

SAY YES

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF UNICEF TURKEY SUMMER 2004

THE BEST
INVESTMENT
FOR HER
FUTURE

For every child
Health, Education, Equality, Protection
ADVANCE HUMANITY

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IN THIS ISSUE

A NEW YEAR BRINGING NEW CHALLENGES

With only a few weeks remaining of the school holidays, educators and students all over the country are preparing for the new academic year which will begin on the 13th of September.

UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, along with our partners in the girls' education campaign *Haydi Kizlar Okula!* are confident that 300,000 girls who were previously out-of-school will enroll in primary education.

This edition of Say Yes is devoted to the drive to enroll 600,000 girls who are out-of-school and achieve gender parity in primary education before the end of 2005.

Read **Getting the Word Out**, pp 4 & 5

Rest stop — children in rural areas usually walk to school. However the state provides transport for those who live further than 2.5 kilometres.

TEMPORARY MEASURES

A chronic shortage of school space in Turkey presents one of the greatest obstacles to girls' enrolment — and education in general.

The past decade has seen massive rural to urban migration in Turkey, placing a tremendous strain on urban and metropolitan services in general. Over-crowded inner city schools often have to run classes in shifts in order to accommodate the large numbers of students on their registers.

Conversely, the more remote, de-populated rural areas tend to have little or no school space available. The traditional solution of transporting children to urban centres and boarding schools has discouraged many parents from sending their adolescent daughters to school.

So the provision of extra space in order to meet the anticipated rise in enrolment rates in September is key to the success of the girls' education campaign in Turkey. A temporary but nonetheless effective solution is to use the pre-fabricated structures which formerly accommodated homeless families in disaster areas. In this issue, we examine the logistics and problems anticipated in putting these now empty structures to good use.

Read **Instant Schoolspace**, page 9



COME ON GIRLS!

Haydi Kızlar Okula! received an extra boost at the beginning of the summer. Governors of the 33 priority provinces met in Ankara on the first day of June to make a forthright and unequivocal declaration in support of the campaign's objectives which we have printed in this issue.

We also spoke to some of the governors about the issue of girls' education and how it affects life in their provinces.

[Read From Strength to Strength, pp 6 & 7](#)

A CHANGE OF HEART

As *Haydi Kızlar Okula!* takes İstanbul under its wing along with another 22 new provinces targeted for increased enrolment rates in girls' education, we meet Gazel — who almost missed out on school but for her father's change of heart.

As many as 75,000 girls in İstanbul are not attending school. Hopefully these girls will see similarly happy resolutions to their stories when schools open in September.

[Read Haydi Gazel! page 8](#)

EVERY PENNY HELPS

Economic hardship is another barrier to girls' education — especially in the poorer rural areas and urban districts of Turkey. Many families require their children to work or stay at home to help with domestic chores.

It is an all too familiar story around the world — especially to advocates of girls' education since the schooling of daughters is usually the first thing to be sacrificed by families in straitened circumstances.

The Social Solidarity Fund has adopted measures to counteract the problem and ease pressure on parents who would otherwise gladly send their daughters to school. The financial subsidy (conditional on a child's continued attendance and successful grades) will be 20% and 40% respectively higher for girls than boys in primary and secondary education.

[Read A Helping Hand, pp 10 & 11](#)



As the clock runs down towards the start of the new school year in mid-September 2004, excitement is growing that the *Haydi Kızlar Okula!* campaign will reach new heights of success this year.

The goal is to get 300,000 extra girls enrolled in primary school which would halve the current numbers. The remaining 300,000 will be the target of the 2005 campaign.

This issue describes many of the initiatives under way to ensure the success of the campaign and highlights the fact that success can only be achieved with help from all sectors of society. True, the Ministry of National

Education, with support from UNICEF, is in the forefront, but many other ministries, institutions and non-governmental bodies are also involved. Some of the most significant strides are even made by individuals. I always find it heart-warming when I hear of creative ideas emerging from various parts of the community. Here are a few examples of such initiatives which I think are worthy of special mention:

- The school in İstanbul whose students raised TL 5 billion for the campaign — this money can be used to deploy two prefabricated classrooms where they are needed.
- The District Governor in Erzurum who came up with the idea of rewarding families who send their girls to school with beehives — a potential source of income.
- The District Governor in Ağrı, who suggested that an effective way of identifying children who are out-of-school would be to ask children in school to list friends who are not attending so that teachers could then follow-up with the families.
- The Mayor of Adana who decided to provide free public transport to volunteers visiting the homes of families in order to persuade them to send their girls to school.

There are many more stories such as these which highlight the ground-level enthusiasm and creativity driving *Haydi Kızlar Okula!* towards what I am confident will be a real success story.

Such examples serve to inspire and motivate everyone involved as we enter the crucial final days of the campaign.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Edmond McLoughney'.

Edmond McLoughney
UNICEF Representative, Turkey

Note: We very much like to hear readers reactions to the newsletter, so please feel free to contact us with your comments and suggestions.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

Even the most promising of initiatives are doomed to fail without a key element — Awareness. One of the most important aspects in ensuring the success of *Haydi Kızlar Okula!* (the Girls' Education Campaign in Turkey) is to make the issues visible since visibility can affect the implementation and outcome of a project from many angles.

Getting the message about girls' education across at all levels of society is vitally important — everyone has an important role to play.

There are many reasons why girls don't attend school. One of the main issues that stand to be affected by increased exposure is economic. An effective public awareness campaign has the potential to reach the eyes and ears of would-be donors. An equally critical step in overcoming the most fundamental obstacle — poverty — is getting the word out to families that financial and social support is available.

Too many children are prevented from attending school simply because their families lack the money required for uniforms, books and supplies or because they are concerned about the loss of a labourer who

could otherwise contribute to the household income.

A second, persistent excuse is tradition. In a family where illiteracy has been the norm, where girls are married off at an early age, or where families feel that their daughter's virtue will be in some way compromised, persuasion is the key. Understanding that an educational environment can be a nurturing and supportive one, and that an educated daughter will be better equipped to contribute to the household, are the key goals of the local aspect of the publicity campaign.

Finally, one of the most predominant reasons for the lack of enrolment is the scarcity of classroom space. In all too many cases, there is no local school, and children need to be bussed distances that make their parents uncomfortable. In the winter months, heavy snow blankets the roads, making them impassable, and often the result is that children fail to resume attendance when the roads clear. When information is available about the support systems in place, as well as the urgent need for immediate and increased classroom space, families will be more likely to support regular attendance, while on the national and international levels, material assistance can be provided.

UNICEF Turkey is aiming to bridge the awareness gap through a number of dynamic initiatives. One of UNICEF's main projects is a publicity blitz in the form of TELEVISION spots and 'Radio Theatre' which addresses the main issues and redefines them in a more positive light.

The first component attempts to highlight the campaign's most notable success stories by centring on the idea of educated girls as effective role models. Stories will spotlight both pre-teen girls who returned to the classroom after an extended absence, as well as beneficiaries of *Haydi*





Kızlar Okula! who have since returned to their home villages with great fanfare. These anecdotes will be presented in the form of short films and are designed to reach the parents of non-attending girls. They therefore represent a vital stage in the awareness campaign.

The second component of the campaign will demonstrate the importance of collaboration on the local level. In segments entitled 'Good Models of Implementation', UNICEF will present examples of how teamwork among the various representatives of a region and/or village almost always results in a more efficient outcome.

For example, in Manisa, the Ministry of Health collects population information that entails door-to-door visits. The form used to collect this information also incorporates questions on girls' non-attendance that is helpful to the efforts of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE).

These films are aimed at reaching the key local actors such as governors, muhtars, and teachers, and will ultimately be employed as part of UNICEF's training programme.

For the third component, which targets parents in the remotest provinces, UNICEF is developing a number of radio plays with themes that address the various cultural layers of Turkish society.

Of critical importance to the success of *Haydi Kızlar Okula!* are UNICEF's efforts in favour of social mobilisation. This grass roots campaign aims to mobilise local teachers, school counsellors, midwives, nurses, civil servants and volunteers to identify families with girls out of school and to convince them of the positive effects of the educational experience. UNICEF is working together with the Ministry of National Education to implement a Training of Trainers (TOT) module to *Haydi Kızlar Okula!* The TOT campaign is currently in an accelerated stage, with intensified efforts to get as many girls enrolled by the first day of school on September 13th 2004.

In another of its multiple efforts dedicated to the girls' enrolment initiative, UNICEF is partnering with an international NGO on the

local level to reach families in five of the most disadvantaged regions, including in city slums. This intensified drive will be indispensable in implementing this most important phase in the provinces of Istanbul, Gaziantep, Diyarbakır, Adana and Mardin.

The goal is to let the public know that financial incentives are available, and ultimately increase the enrolment of disadvantaged girls between the ages of 6 and 14 by at least 50%. Countrywide, the goal is to reduce the gender gap by 50% by the end of 2004 and to eliminate the gap entirely by 2005.

One of the more significant spill-over effects expected to result from these public information initiatives is the creation of the demand for education — if enough people want it, the political will can be created or swayed to provide it. At a human level, it is also important for the public to understand that educating our children requires that we work together, and even more crucial for families to understand the importance of education in their lives, the lives of their children, and the life of the community as a whole.

*The word is out for the girls!
Be sure that you enroll at your
local primary school on the
13th of September.*

FROM STRENGTH ...



Mrs Emine Erdoğan said: "Let's fight the ignorance that sees women as second class citizens".

The *Haydi Kızlar Okula!* campaign, launched in Van in June last year by the Ministry of National Education with the support of UNICEF aims to close the gender gap in education by raising the school enrolment and attendance rates of girls. Within six months, 40,000 girls in ten provinces targeted during the first phase of the campaign were enrolled in school.

This year, *Haydi Kızlar Okula!* will focus on the 33 provinces where enrolment rates for girls in primary education are lowest. Governors of the 33 provinces met in Ankara on the 1st of June in order to outline their plans and declare their support for the campaign at the launch of this second phase.

THE GOVERNORS' DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF HAYDİ KIZLAR OKULA!

As the undersigned governors of the 33 provinces, we have decided to issue this declaration in the framework of the campaign by the Ministry of National Education and UNICEF which aims to get girls to school. We have come together with the aim and the goals that our leader Atatürk showed us and with the ideal of equalling the civilised and educated levels of developed countries, and with the hope of creating a more developed and educated Turkey.

Item 42 in the Constitution of the Turkish Republic states that "Nobody can take away a person's educational rights" and further says that primary education is mandatory for both boys and girls.

Thus, as representatives of the government and all of the official organisations in the provinces, we promise that we will, as we have done in the past, monitor schooling for girls, and with the *Haydi Kızlar Okula!* campaign we shall see to it that there will be no girls left out of school.

Thus for us to be able to fulfil this difficult but honourable task:

We shall hold meetings regularly before the beginning of the school year 2004-2005 to review our plans and get rid of all obstacles to getting the girls enrolled in school.

We will follow up with all the organisations in our provinces, work together with their local representatives, the imams, the teachers, volunteers and even organise house visits to those families who are not sending their girls to school, and to inform the media, and enlist their support .

We shall also help identify families who are unable to financially support their girls going to school and help them to receive financial aid from the Social Solidarity Foundation to be able to send their girls to school.

We shall also support the construction of new classes for girl students in schools, where those are already inadequate.

We shall activate the local leaders and media to support the "Haydi Kızlar Okula" campaign.

We promise to follow-up progress in the campaign and share successful enrolment figures with the public.

Finalised at Ankara by the Governors of *Adana; Adıyaman; Ağrı; Ankara; Ardahan; Aydın; Batman; Bingöl; Bitlis; Diyarbakır; Edirne; Elazığ; Erzincan; Erzurum; Gaziantep; Hakkari; Iğdır; İstanbul; İzmir; Kahramanmaraş; Kars; Kilis; Manisa; Mardin; Mersin; Muş; Niğde; Osmaniye; Siirt; Şanlıurfa; Şırnak; Tokat and Van*



UNICEF Country Representative, Edmond McLoughney pointed out that: "600,000 girls are out of school even though they are of school age."

During its first year *Haydi Kızlar Okula!* focused on the ten provinces of Ağrı, Batman, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Hakkari, Muş, Siirt, Şanlıurfa, Şırnak and Van which had the lowest enrolment rates in primary education for girls. 23 new provinces were added this year.

... TO STRENGTH

WHAT THEY SAID

In her opening speech, Mrs Emine Erdoğan, wife of Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan, said that “if we want to raise stronger generations, we need to educate our children — especially the girls”.

Minister of Education, Dr Hüseyin Çelik said that “under the Ministry of National Education and UNICEF *Haydi Kızlar Okula!* campaign, we will offer financial assistance through the Social Solidarity Fund to mothers who send their daughters to school”.

The Governor of Van, Mr Hikmet Tan, said that “a shortage of school buildings is the main reason why people in my province are not sending their girls to school. Children have to travel long distances to get to the boarding schools and many don’t want to put their daughters through that.” He firmly believes that girls and their families need more female role models: “It’s important to send women teachers into rural areas — a strategy which we have been promoting.

He added that: “the local media has been especially supportive of the campaign, covering each new development as it occurred — everyone in Turkey has been able to follow our progress through this kind of step-by-step coverage.”

When asked how he is able to focus so much energy on girls’ education when there must be so many issues to deal with in a large province such as Van, Mr Tan replied that “coming from Siirt, I’m no stranger to this region and I understand what is to be poor and to be without hope. My late mother was illiterate and she often wished that she could read and write — sadly, she had never been able to fulfil her wish when she died. It breaks my heart that she passed away without ever having had the pleasure of being able to read.

“If I could change one aspect of this campaign, it would be to expand the focus to include the girls’ mothers and older sisters — all women who are unable to read or write.”

Mr Temel Koçaklar, Governor of Mardin has seen big changes in his province: “When I first came to Mardin, there were only three boarding schools. I was discussing one of these schools with a group of mothers and



one of them said ‘I won’t send my girls to that awful place!’ Well I got the message and we took steps to improve the quality as well as the number of buildings. Now we’re encouraging parents to come and visit their children at our schools — it’s good for the children and it helps set the parent’s minds at rest about their children’s environment.”

Mr Koçaklar would like to see more changes, however: “We need to change our outlook on matters of education in the southeast — a family might have as many as ten children but only half of them make it to school!”

Ms Dilek Sabancı, daughter of the late industrialist Sakıp Sabancı, observed that “Girls’ education was a very important issue for my father. Before he died, he had 118 different projects on girls’ education. I wish the campaign every success.”

“Our problem with enrolment rates isn’t as extensive with the indigenous population as it is perhaps for other provinces” says Mr Orhan Işın, Governor of Manisa. “But we have a big immigrant population from the more eastern areas of the country. Manisa is a verdant, fertile region and people are attracted by the farming infrastructure which provides work all year round. Farming unfortunately uses a great deal of child labour and we are mainly concerned with these children who are missing out — they need to be brought out of the fields and into the schoolrooms.”

Governor Işın summed up the general feeling saying that “you really need to take it to heart and promise yourself that in the future you won’t be looking at these figures again.”

The Governors’ Meeting on 1st of June enjoyed extensive nationwide media and press coverage.



Recalling her late father’s devotion to the issue of girls’ education, Ms Dilek Sabancı wished ‘Haydi Kızlar Okula!’ every success.

HAYDİ GAZEL!



Happier now — best friends, Gazel and Dilan are glad to be back at school, looking forward to brighter futures in education and medicine.

As a country in transition, Turkey is losing out on the education of 600,000 girls: educated girls will be the informed mothers and citizens of future generations, which means lower child mortality, healthier physical growth and faster economic development. In İstanbul alone, 75,000 girls are out-of-school. Gazel used to be one of them but not any more. This is her story.

“I was quite anxious when we moved to İstanbul from Batman five years ago since I knew almost nobody here. I went to a fine school back in Batman where I had plenty of good friends. The lessons were more difficult in İstanbul but I loved being in school all the same,” says 13 year old Gazel Değirmenci.

After the move to İstanbul, Gazel managed to attend as far as grade four — like many girls, however, her parents took her out of school when she reached adolescence. At first, Gazel looked after her younger brother until she began work in a textile factory. She liked the factory and in any case she didn't see how she could object to what was after all a family decision — earning a wage was what was expected from her. She and her older brothers were supporting the family without realising how much of a burden it was for them — or that their rights as children were being violated.

Gazel's mother never went to school. Because of this, she was keen for Gazel to have the advantages that she never had. So she pressed the matter of Gazel's schooling with her husband for some time but to no avail — he was stubborn.

“Then one day the school called — it was the principal of Bağcılar Yıldıztepe Primary. My heart was beating so fast,” says Gazel. “The principal had a long talk with my father. Then he visited us at home with a female teacher by the name of Seher.”

The teachers spoke with Gazel's parents about the importance of a formal education and pointed out that traditional values and to some extent, outright bias in favour of boys kept most girls out of school. Gazel's father remained stubborn, saying “I went to school up to fifth grade when I was a boy and where did it get me?” Fortunately he changed his mind when the teachers pointed out that finishing her education would be the only way that Gazel would escape the poverty trap and have better opportunities in the future.

Gazel is very happy now — a militant supporter of *Haydi Kızlar Okula!* Through the campaign she learned that education is a fundamental and undeniable right of every child. She helps her teachers out by giving them the names of other children whom she knows to be still out of school. She herself wants to be a teacher.

INSTANT SCHOOLSPACE



They may not be the most aesthetically pleasing of structures, but when the alternative to non-attendance is a pre-fabricated classroom, the choice is clear.

One of the most common expressions of resistance by parents to enrolling their daughter is that there are no nearby schools. In cases where a school is located in a neighbouring village, parents are often opposed to using the bussing system which, in harsh winter weather, can prove to be erratic or totally inoperative.

Traditional values may also contribute since parents are often adverse to the idea that their daughters will be riding on what is essentially a co-educational vehicle. It is the experience of field personnel that where a school is located locally parents will most certainly send their children to school — barring other obstacles. In an alarming number of provinces, students are prevented from registering for school due to a lack of classroom space.

With the mid-September start of the 2004-2005 school year fast approaching, UNICEF has proposed an immediate yet temporary solution to this urgent need in the form of pre-fabricated buildings.

Between 7,000 and 8,000 units currently stand empty in Turkey now that the General Directorate of Disaster Affairs (AIGM) has relocated the majority of victims of previous national emergencies to permanent housing.

The AIGM has therefore agreed to make these vacant units available in support of the girls' education campaign *Haydi Kizlar Okula!* and increased enrolment in Turkey in general. The cost is a nominal TL 2 billion (less than US\$1,500) required for the transportation of the pre-fabricated units and on-site assembly/disassembly.

Both UNICEF and the Primary Education General Directorate have advocated on behalf of this initiative but obstacles remain.

UNICEF is confident of attaining the goal of enrolling 300,000 additional girls when the new school year begins on September 13th 2004. The need for an immediate solution to the scarcity of classroom space is therefore critical. Not surprisingly, funding is also a major obstacle. Provincial governors are under significant constraints since they must requisition the pre-fabricated units and finance them out of their annual budgets.

In spite of this financial barrier, the provinces of Şırnak and Siirt have taken the lead in this initiative by requisitioning a number of pre-fabricated units. More than one hundred have been delivered so far — providing an educational experience and social haven for an ever-increasing number of disadvantaged girls.

A school within walking distance of home can make all the difference to parents who want their daughter to have a basic education.

A HELPING HAND

With the end of 2004 fast approaching, *Haydi Kizlar Okula!* the girls' education campaign in Turkey is now in its final stretch. While it is true that the initiative has made impressive strides, the final road to success is still fraught with bumpy obstacles. Not surprisingly, one of the major barriers to achieving the goal of 100% enrolment is financial. UNICEF is working harder than ever to address this persistent problem.

In cases where financial want is the only obstacle to sending a child to school, the Social Solidarity Fund (SYDTF) of the Prime Ministry of the Republic of Turkey, in consultation with the World Bank and as part of the Social Risk Mitigation Project, has implemented the Conditional Cash Transfer Programme (CCT). CCT's are just one component of the World Bank's Social Safety Net programme, which seeks to minimise the hardships imposed on a country's population due to economic downturns. Specifically, CCT offers incentives to the poorest sectors, conditional upon a change of behaviour in areas such as school attendance or health care. In Turkey, the CCT programme is aimed at increased classroom enrolment and prenatal care.

In 2002, the World Bank approved a loan of US\$500 million to support the Social Risk Mitigation Project, of which US\$360 million has been budgeted to fund the CCT programme through 2006. To qualify, applicants must complete a scoring formula comprised of about 40 questions, geared towards evaluating their socio-economic

status and determining their eligibility. Because the form itself represents an added obstacle to parents who are often functionally illiterate, local representatives are deployed in the field to provide assistance.

In support of *Haydi Kizlar Okula!* the girls' education campaign, cash transfers granted to families enrolling girls are slightly higher than those for enrolment of boys. At the primary school level, TL 20 million (about \$14) per girl is provided monthly (boys get TL 16.5 million or about \$11.50), while at the middle school level, where girls' attendance generally deteriorates, the grant increases to TL 35 million for girls (about \$25 — TL 25 million or \$17.50 for boys).

Children must comply with two criteria in order for their families to continue receiving the CCT grants.

Firstly, they must regularly attend classes.

Practically speaking, maintaining regular attendance, particularly where children of migrant family workers are concerned, in



cases where a girl is unexpectedly assigned the responsibility of sibling care, or when harsh winter weather makes the roads impassable, this can be a significant challenge. Furthermore, teachers, rarely natives of the village in question, are generally loath to report absences for fear of retaliation or alienation.

Secondly, students must maintain passing grades. Based on the results of both criteria, the Social Risk Mitigation Project offices will either continue or halt the disbursement of funds. In the latter case, families are free to reapply.

Since its inception and as of July 30, 2004, cash transfers have totalled TL 16.5 trillion (US\$11 million), benefiting approximately 440,000 students. An additional \$10 trillion (US\$7 million) is slated to be spent in August 2004 in anticipation of the 2004–2005 school year. Unfortunately, the SYDTF plan to launch a publicity campaign at the end of September comes a little late in the process. However, once the SYDTF materials, which will include brochures, posters, and video clips, are completed, local foundation representatives will be better prepared in their interactions with local communities.

In addition to the promotion of the Conditional Cash Transfer, the Turkish government is currently providing three important financial incentives targeting educational goals. The most potentially far-reaching of governmental strategies is the 100% tax credit for private or corporate donations made in support of the educational system. Contributions may also come in the form of material donations such as school uniforms, or the deployment of a pre-fabricated, temporary classroom. To date, the majority of endowments has been directed at the building of new schools.

In 2003, the Ministry of Education implemented a policy of providing free schoolbooks to all students. This policy is scheduled to continue through the 2004–2005 school year.

Another strategy initiated by the Ministry of Education provides monetary incentives that will attract teachers to the remotest regions — the rural areas which suffer the most conspicuous poverty. In order to respond to the demand for educators in these areas, the government is now considering offering hardship pay to attract more teachers to areas where need is most pressing.

A significantly larger financial subsidy for girls attending school should encourage parents who would otherwise keep their daughters out of school for the sake of their labour contribution.



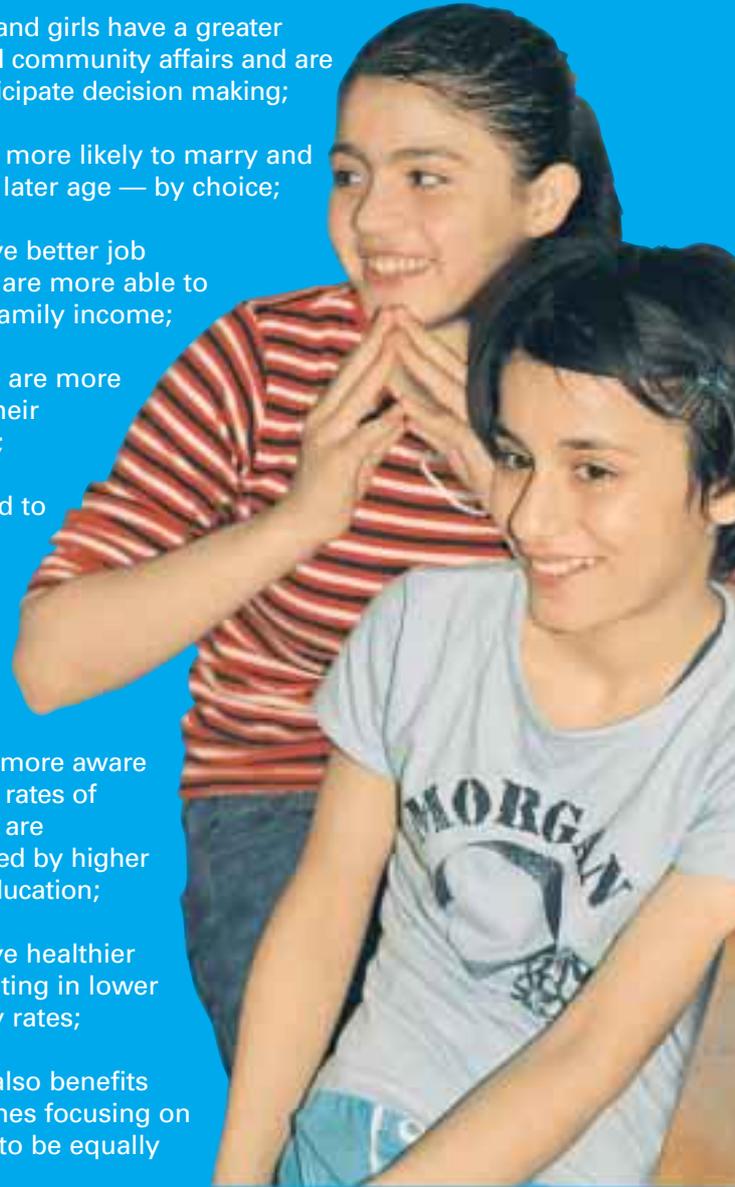


HAYDİ KIZLAR OKULA!

OUR EXPECTED RESULTS FOR 2005

- Rates of enrolment for girls in primary education on a par with rates of enrolment for boys;
- Infant Mortality Rate reduced from 43% (1998) to under 30%;
- Maternal Mortality Rate reduced by 50%;
- Rates of exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months of life increased;
- All children free of Iodine Deficiency Disorders;
- Three million mothers and fathers actively applying positive child rearing practices;
- Adolescents aware of HIV/AIDS and other STIs and methods of protection against these diseases;
- Numbers of children in need of special protection significantly reduced;
- Turkey's legislation fully compliant with CRC/CEDAW;
- All sectors and resources mobilised for the better implementation of children's rights;
- The national budgetary allocation for children increased.

- Educated women and girls have better opportunities and life choices;
- Educated women and girls have a greater voice in family and community affairs and are more likely to participate decision making;
- Educated girls are more likely to marry and have children at a later age — by choice;
- Educated girls have better job opportunities and are more able to contribute to the family income;
- Educated mothers are more likely to send *all* their children to school;
- Educated girls tend to have fewer and healthier children — child mortality rates drop with higher levels of female education;
- Educated girls are more aware of health issues — rates of HIV/AIDS infection are significantly reduced by higher levels of female education;
- Educated girls have healthier pregnancies, resulting in lower maternal mortality rates;
- Attention to girls also benefits boys — programmes focusing on girls have proven to be equally beneficial to boys;



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