



INNOVATIONS FOR
WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT
IN THE GAP REGION
PROJECT
ACTIVITY REPORT
(January-March 2009)

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INTRODUCTION:

THE GLOBAL CRISIS AND TURKEY

Record-breaking unemployment rate of %15.5 in Turkey is the clearest indicator of the crisis' effects on developing countries.

Activities for women's economic empowerment in the GAP Region, where people tend to consent to very low-paid jobs, once again proved the significance of the Project.

The economic crisis, which first started in housing market of USA and expanded globally in a short period of time following the bankruptcy of major banks, takes effect more on developing countries in 2009. Unemployment rates of Turkey, dated February 2009, are the clearest indicator to this fact; where rates broke record and reached %15.5 levels.

Giant firms decreased their capacity utilization and scaled down their production by reducing labor wages by %35. While life gets harder daily for the employees, companies that have become incapable of performing production activities had to dismiss their laborers. As a result of fluctuation of rates due to crisis, company costs have inflated and companies were forced to declare loss. Expansion of crisis and unemployment rates created such a massive psychological depression that people became highly worried about their future.

While the crisis shows effect especially in GAP Region, the cooperation between GAP Regional Development Administration (GAP RDA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) gave hope to the people of the Region.

Activities for women's economic empowerment in the GAP Region, where people tend to consent to work in very low-paid jobs, once again proved the significance of the Project. Women, who gain access to up-to-date information and have the chance to learn from qualified experts, now can contribute to their domestic economy as a potential workforce through participation in atelier activities.

The activities implemented under the Project between January and March 2009 have been summarized below.

OVERALL FRAMEWORK

The Project "Innovations for Women's Empowerment: A Workable Model for Women in Turkey's Southeast Anatolia Region" (to be hereinafter referred to as the "Innovations for Women's Empowerment in the GAP Region") with cooperation between GAP Regional Development Administration (GAP RDA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Swedish International

The project aims at establishing market connections for products manufactured by women of the region and providing women with training programmes in many areas.

Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) became effective upon signing by GAP RDA, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNDP on 25 March 2008.

This project aims at women's empowerment in Southeast Anatolia in social and economic life through innovative production-marketing related strategies. Through the Project, it is intended to support women's labor market participation, branding of the Southeast Anatolia and developing new sales and marketing opportunities. The Project is being implemented in the 9 provinces that comprise the GAP Region, with financial support provided by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

INNOVATIONS FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN THE GAP REGION

The project aims to empower women in the region socially and economically. The implementation strategy is premised on women's empowerment and institutional capacity development targeting women's own capacity to associate and network for income generation purposes. The financial support will be in the form of supply of small machinery and material for women-managed ateliers to produce goods for national and local markets. The technical assistance will focus on design elements that will add to the marketability of the goods and will aim to provide market connections.

The project aims at establishing market connections for products manufactured by women of the region and providing women with training programmes in many areas. In the region, work is being done with Multi-Purpose Community Centers (ÇATOMs) and other non-governmental organizations active in issues of concern to women (MOKİD, Batman Association for the Social Development of Women, Mardin Women's Multi-Purpose Enterprise Cooperative, Besni Active Women's Mutual Assistance, Solidarity and Enterprise Cooperative, Gaziantep Woman University Graduates Cooperative etc.)

In order to monitor the production process, provide the necessary technical support and coordination, and develop the regional, national and international marketing network, the Project Manager locates in the project office in Şanlıurfa, while the Project Assistant works both in the GAP RDA liaison office and UNDP office in Ankara, in order to provide coordination between partners, and assist administrative and financial processes.

OUTPUT 1

Local authorities and commercial actors will have enhanced capacity and knowledge to design local employment programs that favor women's participation in the labor force.

OUTPUT 2

Women's production capacity will be advanced through increased market links.

The steps taken in the implementation of the project include establishing professional production facilities especially through strengthening the existing ateliers and opening new ones. Production facilities are being strengthened with design support for the manufacturing of professional products to be put on the markets through strong marketing and sale networks. There is continuous training and education support for the adoption and eventual achievement of the expected socio-economic transformation for the recognition of the economic development to be achieved and for making it sustainable.

I- ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER OUTPUT 1

The aim is for the local authorities and commercial actors to have greater capacity and knowledge to design local employment programs that favor women's participation in the labor force.

In this context, within the cooperation established with the Diyarbakır Governorate, feasibility work began to set up a small scale textile factory and enable women to benefit from the vocational training courses of the Turkish Employment Agency with the aim of increasing women's participation in the labor force and reducing poverty.

The textile workshop established in Diyarbakır through such partnership aims at developing women's employment and entrepreneurship, carrying out high-quality production and establishing market connections while meeting the needs of poor children for clothing. The protocol envisages that the necessary materials for production, and the rent and operational **costs of the atelier will be met by the Diyarbakır Governorate for one year.** Besides, it is planned that Governorate will cover wages of women working in the atelier for 6 months. In return, equipment and machinery for the atelier is provided by the Project.

II- ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER OUTPUT 2

As a result of increasing connections with the market, support has been greater than before for women's production capacity. In this framework, it is ensured that long-term production workshops manufacturing products with high value-added are established and existing ones strengthened.

Two new ateliers were established in Mardin and Batman.

2.1. Strengthening of Existing Ateliers and Establishing New Ones

Initially, it is important, on the one hand, to strengthen existing production ateliers connected with non-governmental organizations in the region and, on the other, to establish and extend new production facilities. The aim is to turn existing ateliers into units that are managed in a more professional manner.

In this context, **two new design and production ateliers** have been established during the period of January-March 2009.

2.1.1 Design and Production Ateliers:

Mardin:

Ömerli Fruit Pulp Production and Packaging Atelier:

Fruit Pulp Production and Packaging Atelier has been established in February 2009 in Mardin's Ömerli district. It aims to provide employment for disabled and unemployed poor women in Ömerli district. As the traditional way of producing fruit pulp products do not include packaging, these products have a small chance in exporting. Through this new establishment, especially export market is targeted.

Sub-project is implemented in cooperation with Mardin Joint Women Cooperation Association (MOKID), which is a women's platform that unites Mardin Central ÇATOM, Evren ÇATOM, Latifiye ÇATOM and Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (KEDV). The building for this establishment was rented from the Union of Village Headmen, and through the Governorate, the Administrative District of Ömerli undertook reparation of the building. Ömerli Municipality has carried out the landscaping of atelier. Initially **5 women have been employed** in the atelier, where it is aimed to provide employment for 5 more women.

Batman:

Fashion Textile Atelier:

Under the "9 Fashion Designers for 9 Provinces" sub-project, which is the fourth output of the Project, feasibility work was completed for the fashion production atelier in Batman. Following this, the establishment of a **fully equipped production atelier** has started. Experts from Istanbul Textile and Apparel Exporter Associations (ITKIB) supported setting up of this fully equipped atelier.

Technical equipment support was provided to some workshops.

The establishment of companies for setting up infrastructure continues.

2.1.2 Technical Equipment Support

Technical equipment support was provided to two existing ateliers to raise their production capacity and to improve their market competitiveness.

Şırnak:

On February 2009, **3 new and 3 second-hand knitwear machines** were bought for the knitting atelier in Cizre, Şırnak. This purchase was planned according to Cizre district's needs.

Mardin:

On March 2009, reparation cost of a knitting machine which is used in Mardin Dargeçit ÇATOM was undertaken by the Project. Additionally, women working in this knitting atelier were sent to the repairing company for a training session on knitting machine usage.

2.1.3 Companies and Cooperatives for Setting-Up of Infrastructure

Ateliers become institutional in the form of companies and cooperatives. Companies and cooperatives will also be provided with technical support to strengthen their internal governance structures.

Batman:

The company "Yeşeren Düşler Ltd", launched to create institutional infrastructure for Batman Café Airport, is **officially established on January 2009**.

2.1.4 Raw Material Support

Yeğın Triko Ltd. Company has donated **500 kg.** high-quality hand-knitting wool to the Project to be distributed among women in the region.

2.1.5 Atelier Work

Under Output 2, atelier work is being conducted very often in order to strengthen existing ateliers through providing technical support on design and production. In this context, following atelier work has been realized during the period of January-March 2009:

Mardin:

Jewellery Atelier:

Atelier work was conducted in accordance with the needs identified during the field visit on 16-19 February 2009 and various jewellery items such as brooches, necklaces and bracelets were produced.

Field visits and atelier work were carried out and 74 women in total have participated.

A sales point was created in Diyarbakır for these products.

Nusaybin Giftware and Home Textile Atelier:

During atelier work that was carried out on 14 February 2009 at the Nusaybin ÇATOM various key-holders, kitchen aprons, table napkins and wall-hung pockets were produced using shahmeran motifs unique to the district. This workshop was attended by **19 women**.

Diyarbakır:

Diyarbakır Giftware and Home Textile Atelier:

Atelier work that aims to manufacture high value-added products was conducted on 16-19 February 2009 in Diyarbakır ÇATOM. This activity was organized in two stages, where first of all, a preparatory observation of ateliers was made with the designers, who were newly assigned for the Project, to identify potential products to create. Later, on the second stage, current products that have been produced for a period of time were quality checked.

20 participants attended to this workshop, where small cushions, table napkins, small and large bags, needlework necklaces, lavender bags and tray covers were brought out. The follow-up of this atelier work was implemented on 16-19 March 2009 with the participation of **17 women**.

Diyarbakır Doll Atelier:

Doll production, which has been continuing since previous workshops dated 16-20 February and 16-19 March 2009, was quality checked, and some products were chosen to offer for sale. **5 participants** of Diyarbakır ÇATOM attended to this atelier work.

While conducting field and atelier work in Diyarbakır, meetings were held with the Governorate and the Chamber of Trade for the local marketing of these products, and it was decided that a sales point would be established for these products at the Diyarbakır Chamber of Trade. The **official opening of the sales point** was held on January 2009 in the Chamber of Trade and Industry.

Sanlıurfa:

Giftware Atelier (Felt):

Felt giftware products, of which production has been carried on for some time, were quality checked during the atelier work conducted on 21 February 2009. Additionally, jewellery production has been started. **6 women** participated to this atelier work.

OUTPUT 3

The targeted beneficiary women will have strengthened capacity to enter labor markets and the social lives of their communities.

Siirt:

Giftware Atelier:

At the atelier work on 17 February 2009, quality check of the products that have been produced since previous atelier work was done, and some products were chosen to offer for sale. **7 women** participated to this atelier work.

III- ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER OUTPUT 3

The targeted beneficiary women will have strengthened capacity to enter labor markets and the social lives of their communities.

3.1 Sales and Marketing

The existence of sales channels for high value-added products manufactured in ateliers is one of the most important elements to ensure the sustainability of the project. For this reason, sales and marketing have a very significant place and will play a very important role in the project. The sales process begins after the storage and distribution logistic capabilities are arranged for the product network.

3.1.1 Direct Marketing:

Various products (lavender bags, embroidered guest towels, dolls, felt products, needlework jewellery) manufactured during the workshop activities carried out in Mardin, Batman, Diyarbakır, Şanlıurfa and Siirt have been offered for sale in various places in Ankara.

3.1.2 Café and Restaurant Sales:

3.1.2.1 Besni Filo Dough and Bakery Products Atelier

Equipment support was provided to increase the capacity of the atelier which was established under the former project. The atelier has also started operating a school cantina in the district, starting from March. The sales by the Besni Filo Dough and Bakery Products Atelier during the period of January to March 2009 were **TL1.537** in total.

3.1.2.2 Batman Café Airport

Airport Café, for the strengthening of which support has been provided under this Project, realized sales numbers of **TL2.820 in January, TL2.410 in February and TL2.640 in March.**

The aim of this project is for women in Southeast Anatolia to receive training and reach an economic level where they can provide their own maintenance.

Training of trainers activity received 26 trainers' participation.

3.1.3 Fair and Exhibition Sales:

3.1.3.1 Diyarbakır Giftware Fair

Products manufactured by women to whom design support was provided under the project were displayed and offered for sale, **for the second time**, on 24 January-10 February 2009 at the Babil Shopping Centre in Diyarbakır. The exhibition of women's hand-made products was displayed in the exhibition area allocated by the Babil Shopping Centre to support the project. Realized sales were approximately **TL2.500** during this period.

3.2 Training Activities

Increased knowledge is an important element to achieve human development. For this reason, training and education activities form an integral part of the project and its goals. Training will be provided under the project on sales and marketing, communication, gender equality, design, human and woman's rights, cooperatives and management. The project helps to build an integrated capacity by combining production-related technical skills training with awareness-raising education on subjects concerning woman's rights.

3.2.1 Training of Trainers (Ready-to-wear)

On February-March 2009, in the aim of increasing the quality in textile sector, training of trainers activities were conducted in Şanlıurfa and Mardin by experts from Istanbul Textile and Apparel Exporter Associations (İTKİB) in order to improve the teaching capacity of sewing trainers who serve in different institutions. Training activities included basic subjects such as design, cutting techniques, basic working methods in sewing techniques, and transformation of individual development to group work, besides technical subjects like effective training in ready-to-wear sector, machinery and spare parts, and fabrics and fabric groups.

Şanlıurfa:

Under the cooperation established to train sewing trainers in Public Education Centers, ÇATOMs and other related institutions, İTKİB representative conducted a trainers training on 16 March-3 April 2009 in Şanlıurfa. 6 women from Bozova Public Education Center and Bozova ÇATOM and 3 women from Şanlıurfa Central ÇATOM, **a total of 9 women**, attended the training.

Mardin:

Simultaneous with the Şanlıurfa training, another expert from İTKİB conducted a training for trainers in Mardin on 16 March-3 April with the participation of **15 women sewing trainers** from ÇATOMs of central Mardin and its peripheries (Kızıltepe, Ömerli, Midyat, Dargeçit, Nusaybin). Other

OUTPUT 4

The commercial image of the region will be improved strongly towards women's productivity through the innovative sub-project "Nine Fashion Designers for Nine Provinces".

The project will have a branding externality.

trainers from Mardin and its districts, who came to realize the importance of such training, decided to attend to the training as well. Moreover, **2 women trainers** from Kızıltepe and Ömerli ÇATOM were supported to go to Istanbul for a **10-day design training** in a designer's atelier.

IV - ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER OUTPUT 4

The aim is the creation of new fashion and embroidery designs for each of the nine provinces by nine well-known fashion designers in Turkey and the establishment of market connections.

4.1 9 Fashion Designers for 9 Provinces

The sub-project "9 Fashion Designers for 9 Provinces" with field visits carried out by fashion designers in the framework of the protocol signed under the "Reducing Socio-economic Disparities in the Southeast Anatolia Region Project" is continuing under the new project from where it was left.

Under this component, a connection will be created between nine cities in the region and nine well-known fashion designers. The designers, who are members of the Association of Fashion Designers, will work in close cooperation with women in the region and prepare products to be sold in big stores. In addition, by making the cultural heritage visible, the project will help the perception of the region to grow in a more positive way based on local cultural treasures, diversity and women's productivity.

The project will also have a branding externality with emphasis on strong regional features such as the regional people and human diversity and the efforts of women to integrate their cultural and moral values into global knowledge and commercial markets. The products coming out of women's atelier will be marketed with a visibility program that will combine the creativity of Southeast women with fashion designers and their activities in Istanbul and other places in Turkey.

Under this context, 9 leading fashion designers of Turkey started working, under the coordination of fashion designer Hatice Gökçe, to identify a concept for the Project and create a brand for products prepared under this concept. This sub-project includes activities such as creating a story of the Project by using the fashion jargon in order to establish the visual integrity for print and visual media; preparing a fashion collection in accordance with the Project concept; and documentation of the products.

Products produced by the project beneficiary women will be offered for sale in 15 biggest stores of Mudo Company.

Accomplishments during January-March 2009 are as follows:

- Branding and concept creation actions have been completed with the support of fashion designers.
- Hatice Gökçe conducted atelier work in the Region.
- A brand name for women's products is determined.

Another activity under Output 4 is the sub-project that is implemented in cooperation with Turkey's leading ready-to-wear company Mudo. In achieving the Project's goal to expand to national market, it is a very important step that Mudo Company adds the winter collection that is designed by 9 fashion designers and produced by Project beneficiary women to its product range to be offered for sale in **Mudo's 15 biggest stores**. In this framework, it is aimed to complete producing the first bunch of products, which includes **6240 pieces**, on June and put them on sale in Mudo stores on July. Media launch of the sub-project is planned for last week of June.

Accomplishments during January-March 2009 are as follows:

- Product concept is determined.
- Sample products are produced by fashion designers.
- Establishment of fully equipped production atelier in Batman has started.
- Brand of the products is determined and corporate identity work is done.
- Meeting on brand launch and product positioning was held with project partners.

Project Visual Documentation

Since March 2009, a cameraman and a photographer have been assigned by Yoyo Production Company, who volunteered to support the Project, and Project's visual documentation has started through video recording and photographing of atelier work and products.

OUTPUT 5 Management

V - ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER OUTPUT 5

5.1 Project Oversight

Project Steering Committee Meeting was held on 19 January 2009 with the participation of representatives from GAP Regional Development Agency, United Nations Development Programme, Embassy of Sweden, State Planning Organization, Directorate of Social Services and Child Protection and The General Directorate of Women's Status.

**Women in the Region
grow more self-
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It was stated during the meeting that the Project is an important example, not only for Southeast but also for Eastern Anatolia Region and Black Sea Region for future initiatives, and also is very essential for women to gain confidence and economic independence. The significance of the Project was highlighted especially on gender equality, in supporting Turkish Government's efforts to achieve MDGs and fulfill its obligations under the Beijing Platform for Action.

VI. CONCLUSION

In an environment, where unemployment rates are increasing and effects of global crisis are felt deeply, significant improvement has been achieved under the Project through taking important steps within output 1, output 2, output 3 and output 4. Project made progress during January-March 2009.

Women in the Region grow more self-confident day by day through participating in fairs, holding exhibitions and marketing products of their own manual labor. Once they discover their abilities and skills, women put more effort to take an active part in the Project.

Today, one of the biggest problems in Turkey is the difficulty of women's participation to labor force. It is sometimes a challenging task to introduce new developments to people of the GAP Region due to Region's traditional structure and low rates of literacy. However, the Project successfully grew beyond the traditional standpoint of the people with the help of significant improvements that have been achieved, while taking regional sensitivities into consideration.

It has been well received by the neighboring communities that women are both been given training and also able to contribute to family budget in an economic crisis environment where others are in difficulty of finding jobs.

During the period of January-March, active work forces in ateliers have been triggered and women have been enabled to participate in production process. When the Project is completed, it is envisaged that beneficiary women will easily take part in labor force market in Southeast Anatolia Region.