

Situation of Children in Diyarbakır

Diyarbakır is one of the most populated cities that receive quite high flow of migration in South-Eastern Anatolia region. According to the TÜİK data of year 2011, the population of the city is 1.570.943. Almost 50% (742.019) of the total population consists of 01-19 age group.

Children living in the regions of Diyarbakır that formed with migration and having difficulties in accessing various social services are generally working on streets. Regarding this matter, there are no well-prepared, comprehensive and current data studies covering the overall of Diyarbakır. In 2010, although it is being mentioned in the research conducted by Social Services Provincial Directorate that 1.649 children are working on the streets, it is known that this number is quite higher than this number. Within the direction of the meetings held with various institutions and organizations in Diyarbakır, it is being considered that there are almost 10.000 children who are under risk in the city, living in insufficient cultural and economic conditions. Especially, Diyarbakır is in the position to be the most effected city during the conflict processes.

After the flow of migration, the population of the city has been doubled and no physical or social precautions had been taken regarding this matter. Especially the people arriving with the migration had been effected by this situation and children had been the worst effected group among these people. Children of the families arriving in Diyarbakır with migration generally work on streets to make a contribution to the family economy. It is obvious that the high number of children working on streets in Diyarbakır also increases the tendency for falling out of education system. Apart from the disadvantages of working on streets, these children also getting distanced from the education system due to the problems of the current education system (crowded classrooms, teaching methods based on memorization, lack of social support mechanisms).

It is being observed there are several risk factors that might negatively effect the lives of these children in the future such as violence tendencies, volatile substance abuse, health problems, lack of self-esteem along with the emotional and behavioural traits observed in these children. These problems also bring along certain situations where these children are being detained from schools in Diyarbakır. Lack of social mechanisms that will support these children in their natural environment causes these mentioned problems to deepen. Especially the fact that no effort was made to develop cooperation and collaboration by social services, health and educational institutions with local administrations and NGOs, thus an overall approach towards the solution of the problem has been hindered. Current programs and projects of the public institutions and local administrations are far away from generating long termed solutions that focus on children.

For the last 10 years, even though it is fair to say that the Child and Youth Support Centres opened by public institutions and local administrations have been useful on some issues, as any preventive approaches have not been developed, these centres could not manage to eliminate the issues feeding the problem. As these support centres and activities are not based in the regions where the individuals need this type of support, mentioned groups are experiencing difficulties for accessing these mechanisms. The lack of any appropriate and healthy environments where children can spend their free time after school suitable for their development, leaves these children vulnerable to the risks being on streets.