AGES-OLD PERCEPTIONS AND THE TRUTH ABOUT TURKISH YOUTH

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This presentation is on youth from Human Development perspective. It presents the results of a comprehensive research conducted for the 2008 National Human Development Report (NHDR) on Youth in Turkey. It looks into many issues regarding the opportunities and capabilities of youth in Turkey and shows the striking link between poverty and lack of participation in education, employment and civil society. In the report the NHDR team has especially focused on the “invisible youth” who do not participate in any of these spheres. And there are at least 5 million of them in Turkey between the ages of 15 and 24. The team tried to show how they become “idle” and how their opportunities are increased through participation.

The 2008 NHDR in Turkey was written in such a participatory way that hundreds of young people, youth NGOs, academics, public institutions were involved during the preparation. And a quantitative survey among more than 3,000 young people was conducted. The team has come across with many interesting findings, regarding exclusion, perception of the youth by the general public and by themselves, and otherness during the survey. This presentation includes those findings. Following the launch, youth NGOs which usually are at odds with each other came together to advocate the recommendations of the report and up to 40 organizations published a joint press release. Since the publication of the report in March 2008, there have been more than 2000 news reports on the report. Most recently the government decided to design a new youth policy which is missing in Turkey. A project team has been established by the government to work on a youth law and strategy. The project team is now working closely with the NHDR team and the youth NGOs to draw up a road map, which could make a change in the lives of youth and ages-old perceptions about youth.