

The best interest of the child should be the primary consideration by judicial authorities in all actions concerning children!

The protection of the best interest of the child means that rehabilitation and restorative justice objectives as well as supportive intervention programmes should be prioritized in dealing with children and young offenders.

The principle of the best interest of the child has also been adopted by the Turkish legislation for all procedures concerning children in the justice system.

Supportive services specific to children and young people should be accessible!

Children are different from adults in terms of their physical and psychological development, and emotional and educational needs.

For children and young people that are pushed into crime, it is essential to ensure that effective assessment tools to identify their risks and needs are in place and supportive intervention programmes are available.

DENGE Juvenile Probation Programme

aims to ensure more accessible, effective and adequate probation services for children and young people.

Children and young people have the right to express their views and participate freely and actively in all matters affecting them!

“While everybody was buying chocolate at the school cafeteria, I couldn’t because I didn’t have the money. So, I just thought I could steal some chocolate bars like I stole cherries from an orchard back in my village. What’s the worst that could happen anyway? I got caught trying to steal one day. That’s how my penal experience started. In one hearing, the judge told me he wouldn’t sentence me this time but that he never wanted to see me in a courtroom again. But I had a bad name at school, everyone started to call me a thief. So, I just did what they expected of me any time I got the chance. Then, I was taken to a care centre, because the judge had put me under protection and care. I continued my education in this centre. One of the teachers was really very helpful, and I liked the school. Nobody knew me because I changed schools. Nobody called me a thief. So, I promised myself never to steal again, and I kept my promise. When I was 15 and in high school, I learned that I was sentenced to about 4 years in prison due to previous offence and I was imprisoned. The psychosocial service official who took care of me in the prison enrolled me in distance high school once she learned that I was in high school when I was taken in. I spent two years in prison and was released on probation at the age of 17. They told me when I was getting out that if I did not obey the rules under the Probation for 1 year, then I would be returning to prison. There were experts who listened to all my problems without commenting or prejudging them and who came up with alternatives as to how I should lead my life. I got into the Department of Mining Engineering. 2 years later, again with the support of the probation services, I was appointed as an ex-convict public worker. Having graduated from the Mining Engineering Department in the year (...), I now work as an engineer in the public institution where I was working as a public worker. Recently, I’ve been building a house in my village for my father and mother. Thank you very much for everything. Probation is the last stop for people who have lost all their hope.

Best Regards.”

This is a short version of a letter sent to the MoJ Probation Department.

For more information

www.unicef.org.tr • www.cte-ds.adalet.gov.tr

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DENGE

Juvenile Probation Programme

Development of an Effective Risk Evaluation System for Children in Turkish Probation Services Project



Deprivation of liberty is the last resort for children and youths!

Every individual is a child until he/she reaches the age of eighteen.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Child Protection Law 5395 of 2005 emphasize that deprivation of liberty should be the last resort for children and young people.

There are conclusive findings that imprisonment does not reduce the likelihood of child/youth reoffending.

Research showed that deprivation of liberty is the most expensive way of preventing reoffending and dealing with children and young people who are in conflict with the law.

Community-based services are not only more effective but also less costly!

Research findings suggest that supporting children and young people through community-based intervention programmes is more beneficial for them and for the society than depriving them of their liberty. Community-based interventions are more effective in reducing recidivism than detention.

Improving community-based services and probation services for children is among the priorities set in the Judicial Reform Strategy (2015) and the Ministry of Justice Strategic Plan (2015-2019).

The “Development of an Effective Risk Evaluation System for Children in Turkish Probation Services” Project is co-financed by the European Union, the Republic of Turkey, and UNICEF and implemented by the Probation Department of the Directorate General of Prisons and Detention Houses, with the technical assistance of UNICEF.

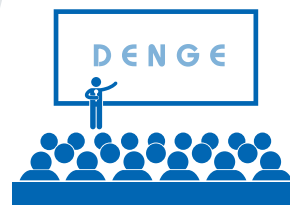
What are the key programme objectives?

1 Develop an effective risk and needs assessment tool and supportive intervention programmes for children and young people.

- Assessment of the current probation system
- Development of a new risks and needs assessment tool
- Development of new intervention programmes
- Capacity building for probation staff

2 Regularly monitor the implementation of tools and programmes

- Integration of tools into the National Judicial Information System (UYAP)
- Revision of the in-service training curriculum for justice professionals
- Capacity building for relevant stakeholders



End results of the programme:

- ▶ Decrease in the number of children and young people deprived of their liberty
- ▶ Increase in the number of community-based supportive intervention programmes
- ▶ Increase in the number of children and young people benefiting from community-based supportive intervention programmes
- ▶ Regular monitoring & evaluation and evidence-based policy making



Implementation period: December 2015 - December 2017

Pilot provinces: Adana, Amasya, Ankara, Antalya, Bursa, Denizli, Diyarbakır, Elazığ, Erzurum, Eskişehir, Gaziantep, İstanbul, İzmir, Kayseri, Kocaeli, Konya, Manisa, Mersin, Rize, Sakarya, Şanlıurfa