives and who were the victims of forced



migration, from our food fund founded by our own members. 2 or 3 times a year our board members visit these families and give them the food we supplied from food factories. Our association prepared a migration report according to the interviews, which have been carried out since the foundation of our association, with 1000 families in 20 different districts in the city. The report was sent to

national and international migration institutions, human rights institutions, some important national NGOs, and the Embassies of EU countries.

Under the leadership of our association and with the coordination of Public Assembly of Demirtaş² District, a public march with the slogan "No to All Forms of Corruption, Mafia, Drugs, and Robbery for a Clean Society" was performed. After the demonstration to which about 3000 people participated, we received positive reactions from the public and local governors. Mediterranean Migration Association carries our different activities in Mersin throughout the country between 14 and 21 June every year in the scope of "Migration Week" activities. This year we gave a press release under the title "Stop the Operations, No More Migrations" in the Migration Week.

Who are your target group?

The target group of Mediterranean Migration Association is about 500 thousand people living in Çukurova³ region who are the victims of forced migration. Besides, other groups of people who immigrated to the region for different reasons also take place in our target group.

What kind of difficulties or necessities do you observe?

Mediterranean Migration Association has now reached its target group in Çukurova, especially in Mersin and had a strong communication with them. Nevertheless, it is not possible to say that we actually solved the problems of the thousands of unemployed and poor people. We, as an association, act as a guide for legal and social problems of the victims.

1 A legal document which is given to Turkish citizens who have a monthly income under a certain limit and which ensures them free health services. <http://sbu.saglik.gov.tr/yesil>

2 A relatively poor district of the city in which mostly Kurdish people who emigrated from the Southeastern part of Turkey settled.

3 Çukurova (formerly Cilicia) is a geographic, economic and cultural region in south-central Turkey, covering the provinces of Mersin, Adana, Osmaniye and Hatay. With a population of 5.62 million, it is one of the largest population concentrations in Turkey. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%87ukurova>



15 September International Day of Democracy

The United Nations General Assembly declared this day with the aim of inculcating the ideas of democracy, development, human rights and respect for basic freedoms in the whole world. It has been celebrated since 2008.

Women are trying to overcome poverty by working at home

We asked our questions about the poverty of women to Gaye Cön Şakar, Nazik Işık and Gül Erdost from the Study Group of Home-Based Working Women.

Since the 70 per cent of the poor in the world is composed of women, this existing situation is called "the feminization of poverty". What do you think is the reason?

Reasons such as change in family structure, increase in the rates of divorces and having children out of wedlock and taking care of children only by mothers are used to explain "feminizing poverty". This concept was first discussed in the 4th World Conference on Women in 1995. The majority of the poor are women and their children. Poverty is affecting men and women in different ways. Determining characteristics of women's poverty are their inability to access educational opportunities and their still being in secondary position in employment. The unequal situation of women and the fact of social gender cause women to get poorer, for instance after divorce. If a woman has no education and income, divorce affects her level of income as well as her social status.

Women try to support their home economics by working unregistered for low wages, or as it is frequently seen in Turkey, the whole family works in agricultural areas and women remain as unpaid family workers. Correspondingly, this situation of being a woman shaped by the roles of social gender and being raised according to traditional roles cause women not to have time outside of their home to earn money. In the outside world, treating women discriminately also deepen their poverty. Women have been getting poorer and they have stayed thus for many years because of all these reasons.

Considering the fact that a great number of women take care of housework, they are "housewives", as it is generally stated, would not women's work at home be counted as a job?

Women's taking care of their family and home, such as mending clothes, preparing dowry for girls, presents for friends or food for winter, activities to manage and save home economics are part of traditional roles of women. These are



not considered as economic activities. Since they are not accepted as productive activities, they are not taken into consideration, for instance, as part of national income. This, actually, is an attitude which causes women and their labor to become invisible ignoring their contribution to society. However, productive activities of women at home are skills which have their own value in the market. As poverty gets harder, women use their skills through which they can earn money in order to help to support their family. Women work at home but they do not see themselves as employees. They are not aware of their participation in labor force. A woman who works at home either for herself or as unregistered is an employee. At the beginning of our workshop which we carried out as the Study Group of Home-based Working Women, only 1 or 2 people out of 20 or 25 answer affirmatively the

question "Who works among you?". Women working at home are not only the poor women but the poor women have a considerable place in this group of home-based working women. After women working at home started getting organized and became visible in the world and also in Turkey, women who call themselves as housewives before started to consider themselves as employees and asked their rights both in family and legal arena.

What are the activities of Home-based Working Women?

The Study Group of Home-based Working Women came together in 1999 and has been carrying out activities such as making the labor produced at home and women working at home visible, helping women be organized for their rights of work, payment, health services, and security, developing mechanisms for the communication of new organizations with others, making national policies about working at home and those who work at home, communicating with international organizations and thus exchanging experiences about activities in this field, supporting scientific studies by helping academic studies, and preparing written materials.

"We are not the solution for poverty for the time being but we can reduce it"

We asked whether microcredit is a solution to poverty to Polat Gül, Responsible Assistant Manager of Tepebaşı Office of Turkish Grameen Microcredit Programme.

How did this programme start?

One day Professor Muhammed Yunus from Bangladesh sees women who make different objects from bamboo in his country. Unfortunately they sell these objects for very low prices to tradesmen. He decides to offer these women to give small loans. The women thus, instead of helping capital holders make money, they start earning their own money and contribute into their family budget.

Does not the husband spend the money his wife earns?

We are in constant contact with the women to whom we gave loans, both in the process of paying back and in

production. We have always seen that the women used the money that they earned for their work or home. The system actually works like this. It was then used in 117 more countries in the world and a total number of 600 million women, together with their families, used loans and became part of production. In Eskişehir, Turkey, the program was started in 2008 and 1500 women took loans in 2 years. We gave about 2 trillion liras loan in Eskişehir.

Why do not you give loans in more amounts?

The main reason for this is that it is easier for women to pay back small amounts. This programme claims that it is



1 September or 21 September International Day of Peace

The United Nations declared the third Tuesday of September, the opening day of General Assembly, as the International Day of Peace and it has been celebrated since 2001, including in Turkey.



wrong to donate people despite they can work. We give loans in small amounts to women to help them contribute economy and so we give them donations in small amounts.

Can this program be a solution to poverty?

Şu an için bu kadar iddialı olmanın doğru I do not think it is true to have so large a claim. We might be able to say this in the future but for the time being we should be contend to reduce poverty. Perhaps



the most important contribution of this system is to try to keep women outside of a "beggar culture" of a "parens patriae" tradition which keeps women out of production by giving them, who have the potential to produce, donations under the name of "social aid". We are trying to combat poverty, by giving loans to women, with a popular expression, by teaching them to fish, instead of giving them donations.

"How the budget is shared is important!"

We also interviewed with Association for Social Rights (SHD⁴) in this issue. Despite it is a quite young association, SHD carries out comprehensive activities. We talked to the members of SHD about their activities and "social policies", but we can only publish a summary of the interview since we have no space for the whole text.

What does SHD do?

Our basic activities are data collecting and detecting problem fields through Violations of Social Rights Report. Since 2006 we have been collecting information and publishing a monthly report about the violations in the fields of work, education, health services, city, and rights of the disabled. There are quite interesting results. When you add many cases which could simply be seen as page 3 news to each other, the problems in the social policies of government become more visible.

We also carry out workshops with a theme. We try to join all the symposiums or panels which are in our field of interest and encourage people to send academic papers to different journals. Otherwise, many activities do not go beyond being in solidarity with victims of rights.

There is also ÜSDEM, Ümraniye Social Solidarity and Education Center, which is a center in which three unions and three associations act together and we are one of the founders of it. However it is early to talk about it, Women's and Youth's House, opened again in Ümraniye, is an original activity which associates women's movement with social rights.

How is the concept of "social right" understood by the state and especially by the local governments? Do you think the policies produced about this are sufficient?

When some basic social rights such as education and health services are managed by private sector, they become seen as a kind of "money making" source. What remains then? "Alms," with its very exact meaning, which is not given according to objective criteria, which is taken by those who obey the orders of some high rank officials, and which is given to those who are in a list prepared in offices of political parties. We think relationships in financial distribution must be interfered today; otherwise rights would remain only as a word. The "Campaign of Budget for Public" that we carry out every year is a good example to this.

What would you suggest to get more effective results?

How the budget is shared is important. For instance, the budget of the Directorate of Religious Affairs is more than that of the Ministry of Health. The Ministry of Education does not build schools unless there is a donation. The budget of Football Federation is almost 10 times more than that is allotted to public health. There are so many examples like this. Politicians make a choice of distribution here, and we should force them to make these choices differently.

Suggestion for solutions from the Regional NGO Initiative

649 NGOs from 20 cities who held a one-day workshop in Diyarbakır stated that they will act to start a negotiation process to solve the Kurdish problem and they will heretofore continue to work under the name of "Regional NGOs Initiative". These 649 NGOs from 20 cities in the region, which met in Diyarbakır due to the increasing military operations and conflicts in the region, released the final declaration of their one-day workshop. Many NGO representatives joined in the announcement of this final declaration released through a press meeting in front of Sümerpark Reception Hall.

After the workshop the demands of NGO representatives for a solution are as follows:

- the first condition is a non-fighting atmosphere. Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) must stop its operations and PKK



must stop its actions. There must be a peace atmosphere which will open the way for a political solution.

- A dialogue process must be started. Everyone who sees itself as a side of the issue should be incorporated to the process of solution. We support the idea of a new constitution which is based on pluralism, democratic values, freedom and equality.
- There must be a new regime of political parties in which all the political views could be expressed easily. The election threshold must be cancelled or reduced to a reasonable percentage.
- Arrangements to compensate the unjust treatment of the children who are the victims of Anti-Terrorism Law (TMK). Anti-Terrorism Law must be annulled. The articles in the Turkish Penal Law which are against the universal law and which cause injustice and similar anti-democratic laws in the legislation must be revised on rights base.

4 For further information about SHD, go to www.sosyalhaklar.org



Nevertheless, it is claimed that this day is celebrated by the former USSR and Warsaw Treaty Organization countries to remind the day, which has nothing to do with peace, German troops invaded Poland.

Freedom of Association

Suit filed to close down Van Office of Kurdî-Der

The first session of the suit filed to close down Kurdish Language Research and Development Association (Kurdî-Der) with the claim that "it turned into an institution which is against law and morality" was held on 22 July in Van 3rd Civil Court of General Jurisdiction. The suit was watched by Remzi Azizoglu, the President of Kurdî-Der, administrators of Kurdî-Der Van Office, STGM (Civil Society Development Center), representatives of different NGOs and general public.



In the press release given after the hearing, the lawyer Cemal Demir said that the press briefing released by Kurdî-Der Van Office and which is claimed to constitute a crime in the bill of indictment is actually legal. He added, "The demand expressed by 'We want education in our native language' cannot be accepted as a crime. Turkey signed European Convention on Human Rights which includes this issue. The explanations of the associations are in the scope of human rights." The lawsuit was postponed to 30 September 2010.

Gender

Stopp!!!

The conference "Different Experiences, Common Goals" was held in the scope of the project "We are Building Bridges against Violence against Women" which is carried on by Mor Çatı (Purple Roof) in cooperation with İzmir Women's Solidarity Association, Van Women's Association and Women Against Violence Network (WAVE) from Austria. Prof. Dr. Songül Sallan Gül from the Sociology Department in Süleyman Demirel University released the preliminary results of her research on profiling women who stay in Women's shelter houses:



- * 57 % of the women are brought to shelter houses by the police. 22% of the women go to municipalities and 9 % of them to shelter centers of SHÇEK (Social Services and Child Protection Society).
- * Women stay in shelter houses for one week to 8 months. Only 7 % of them stay there for 3 months or more.
- * More than half of the women staying in shelter houses are under the age of 30. 15 % of the women are aged between 14 and 18 and 70 % of them stay in shelter houses of SHÇEK. There are children, mothers, aged or pregnant women and victims of incest in this group.
- * Institutions would not want to accept women over 50.
- * Disabled women, prostitutes and drug addicts are not accepted.
- * 13 % of the women in the shelter houses are illiterate. 74 % finished primary school and 2 % are university graduates.
- * They stayed married for 6 months up to 30 years.
- * 47 % of them got married between the ages of 13 and 17. 13 % of them were sexually harassed.
- * 34 % of them were exposed to a wide range of violence; some were beaten or their ears were cut off.

- * 53 % of them complain about the insufficiency of the services given to children.
- * 52 % of them who went out of these institutions want to live with their children.
- * While 5 % of them who left these institutions could find jobs, 36 % of them say that they had to go back to their home because they had no other choice.

İlke Gökdemir, volunteer of Purple Roof Women's Shelter Association, said in the opening speech of the conference that they carried on different activities such as workshops for psychologists and social service experts in the scope of the project started in March. She also added that a website will be designed according to the frame of the project and they will share information about violence against women and news from women's associations and organizations which do not have a website.

MY HUSBAND
HAS FOUND A JOB
IN CLEANING
SERVICES IN A
SKYSCRAPER.
HE SAYS ITS
ELEVATOR IS
LARGER THAN
THIS SLUM.





16 September International Day of Protecting Ozone Layer

This is the day when Montreal Protocol, an international convention on the protection of ozone layer, was signed. The protocol was signed by 191 countries, including Turkey, and it aims to stop the production and consumption of chemicals that damage ozone layer.



“Cooperative initiatives strengthen women”

In 2009 seven different women’s cooperative broke a new ground in Turkey by forming S.S. Mediterranean Union of Women’s Culture and Business Cooperatives. The union, which is open to the participation of other women’s cooperatives in neighboring cities, is carrying out its activities, which it started with 50 members at the beginning, with its 250 members. In the building allocated by Çukurova Municipality different activities such as courses on ceramic and glass products, original thin and thick waving, Karaisalı rug, felt-made home materials, furnishing, clothing, hair dressing, computer, accountancy, English, folk dances and Turkish classical music. The union has reached 590 women so far through a field survey and decided on which educational activities are to be started according to their suggestions. It also continues to work with women who have a low level of income and who could not earn their own money by helping them earn their lives through educational support. Representatives of 18 different international cooperatives visited the union so far and

they were informed about the activities of the union. The United Nations declared 2012 to be the International Year of Co-operatives and this points out to the importance of cooperatives in economic and social development.



“We will call them to account for the murder of women”

Eskişehir Democratic Women’s Platform was on Eskişehir streets to show that they will not give up searching the murder of women. There were demonstration every two weeks and

women aimed to react against violence against women and their murder.



In the briefing of the platform it was claimed that murders of women are increasing day by day and the penalty of men who murdered women was mitigated due to various reasons by the state which is the law-making mechanism. It was also stated,

“The men who escape punishment for the murder they committed by enjoying some mitigating reasons such as ‘unjust provocation’ continue to murder women after they are released. Moreover, due to little punishment for the penalties, murder of women is almost encouraged by the state, let alone eliminating them. We will always be watching lawsuits until the murders of women stop and the laws such as ‘unjust provocation’ are annulled.”

Rights of the Child

Rights and Freedoms Platform discussed “stone-throwing children”

Afyonkarahisar Rights and Freedoms Platform stated that the children who are judged because they threw stones to the police must necessarily be judged by juvenile courts. Murat Uçar, lawyer and the speaker of the platform, which made a demonstration in front of the central Post Office, said that more than 4000 children were tried on equal terms with adults for “throwing stones” to the police, punished according to Anti-Terrorism Law or are still waiting their turn to be punished but these children must first all be sent to rehabilitation. Uçar also added that it is a vital necessity for all the actors of the politics, government and opposition parties, to come together unconditionally and put the decisions which will contribute to the solution into practice.





It was regarded as one of the most successful international conventions which aim to solve extensive environmental problems collectively. This day is celebrated in the whole world through a series of activities parallel to the issue.

Rights of the Disabled

Library of the Visually Impaired in Turkey

The Library of the Visually Impaired in Turkey (TURGÖK) which is based in İzmir has been supplying free and non-returnable book service in Turkey and also in Netherlands, Cyprus, The USA, and Germany. It prepares audio and Braille printed novels, textbooks, books for preparation for University Entrance Exam, Public Personnel Selection Exam, High School Placement Exam, Open High School and Primary School Exams. There are also monthly journals in Braille printing for primary school 1th to 5th grades, "Yavru Balası" (Baby Honey-bee) and for grades 6th to 8th, "Balası" (Honey-bee), and also for high school



students and adults an MP3 journal "Arkadaş" (Friend), which is sent to the members. So the members of the library could make their own library. In the library there are 4 reading cabins, computer course room, volunteer work room, and Braille printing units.

TURGÖK has cooperated with many NGOs in many different projects so far. The last one, "Braille for the Visually Impaired and Turkish Speaking Spelling Dictionary Project" which it carried out in cooperation with Karşıyaka

Soroptimist Club was funded by İzmir Development Agency. For more detailed information about TURGÖK:

0232-224 26 27 – 232-224 32 33, bilgi@turgok.org

Rights of Elderly

Rights of Elderly People Campaign

Association for Solidarity with Elderly People (YDD), which was founded to protect the rights of the elderly and help them live in good conditions, carried out a campaign for senior citizens living in Adana. The association has rights-based activities aiming to meliorate the conditions of older people's lives, to create social unity, to solve their economic and health problems, and to help them enjoy their lives and firstly it identified elderly people in the area.

Emel Varlı, the President of YDD, informed us about their campaigns and said, "The rights of older people are a right



to life which is beyond some physical needs of older people such as board and lodging, health services, security and it is a right to a qualified life appropriate to their environment and culture, beliefs,

and the life style they are accustomed to. The priority of our campaign is to raise the consciousness of older people about their rights and we try to do this with our brochures, meetings and one-to-one conversations." Varkal stressed that theirs are not aid campaigns which are humiliating and make people dependent and therefore cannot be accepted. She added, "Today the needs of the older people are met in a traditional way of charity and in return they are expected to thank, feel gratitude and they are even abused. You cannot eliminate poverty by supplying some simple needs, they remain poor. If older people can enjoy their rights, the situation will change. So, we should not campaign for charity but support them to enjoy their rights to relieve the poverty, pain and injustice in their lives."

Varkal said that the basic reasons for the poverty of older people should be detected and the right-holders must be encouraged to claim their rights and the decision makers must fulfil their obligations. She also added that they thus visit older people and have conversations with them to know their target group better and identify their needs.





22 September World Carfree Day

This day has been celebrated in many cities in Europe since a couple of years. There are activities in many European countries with the slogan "I am carfree in My Own City" against the domination of cars and car-centered approaches.

Drawer: Aydan Çelik – barisapedal.org



Legislation

Eliminating discrimination

Elimination of discrimination which is practised deliberately or in purpose without being noticed by the general public under the justifying cover of general understanding in daily life and which one meets in different areas of life in different forms, is a field of activity which is paid much attention by human rights organizations. When international documents and regulations considered, prohibition and elimination of discrimination is not a field foreign to legislation in the context of equality principle. Prohibition of discrimination and the principle of equality which are stated in supra/ international documents are also stated in Article 10, titled as "Equality before the law", of the constitution.

Considering this constitutional rule, it is obvious that individuals who are equal before the law must be protected against all forms of discrimination. However, in the practice of the principle of equality, only a formal understanding the approach (which can actually be meaningful), "equality between only those who are in a position of equality" and vagueness and therefore arbitrariness of the meaning of "being in equal position" excludes the principal of equality being a principal which supplies proper legal protection. This "vagueness" and thus discrimination can be eliminated through regular practices of legislation, execution and jurisdiction and making the experiences and background knowledge about the struggle against discrimination visible through new legislative concepts is a significant and progressive means in eliminating discrimination.

In this respect, after the study, which was prepared under name "Law Draft on Preventing and Eliminating Discrimination" by the working group formed by the coordination of Human Rights Joint Platform (İHOP) and



submitted to NGOs and professional organizations to be evaluated, "Draft Law on the Prevention and Elimination of Discrimination⁵" was released to public information. Both draft laws are for "enabling legislative, executive and judicial units, individuals, public and private legal bodies to act according to the principle of equality and the prohibition of discrimination". It should also be noted that to make the prevention of discrimination in the fields of "legislation, execution and jurisdiction" a matter of law might cause some important difficulties in terms of the methodology of law. The difficulty here arises from the fact that the draft law includes legislative and judicial powers as well as execution and management.

In both of the drafts, fields of discrimination are fundamentally defined and a unit, which has a public legal identity to struggle against discrimination and act for equality, is formed. In the draft of the government, mainly the draft prepared by İHOP working group was taken into consideration about the fields of discrimination, yet different regulations in the authority of "The Committee of the Struggle against Discrimination and Equality" which will act especially in this field. Besides the similarities and differences of the two texts, at this point, it is important to discuss the approaches of the two drafts to the issue and the solutions they offer and to form the legal means to prevent the discrimination with all its forms in all fields.

Assistant Professor Ayhan Tekinsoy, from the faculty of law in Ankara University, who is one of the members of the study group of the Draft Law of Discrimination, helped to prepare the Legislation part in this issue.

I HAD TOUGH TIMES, TOO.
WHEN I WAS A COMMANDO,
WE ATE TURTLE, LIZARD AND
SIMILAR STUFF IN THE
MOUNTAINS.



¹ http://www.ihop.org.tr/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=32&Itemid=88



Civil Activists

Bariş Dikilitaş (Sarmaşık [Ivy]-Association for the Struggle against Poverty and Sustainable Development)

He graduated from the Department of Political Science and International Relationships and received his MA degree in Communicative Sciences with his thesis on "Civil Society as a means of Democratization in Turkey. He started his career in financial sector and in 2004 he started working in the field of development and social policies of disadvantaged groups with a project of the United Nations Development Programme on socio-economic development and entrepreneurship. In 2006 he joined Sarmaşık-Association for the Struggle against Poverty and Sustainable Development formed by the local foundations in Diyarbakır and worked for the aim of understanding and reducing the effects of the poverty suffered especially by Kurdish people.



Sarmaşık Association is a founded by the cooperation of 32 founders from Diyarbakır Municipality and the NGOs, industrialist and businessmen associations, and trade unions in Diyarbakır in April 2006 with the aim of research and report of the socio-economic effects of the forced migration to Diyarbakır in the last 20 years and the underdevelopment on society, and especially putting projects which can meliorate the conditions of disadvantaged groups (the unemployed, women, children, disabled people) into practice.

Why do you think the issue of struggling against poverty understood as rights-based so late by the NGOs in Turkey?

Generally speaking the main reason lies in the fact that the need for "demilitarization" and the search and activities to satisfy this need are expressed in accordance with today's "rights-based" definitions too late. I think this is due to the fact that the relationship between the state and individual was arranged and developed by the state for the most part to the advantage of the state. That situation is directly associated with the (forced) delay of "demilitarization" pursuits on theoretic and practical levels. In specific terms, struggle against poverty has been seen as "aiding the poor" in Turkey so far. All wings in politics unfortunately have this frame of mind.

Is a different kind of poverty suffered from in the east and southeast of Turkey compared to other parts of the country?

Actually, poverty has different dynamics in each region and group. I have always known Romans as poor people throughout my life. About the poverty of the Kurdish people, I think its difference should be sought for in the effects of state policies after 1980. A deportation practice was then started to fasten the process of the assimilation of Kurdish people, which, in my opinion, is multi-dimensional, to make them regress socio-economically and to prevent them to be organized politically. Their villages were evacuated. Things become desperate at this point because the Kurdish society is not industrialized; they are self-sufficient but they do not have a market economy. Nevertheless until the beginning of the 20th century they had their own market economy but the borders of national states did not separated the places that Kurdish people lived on yet. In the end, about 3 million people from the villages which were evacuated could no longer be self-sufficient, lost their socio-economic and cultural initiatives and became/made dependent. In the meantime Turkey started to practice neo-liberal economy policies and thus, like a domino effect, Kurdish people started to suffer from more than poverty that we know but a state of deprivation. Yes, a different kind of poverty is suffered from in these regions because it has ethnic, political, socio-economic and cultural basis and is against all human rights that we know.

What does Sarmaşık Association do about the struggle against poverty?

First of all, we tried to interpret the data about poverty in Diyarbakır and so understand the most basic needs. For that reason, we defined the

working fields of the association with our survey "The City Map of Poverty in Diyarbakır". We founded the Food Bank which helps about 2500 families who cannot afford their staples food. The food bank is an important example in terms of the way of solidarity between not only the right-holders but also between the project partners who support the use of this right. We are thinking of giving service to about 5000 families in Diyarbakır. We give educational, economic and cultural support to 120 children most of whom come from these families. We support natural gas training to unemployed people in our city in coordination with the Vocational Training Center of Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality. We employed pilot projects on women's health, meliorating post-natal period and hygiene in coordination with Turkish Family Health and Planning Association (TAP). One of our most significant aims in these activities was to move the local dynamics of Diyarbakır and I can say that we managed that. Our most favourite slogan is "Let's not make people beg, Let's join our hands" which is also the slogan of our campaign to increase the support to the food bank and decided on by our dear friend and executive board member Evrim Alataş whom we lost a short while ago.

What are the difficulties of activating as an association in the region?

It is difficult to create a foundation which is supported by everyone in a place like Diyarbakır where both the social structure is fragile and there is a great separation between the positions of social institutions. This situation not only concerns the people who will be supplied a certain form of service but those who will be legally or volunteering in charge of supplying the service as

well. I think there are problems in the attitudes of some NGOs and local government units, due to the fact that they could not yet overcome the classical definition and methods of struggle against poverty. It does not, nevertheless, mean that we wholly overcame it but how can it be overcome unless we work together? Unless we try to define reasons and difficulties with a broader perspective, we can cause even deeper difficulties or problems, let alone overcoming the usual ones.

When compared to other fields, how did working in the field of poverty affect you as an activist?

It is a field which includes almost all of the human rights and its violations, so I can say that it quite improved me and my colleagues.



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