

**FROM EARLY  
CHILDHOOD  
TO YOUTH:  
GROWING UP  
WITH THE ARTS**

**OCTOBER 2019**





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This report was prepared by  
Prof. Dr. Feyza orapçı  
within the scope of the  
cultural policy studies of the  
Istanbul Foundation for  
Culture and Arts.



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**1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

According to the data by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK)<sup>1</sup>, children between the ages of zero and 17 comprise 28% of the population in Turkey. This rate represents the highest childhood population among the European Union country members. With 8% of its population comprised of children below the age of four, Turkey also has the highest population of young children in Europe. In light of this data, taking steps to improve the wellbeing of children and youth and to contribute to their development are among the priorities of the cultural policies in Turkey.

This report, entitled *From Early Childhood to Youth: Growing up with the Arts*, authored by Prof. Dr. Feyza Çorapçı within the scope of the cultural policy studies of the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSÜ), discusses the role of arts exposure from early childhood onwards from the perspective of developmental psychology. While prepared in the transformation process of İKSÜ into a child-friendly cultural institution, it is a step taken by the foundation towards meeting the need for research review and policy analysis on children's engagement with the arts. The report evaluates the role of various art disciplines on the fundamental developmental competencies from early childhood into adolescence.

<sup>1</sup> Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK). İstatistiklerle Çocuk (Statistics on Children), 2017. Access: <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=30708>

The studies in this field point to the transformative power of exposing children to art from an early age onwards. Coming into contact with artistic experiences such as painting, music, and movement/dance at an early age is a major contributor for children's interest and participation in culture and arts later in their lives.<sup>2</sup> The data also show that participation in structured art programmes, i.e. regular activities with well-defined goals that require a certain effort from children, contributes to a range of developmental competencies, including academic success and identity development during middle childhood and adolescence.

The report also points out the potential of artistic involvement in improving various skills such as questioning, investigation, imagination, creative and critical thinking, self-expression, and empathy. When social issues are tackled through art, it becomes possible for children to critically think about the environment they want to live in and to have a sense of social responsibility.<sup>3</sup> The report is further shaped through the questions of 'What can be done to attract the attention of families and children in arts programmes? What can be done to improve the means of access and participation in programmes targeting different groups? What can be done to maintain a positive learning and interaction environment at workshops designed and moderated by artists?'

<sup>2</sup> Zakaras, L., & Lowell, J. (2008). *Cultivating demand for the arts: Arts learning, arts engagement, and state arts policy* (Vol. 640). Rand Corporation. Access: [https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND\\_MG640.pdf](https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG640.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Stevenson, L. (2014). *National creative youth development summit: Setting the agenda*. Boston, MA: Massachusetts Cultural Council. Access: <https://nasaa-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/National-Summit-on-Creative-Youth-Development-Setting-the-Agenda.pdf>

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) emphasizes the significant role of art and art education on the development of children and advocates every child's access to art as a universal human right regardless of the child's status – socioeconomic, refugee, cultural minority, or disability.<sup>4</sup> However, as arts education gradually decreases in the curriculum in Turkey, children, especially those from disadvantaged families, are deprived of high-quality art experience. Therefore, out-of-school art workshops gain significance as an alternative teaching environment to expose children to art from an early age onwards and to provide them with different learning experiences through art.

In this context, this report offers suggestions (1) to facilitate children's access to art programs in their leisure time regardless of their socioeconomic status, (2) to improve the quality as well as the quantity of the programs designed by culture and arts institutes and municipalities, and (3) to initiate local, national, and international collaborations. The goal is to provide available research findings and good examples that will contribute to the knowledge in creating cultural policies in the long term and facilitate the essential investments.

<sup>4</sup> UNESCO (March, 2006). *Road map for arts education. The world conference on arts education: Building creative capacities for the 21st century*. Lisbon, Portugal. Access: [http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/CLT/pdf/Arts\\_Edu\\_RoadMap\\_en.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/new/fileadmin/MULTIMEDIA/HQ/CLT/CLT/pdf/Arts_Edu_RoadMap_en.pdf)

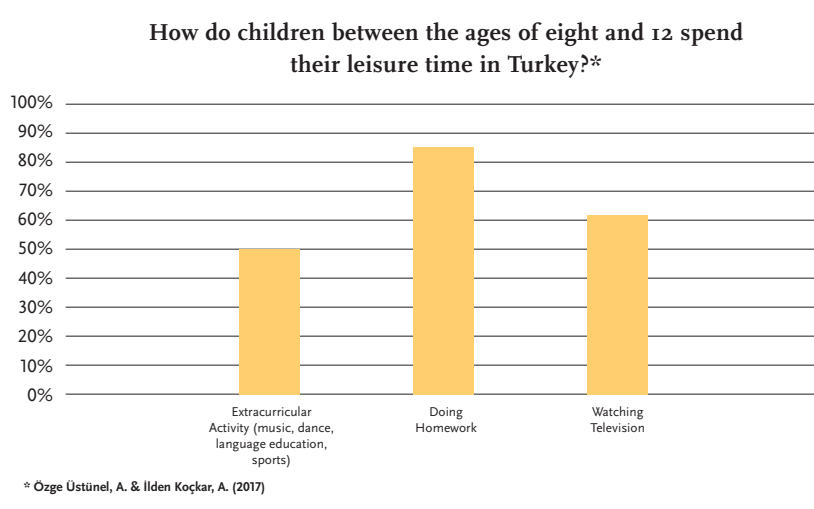
## 2 INTRODUCTION

Positive youth development approach a perspective aims to optimize developmental outcomes by providing all children and youth equal access to resources. This approach emphasizes the importance of offering fundamental developmental experiences for children and youth to bring out their creative potential.<sup>5</sup> Gaining momentum around the world lately, positive youth development approach advocates that participation in quality leisure activities offers valuable opportunities for healthy psychological development. Research findings reveal that children who regularly attend workshops or club activities such as sports, arts, and science in their leisure time are more likely to perform better at school, feel self-confident, and gain experience in group interactions such as giving feedback and offering leadership, and fulfill social responsibilities later in their lives, such as volunteering and voting.<sup>6</sup> These findings demonstrate the importance of structured leisure activities that are held regularly under adult supervision and provide children opportunities to have fun and gain knowledge as well as skills in their areas of interest. Available studies on how children and youth in Turkey spend their leisure time reveal a very low participation rate in structured activities in various fields including sports, arts, and science.

<sup>5</sup> Lerner, R. M., & Benson, P. L. (Ed.). (2003). *Developmental assets and asset-building communities: Implications for research, policy, and practice*. Springer Science & Business Media.

<sup>6</sup> Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., & Pachan, M. (2010). A meta-analysis of afterschool programs that seek to promote personal and social skills in children and adolescents. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 45, 294-309.

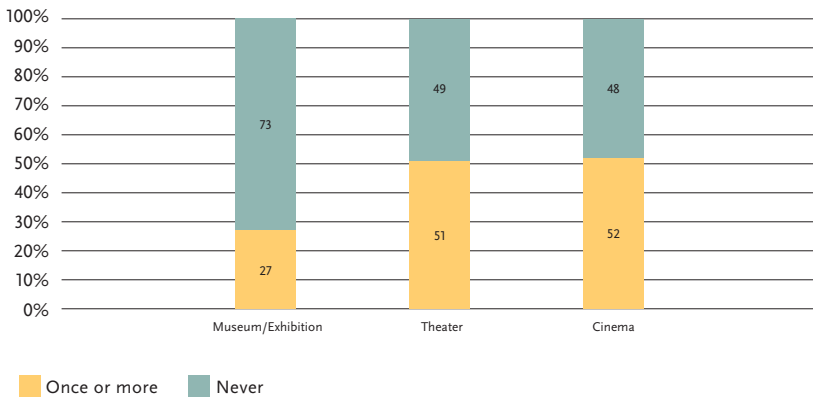
Research on the well-being of children examines children's objective living conditions and their evaluation of these conditions. A study on the well-being of children was conducted with 3,000 children between the ages of eight and 12 in Turkey, most of whom attended public schools.<sup>7</sup> Approximately half of the children in this study state that they find the opportunity to take extracurricular lessons in subjects they don't have at school (such as music, dance, language, or sports) or participate in a team or club activity in their leisure time. This percentage is even less if artistic activities are considered separately. In their time outside school, **doing homework** is the **most mentioned** (by 86%) leisure activity while watching television is mentioned by 62%.



**7** Müderrisoğlu, S., Karatay, A., Uyan-Semerci, P. & Ekim-Akkan, B. (2015). Children's worlds: International study country report TURKEY. G. Rees. & G. Main, (Ed), *Children's views on their lives and well-being in 15 countries: An initial report on the children's worlds survey, 2013-14*. York, the U.K.: Children's Worlds Project (ISCWeB). Access: [http://www.isciweb.org/\\_Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/Turkey\\_NationalReport\\_Final.pdf](http://www.isciweb.org/_Uploads/dbsAttachedFiles/Turkey_NationalReport_Final.pdf)

Another study in 2013 involving nearly 800 children between the ages of six and 11 who live in the urban areas of Istanbul and attend public schools examined how they spent their time outside of school.<sup>8</sup> The findings revealed that children spend more time **watching television** than in any other activity during the day. While watching television for three or four hours a day was reported by 30%, it is followed by activities such as **playing at home** and **studying**. 73% of the participating children have never been to a museum/exhibition, 49% have never been to a theater play, and 48% have never been to a movie. The higher the family's socioeconomic status, the less time children spend in front of the television and more frequently visit a museum/exhibition and see a play or a movie. The rate of children actively participating in an artistic activity rather than being in the audience is 19%, 7%, and 1% in the upper, middle, and lower socioeconomic classes, respectively.

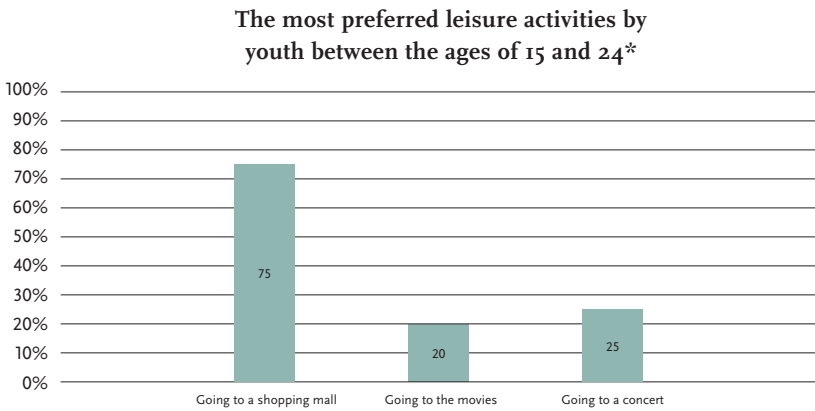
The rate of participation in culture and arts events for children between the ages of six and 11\*



\* What do children do outside school? (2017)

<sup>8</sup> Özge Üstünel, A. & İlden Koçkar, A. (2017). What do children do outside school? The access to and participation in extracurricular activities for children between the ages of six and 11 in Istanbul. In *children's university projects in Turkey and abroad*, (pp. 33-49). Istanbul: Altınbaş University Publications.

A collaborative research conducted by the Nüfusbilim Derneği (Demography Foundation) and the United Nations Population Fund<sup>9</sup> in 2007 collected data from youth between the ages of 15 and 24 in 3,500 household believed to represent Turkey. The most preferred leisure activities by this age group are **chatting with friends** and **visiting shopping malls**. Activities such as going to the movies or a concert or playing an instrument were mentioned by 20-25% of the participants.



\* The United Nations Population Fund, Nüfusbilim Derneği (Demography Foundation) (2007)

The Habitat Association published a research in 2016 entitled *The Wellbeing of Youth* with the participation of 1,209 young people representing the urban young population of Turkey. Out of all the participants, those who were students preferred **wandering around with friends** was endorsed by 82% of those who were students as the preferred a leisure activity by 82%, followed by **sitting at a café with a friend** at least once a week endorsed by 68% of the participants. In terms of cultural consumption habits, around 20-22% of the youth go to a play or a concert.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> [http://sagliktagenc.org/zile/uploads/2018/01/Turkiyede\\_Genclerin\\_Csus\\_Durumu.pdf](http://sagliktagenc.org/zile/uploads/2018/01/Turkiyede_Genclerin_Csus_Durumu.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Erdoğan, E. (2016). *Findings from field research about the wellbeing of youth in Turkey*. Access: <https://habitatderneği.org/wp-content/uploads/turkiye-de-genclerin-iyi-olma-hali-raporu.pdf>

The research findings mentioned above reveal that children and youth in Turkey spend their leisure time mostly at unstructured events and fail to use this time constructively for self-discovery and skill acquisition. It is also apparent that access to and interest in cultural and artistic events are quite low and that the disadvantaged children who could especially benefit from these events have very limited access.

Moreover, according to the Youth Development Index<sup>11</sup> that offers an evaluation of youth based on five criteria, namely education, health, employment opportunities as well as political and civil participation, Turkey ranked 62nd in general average among 183 countries in 2016. The fact that Turkey ranks 177th in the category of civic participation, which includes sports, artistic, and cultural activities among other things, reveals how little youth participate in social life through such events. In other categories Turkey ranks,

- 71<sup>st</sup> in Employment
- 49<sup>th</sup> in Education
- 31<sup>st</sup> in Health
- 62<sup>nd</sup> in Global.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.thecommonwealth-healthhub.net/global-youth-development-index-ydi/>



Studies in the last 20 years show that when children, especially those from disadvantaged families, participate in art-based programmes, they are five times less likely to quit school and twice as likely to graduate from university in addition to doing better in fulfilling their civic duties such as voting as young adults.<sup>12 13</sup>

Nourishing children artistically in their formative early childhood years which is a critical period in their development, significantly increases their chance to become individuals who are socially and emotionally more competent, with stronger communication skills and psychological adaptation. For children, as they are constantly curious and in need of exploration in their early years, art proves to be a pleasant engagement that allows them both to explore with all their senses and gain a kind of sensory literacy and to express themselves naturally and freely. On the other hand, artistic activities enable children to get to know themselves better at a young age, to have an idea of what they like and what they do not, to express their experiences through art, and to improve their cognitive abilities such as planning, making decisions, reflecting, and finishing a project, while also mobilising their imagination through play.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, providing children with a rich artistic environment from an early age onwards not only supports their development but also keeps their interest in art alive.<sup>15 16</sup>

**12** Catterall, J., Dumais, S., & Hampden-Thompson, G. (2012). *The arts and achievement in at-risk youth: Findings from four longitudinal studies*. Research Report #55. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts. Access: <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-At-Risk-Youth.pdf>

**13** Arts Education Navigator: Facts & Figures. Americans for the Arts. Access: <https://www.americansforthearts.org/by-program/networks-and-councils/arts-education-network/tools-resources/arts-ed-navigator/facts-figures>.

**14** Menzer, M. (2015). *The arts in early childhood: social and emotional benefits of arts participation: a literature review and gap-analysis (2000-2015)*. National Endowment for the Arts. Access: <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/arts-in-early-childhood-dec2015-rev.pdf>

**15** French, G. (2013). *The place of the arts in early childhood learning and development*. Commissioned paper from the Arts Council, Ireland. Access: <https://arrow.dit.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=aaschslrep>

**16** Rabkin, N., & Hedberg, E. C. (2011). *Arts education in America: What the declines mean for arts participation*. Research Report #52. National Endowment for the Arts. Access: <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/2008-SPPA-ArtsLearning.pdf>

### 3 METHODOLOGY

The report firstly focuses on the role of art on children's development from early childhood to adolescence. Existing research studies are reviewed in analysing the developmental characteristics of **early childhood**, a period in which the foundations are laid for interest in culture and arts, and how attending arts events or programs during these formative years (from infancy up to preschool) affects later engagement in the arts. The reviewed and summarized articles were chosen according to the criteria of being up-to-date, conducted by quantitative scientific research methods, and published in peer-reviewed journals. The report then examines the positive developmental contribution of participating in extracurricular arts programmes during **middle childhood and adolescence**. This section includes theoretical approaches and current research findings on how children spend their leisure time. Through reviewed studies, the report aims to highlight the benefits of participating in arts programs for academic, social, and emotional competence of children and youth, besides the obvious benefits in aesthetic development.

The report discusses **the children and youth's access and attendance to art workshops** in a separate section that summarises the institutions that organise art workshops and examines the factors that affect regular participation from the viewpoint of the children and parents.

In addition to the research literature review, the report makes use of the data and case studies as summarised below:

1) Face-to-face meetings with the partner municipalities of the Istanbul95 project:

As part of the report research, face-to-face meetings were held between June and August 2019 with the directorates of cultural affairs of the four partner municipalities (Beyoğlu, Maltepe, Sarıyer, and Sultanbeyli) of the İstanbul95 project, looking into their approach towards culture and arts activities for children and youth. Considering the high refugee population in the district of Sultanbeyli, a separate meeting was held with the Refugees and Asylum Seekers Assistance and Solidarity Association, of which the municipality itself is a project partner, regarding the Children and Youth Centre.

2) Focus group meetings with the instructors, participants, and their parents involved in the arts programmes / workshops held at the İKSV Alt Kat: Learning and Interaction Space.

The report offers **an analysis of the arts workshops** held for various age groups at the İKSV Alt Kat: Learning and Interaction Space of the İKSV. Within this scope, individual interviews were conducted with the instructors of three different workshops on music, visual arts, and storytelling/drama between May and July 2019. In addition, focus group meetings were held with all the children and youth who attended these arts workshops, as well as with the parents whose children attended music and storytelling/drama workshops. The meetings aimed to discuss children's experiences, and to offer an insight into the fundamental ideas and approaches of these programmes, and to shed light on their common principles.

3) The report includes the results of the survey conducted with 125 participants to evaluate the children's book *Optigull and Pesigull: A Good Neighbour Song*, published as part of the 15th İstanbul Biennial.

The report provides examples of good practices from around the world and Turkey to support the ideas discussed in the main topics. In light of the recent research and published site reports, the **common features of high-quality arts programs** are presented to improve the quality of current practices in Turkey and to develop new programs. Lastly, the report presents recommendations to develop quality programmes and to shed light on cultural policies.

## 4 CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND ARTS & CULTURE

### 4 1 THE ROLE OF ART IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Early childhood (0-3 years) and preschool years (4-6 years) are the primary periods of rapid physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development of a child. Children under the age of four comprise nearly 8% of the population in Turkey, which makes the country with the highest small children population in Europe. Considering that one of every four children in this critical age group is impoverished, supporting early childhood development becomes one of the top priorities.

Scientific research on early childhood calls attention to the heavy cost of inaction for young children with respect to the later psychological, social, and economic implications. Nobel Prize laureate James Heckman (2006) states that children who cannot fulfill their developmental potential, are less likely to enter qualified labor force and more likely to benefit from health, special education, and psychological as well as social services, thereby increasing such expenses in the long term. Therefore, supporting development in early childhood bears great significance not only for the individual development of a child but also for the economic and social growth and sustainable development of a country.

Undeniably, environmental influences contribute to childhood development besides genetic factors. In light of the recent research conducted in the field of neuroscience, Harvard University professor Jack Shonkoff explains the rapid changes that characterize early years with the fact that the brain is more susceptible to environmental stimuli and develops much faster with experience compared to other developmental periods.<sup>17</sup> A large body of research supports that all children need environmental stimulation such as a language rich environment, sensitive interactions, and opportunities for play and exploration to fulfill their potential at the highest level. The environmental stimuli and experiences in the first three years, serve as important catalysts to make connections among the 100 billion brain cells and create the neural networks that support the development of memory, emotions, behaviour, movement, and language skills. In conclusion, the foundations of brain development are laid through these experiences at the earliest ages.

<sup>17</sup> Shonkoff, J. P. (2010). Building a new biodevelopmental framework to guide the future of early childhood policy. *Child Development*, 81, 357-367.

What would be the role of art in brain development? Rhythmic movement to music or drawing and painting in colour enables most kids to be engrossed in an activity for a certain period of time. Moreover, such activities help children pay attention to a number of things simultaneously and choose the proper reactions out of several options, such as playing the right note at the right time or moving slower when the music slows down. Therefore, participating in an artistic activity provides an experience for children in which they are required to concentrate efficiently and to improve their “behavioural adjustment”. Experiences that require attentional focus stimulate the formation of new neural connections and strengthen the present ones in the prefrontal cortex, which subserves cognitive control.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, clapping to a rhythm and singing from an early age onwards strengthen the neural connections in the areas of the brain that are responsible for language, abstract thinking, and mathematics.<sup>19</sup> An artistic activity, no matter what form of art it is in, demands the effective cooperation of areas of the brain that support rational thinking, language, spatial awareness, and emotions. Therefore, artistic activities involving creative expression nourish the physical, cognitive, and socio-emotional development of children as a whole, while there is cumulating evidence that regular participation in artistic activities supports the development of the brain in children.<sup>20</sup>

**18** Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2011). Building the Brain’s “Air Traffic Control” System: How Early Experiences Shape the Development of Executive Function. Access: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/How-Early-Experiences-Shape-the-Development-of-Executive-Function.pdf>

**19** Schlaug, G., Norton, A., Overy, K., & Winner, E. (2005). Effects of music training on the child’s brain and cognitive development. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1060, 219–230.

**20** Asbury, C. H., & Rich, B. (Eds.). (2008). *Learning, arts, and the brain: The Dana Consortium report on arts and cognition*. Dana Press. Access: [https://hewlett.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Learning\\_Arts\\_and\\_the\\_Brain.pdf](https://hewlett.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Learning_Arts_and_the_Brain.pdf)

In recent years, there have been an increasing number of research studies that examine how regular participation in artistic activities in early childhood contributes to self-control skills. On the biological level, self-control is related to the development of the prefrontal cortex. On the behavioural level, it is about children learning how to control their emotions, such as disappointment and anger, and rash reactions when they are asked to follow certain rules. The development of this cognitive control mechanism is one of the most critical processes of early childhood.<sup>21</sup> Self-control, which enables children to remember instructions, to focus, to make plans, and to work towards a certain goal, is of crucial importance to future academic success, peer relations, and socio-emotional competence.<sup>22</sup>

Between the ages of zero and six, art is regarded as a process in which children explore the world, learn new concepts through trial and error, improve their communication skills, and trigger their imagination through play. During this period, music-based activities include listening to music, singing, moving or dancing to a rhythm, and accompanying a song with simple rhythm instruments. Drama-based activities involve telling a story or acting out a character in a story, while visual art-based activities are about drawing, painting, or creating objects from mud, clay, and big blocks. In short, art in early childhood include mostly performance-based activities in which children use their verbal skills relatively less. Small children experience artistic process by transforming random actions into a certain form of practice.<sup>23</sup>

**21** Calkins, S. D. (2007). The emergence of self-regulation: Biological and behavioral control mechanisms supporting toddler competencies. C. A. Brownell and C. B. Kopp (Ed.), in *Socioemotional development in the toddler years: Transitions and transformations* (261-284). New York: Guilford Press.

**22** Hendry, A., Jones, E. J., & Charman, T. (2016). Executive function in the first three years of life: Precursors, predictors and patterns. *Developmental Review*, 42, 1-33.

**23** Wrights, S. (2003). *The arts, young children, and learning*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Especially from two years old onwards as sense of self and vocabulary develop and motor skills such as walking, running, and hand-eye coordination and self-care skills improve, children become more interested in artistic activities. Involvement in arts such as music, dance, and drama, either as an audience member or as a participant, in early childhood years is among the leading factors that contribute to a child's interest and participation in culture and arts events in adulthood.<sup>24</sup>

A review on the contribution of art in socio-emotional development in early childhood<sup>25</sup> shows that participation in programmes such as music, dance, and drama is associated with development of the socio-emotional skills such as empathy, sharing, collaboration, and self-control.

The monthly, hour-long **Stroller Tours**<sup>26</sup> at the Guggenheim Museum in New York are designed for children up to two years old and their caregivers. During these guided interactive tours, which enable small children to explore through their senses, caregivers and children can together touch, hold, shake, smell, and examine certain objects. After the exhibition tour, caregivers can partake in art workshops with the children.

<sup>24</sup> Rabkin, N., & Hedberg, E. C. (2011). *Arts education in America: What the declines mean for arts participation*. Research Report #52. National Endowment for the Arts. Access: <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/2008-SPPA-ArtsLearning.pdf>

<sup>25</sup> Menzer, M. (2015). *The arts in early childhood: social and emotional benefits of arts participation: a literature review and gap-analysis* (2000-2015). National Endowment for the Arts. Access: <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/arts-in-early-childhood-dec2015-rev.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.guggenheim.org/event/stroller-tours>



**Mocca**<sup>27</sup> in Amsterdam starts out from the idea that culture and arts should be one of the cornerstones in a child's education and upbringing. With a view to introducing all children in the age group 4-12 to art, it brings cultural institutions and artists together with schools on behalf of the Municipality of Amsterdam and acts as a facilitator in creating a cultural education curriculum. With the same goal in mind, it also provides counselling to help institutions improve and execute their cultural education programmes. In addition to organizing programmes to improve the capacity of cultural education professionals, it runs a Cultural Bus Programme that allows students to visit museums, theatres, concert halls, and exhibitions free of charge.

**Baby Mornings**<sup>28</sup> guided family-friendly exhibition tours can be attended free of charge by parents and caregivers with babies up to 18 months old at the Istanbul Biennial and Istanbul Design Biennial venues. These tours allow caregivers with babies to comfortably partake in art and culture events and ease their anxiety to bother other attendees.

<sup>27</sup> For more information, see: <https://mocca.amsterdam/about-mocca-2-hoodpagina-over-mocca/>

<sup>28</sup> For more information, see: <https://bienal.İKSV.org/tr/haberler/ucretsiz-bebekli-sabahlar-turlari>

**4** | **1** | **1** | HOW TO ESTABLISH INITIAL EXPERIENCES WITH THE ARTS

Means of introduction to art in early childhood can be studied under the titles of music and dance, drama and visual arts, reading culture, and play.

**I. Music and dance**

The affection and sensitivity in the caregiver-infant relationship in the early years of life develop through parents sharing their excitement, love, and care with the baby and the baby sensing these feelings. The sense of togetherness is strengthened when caregivers react to the baby's vocalizations and gazes by talking back, or singing. When caregivers' voice, gestures, and body language are in coordination with their baby's cues, this communication pattern enables a synchronous interaction.<sup>29</sup> This synchronization, which resembles the rhythm in music and dance, instills a sense of trust in the baby and contributes to socio-emotional competence in later years.<sup>30</sup>

**29** Trevarthen, C., & Aitken, K. J. (2001). Infant intersubjectivity: Research, theory, and clinical applications. *The Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry and Allied Disciplines*, 42, 3-48.

**30** Feldman, R. (2015). Sensitive periods in human social development: New insights from research on oxytocin, synchrony, and high-risk parenting. *Development and Psychopathology*, 27, 369-395.

Only few studies have to date examined whether or not programmes involving rhythmic music, singing, and dancing further enrich this synchronized interaction between caregivers and their babies. In group activities based on music and movement, such as Kindermusik and Music Together programmes, caregivers and babies follow the rhythm of the music by singing, moving, dancing, or by playing simple rhythm instruments under the guidance of a music instructor. Many of these activities not only offer a delightful pastime but also teach moving slower or faster according to the rhythm, tempo, and style of a music and waiting for turn. In this context, music and dance programmes contribute to the development of skills such as attentive listening, recognition, and self-control. Research findings reveal that music and dance programmes strengthen the emotional bond between a caregiver and her baby, maintain more positive emotion, eye contact, and synchronization, as well as contribute to self-control skills in children.<sup>31 32 33</sup> Moreover, this body of research suggests that engaging in musical movement, playing simple instruments, singing and dancing with peers, and waiting for a turn support children's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development as a whole. All these findings emphasize the importance of engaging young children in activities that include music, singing, and movement within daily life.

**31** Vlismas, W., Malloch, S., & Burnham, D. (2013). The effects of music and movement on mother–infant interactions. *Early Child Development and Care*, 183, 1669–1688.

**32** Mualem, O., & Klein, P. S. (2013). The communicative characteristics of musical interactions compared with play interactions between mothers and their one-year-old infants. *Early Child Development and Care*, 183, 899–915.

**33** Winsler, A., Ducenne, L., & Koury, A. (2011). Singing one's way to self-regulation: The role of early music and movement curricula and private speech. *Early Education and Development*, 22, 274–304.

In recent years, there have been studies on how preschool curricula enriched with artistic activities could support the developmental skills of at-risk, impoverished children. Such curricula reinforce the regular school-preparation activities with daily music, dance, creative movement, and art activities. For instance, if the learning theme of the week is ‘shapes’, children choose instruments of different shapes in music class, draw various shapes in art class, and make different shapes with their bodies in dance class during that week. Research reveals that children who follow a curriculum enriched with music, creative movement, and art on a daily basis are more socially competent; their knowledge of numbers and vocabulary are more advanced, as well as their self-control skills, and their cortisol levels, known as the stress hormone, are lower compared to children following an ordinary curriculum.<sup>34 35 36 37 38 39 40</sup> Lastly, enriching a preschool curriculum with even an eight-week creative dance/movement programme proves influential in teaching social skills, especially for immigrant children.<sup>41</sup>

**34** Brown, E. D., & Sax, K. L. (2013). Arts enrichment and preschool emotions for low-income children at risk. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 28, 337-346.

**35** Ritblatt, S., Longstreth, S., Hokoda, A., Cannon, B., & Weston, J. (2013). Can music enhance school-readiness socioemotional skills? *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 27, 257-266.

**36** Rauscher, F. H., & Hinton, S. C. (2011). Music instruction and its diverse extra-musical benefits. *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 29, 215-226.

**37** Brown, E. D., Garnett, M. L., Velazquez-Martin, B. M., & Mellor, T. J. (2018). The art of Head Start: Intensive arts integration associated with advantage in school readiness for economically disadvantaged children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 45, 204-214.

**38** Brown, E. D., Benedett, B., & Armistead, M. E. (2010). Arts enrichment and school readiness for children at risk. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 25, 112-124.

**39** Greene, M. L., & Sawilowsky, S. (2018). Integrating the arts into Head Start classrooms produces positive impacts on kindergarten readiness. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 45, 215-223.

**40** Brown, E. D., Garnett, M. L., Anderson, K. E., & Laurenceau, J. P. (2017). Can the arts get under the skin? Arts and cortisol for economically disadvantaged children. *Child Development*, 88, 1368-1381.

**41** Lobo, Y. B., & Winsler, A. (2006). The effects of a creative dance and movement program on the social competence of Head Start preschoolers. *Social Development*, 15, 501-519.

Every Sunday, the Royal Opera House in London presents 'Ballet Dots', 'Opera Dots', and 'Dots Day', 45-minute workshops in the foyer on music, singing, stories, and dancing, for children between the ages of zero and five and their families.<sup>42</sup>

Opened in Denmark in 2016, **KU.BE House of Culture and Movement**<sup>43</sup> is a municipal community centre for encouraging alternative forms of movement for the residents in its neighbourhood. The 3,200 square metre building is designed for all ages from early childhood to adulthood, offering colourful and attractive spaces of different sizes for activities such as climbing, dance, yoga, theatre, and parkour. It thus enables small children to freely move around and participate in many creative activities while parents can both accompany their children and also experience various activities for themselves.

<sup>42</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.roh.org.uk/workshops/dots-day>; <https://www.roh.org.uk/workshops/opera-dots>; <https://www.roh.org.uk/workshops/ballet-dots>

<sup>43</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.mvr.nl/projects/50/kube-house-of-culture-and-movement>

## 2. Drama and visual arts

Children who have developed attentive listening, learning, and problem-solving skills especially in the preschool period are fast to learn socio-emotional skills such as understanding and defining their own and others' emotions, showing empathy, and collaboration. A research study in preschools focused on how drama-based activities, which involved writing a story with the class teacher and acting it out with classmates, held during free play time throughout the year influenced child development. It revealed that activities with a play-based approach supported the development of self-control and social skills such as language, sharing, waiting for one's turn, listening to others, and empathizing with friends.<sup>44 45</sup>

Howard Gardner<sup>46</sup> argues that preschool children are intuitively creative and greatly enjoy getting involved in music, arts, drama, and language activities. Two year-olds can hold a pen and scribble on surfaces while at three, children can draw geometrical shapes and by the end of kindergarten, they can paint or draw original colourful pictures. A research on the relationship between art activities and socio-emotional development shows that children who feel sad, afraid, or angry can deal with these negative emotions through painting and drawing.<sup>47</sup> As part of the research, children feeling sad and disappointed were randomly assigned into three groups. The children in the first group were asked to draw a house of their own preference, the ones in the second group to draw an incident that upset them, and the ones in the third group to draw an exact copy of a drawing they are given. It was observed that the children in the first group who drew any house they wanted were the ones who dealt best with sadness.

<sup>44</sup> Schellenberg, E. G. (2004). Music lessons enhance IQ. *Psychological Science*, 15, 511-514.

<sup>45</sup> Nicolopoulou, A., Cortina, K. S., Ilgaz, H., Cates, C. B., & de Sá, A. B. (2015). Using a narrative-and play-based activity to promote low-income preschoolers' oral language, emergent literacy, and social competence. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 31, 147-162.

<sup>46</sup> Gardner, H. (1980). *Artful scribbles: The significance of children's drawings*. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>47</sup> Drake, J. E., & Winner, E. (2013). How children use drawing to regulate their emotions. *Cognition & Emotion*, 27, 512-520.

There are findings pointing to the fact that involvement in different art forms has effect on different developmental fields in early childhood. For instance, an experimental study by Schellenberg (2004) assigned a group of six year-old children randomly to either music education or drama activities. After attending the activities they were assigned for a year, children in the drama group were observed to gain social skills while the children in the music class had increased IQ points.

**Dockteatern Tittut<sup>48</sup>**, a theatre group in Sweden, has special performances for families with children up to 24 months old that include music, shadow play, and moving colours and shapes, offering babies a chance to explore many different things. These performances are held not in a conventional theatre hall but in big tents where parents and babies can sit on the floor and become a part of the show.

Held in Istanbul and Ankara annually since 2016, **Atta Festival** is the only international arts festival for babies and children in Turkey. Atta Festival hosts theatre, dance, music, cinema, and contemporary art events for babies up to three years old, for children and youth up to the age of 18, and the accompanying adults. Welcoming groups from Turkey and abroad in its programmes, this festival for children and youth also presents interactive content.

<sup>48</sup> For more information: <https://dockteaterntittut.se/english/>

Of preschool educational methods, **Waldorf, Montessori, and Reggio Emilia** schools regard children as individuals with an innate desire for learning, who reflect on what they learn and express their thoughts through play and art activities. The Reggio Emilia approach in particular regards art activities as a reflection of children's emotions and thoughts on action and frequently benefits from such activities. While providing children who actively do and learn in the process with opportunities to explore the environment, choose the materials, manage the process, and to take responsibilities, the phases of the children's creative process are photographed, recorded, and observed by the teacher. This approach presents children with a number of opportunities to solve problems and do research and especially in small group activities, children are encouraged to communicate with each other.

### 3. Reading culture

This study revealed that children in low-income families heard on average 616 words per hour, while children in high-income families heard on average 2,153 words per hour. Based on these numbers, it was estimated that in the first three years of their lives, children in low-income families heard a total of about 13 million words and in high-income about 45 million.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Hart, B. & Risley, T.R. (1995). *Meaningful differences in the everyday experiences of young American children*. Baltimore: Brookes.



Called 'The Thirty Million Word Gap', this finding led to many extensive campaigns primarily in the U.S. as well as in other countries to increase the number of activities that involve talking and reading with children. These campaigns aimed to expand children's vocabulary and to improve their language skills such as listening and talking by encouraging children's exposure to written and visual works beyond daily conversation.

Why is it important to learn new words and to develop language skills in the earliest years of life? While the words children hear develop the language area of their brain on the biological level, this area also supports the active performance of the prefrontal cortex which simultaneously contributes to attention and learning skills.<sup>50</sup> Therefore, vocabulary acquired in early childhood develops listening, understanding, and speaking skills as well as improving emotional and behavioural control and playing a significant role in academic achievement.<sup>51</sup>

The foundations of a reading culture is laid when a child gets acquainted with and starts taking pleasure in books, which enrich his or her language environment and develop the abstract thinking skills such as imagination and fictionalizing, at the earliest ages. In this context, it is of utmost importance to organize reading hours at parks, children's libraries, and street festivals and, most importantly, to increase reading habits in the family.

<sup>50</sup> Asaridou, S. S., Demir-Lira, Ö. E., Goldin-Meadow, S., & Small, S. L. (2017). The pace of vocabulary growth during preschool predicts cortical structure at school age. *Neuropsychologia*, 98, 13-23.

<sup>51</sup> Morgan, P. L., Farkas, G., Hillemeier, M. M., Hammer, C. S., & Maczuga, S. (2015). 24-month-old children with larger oral vocabularies display greater academic and behavioral functioning at kindergarten entry. *Child Development*, 86, 1351-1370.

In recent years, municipalities have launched **Kitap Okuyan Çocuklar: Oyun Kitaplığı (Kids Reading: Play Library)**<sup>52</sup> programmes for kids to acquire a love of books and reading, for them to socialize with their peers and learn by observation, trying, and exploration. Play Libraries are learning centres where families with children older than six months can participate (free of charge) in play and creative reading hours, art activities, and seminars on child development. The first play library was founded by the Kadıköy Municipality at the Özgürlük Park in 2014 and the second by the Mersin Mezitli Municipality in 2015. Şişli Municipality opened two play libraries, one in Feriköy and the other in 19 Mayıs Neighbourhood, in 2016.

Reorganized as part of the Children's Libraries Improvement Project by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism in 2012, the Public Library was transformed into **Istanbul Üsküdar Selimiye Children's Library**. What distinguishes Selimiye Children's Library from others is its preschool department on the ground floor, designed for children between the ages of zero and six and their families. This department has books on early childhood as well as toys, a playhouse corner, colouring tables, and a movie area.

Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality opened the first **Applied Children's Library** in Turkey. 34,208 children and 27,429 adults benefited from this library in 2018. The library has a workshop area where story hours, creative writing classes, and storytelling, music, and visual art activities are held; an exhibition area for children; an application area for panels with families and children; and a leisure area.

<sup>52</sup> For more information, see: <http://kitapokuyancocuklar.org/>

**The Maakplaats 021**<sup>53</sup>, a programme developed by the collaboration of four institutions in the Netherlands, designs makerspaces<sup>54</sup> in Amsterdam’s public libraries and trains the staff who will run these spaces. Within the context of the programme, makerspaces were created in 10 of the 26 libraries in Amsterdam. The makerspaces offer after-school activities while the schools can also use these spaces as classrooms for their group activities. The programme aims to transform the libraries to meet the needs of the 21st century, so that they will have a function beyond being places for reading and borrowing books. It sets out from the idea that education must soon be offering a combination of a variety of learning environments such as museums and libraries.

#### 4. Play

Art prompts individuals to reflect on their experiences, emotions, and ideas and to express them through symbols. Therefore, art is symbolic and creates different meanings.<sup>55</sup> Although not regarded as a branch of art, play enables children to imagine doing things that have never been done before. Thus, play offers them the first opportunity to both display their creative skills and use symbolic representations. Creative games with imaginary elements contribute to the development of socio-emotional and language skills in children and encourage them to reason about the situations they enact during play.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> For more information, see: <https://maakplaats021.nl/>

<sup>54</sup> The Oxford Dictionary defines “makerspace” which does not have a direct translation in Turkish as “A place in which people with shared interests, especially in computing or technology, can gather to work on projects while sharing ideas, equipment, and knowledge.”

<sup>55</sup> Heath, S. B., & Wolf, S. A. (2004). *Art is all about looking: Drawing and detail* (pp. 64-84). London: Creative Partnerships.

<sup>56</sup> Berk, L. E. (1994). Vygotsky’s theory: The importance of make-believe play. *Young Children*, 50, 30-39.

Children can express their creativity through play without any need for expensive or commercial toys. Children can turn durable and solid cardboard boxes and colourful hula hoops into tunnels, robots, or rocket ships. Additional materials such as tapes and crayons enable them to enrich their creativity and customize their works.

A collaborative project by Superpool Architecture, and municipalities, the **HOP Mobile Playground** is for children between the ages of zero and six. An open area quickly transforms into a playground when playmakers provide children with simple and light materials such as cardboard boxes, fabrics, tapes, hula hoops, small balls, and ropes. Playmaker adults act as facilitators and aim to enable children to explore their creativity while having a pleasant time.

The mobile application **İlk6Yıl (First 6 Years)**,<sup>57</sup> realized by the Mother Child Education Foundation with the collaboration of Turkey Vodafone Foundation, provides parents with information about child development between the ages of zero and six and with activity recommendations. The information is categorized according to different developmental characteristics of children and it is supported with photographs, educational videos, and animation films. The play section offers information alongside recommendations on music, dance, play, and reading activities for different age groups, which parents and children can do together.

<sup>57</sup> For more information, see: <http://www.ilk6yil.com/>

The **Urban95**<sup>58</sup> programme, initiated by the Bernard van Leer Foundation, which has been collaborating with academics, experts, and political leaders to decrease child poverty in over 50 countries since 1965, is run in Istanbul under the name **Istanbul95**.<sup>59</sup> Urban95 asks a bold yet simple question to city administrators, urban planners, architects, innovative developers, and social scientists all around the world: “If you could experience the city from 95cm – the height of a three-year-old – what would you change?”

Implemented primarily in collaboration with the municipalities of Beyoğlu, Maltepe, Sarıyer, and Sultanbeyli since February 2017, the Istanbul95 project aims to raise awareness in seeing Istanbul from an elevation of 95 centimetres and encourages the decision-makers of the city to invest in urban planning and public services with this awareness while also increasing the capacity of the programmes for children and families run by district municipalities.

<sup>58</sup> For more information, see: <https://bernardvanleer.org/tr/urban95-city/urban95-city-istanbul/>

<sup>59</sup> For more information, see: <https://belediye.istanbul95.org/>

Published by the Bernard van Leer Foundation and also translated into Turkish, the **Urban95 Starter Kit: Ideas for Action**<sup>60</sup> is a guide on the changes that can be done in cities to benefit children under the age of five. Though the kit is prepared principally for local administrations, it also proves useful for other partners who play a role in building better cities for children and caregivers. The Starter Kit offers 29 different ideas under the sections of public space, mobility, early childhood services, and data-driven management and shares the steps required to implement them along with example practices from across the world. The kit includes different steps that could be taken in the field of culture and arts, ranging from art applications in public spaces to storytelling.

<sup>60</sup> For more information, see: <https://bernardvanleer.org/app/uploads/2018/05/BvLF-KENT95-Baslangic-Kiti.pdf>

## 4 2 WHAT ARE THE FUNDAMENTAL DEVELOPMENTAL COMPETENCIES IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE?

The period between the ages of seven and 11, defined as middle childhood, is the primary developmental period during which children are most curious and cognitively ready to learn new things. Compared to the preschool period, school-age children can focus their attention for a longer time, find it easier to remember what they learn, display verbal and written communication skills by using more complex grammar rules, and express their original thoughts on a subject. In addition, this is also a period of progress in understanding the perspective, emotions, and ideas of others. Middle childhood is a period during which feeling a sense of achievement is important, belief in one's skills is developed, and the foundations of self-confidence is laid.

Participation in sports (basketball, football, swimming, etc.), artistic (music, dance, drama, painting, etc.), scientific (robotics, coding, etc.), and academic (chess, debate, etc.) activities and structured activities such as scouting and social responsibility projects increases during the middle childhood period. These activities involve teamwork and contribute to the process of identity exploration. Moreover, children state that during these programmes, they encounter situations that cause anger, anxiety, and stress and they get to improve their skills to deal with such emotions with the support of their instructors.<sup>61</sup>

**61** Hansen, D. M., Larson, R. W., & Dworkin, J. B. (2003). What adolescents learn in organized youth activities: A survey of self-reported developmental experiences. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 13, 25-55.

There is evidence that out-of-school programmes contribute to academic success by strengthening children's sense of competence through motivation of success and learning.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, mechanisms such as distancing children from risky behaviour in their leisure time by providing them with a certain goal, bringing them together with peers that display positive behaviour, and creating a sense of belonging to a group explain the protective role of structured events.<sup>63</sup> Some research studies suggest that establishing strong social bonds with adults and peers in these programmes act as protective mechanisms, especially for children with poor social skills who benefit from peers with exemplary positive behaviours.<sup>64 65</sup>

Another critical period in development is adolescence that spans the ages of 12 to 18. During this period of rapid psychological change and transition, it is fundamental for adolescents to be in supportive relationships with their social environment, especially with family and friends; to feel competent and self-confident; to be active and independent in their environments such as school and society; and to earn self-respect and sense of identity.<sup>66</sup> Yet, this period also embraces impulsivity, taking risks easily, rash decision-making, search for emotional closeness, and adaptation to changing physical development and body structure.

**62** Covay, E., & Carbonaro, W. (2010). After the bell: Participation in extracurricular activities, classroom behavior, and academic achievement. *Sociology of Education*, 83, 20-45.

**63** Larson, R. W., Hansen, D. M., & Moneta, G. (2006). Differing profiles of developmental experiences across types of organized youth activities. *Developmental Psychology*, 42, 849-863.

**64** Eccles, J. S., & Barber, B. L. (1999). Student council, volunteering, basketball, or marching band: What kind of extracurricular involvement matters? *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 14, 10-43.

**65** Mahoney, J. L. (2000). School extracurricular activity participation as a moderator in the development of antisocial patterns. *Child Development*, 71, 502-516.

**66** Lerner, R. M., Dowling, E. M., & Anderson, P. M. (2003). Positive youth development: Thriving as the basis of personhood and civil society. *Applied Developmental Science*, 7, 172-180.



The positive adolescent development approach focuses on the strengths of children and youth. When dealing with the developmental process, it aims not only to prevent potential behavioural problems but also to reveal the potential of energy, learning, and creativity in children and youth. Below are the most fundamental developmental experiences for children and youth to reveal this potential:<sup>67</sup>

- Encountering new people, ideas, roles, and situations,
- Finding opportunities to learn different skills, to imagine, to design, and to create,
- Forming relationships between the skills and information they learn,
- Making choices and decisions in their areas of interest,
- Having ideals and goals for the future,
- Being encouraged to show determination and effort to realize their goals.

It is a priority to provide all children and youth equally with the above-mentioned fundamental developmental experiences and opportunities. Positive youth development approach advocates that these experiences lay the foundation for raising successful, determined, sensible, self-confident, sociable individuals who can actively communicate with others and are respectful towards the social and cultural rules of society.

**67** Nagaoka, J., Farrington, C. A., Ehrlich, S. B., & Heath, R. D. (2015). *Foundations for Young Adult Success: A Developmental Framework. Concept Paper for Research and Practice*. University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research. Access: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED559970.pdf>

Arts programmes and workshops (music, dance, drama, painting, etc.) held outside formal education by municipalities, central administration, and civil society actors have the potential to provide the aforementioned developmental experiences. While enabling children to have fun, to develop an interest in different fields of art, and to nourish their creativity, these experiences also contribute to their active participation in social life.<sup>68 69</sup> Since they are not limited by the curriculum of formal education, arts programmes and workshops can make use of contemporary currents to expand children and youth's field of interest.

Today, also with the effect of globalization, mass communication exposes children and youth to the values, products, and images of the dominant culture while art enables them, especially the youth who is in the process of developing a sense of individual identity, to get to know themselves, to explore their authenticity, and to make their voices heard. The creative process in arts programs and workshops includes the collective use of many skills such as thinking, exploration, learning, planning, imagining, problem solving, reflecting, correcting, making an effort, collaboration, and empathizing.<sup>70</sup> Therefore, artistic activity is regarded as a critical process that contributes not only to the aesthetic, but also to cognitive, and socio-emotional development of children and youth.

**68** Rapp-Paglicci, L. A., Ersing, R., & Rowe, W. (2007). The effects of cultural arts programs on at-risk youth: Are there more than anecdotes and promises? *Journal of Social Service Research*, 33, 51-56.

**69** Heath, S. B. (2001). Three's not a crowd: Plans, roles, and focus in the arts. *Educational Researcher*, 30, 10-17.

**70** Heath, S. B., & Roach, A. (1999). Imaginative actuality: Learning in the arts during the nonschool hours. *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning*, 19-34.

## 4 2 1 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ART TO DEVELOPMENTAL COMPETENCIES IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

Arts participation has been associated with cognitive development and academic success, language development, socio-emotional development, and identity development.

### 1) Cognitive development and academic success

The process in any arts programme or workshop, whether it be on music, dance, plannings, design, or any other form of art, requires children to make observations and plans, to remember the instructions they are given, to focus on the task at hand, to avoid distractions, and to evaluate their work at every step. Therefore, art activities have the potential to support the development of many cognitive skills.<sup>71</sup>

Scientific studies show that participation in drama and music activities outside of school are positively correlated with school attendance and success as well as academic goals.<sup>72 73 74</sup> A research review based on 19 studies reveal that children who play an instrument and who have taken music classes for at least two or three years are more successful at recognizing and organizing visual stimuli (spatial reasoning) and at self-control defined as the ability to plan and work towards a goal.<sup>75 76</sup>

**71** Stevenson, L. (2006). The arts: New possibilities for teaching and learning. *Principal's Research Review* 1, 1-6.

**72** Metsäpelto, R. L., & Pulkkinen, L. (2012). Socioemotional behavior and school achievement in relation to extracurricular activity participation in middle childhood. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, 56, 167-182.

**73** Winner, E., & Cooper, M. (2000). Mute those claims: No evidence (yet) for a causal link between arts study and academic achievement. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 34, 11-75.

**74** Holochwost, S. J., Propper, C. B., Wolf, D. P., Willoughby, M. T., Fisher, K. R., Kolacz, J., ... & Jaffee, S. R. (2017). Music education, academic achievement, and executive functions. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts*, 11, 147-166.

**75** Hetland, L., & Winner, E. (2001). The arts and academic achievement: What the evidence shows. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 102, 3-6.

**76** Jaschke, A. C., Honing, H., & Scherder, E. J. (2018). Longitudinal analysis of music education on executive functions in primary school children. *Frontiers in Neuroscience*, 12, 103-114.

Recently, national databases were analysed to compare the role of different levels of participation in curricular or extracurricular artistic activities during middle and high school years on the students' academic success in later years. The project entitled "The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth" analysed four major national educational databases in the U.S. and tracked 25,000 children for 10 years.<sup>77</sup> This research shows that participation in art activities contribute significantly to the academic and social success of youth, especially those at risk from low-income families. The research findings revealed that children who participated in art activities more frequently were more successful, had better grades, and had a higher rate of attending university than their peers with lesser participation. It was also seen that children participating in art activities were three times more likely to get a university degree while those attending fewer activities were five times more at risk to graduate from school.

<sup>77</sup> Catterall, J., Dumais, S., & Hampden-Thompson, G. (2012). The arts and achievement in at-risk youth: *Findings from four longitudinal studies*. Research Report #55. Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts. Access: <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-At-Risk-Youth.pdf>

## 2) Language development

Shirley Brice Heath, who studies language anthropology at Stanford University, investigated 124 youth organizations in the U.S. during her 10-year research that began in 1987. Professor Heath states that these organizations offer programmes in various fields, including sports, social service, and art, that mostly benefit economically disadvantaged youth. The most important aspect of these programmes that involve theatre production (scriptwriting, acting, composing music, and décor design), music, and visual arts is that they enable youth to partake in long-term projects (three days a week for a year) and to plan and develop a performance or an exhibition open to public. Professor Heath emphasizes that this approach makes youth experience the hardships and challenges that may be encountered at any step of the process and allows them to join forces and find solutions to overcome these.

The research team recorded the conversations among the youth and observed their interactions with each other at every step of the activity from planning to application and rehearsals, for a better understanding of their learning and language development.<sup>78</sup> It revealed that the youth who participated in artistic programmes had a more striking development of language discourse compared to those who were in sports and social service programmes. During the first few months of the programme, the youth frequently changed subjects while talking to each other and emphasized the possibility of failure about their project; however, over time, as they undertook various responsibilities, they started asking more questions to one another and there was a significant increase of cause and effect relationship in their discourse. In addition to such remarks, they also started to frequently use statements that reflected their consideration of different possibilities such as ‘If we do this, will we have any money left? How successful can this solution be? What’s the possibility of us doing this?’ Professor Heath states that young people have a tendency to observe the adults around and imitate their talks and she points out the importance of the language used by the workshop instructors. She emphasizes that the instructors would be setting an example to the youth by asking such questions as ‘If we do this, what would be the consequences?’ during the planning and development phases.

**78** Heath, S. B. (2001). Three’s not a crowd: Plans, roles, and focus in the arts. *Educational Researcher*, 30, 10-17.

### 3) Socio-emotional development

In another study in the U.S. that focused on the subjective experiences of eighth grade students in various after school programmes, it was observed that children enjoyed sports and art activities, in which they focus their attention on using their skills, more than activities that involved academic games (chess, debate, etc.) and group games.<sup>79</sup> Another study comparing the experiences of youth taking different after school activities<sup>80</sup> found that it was performing and fine arts programmes such as orchestra, choir, drama, dance, and creative writing that most led youth to set goals, make determined efforts, and excel in time management. Especially the goal of presenting the work to an audience at the end of the workshop encourages children to use their creative freedom more responsibly and efficiently and to show determination and effort.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Shernoff, D. J., & Vandell, D. L. (2007). Engagement in after-school program activities: Quality of experience from the perspective of participants. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 36, 891-903.

<sup>80</sup> Larson, R. W., Hansen, D. M., & Moneta, G. (2006). Differing profiles of developmental experiences across types of organized youth activities. *Developmental Psychology*, 42, 849-863.

<sup>81</sup> Heath, S. B. (2001). Three's not a crowd: Plans, roles, and focus in the arts. *Educational Researcher*, 30, 10-17.

All these findings advocate the idea that when participating in art workshops, children experience something similar to ‘flow’ state defined by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi<sup>82</sup> as ‘optimal experience’, which puts the individual in high concentration to achieve a meaningful but hard goal. In addition, at art workshops, children acquire the competence in showing ‘persistence’ which is regarded by many psychologists as a fundamental character strength and the most critical factor for academic and professional success.<sup>83</sup> It is also emphasized that children and youth attending artistic programmes have more self-confidence when creating a work of aesthetics.<sup>84 85</sup>

A research conducted by the prominent universities in Canada and the U.S. evaluated the effects of a national art and youth project in Canada by using quantitative and qualitative methods. It revealed that the participating children experienced less emotional problems such as anxiety and depression over the course of their involvement in art workshops, compared to those who did not participate. In interviews, the families expressed that their children’s self-confidence and self-respect had improved noticeably, they had better relationships with their peers, and a more independent decision-making process. In addition, they also said that the program instilled the sense of responsibility in their children along with skills such as teamwork discipline, mutual listening, reconciliation, and making joint decisions. Observations made during workshops pointed out that the children’s social skills like communication, cooperation, collaboration, and problem solving developed as well as their artistic skills.

**82** Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1996). *Creativity: Flow and the psychology of discovery and invention*. New York: HarperCollins.

**83** Duckworth, A. L., Peterson, C., Matthews, M. D., & Kelly, D. R. (2007). Grit: Perseverance and passion for long-term goals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92, 1087-1101.

**84** Stevenson, L., Limón, C. J., & Reclosado, T. (2013). Community-based afterschool and summer arts education programs: Positive impact on youth and community development. *Expanding and Opportunities*, 79-82.

**85** Hunter, M. A. (2005). *Education and the arts research overview*. Australia Council for the Arts. Access: <https://www.ampag.com.au/wapap/Campaign/2-education-EducationAndTheArtsResearchOverview.pdf>



Five years later, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the 32 students who had attended the workshops regularly. The youth defined the sense of competence of creating a work as the most definitive element that contributed to their development. They defined their two other significant experiences as forming positive relationships with the workshop instructors and the other children and acquiring the sense of belonging while learning to accept differences in the group. The sense of belonging, collaboration, and a network of reliable relationships are experiences that reinforce the social capital.

The **National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project**, run in Canada between 2001 and 2004, used theatre, visual arts (set design, painting, making masks, etc.), and digital technologies together. This programme was attended by 183 children between the ages of nine and 15, two days a week after school for nine months. Carried out by a workshop instructor and two or three assistants, the programme aimed to develop children's artistic and social skills.

Comprising three terms, the first term of the programme was designed as introduction to various branches of art, including improvisation, making masks, scriptwriting, and making movies, for the children to get to know each other, have fun as a group, and build positive group dynamics. In the second term, the children worked in an area of their preference as a group while in the third term, all groups worked together in staging a performance or making a video, allowing children to display of their artistic and teamwork abilities.

#### 4) Identity development

During adolescence, abstract and future thinking abilities develop. Adolescents begin to consider the long-term consequences of their decisions and how their choices may shape their lives. In addition to cognitive questioning regarding the future, they start thinking about the issues they deem important in life and exploring their values while also trying to understand the characteristics that distinguish them from their peers. Experiencing different roles and identities is a part of self-exploration and the most fundamental element in a young person's identity development. Another need that gains importance during adolescence is autonomy. A young person's autonomy development is supported when they can do certain tasks on their own and have the opportunity to make independent decisions.<sup>86</sup>

For youth who regard school environment as restricting, after-school programmes have the potential to contribute to their development of identity and autonomy. In these programmes, allowing young people to take on different roles and responsibilities (for instance, those in the drama workshop can also do the stage design if they want or those in the guitar class can design the posters for their concert) provides a supportive environment for their identity and autonomy development.

<sup>86</sup> Steinberg, L. (2005). Cognitive and affective development in adolescence. *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 9, 69-74.

Artistic programmes, in which youth can realize their creative potential better compared to academic activities, provide more opportunities for young people to explore themselves.<sup>87 88</sup> Considering that such art forms as theatre and film contribute greatly to the youth's self-exploration process through telling a story or acting,<sup>89</sup> the importance of these programmes is undeniable for children who have a limited chance of choosing different roles and trying them.

Another performing art, dance teaches the ability to express one's self through bodily movements, as well as sensory and physical awareness, and makes a person to focus on the relationship between space and movement. The interviews with 600 children with different levels of experience in dancing between the ages of three and 18 in Australia, Canada, the U.K., Spain, and different states of the U.S. showed that dance lessons were experiences that provide relaxation, excitement and freedom on an emotional level. Children in middle and high school expressed that they had an increased awareness of their body and felt more energetic. The older children frequently mentioned the concept of "inner world", saying that dancing enabled them to explore and express their inner world.<sup>90</sup>

**87** Hansen, D. M., Larson, R. W., & Dworkin, J. B. (2003). What adolescents learn in organized youth activities: A survey of self-reported developmental experiences. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 13, 25-55.

**88** Larson, R. W., Hansen, D. M., & Moneta, G. (2006). Differing profiles of developmental experiences across types of organized youth activities. *Developmental Psychology*, 42, 849-863.

**89** Halverson, E. R. (2010). Film as identity exploration: A multimodal analysis of youth-produced films. *Teachers College Record*, 112, 2352-2378.

**90** Stinson, S. W. & Bond, K. (2000). "I feel like I'm going to take off!": Young people's experiences of the superordinary in dance. *Dance Research Journal*, 32, 52-87.

**Mosaic Youth Theater**,<sup>91</sup> chosen as one of the most successful youth art programmes in the U.S., was initiated by the actor and director Rick Sperling in the state of Detroit in 1992. Named “mosaic” because it gathered youth from different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, the programme provided youth between the ages of 12 and 18 with free workshops in theatre, vocal music, and stage design. The young people worked with professional artists in three groups – Mosaic Actors, Mosaic Singers, and Mosaic Technical Team – and staged a play at the end of the year. A study by the University of Michigan shows that staging a play in professional standards develops the youth’s skills to work with discipline, show group cooperation, solve problems, and communicate based on respect.

During adolescence, the limbic system, centre of emotional reactions in the brain, is more active than the prefrontal cortex, which supports cognitive abilities such as reasoning and decision-making. While making them more reactive to stress, this also directs them to look for experiences that are exciting, new, and risky. Shirley Brice Heath emphasizes the importance of experiencing different roles and risks in the safe environment of after-school artistic programmes. There are also scientific studies to advocate that participation in after-school art programmes plays a protective role against substance abuse.<sup>92 93</sup>

<sup>91</sup> For more information, see: <https://mosaicdetroit.org/>

<sup>92</sup> Fauth, R. C., Roth, J. L., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2007). Does the neighborhood context alter the link between youth’s after-school time activities and developmental outcomes? A multilevel analysis. *Developmental Psychology*, 43, 760-777.

<sup>93</sup> Fredricks, J. A., & Eccles, J. S. (2005). Developmental benefits of extracurricular involvement: Do peer characteristics mediate the link between activities and youth outcomes? *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 34, 507-520.

## 5 ACCESSIBILITY TO, PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE IN ART WORKSHOPS

### 5 1 WHERE ARE ART WORKSHOPS ORGANIZED?

In many countries around the world including Turkey, art workshops outside school are generally held at public organizations and institutions such as municipalities, youth centres, public education centres, and children’s libraries as well as at NGOs and culture and arts organizations such as museums and galleries. Offered in different scopes and frequencies in the non-formal education system, these educational programmes allow individuals to improve their cultural literacy and to access culture, while presenting art to audiences in a wider range.<sup>94</sup>

**Youth Centres**, one of the public institutions active in this field, were opened by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Youth and Sports<sup>95</sup> in 2004. There are 286 youth centres across Turkey and six in Istanbul. These centres offer art classes (music, sketching, cartoon drawing, marbling, painting, folk dances, and drama) and scientific courses (model planes, mathematics, computer, and robotics).

<sup>94</sup> (Re)thinking Arts Education in Turkey (2014) <https://www.iksv.org/en/reports/re-thinking-arts-education-in-turkey>

<sup>95</sup> The National Youth and Sports Policy Document, prepared by the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Youth and Sports and valid since 2013, aims to raise a younger generation “with the ability to read, think, and question along with self-expression while adopting sports, arts, and science as a way of life.” The plans in the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Youth and Sports also include doubling the volume of instructions that enable the youth to spend their leisure time in an effective way. Moreover, with the aim to support and increase the youth’s participation in extracurricular activities in the fields of science, arts, culture, sports, and social services, the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Youth and Sports published the Regulations on Social Events at Educational Institutions in 2017. As of the end of the academic year in 2019, students in Turkey were given a “Social Activity Document” that shows the events they participated in throughout the year in addition to their school report.

The lesser-known **Children's Universities** are being opened by the collaborative initiatives of universities and municipalities since 2009. There are 27 Children's Universities in Turkey, seven of which are in Istanbul.<sup>96</sup> They offer programmes during school hours, at weekends, or on holidays to children between the ages of seven and 14. These programmes are in the form of workshops and applied courses that are based on creative and scientific thinking and that help children to explore their interests and talents. Spanning contemporary art, music and performing arts, web design, urban design, programming, and robotics workshops, these universities aim to reach children mostly from public schools.

These programmes, in large part organized by **local authorities** open a new area of education outside school for children and youth. Easily accessible in particular, these art workshops bear great significance as they offer children a new space with opportunities to improve their creativity and to freely express themselves. On the other hand, unless they are designed to cater to the needs of different groups, such educational activities, which allow children to associate art with other disciplines and daily life, have limited influence on development despite the positive approach of local administrations.

<sup>96</sup> İlden Koçkar, A. (2017). *Examples of children's universities in Turkey and abroad*. Istanbul: Altınbaş University Publications.

Interviews conducted as part of this report with the culture departments of Beyoğlu, Maltepe, Sarıyer, and Sultanbeyli Municipalities, which are partners in the Istanbul95 project, provided information about the content, planning, and execution of culture and art events organized for children and youth. The findings are summarised as follows:

- Art workshops for children and youth include various fields such as music (instrumental and vocal), performing arts (dance, ballet, folk dances, and theatre), literature (storytelling and fairytale workshops, and creative writing), design and visual arts (painting, sculpture, ceramics, and photography), and traditional handcrafts (marbling and tile making).
- These workshops mostly cater to the age group between seven and 14.
- In addition to workshops in which children participate actively, there are also regular cinema and children's theatre events throughout the season.
- In order to popularise reading among children and youth, each municipality has a children's library or a room designed for children in a public library.
- At the end of workshops, the work of children and youth are presented as public shows.

**Youth Centre and Information House / Academy<sup>97</sup>** of the Beyoğlu Municipality runs projects in cooperation with the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Youth and Sports. The fact that nearly 2,000 youth attended the Academy regularly in 2018 proves youth's interest in and need for such centres. The centre has art classes as well as facilities like an e-sports hall, robotic coding workshop, and a green box, and the NGOs are also encouraged to use it.

<sup>97</sup> For more information, see: <http://www.beyoglugenclikmerkezi.com/>

Sultanbeyli Municipality organizes many literary events and activities for children and youth. Every summer since 2010, it has been holding poetry and writing workshops, the outcome of which is two literary magazines entitled *Aydos* and *Teferrüç* prepared together by the instructors and participants. In addition, the poems written by the participants are presented on an international platform at the **International Istanbulensis Poetry Festival**.<sup>98</sup> The Sultanbeyli Fatih Youth Centre houses the thematic **Istanbulensis Poetry Library**.

Since 2016, Maltepe Municipality has a **Polyphonic Children's Choir**, comprised of 63 children between the ages of seven and 15. The choir works under a music teacher at the SANSEV (Artists and Art Enthusiasts Culture and Cooperation Association by) once a week for eight months and participates in festivals and competitions. The municipality aims also to establish a youth orchestra.

In collaboration with the Istanbul Philosophers' Association, Sarıyer Municipality organizes **philosophy workshops for children**. Organized for two different groups (one for the ages between seven and 10 and another for the ages between 10 and 14) for six weeks, the workshop culminates in an exhibition showcasing the children's works. In addition, at the **EÇADEM (Support Centre for Disabled Children and Their Families)**<sup>99</sup>, rhythm, piano, handcrafts, and drama teachers from the Sarıyer Public Education Centre, , folk dance instructors from the Sarıyer Municipality, and volunteering harp and dance instructors teach 79 mentally disabled children on certain days of the week.

<sup>98</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.istanbulensissiiir.org/>

<sup>99</sup> For more information, see: <https://ecadem.ku.edu.tr/>



## 5 2 FACTORS THAT AFFECT PARTICIPATION

As the research findings referred in the introduction reveal, children's participation in culture and art activities, either actively or as an audience member, is very limited in Turkey. These findings lead to further questioning of the obstacles for participation.

There are differences based on the gender, disability status, socioeconomic level, and minority or refugee status of the children, regarding their access to and participation in structured after-school activities. All these findings point out that children in certain fractions of the society become even more disadvantaged as they cannot participate in social life and, therefore, may face social exclusion.<sup>100 101 102</sup>

In the U.S., Canada, and a number of European countries where extracurricular activities are very popular, it is seen that access to culture and arts is still limited especially in low-income families. A report dated 2010 by the Wallace Foundation in the U.S. examines the challenges children and youth face in accessing art workshops and the attitude of the children and their families. The report is based on in-depth interviews with 151 children and 73 mothers or caregivers from families with low income and rather limited access to culture and arts in seven different U.S. cities. A nationwide project in Canada conducted between 2001 and 2004 examined the programme characteristics that determined families' participation in art workshops. According to this, the fundamental characteristics a workshop programme are listed as follows:

**100** Fredricks, J. A., & Simpkins, S. D. (2012). Promoting positive youth development through organized after-school activities: Taking a closer look at participation of ethnic minority youth. *Child Development Perspectives*, 6, 280-287.

**101** Dawes, N. P., Modecki, K. L., Gonzales, N., Dumka, L., & Millsap, R. (2015). Mexican-origin youth participation in extracurricular activities: Predicting trajectories of involvement from 7th to 12th Grade. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 44, 2172-2188.)

**102** Eriksson, L., Welander, J., & Granlund, M. (2007). Participation in everyday school activities for children with and without disabilities. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities*, 19, 485-502.

- 1) To be in the vicinity where the families live,
- 2) To be free of charge and, preferably, to cover the expenses for transportation, food, and materials,
- 3) To be held at appropriate times,
- 4) To be housed in a reliable institution.<sup>103 104</sup>

#### a. Factors that Affect Participation According to Families

The **attitude of the families** is another determining factor for children's participation in art workshops. According to the report by the Wallace Foundation, there is a widespread belief among low-income families that culture and arts activities do not contribute to academic success and teach a professional skill in the long term. Therefore, their children's lack of participation in art activities is not a concern for these families. In addition, art workshops are believed to be based on talent. In order to change this perception, it is important to organize seminars and activities for families to raise their awareness and inform them that, through art, their children can learn skills such as planning, time management, self-confidence, self-exploration, and perseverance.

Families define **positive learning atmosphere** at workshops as the most prominent element in their children's regular participation in the programme. The candid but disciplined relationship workshop instructors maintain with children stands out as an element that makes a difference in regular participation. This situation points to the importance of choosing workshop instructors based not only on their artistic competence but also on their work experience with children and enthusiasm.

**103** Wright, R., John, L., & Sheel, J. (2007). Lessons learned from the National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project: Longitudinal study of a Canadian after-school program. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 16, 48-58.

**104** Montgomery, D., Rogovin, P., & Persaud, N. (2013). Something to say: Success principles for afterschool arts programs from urban youth and other experts. Wallace Foundation Report. Access: <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Something-to-Say-Success-Principles-for-Afterschool-Arts-Programs.pdf>

A nation-wide art and youth project run in Canada between 2001 and 2004 aimed to reach children and youth from low-income families with different cultural backgrounds and with limited access to culture and arts events.<sup>105</sup> Taking the country's ethnic diversity into consideration, the priority was given to work with artists who were from similar cultural and ethnic backgrounds with the intended population of the workshops and who lived in the same vicinity with the children. In addition, the educational meetings with workshop instructors covered the issues of inclusiveness, sensitivity to multiculturalism, and active workshop management. The fact that nearly 85% of the children participated regularly in the nine-month workshop reflects the positive effects of this approach.

In a study held in Istanbul in 2013, families were asked the reasons for their low interest in art events. The replies were: absence of such programmes in the immediate vicinity (54.5%), economic reasons (39%), and children's reluctance (11%).<sup>106</sup> The study revealed that the socioeconomic status of families played a determining role in access to art events. While 4% and 13% of the families in low and middle SES groups (respectively) knew about the organizations that offer art events, this percentage was 37 in the high SES group. In the same study, families stated that most of the art activities were provided by the schools, followed by public organizations and private courses.

**105** Wright, R., John, L., & Sheel, J. (2007). Lessons learned from the National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project: Longitudinal study of a Canadian after-school program. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 16, 48-58.

**106** Özge Üstünel, A. & İlden Koçkar, A. (2017). What do children do outside school? The access to and participation in extracurricular activities for children between the ages of six and 11 in Istanbul. In *Children's University Projects in Turkey and Abroad*, (pp. 33-49). Istanbul: Altınbaş University Publications.

These findings points to the low and unequal participation in art activities for children in Turkey and abroad.

**Mobile Recreation Vans** are an example of alternative workshop practices.<sup>107</sup> In Boise, Iowa, U.S., the municipality sends Mobile Recreation Vans to high-poverty neighbourhoods, where juvenile delinquency is high and access to public transportation is low, at after-school hours and weekends. These vans bring children and youth artistic and recreational equipment and organize events. Another prominent aspect of this service is that it informs families about proper nutrition and healthy living while offering healthy snacks to children.

Supported by the Refugees and Asylum Seekers Assistance and Solidarity Association and the Istanbul Development Agency, the **Children and Youth Centre (ÇOGEM)** serves in the district of Sultanbeyli. This centre has an important place in raising awareness for social adaptation efforts, eliminating prejudice, and supporting interaction. Catering to children between the ages of six and 15, the centre aims to strengthen the educational process of Syrian refugee children through social adaptation and to decrease their risk of leaving school, all the while enabling them to preserve their cultural identity. To this end, its educational services include free-of-charge kindergarten for Turkish and Syrian children between the ages of four and six, convincing children with the risk of leaving school after the age of 12 and their families to continue school education, and catch-up classes to support education.

<sup>107</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.cityofboise.org/departments/parks-and-recreation/activities-classes-and-sports/youth-programs/mobile-recreation/>

It also organizes arts, culture, and sports activities to increase the interaction between Turkish and refugee children in Sultanbeyli and to initiate intercultural communication. The workshops with art instructors include drama, marbling, clay, stained-glass, recycling, and rhythm. In the 'Co-Living Workshop', one of the classes that aim social adaptation and inclusion, children come together to -read books and act them out by using the creative reading technique and they learn critical thinking. Some of these workshops are held at schools once a week during class hours while others are held as outdoor activities. During the park trips, the children play group games in the nature with a view to developing a sense of collaboration and belonging. There are also art workshops in which mothers and their children participate together. One of the major artistic projects ÇOGEM plans for the future is to establish a choir and a drama group that will bring Turkish and refugee children together.

The **Child Caravan** project is realized in cooperation by the Sultanbeyli Municipality, Refugees and Asylum Seekers Assistance and Solidarity Association, International Blue Crescent Foundation, and Penny Appeal. Housed in a container made of durable materials, the Child Caravan mainly aims to prepare the Syrian refugee children, who live in the parts of Istanbul that are not easily accessible, for the daily life in Turkey.

There is an activity area in the container where play based learning activities are held as well as language courses outside school hours, screening of cartoons and children documentaries to teach the culture, and art workshops. Children and their families receive briefings on issues like health and hygiene and they are provided with psychological support services. Another aim is to bring the refugee children and their families together with the local community in various cultural activities to maintain the social adaptation.

### **b. Factors that Affect Participation According to Children**

Two most important factors that affect children's motivation in any kind of activity are having a positive expectation about the content of the activity and having an expectation of success in the activity.<sup>108</sup> If children find the content of the programme exciting and believe that they will succeed in it, then they have a high motivation to participate and regularly attend a workshop. For children, the meaning of being successful in an activity can range from having fun to expressing one's self freely, from creating a good work to earning social status and reputation among their peers.

As examined in detail in the sixth chapter, when asked about their expectations from an art workshop, the participants of the workshops held at İKSV Alt Kat: Learning and Interaction Space mainly said improving one's self, having the opportunity to work with an artist, making new friends, relaxing through art, and having fun.

<sup>108</sup> Eccles, J. S., & Wigfield, A. (2002). Motivational beliefs, values, and goals. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 53, 109-132.

Interviews with children and youth abroad show that similar factors come into play regarding their interest and regular participation in art workshops.<sup>109</sup> These factors are **workshop content, learning by doing and presenting, and making new friends.**

**1) Workshop content:** Interviews with children reveal that the term ‘art workshop’ mostly reminds them of painting or drawing classes held in an environment similar to school. Prejudice against these workshops, with the assumption that they are boring or only for small children, poses a great obstacle for participation. Yet, many children express that they find content (such as theatre/movie production, set/costume/mask design) that will release their creativity and teach them new skills exciting.

It is important for the workshop content to appeal to children and youth because, today, there are many attractive activities that ‘compete with’ art workshops. As mentioned in the previous chapter, these rival activities include watching television, spending time on Facebook, meeting with friends, watching videos on social media, and going out. Moreover, since transition to adolescence (ages 10-13) is a period when children care about adapting to their peer groups and develop a social identity, children in this age group take the norms of their group of peers into consideration when deciding to participate in certain activities. Those children whose most friends do not participate in art activities can make a less risky choice socially and prefer to stay away from art activities. In this context, especially boys do not associate art activities with the social norm or status and perceive a risk of being seen as incompetent or socially stigmatized at these activities.

**109** Montgomery, D., Rogovin, P., & Persaud, N. (2013). Something to say: Success principles for afterschool arts programs from urban youth and other experts. Wallace Foundation Report. Access: <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Something-to-Say-Success-Principles-for-Afterschool-Arts-Programs.pdf>

In short, among the most fundamental psychological factors that hinder participation and attendance, we can mention the children dismissing the workshop content as irrelevant to themselves, having no examples of programmes that allow them to display their creativity, and fearing to take a social risk.

**2) Learning by doing and presentation:** Children mention learning by doing and experiencing as another important element affecting their attendance in workshops. They state that they want to do things that enable them to express themselves in an authentic way and that reflect their own choices and decisions. All these play a significant role in the development of autonomy. Psychological studies show that a supportive attitude towards the autonomy of children and youth, in other words for adults to inquire about the children's interests, preferences, and intentions with a view to understanding them, strengthens their perception of control, self-confidence, and sense of competence.<sup>110</sup> In this context, when children can share their opinions during the creative process of the workshop, it has a positive impact on their participation.

Many children say that they find it exciting to make a public show of the project they worked on during the workshop. They state that such performances are an encouraging factor that drives them to do their best. Though children at this age feel anxious about being evaluated, the goal of displaying their skills and work captures their interest, makes it easier for them to channel their energy into the work at hand, and encourages them to make an effort despite certain challenges. These public shows not only display the productivity and potential of the children, but also reinforces their success and self-confidence.

**110** Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2014). Autonomy and need satisfaction in close relationships: Relationships motivation theory. *Human motivation and interpersonal relationships* içinde (ss. 53-73). Springer, Dordrecht.



**3) Making new friends:** Children at an age where peer groups gain importance express that they prefer these workshops to meet other children of similar interests and to make new friends. In addition, children say that they want to be able to express themselves freely without fear and the anxiety of being mocked, that is they want to feel emotionally safe.

In conclusion, the children's expectations mostly overlap with the elements that a quality art workshop must have, as examined in the seventh chapter of the report. All these elements that affect the children's motivation regarding access and regular participation also correspond to the three fundamental needs addressed by the theory of self-determination:<sup>111</sup> The need for close and supportive relationships, the need for autonomy (making choices according to one's interests), and the need to feel successful. When these needs are recognized and mostly fulfilled by one's social environment, a person's wellbeing and motivation improves. It is made possible for children to fulfil these fundamental psychological needs and to realize their potential mostly by the support they get from the adults and their peers at workshops.

<sup>111</sup> Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The "what" and "why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11, 227-268.

**6 CASE STUDY: İKSV ALT KAT WORKSHOPS**

This chapter examines the workshops **Children and Youngsters Create with Artists**, **The Stronger Together Choir**, and **The Istanbul Tales Writing and Storytelling Workshop** held at the İKSV Alt Kat: Learning and Interaction Space, founded to increase children and youth's opportunities of accessing and participating in culture and arts activities.

Founded with the support of Istanbul Development Agency (İSTKA), the İKSV Alt Kat: Learning and Interaction Space organizes creative workshops for children and youth to facilitate their access to culture and arts activities and to support cultural diversity. Within the scope of the workshops, which began in March 2019, children and youth from various districts of Istanbul with limited access to culture and arts are provided with the opportunity to improve their creativity in a number of fields such as music, film, contemporary art, design, literature, and dance. Collaborations are held with the NGOs, local government units, and schools to organize these workshops.

For this report, the children and youth participating in these workshops, their families, and the workshop instructors were interviewed both individually and in groups. These interviews raised many of the principles included in the previous chapter of this report. The quotations presented here reflect these principles from the first-person accounts of the workshop participants and instructors.

**6 1 CHILDREN AND YOUNGSTERS CREATE WITH ARTISTS**

*Children and Youngsters Create with Artists* is a workshop that brings Istanbul-based artists together with young people to create a collaborative art project. Held between April and June 2019, the project was designed and conducted by the artist Volkan Aslan, who studied painting at the Mersin University Fine Arts Faculty and who enjoys collective work as part of his practices. The short films produced in the workshop were screened on the World Wide Fund for Nature's (WWF) boat docked at Büyükada IDO Pier during the opening week of the 16th Istanbul Biennial.

20 participants between the ages of 15 and 18 from the Fatih Atatürk Çağdaş Yaşam Multi-Programme Anatolian High School, Istanbul Atatürk Anatolian High School, and Getronagan Armenian High School attended the workshop. The number of participants was limited to 20 in order to increase the efficiency and to keep the interaction among participants alive through the 12-week programme.

The workshop *Children and Youngsters Create with Artists* aimed to provide the youth with a platform for multi-perspective and critical thinking and give them the opportunity to develop ideas and create something collectively. Workshop instructor Volkan Aslan states that he also aimed to create awareness in the participants that anything can take a form – any object they see at home or on the street, everyday materials, or a video taken on a mobile phone – and that they can tell a story by even gluing two stones together.

To this end, the participants were introduced to the narrative language of conceptual art and its relationship with material in the first half of the workshop. They found the opportunity to examine and discuss about both the works of various artists from the slides in the İKSV archives and the works installed in the İKSV Nejat Eczacıbaşı Building. Workshop instructor Volkan Aslan has observed that, during this process, the participants learned to think critically and **‘when they looked at a work and saw a stone on an A4 sized piece of paper, they started questioning why the artist had put it there and what it meant.’**

In these workshops that aim for children and youth not to be mere consumers, but also producers of artistic expression, the participants worked together on a project from the fourth week onwards. They experienced all the preparation and implementation phases in creating a work, in this case which was based on the concept of Seventh Continent, the main theme of the 16th Istanbul Biennial. The workshop instructor says that when the participants decided to create a work on the damage humans cause to the nature, the first thing that occurred to them was to make a sculpture out of empty plastic bottles. He then encouraged them to **‘express waste without actually using waste’**: **‘I wanted them to learn to think differently, like expressing waste without actual waste. I wanted them to develop the abstract thinking skill, such as imagining a chair beyond its function and turning it into a ladder by stepping on it or into a tent by turning it upside down and stretching a cloth, or making a surfboard out of it by placing it sideways.’**

Volkan Aslan said that the participants started off by building a tree with plastic bottles, then developed each other's ideas over the following weeks and shot a video on slicing and consuming a cake. He also added that they did many abstract thinking exercises – for instance, they discussed the different meanings that could be assigned to the work when you take a globe made of a polyester ball and either place a knife beside it, or stab it with a knife, or cut the globe in half and then stab it – and his only role was as **'a guide and a listener'** while the participants improved themselves by **'opening each other's minds.'**

At the end of the workshop, three focus group interviews were held with the 17 young participants and they were asked about the factors that affected their decision to choose this programme, the workshop environment and process, their relationship with the instructor, and what they gained from this experience.

The young people, most of who were interested in various branches of art such as painting, photography, theatre, dance, and music, said that they had learned about this workshop through a school announcement. They said that they had chosen to participate in this workshop to **improve themselves** and because they were excited for the opportunity of **working with an artist. Making new friends** was another common factor they mentioned. Lastly, at least one participant in each interview said that they had come to the workshop with the **expectation to relax and have fun by being involved in art** outside school. The interviewees said they did their best to attend the workshop regularly but missed a few sessions due to various reasons such as exam weeks, pilot tests, and sports tournaments.

**'It drew my attention as it is an institution that works professionally. The more I am involved, the more I realize how right my decision was.'**

**'I saw this as an opportunity for myself. I thought maybe I could do something that would stand out in the future. Also to make friends.'**

**'I already enjoyed painting. I thought this would be a way to make new friends and to socialize.'**

**'It's very impressive to be taught by an artist.'**

**'I like seeing exhibitions. I was excited when our schoolteacher said that we would be discussing exhibitions here.'**

Agreeing that the workshop environment was friendly, comfortable, and delightful but also serious and structured, the participants said that they felt secure in expressing themselves, the group listened respectfully to the exchange of ideas, and that they made an effort to develop each other's ideas and create a common concept. They also described the workshop as a space for spending quality time and mentioned that otherwise they would perhaps spend this time sleeping or watching films.

**‘It was a relaxed environment.’**

**‘The orientation stage and working with clay in the first few weeks were very fun. It was also fun to come up with ideas and to comment on exhibitions. It is fun and relaxing to create a model as well. I look forward to coming here after my classes at school.’**

**‘You put forward an idea and someone else adds to it. There are no fights or clashes. There’s no mocking and nothing to be pessimistic about.’**

**‘If I hadn’t come here, I’d miss on this friendly atmosphere.’**

**‘It was fun. I couldn’t tell how time passed.’**

**‘It was more serious and detailed than I expected. I thought it would be looser.’**

**‘It’s lovely that people do not judge or discriminate against one another here.’**

**‘It was very respectful. Since everyone was here to have fun and work, conversations were also advanced.’**

**‘In fact, despite our differences in religion, language, and race, we are here together and all we do is art.’**

**‘This workshop environment embraced us like a family.’**

Stating that they were given an informal space without hierarchy and that they had the opportunity to own the learning process, the participants all agreed that they gained a certain sense of control by being included in the planning and decision-making processes.

**‘We usually did what we wanted, but it didn’t become too chaotic or disorganized.’**

**‘What we did was not about talent. The teacher said we could draw lines or pictures. We didn’t have difficulty because we were free to do what we wanted.’**

**‘We were always asked about our opinion and we could implement our ideas. For instance, they asked us, “Would you like to do this or do that? What kind of work would you like to create?”’**

**‘We’re always imagining new things and trying to think in a different way. We take a break from ordinary life.’**

**‘Someone came up with an idea and it was followed by different ideas. But the person with the original idea never said, “Why has it changed so much?” In fact, they changed their opinion.’**

**‘We actually wanted ideas to be subject to change.’**

The participants all agreed that the workshop instructor was supportive and guiding, eased the process, and maintained order. They expressed that he always listened to them and valued each idea.



‘He didn’t feel like a teacher; he was very candid. This is very pleasant. We feel that authority in other places but not here.’

‘He takes all of us seriously and makes us feel comfortable. We don’t feel under pressure.’

‘He placed our ideas into a frame that could work and let us figure out how to implement them. For that, I think he guided us very well.’

‘I express an opinion just to see if it works or how he guides me.’

The participants expressed four common themes about what they gained from this workshop:

- 1) Awareness for creativity, abstract thinking, and conceptual art
- 2) Improving one’s self-expression ability
- 3) Taking a break from academic pressure and relaxing
- 4) Adopting role models and planning an adult identity

**1) Awareness for Creativity, Abstract Thinking, and Conceptual Art:** The participants said they learned to be more attentive towards their surroundings, to evaluate what they saw through different perspectives, the process of creating an authentic work, and the skills to interpret artworks. They also expressed that they experienced the cycle of planning, creating, presenting, and deliberating in the creative process.

**'I was prejudiced against conceptual art. As I have learned more about it, it doesn't seem so ridiculous anymore. It is actually quite reasonable.'**

**'For instance, I could see even an ordinary piece of glass in a different way.'**

**'Someone said that the picture on the stairs was a flower made of tanks. Upon closer look, I realized it was a tank. Then I thought, we really don't look around us attentively and we can't see the nearest things. I started to look around me more carefully. This place taught it to me. It might well be the best thing I learned here.'**

**'I think my imagination has expanded greatly here.'**

**'We discussed the works in the group. I have learnt a lot, like deducing the concept of immigration from of a piece of soil.'**

**'For example, I reconsidered my ideas, realized what was missing or wrong, and changed them.'**

**2) Self-Expression Ability:** The participants said that inquiring about different ideas and questioning each other's thoughts led them to express themselves better. In addition to showing understanding and empathy towards one another, they also realized that their own perspectives could change.

**'We learned to exchange ideas. We were rather timid before. I used to be very shy before coming here.'**

**'For example, I realized I was not as open-minded about different perspectives as our teacher was. But I have definitely improved myself on that.'**

### **3) Taking a Break from Academic Pressure and Relaxing:**

Describing the workshop as a place where they could take a break from both daily and academic stress, the participants said that they felt happy and relaxed, and they had a good time at the workshop.

**‘It was also relaxing to come here. We’re like racehorses in academic life.’**

**‘My mind felt at ease here. When I came to İKSV Alt Kat, I would let go of certain concerns. I would leave my phone aside and make art.’**

**‘I’m preparing for exams and was quite stressed out. After the workshop, I was going to private lessons in the evenings. My teachers told me that there was something different with me, that I was happier. Because I was leaving this place happy.’**

**‘We lack certain things; we’re even incapable of thinking. We could spare time for ourselves here and think about stuff. So, it was very pleasant.’**

### **4) Adopting Role Models and Planning an Adult Identity:**

Experiencing different roles during adolescence serves as a beginning to forming a sense of identity. The participants said that they were very impressed to meet the teams of different festivals at the İKSV and talk with the artists invited to the workshop. They also said that they had started considering a career in the arts among their future plans.

**'I was most surprised when I learned that the Istanbul Biennial team consisted only of five people. They have so much work to do and they're still so happy and loving it.'**

**'If I hadn't come here, I would have missed the opportunity to meet people who know themselves and what they're doing.'**

**'We had two guest artists here; their works were about to be exhibited. I got to see how they lived.'**

**'Mr. Aslan said we could join when we were in university. That was so good to hear. I'd love to be a part of the biennial whether professionally or as a hobby.'**

**'Apparently there would be open positions here at times. If there is an open position, I'd love to work for instance, at the Film Festival when I'm of age.'**

**'I thought I would do it only as a hobby, but I realized I could in fact do it in a more active way. I've improved myself. I could consider doing this professionally.'**

**6 2 THE STRONGER TOGETHER CHOIR**

İKSV Alt Kat launched a chorus project with a view to touching the lives of children and strengthening their social adaptation through the universal language of music. Under the direction of chorusmaster Zeynep Eren Kovankaya, hand choreographer Buket Ela Demirel, who is a researcher on sign language, and rhythm instructor İpek Aktaşlı, hearing impaired children and visually impaired children got together with their peers with normal development in the Stronger Together Choir. For this project, İKSV Alt Kat collaborated with the Music for Peace Foundation that provides free music education to children with normal development but with limited financial means, living in the districts of Beyoğlu, Fatih, and Edirnekapı. The songs were performed in Turkish by both singing and sign-singing simultaneously in the chorus, which aimed for children with different developmental characteristics to have fun and to improve their communication skills and self-confidence by making music together. Also aiming to reintegrate children with disabilities into the society through music, the chorus set an exemplary practice for social inclusion and inclusive education.

In this chorus, inspired by El Sistema's White Hands Choir,<sup>112</sup> the children with visual impairment and the children from the Music for Peace Foundation sang the songs under the direction of the chorusmaster, while the children with hearing impairment worked with the hand choreographer and the rhythm instructor to sign-sing the songs with hand choreography and body language. The choir practiced once a week from February through June 2019. The visually and the hearing impaired children practiced separately in the first four rehearsals and once they had learned all the songs in the repertoire, a total of eight *tutti* rehearsals were held (first once a month, then more frequently). 10 children from the Music for Peace Foundation attended the rehearsals in the last two months. One of them expressed an interest in sign-singing and joined the group with the hearing impaired children.

<sup>112</sup> For more information, see: <http://www.corodemanosblancas.org/index.php/es/trayectoria/>

The visually impaired group in the chorus comprised 11 children between the ages of 12 and 15 from the Pariltı Foundation for Supporting Visually Impaired Children. 10 children in this group had a complete visual impairment while one of them had limited sight. In addition to those singing for the first time, the visually-impaired group also included children with musical training, who could play the keyboard, piano, or violin.

The hearing impaired group comprised 17 children between the ages of five and 15 from schools, foundations, and organizations for people with hearing impairment. Apart from one child who used a cochlear implant and another who could hear but had parents with hearing disability so used Turkish Sign Language, the rest of the group included children with total hearing impairment. The workshop was the first chorus experience for all the kids in the group with hearing disability.

The chorus repertoire was chosen according to the following criteria.

- 1) Musical richness
- 2) Children's liking
- 3) Popularity for the audience to sing along
- 4) As little metaphorical lyrics as possible for ease of translation into sign language

Regarding the last criterion, the instructors pointed to the importance of translations that are sensitive to the deaf culture and said, **'If you're doing a project with people who have hearing disability, you should never do a *mot à mot* translation, because sign language is a separate language with its own grammar, which should be observed in order to properly express it.'** They emphasized that it is necessary to translate the lyrics based on their meaning.

The rehearsals for the visually impaired children began with breathing exercises and stretching, then continued with vocal exercises and signing techniques. Chorusmaster Zeynep Eren Kovankaya stated that, for the last five years, she had learned how to express herself only with her hands, without using any words or mimics, but that in this case, working with a group of visually impaired children, she had had to describe all vocal and physical exercises in words to the minutest detail. She added that they had worked on the tempo by clapping, finger snapping, singing together and with piano accompaniment. Kovankaya defined a piano for accompaniment and a good audio system for listening to sample repertoire as crucial elements of rehearsals as the visually impaired children had learned the songs by ear instead of from score. The visually impaired children in the chorus learned two of the songs in the first month and the rest of the repertoire came along in the same pace. Kovankaya said that they had focused only on details in their last month and all the repertoire had been ready by the concert. Kovankaya was pleased with the children's level of motivation, which remained the same throughout, and the *tutti* rehearsals, which were as efficient as possible.

The rehearsals for the children with hearing disability were conducted in Turkish Sign Language and at times included information on general knowledge as well. The rehearsals covered four topics in brief:

- 1) Explaining the lyrics to the children
- 2) Giving them background information on topics like geography and science for a better understanding of the context of the songs (Explaining how the chorus improved children in multiple ways, rhythm instructor İpek Aktaşlı said, **‘For instance, we had to teach the children some geography for them to understand the song “Blue Planet”, things like planets, stars, the Earth, and deep blue. That’s why it wasn’t just about translating the songs into sign language; they learned a lot of things.’**)
- 3) Memorising the songs in Turkish Sign Language
- 4) Rehearsals with music

It took about a month for the children with hearing disability to learn each song and they were ready to sign-sing four songs in the repertoire by the concert time in June.

Buket Ela Demirel said, **‘Music is not just what we hear with our ears; it’s vibrations. In fact, everything in the universe vibrates,’** and emphasized the importance of rehearsing with a sound system that enabled the children to feel the vibrations. Stating that the children with hearing disability enjoyed the rhythm and needed the bass sounds to feel it, the instructors said they began rehearsing with piano accompaniment and then tried to make the children feel the vibrations by using the sound system. They said, ‘In making music, it’s important for children with hearing disability to feel the vibrations and the rhythm’ and advised the use of another instrument besides the piano to increase the vibration level.



In the rehearsals where children with visual impairment got together with the children with hearing impairment, the instructors observed that music opened up a totally different channel of communication between children and enabled them to interact through a common feeling. The children also made an effort to communicate with each other through the instructors. Some visually impaired children asked their instructors for help to use Turkish Sign Language to tell their names to the children with hearing impairment, while some of the children with hearing disability asked their instructors why the visually impaired children were wearing glasses, to which the visually impaired children answered as, **'Just for charisma'** or **'My eyes drift'**. The instructors emphasized that creating social occasions to bring children together outside rehearsals could increase the interaction between the two groups.

Chorusmaster Zeynep Eren Kovankaya said that the children from the Music for Peace Foundation were quick to mingle with the visually impaired group, especially thanks to the group activities they did in the first few rehearsals, and that the sense of teamwork was the highest in the weeks right before the concert. The chorusmaster observed: **'I believe they had an experience that developed their social skills and helped them to better comprehend the importance of being helpful.'**

After preparing for five months, the chorus performed a mini public concert at the Zorlu Performing Arts Centre Amphitheatre on 29 June 2019 as part of the 47<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Music Festival. Before the concert, the chorusmaster and the instructors observed that all the children had a **'boost of self-confidence'**. As expressed by the rhythm instructor İpek Aktaşlı, **'children with disabilities showed how to overcome obstacles'** with great success. The chorusmaster said that she wanted the 'Birlikte Güçlü Sesler' Chorus to perform in the choir festivals and even expand their repertoire by adding songs in English.

Two focus group meetings were held with the parents of the 10 visually impaired children in the final weeks of the chorus. The parents expressed that the children attended the chorus rehearsals with interest and excitement every week and that they had missed one class at most due to personal reasons during the entire time.

Stating that they were very impressed with the idea of children with hearing and visual disabilities and children without them singing together, the parents said their children were baffled and asked, **'They cannot hear and we cannot see. How will we communicate?'** Some of the parents said that they wanted their children to join the chorus to socialize and meet with their peers with different disabilities as well as to **'be a fair part of the common social denominator'**, while others said that they wanted it for their children's personal development, especially for improving their singing skills.

The parents agreed that the chorus contributed greatly to:

- 1) the children's music training
- 2) decreasing their stereotypical movements like twitches
- 3) their socialization and sense of belonging to a group
- 4) their self-confidence
- 5) their awareness

In terms of musical training, the parents said that their children were singing more clearly and beautifully, that they had learned to distinguish between tones and to breathe through the diaphragm, and even they were teaching their families this breathing technique.

**'For example, when he hears a song on TV, he says, "The singer went too high" I tease him by saying that it was only yesterday he started singing, he couldn't have possibly known the difference. Sometimes, someone sings at school and he says, "Mum, it wasn't good at all. It was out of tune."**

**'My son said, "We used to know nothing about singing."**

**'The biggest gain was to learn how to sing. Music is how the brain dances.'**

In both focus meetings, the parents mentioned that there was a significant decrease in their children's twitches such as rocking back and forth and rubbing their eyes during the rehearsals. They added that the children started standing upright because the chorusmaster attached great importance to right posture while singing. A parent said it even taught them to **'stand tall in the society'**.

Thirdly, all parents said that there was a pleasant atmosphere of friendship in the chorus and that the chorus practices developed their children socially. Expressing how excited the children were to perform together on stage, the parents said the chorus created a **'group spirit'** and taught the children the discipline of working together and to adjust their voices according to one another. One parent said, **'The best thing about this is that they get to be with other people,'** and emphasized how such activities strengthen the bond between the children with disabilities in the society. About mingling with children with hearing disability, the parents said their children started to learn sign language, at least enough to tell their names to the children with hearing disability. Lastly, they emphasized that it was hard to bring sighted children together with visually impaired children in such group activities as sports, but chorus had a more unifying effect in this context.

The parents said the chorus practices instilled a sense of self-confidence in their children and that the more self-confident they felt, the more courageous they became. One of the parents said her daughter used to be very ill-tempered, but she calmed down through her interaction with chorus members and the chorusmaster and thanks to the breathing exercises.

**'My daughter was to perform on stage on April 23. First, she was very scared and anxious. I told her, "You are taking classes; you know how to stand and perform." At least, she went on to the stage feeling more self-confident. Everyone noticed it there. She received lots of applause and was happy to hear people tell her how beautiful her voice was and that she had learned to use her voice very well.'**

Lastly, in both focus interviews, the parents talked about their children's identity development and said, **'They begin to realize that there are other disabilities besides theirs.'**

In the two focus group interviews with the visually impaired members of the choir, all children said they were very happy with the chorus and that it was the best chorus experience they ever had. They had enjoyed singing the selected songs and doing the breathing exercises; they also said that they could sing more comfortably and beautifully, that singing together relaxed them at the end of the day, and they felt happier. All children agreed that they wanted to continue chorus practices after the concert as well.

**'I thought I'd go the first week to see what it's like and I would then decide whether I would continue or not. I didn't expect it to be this good.'**

**'They asked me if I wanted to go on stage and sing a folk song on April 23, and I accepted. Two of our friends played *bağlama* and I sang. It was very nice. That was a month ago. I really enjoyed it. If I hadn't been a part of this chorus, I wouldn't have learned many things, like diaphragmic breathing. I would have sung without knowing this technique and I would be out of breath.'**

**'I used to be in a choir at school, but my voice was different back then. Now I'm in this chorus and I have my voice.'**

**'Even if I am upset before coming here, I can start feeling positive during the practice and remain that way after I leave.'**

The children said, during the weeks with a heavy class load, attending the practice on weekdays after school was tiresome, especially for those living far, and prevented them from studying in the evening so they preferred to come at weekends.

**‘Most of us go to school full day, so we were coming here without resting or going home beforehand. It was still enjoyable but we couldn’t do any homework on those days. It’s better now that the practices are on Saturdays.’**

Deeming the chorus atmosphere to be very positive, all children agreed that the chorusmaster avoided a hierarchical approach, was very attentive and understanding, and that she was always encouraging and supportive. One of the children said they felt that there was **‘strength in numbers’** when they were singing together. Another child expressed his belief in-group work by saying, **‘My legs can shake during the concert but I think if one of us forgets, the others will complement.’** All the children said during the practices they had fun, learned techniques to properly use and control their voices, and felt excited about the goal of performing on stage.

**‘What I liked the most was to work for something together whether we can see or not, whether we have a disability or not. This makes me very happy.’**

**‘I think why it’s nice is because there’s love and interest. It’s nice that they attend every single person to, for example, correct his or her pitch if necessary. It’s impossible to put it into words, it’s so nice.’**

**‘It’s better and more disciplined than what I expected. But discipline doesn’t mean an atmosphere of pressure.’**

In short, the chorus turned out to be an experience with inclusive educational approach, where all children had fun and relaxed, while learning new skills. The concert at the end of the practices enabled children both to experience performing at a professional event and to share this special experience with their invited families and friends.

**‘Here, we’re trying to improve our singing voice and to have a good time. My dream at first was this; well maybe not dream, but my expectation: We’ll sing songs, we’ll have a concert, and we’ll correct our singing voice. But it wasn’t just that. Now, we can say we had a professional experience when there’s a musical activity.’**

6 3

### ISTANBUL FAIRYTALES WRITING AND NARRATION WORKSHOP

The Istanbul Tales Writing and Storytelling Workshop was developed and carried out by Deniz Soruklu Evren, who studied acting and creative drama leadership and has been working with children professionally for nearly 23 years.

The Istanbul Tales workshop aimed for children to look at Istanbul from a different perspective, to strengthen their bond with the city and with each other, and to create and tell stories about the place they live. At the end of the workshop, a selection of the fairy tales created by the children will be published as a book and the children will have the chance to share their stories with audiences at the ‘Tales Stage’ event as part of the 23rd Istanbul Theatre Festival to be held between 13 November and 1 December 2019.

Held in two different age groups (7-9 and 10-13) for 12 weeks each, the Istanbul Tales workshops were attended by 36 children, including refugees, from various districts and schools in Istanbul.<sup>113</sup> There were two visually impaired children in the 7-9 age group and one in the 10-13 age group.

**113** The workshops were attended by children from the Turkish Red Crescent Bağcılar Community Center, Hayata Destek Foundation, Parılı Foundation for Supporting Visually-Impaired Children, Çimenev Science and Art Center, and schools in the districts of Beyoğlu and Şişli. Focusing on pluralism, these workshops gathered 15 Syrian migrant children with 21 Turkey-born children with Roman, Armenian, and Kurdish ethnicities from different districts in Istanbul including Tarlabaşı, Kurtuluş, Bağcılar, Şişli, and Bakırköy.



With a view both to intermixing children from different cultural backgrounds and with different languages, some of whom are partially or totally visually impaired, and to reinforcing their storytelling and writing skills, the workshop made use of various branches of art such as music, painting, dancing, rhythm, and drama in play activities. As part of the workshop, the children were taken on a trip to the historical venues in such districts as Karaköy, Haliç, Eminönü, Kasımpaşa, Beyoğlu, and Şişhane that have been a home to different cultures throughout centuries and they were told about the stories of these venues so that they could associate themselves with the city and make a connection between the past and the present.

The workshop included games, painting, and rhythm activities in addition to improvisation and enactment activities that would improve storytelling skills through music and bodily movements. Listening to the stories told by the instructor every week, the children then started to create a plot, characters, time, and place by drawing and to tell imaginary stories. One of the most important features of the workshop was the use of colourful ropes in group games, stories, and pictures to strengthen the concept of *making a connection*. For instance, during the circle activity, children took turns to tell their names while holding one end of the rope and giving the other end to another friend, which eventually connected all of them together. These connections made with visible ropes laid the foundation for the invisible bonds formed between the children for 12 weeks.

In an evaluation meeting after the workshop, Deniz Soruklu Evren said, **‘Children who were perhaps aware of each other but never really socially mixed, met and united in the Istanbul Fairytales workshop,’** and that the children gained a lot during the play-drama-story activities at the workshop, such as developing their skills to listen to and understand each other and to express themselves and their worlds of imagination freely. Moreover, Evren stated that she had chosen fairy tales that aroused children’s curiosity, made them ask questions and reflect on the different attributes of the characters, and that even included certain dilemmas, so that the children could acquire critical thinking skills. The activities and games at the workshop were designed to give children the opportunity to do planning and to take part in certain decisions (such as choosing which story to tell on the Tales Stage).

Another important feature of the workshop was enabling the refugee children to experience social acceptance. Evren believes that the fairy tales workshop created a space for the refugee children who lived with limited means to explore their existence. Regarding two Syrian refugee children who were working in the textile industry during the week, she pointed out that they were able to experience a sense of belonging and to embrace their true identities in the workshop at weekends. She also expressed that interacting with the visually impaired children in the workshop raised awareness in both her and the other children about the language they’ve been using. She said all the children mingled quickly and developed friendships.

Adding that the goal of publishing a book at the end of the workshop instilled a sense of responsibility and discipline in children, Evren said that the fairy tale book was a **'symbolic output'**. Among other benefits of the workshop, she mentioned the children asking their parents or grandparents at home about fairy tales and teaching a game they learned at the workshop to their siblings, as well as the rather taciturn children starting to talk more and to share their ideas without feeling the threat of being mocked. Evren said all the children would be on stage at the Tales Stage event; yet, they would not be obliged to tell their stories – those who wished could tell a story while others would accompany with music or rhythm. Based on her previous experiences, she said that children who felt too shy to tell a story in the beginning could wish to do so on stage.

During the individual and group interviews held with the children at the end of the 12-week workshop, the children in the 7-9 age group said that they had liked 'Mrs. Deniz,' playing games, making pictures with ropes, and listening to fairy tales and stories the most, while the children in the 10-13 age group referred to the trip they had went on, creating their own characters, listening to different fairy tales, drawing pictures, and playing games as their favourites.

‘Mrs. Deniz’s fairy tales...’

‘I loved the teachers, writing stories, and playing games. I had so much fun.’

‘It’s so much fun. You just babble, but it’s not called babbling. You can write whatever comes to your mind, pour your heart out. It feels very, very good.’

‘I liked the things we did with songs and with ropes.’

‘You draw the things you picture in your head. That’s what I like.’

‘For me, the best part was the day we took a trip. I cannot forget the day we sang and played games. Here, I realized I could draw. My eyes were opened here.’

‘We drew and felt like we were in a fairy tale.’

When asked about what new experiences they had in the workshop, the children said they had listened to many new stories, learnt new games, and that they had written a fairy tale for the first time in their lives. They also said that even though they had already been to some of the places they visited on the trip, they had been surprised and very much pleased to learn new stories about these places.

‘Mrs. Deniz told us fairy tales from every country in the world, from the places she’s visited. Though they were very different from each other, we found some common topics to link them and wrote fairy tales.’

‘I learned how to enjoy fairy tales, that they’re not pointless. Because they’re pleasant to read. It’s also used by moms; they read it and children fall asleep. Firstly, you improve your reading, and secondly, children like it.’

‘I play the games we learned here with my sibling at home. She’s eight. We download the songs we listen here and listen to them at home. And I show my school mates how we tap out the rhythm.’

‘I wrote a fairy tale for the first time in my life. I never do that normally, I mean such artistic things...’

‘We wrote a story and drew with meditation music.’

‘For example, writing down a simple idea and then adding the details to it...’

‘Now, I always leave the door of my imagination open.’

Children expressed their excitement to have their fairy tales published as a book at the end of the workshop and that people would read them.

**‘When I have my book out, I’ll go running home. I’ll go running to show my book. And I want to read it from beginning to end as if it weren’t me who wrote it.’**

**‘When I told my schoolteacher I’d have a book published, she said, “You should bring it to me as well.”’**

Children said that they had developed friendships, enjoyed being with the other children, and had a lot of fun together throughout the workshop. One of the visually impaired children said she had not wanted to come to the workshop at first out of embarrassment, but she had become good friends with two children who invited her into their games and now she was coming here ‘for friends’.

**‘During the first few weeks, we familiarised with each other, played games, and built connections.’**

**We get along very well with her [the refugee child]. She helps me and we help her.’**

**‘It was a change for me. It was refreshing to be with different people than the normal – how shall I put it, those people we are always with.’**

**‘It’s a good thing for me. I’ve made a lot of friends.’**

All the children said that the workshop instructor was very fun and that they loved the fairy tales she told.

**‘Calling her a teacher is a bit strange. She does not teach she makes us experience something.’**

The two focus group interviews with the parents of 10 children revealed that while some children at the workshop enjoyed reading, writing, and drawing, while others were reluctant to read and write, but had become interested when they were told that they would be the co-authors of a book. Those parents with children who did not like writing, said that their children had liked the workshop a lot, thanks especially to the play factor, and written fairy tales. The mothers of younger children expressed that the problem was ‘not writing, but sitting still,’ and that the children were comforted by the diversity of events at the workshop comprising songs, games, and drawing sessions. Therefore, although the children were not so willing to sit down and write, they liked the workshop, gained a sense of responsibility, and contributed to the fairy tale book.

All the parents at the interview emphasized that the children did not regard the workshop as ‘a duty or an obligatory class,’ that they loved coming here and felt like **‘doing, accomplishing something’**.

**‘They like it because they have fun while doing it. It seems like they’re learn more, too.’**

**‘The children are happy because they’re taught through play.’**

**‘My child didn’t want to come today, but when they are here, their world changes. It’s all till they get through that door.’**

**‘My son loves the games they play here. He even teaches them to his sibling at home saying, “Look, this is what we played,” and they try playing them together at home.’**

**‘He said the trip was a lot of fun and that in his story, he’d write about the things he’d observed.’**

When asked about the benefits of the workshop for their children, the families' responses mainly fell under three headlines:

#### 1) Self-confidence

'My daughter feels like she cannot do anything, maybe partly because she can't see. For example, she would never tell us anything, but when she started writing stories, writing a book here, she started telling us more. She feels proud to be doing and achieving something. Also, upon receiving positive feedback from her schoolteacher, I can say she feels more confident now.'

'His low self-confidence was our biggest problem and it has slightly increased now. They better understood what a story was and how to write one. His imagination expanded. Now, he tells us stories he makes up.'

'My son was already writing small stories, but now he's all like, "I'm writing a book." He has that confidence and I think it's because of the workshop. Because, before that, he was talking about stories, perhaps a diary, not a book. Now, he's talking about writing a book.'

'She tells me they're writing and going to become writers.'

'He's very excited to have his story in the book. I wasn't expecting him to get so excited.'

#### 2) Encountering diversity

'Today, since children do not play on the street that much, they cannot interact with each other. These activities are a great opportunity for them. That's the most important thing, I mean, that children can meet other children from different walks of life, with different beliefs. I think it's the most important aspect.'



3) Experiencing friendship and group work in a collaborative atmosphere

‘They’re going to say they did something together. No matter what comes out in the end, they will have created it together.’

‘They see that something that looks like it’s impossible to do can actually be done.’

‘My son is 90% visually impaired; one of his eyes has no sight and the other sees very little. He was very reluctant at first; in fact, we kind of forced him to come. On the first day, he wanted to leave the class. But in the following weeks, he forced us to bring him here. The children embraced him from the first day on. I think the friendly atmosphere and the teachers did the trick here.’

‘My son didn’t use to have any friends with disability. But here, for example, he became friends with a woman’s [visually-impaired] son and he even asks about the boy if he’s absent. My son doesn’t become friends with just anyone. He will talk to anyone but won’t get too close. They’ve become very close. He calls him from home.’

‘Half the reason my son comes here is for friends. They also play different games here that we don’t play at home, that we don’t know of. We start playing them when we get home. For example, we visited his grandparents once and he even taught his grandfather the game.’

At the end of the workshop, instructor Deniz Soruklu Evren met with the families together with a specialist psychologist and shared her experiences and her opinions, so that the healing effect achieved in the workshop could continue at home and at school.

**6 4 İKSV BOOKS FOR CHILDREN**

As part of the 15<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial, centred upon the theme *a good neighbour* in 2017, the İKSV realised a children's book project for the first time, with the support of the Bernard van Leer Foundation. The book entitled **Optigull and Pesigull: A Good Neighbour Song** told a story interwoven with the biennial venues and the exhibited works and also suggested various activities. As a continuation of the project, children's books were published in three languages (Turkish, English, and Arabic) within the scope of the 4<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Design Biennial, 47<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Music Festival, 26<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Jazz Festival, 16<sup>th</sup> Istanbul Biennial, and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Istanbul Theatre Festival, with the support of the Bernard van Leer Foundation. The Arabic version of the book in particular, facilitated reaching out to the Syrian refugee children. These books can be obtained free of charge at the contracted bookstores and at the venues of the festivals and biennials. Workshops and reading activities are also held in connection with the children's books at the İKSV Alt Kat: Learning and Interaction Space, as well as at the festival and biennial venues.

A survey was conducted in November 2017 to find out the opinions and impressions on *Optigull and Pesigull: A Good Neighbour Song*, which pioneered the children's books published by the İKSV. The book was evaluated by 125 participants between the ages of 20 and 67, 89% of which were women. 93% of the participants were university graduates.

55% of the families taking the survey said they had read the book with their daughters, while 41% had read it with their sons. Regarding the distribution between age groups, the percentages were similar for the 2-3 and 4-5 (preschool) age groups: Nearly one-third of all participants said they had read the book with their 2-3 year-old children, while another one-third with their 4-5 year-old children. The remaining 40% were families with children in the school age group (6+). 72% of the families said they had read the book with their children after visiting the biennial. 15% of the families said they had read it both before and after visiting the biennial and only 12% said they had looked at it only before visiting the biennial.

**‘It’s a very good book. My daughter has just learned to read and she read it herself. That was the first book she read herself and she liked it a lot in terms of both content and illustrations.’**

**‘There could have been a few more stories. Like short ones specifically focusing on the works in the biennial. Or telling about the creation of an artwork.’**

**‘Since my daughter is two, she couldn’t visit the biennial, but she can’t get enough of the book. She sings the songs together with the dolphins.’**

**‘My kid can’t talk yet, but she can repeat and mimic my words and gestures. The book was of great visual help.’**

Most of the children who read the book after visiting the biennial were able to recognize the works when they saw them in the book. According to the statements of the families, 70% of the children in preschool and school age groups recognized almost all of the works in the book, while this percentage was nearly 30% with the children in the 2-3 age group. This difference in percentages is at an expected level considering the different cognitive abilities of children at the given ages.

Families who answered the survey also evaluated their children's level of interest in the storyline. 85% of the families with children in early childhood (age two or three) and in preschool (age four or five) and 75% of the families with children in school (age six and older) said their children had found the story quite interesting. Revealing that children in all age groups showed a similarly high interest in the story, the results showed that the book had elements that catered to different developmental stages.

**'As a mother and son who came from another city to visit the biennial, we were welcomed by Optigull and Pesigull and we liked that. In our case, my son was visiting a biennial for the first time in his life, and he held onto this book like some kind of support. It's hard to comment on the content because it aims to reach out to all age groups. Thank you.'**

**'My niece is 1 and a half years old and cannot talk yet. But we enjoyed looking at the pictures and she listened to the story.'**

**'My child is one, so she cannot quite grasp the points mentioned above, but she loved the book and never let go of it since the day we got it. She makes the cats, dogs, and other animals talk as much as she can. I think it has a different approach because it's different from the story books we have.'**

**'My baby is 21 months old. She loved it so much that it is now among our bedtime books. Thank you very much.'**

At least 75% of the families with children in early childhood and preschool period said they read the book frequently on their children's demand, while this percentage was around 60% for families with children at the age of six or older. 90% of the families said they used new words when reading or talking about the book with their children. The most frequently used words were 'biennial', 'optimistic', 'pessimistic', 'curator', and 'artwork'. 60% of the families said their children also started using the words 'biennial' and/or 'Istanbul Biennial' in conversation. In addition, one-third of the children who visited the biennial and read the book have added the words 'artwork' and 'labyrinth' to their vocabulary and about 20% used the words 'optimistic', 'pessimistic', 'contemporary art', and 'curator'.

It was observed that families with children in early childhood (ages two or three) showed a substantial interest in the book and its evaluation. Considering the lack of materials in culture and arts events catering to children in this age group and their families, the book has made a significant contribution in the field to meet this need.

Considering the positive role language development plays in children's preparation for school, academic success, and their social relations with adults and peers, the book also had the benefit of adding new words to the children's vocabulary. Many of the children who read the book with their families heard words rarely used in daily language such as 'biennial', 'curator', and 'artwork' for the first time and even began using them. Families said that the words in the title of the book were also the new words their children learned the fastest.

## 7

**A ROADMAP: FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES FOR ART WORKSHOPS**

The leisure artistic activities children and youth attend make positive contributions to their development in many different aspects. However, these positive contributions depend on the children's regular attendance in these workshops, their interest and enthusiasm, and their commitment in what they do. This atmosphere of positive learning and interaction can be obtained by high-quality workshops.<sup>114</sup> Therefore, while making plans to increase access to art workshops, the evaluation and regulations regarding the quality of the programme should also be taken into consideration.

Observations and case analyses in organisations that offer workshops in different fields of art, in-depth interviews held with the managers, instructors, and the participant children in the workshops, the reviewing of the curriculums and strategic plans, and surveys all helped to determine the fundamental and common principles of quality that are intrinsic to the success of distinguished art programmes.<sup>115 116 117 118 119</sup>

**114** Bohnert, A., Fredricks, J., & Randall, E. (2010). Capturing unique dimensions of youth organized activity involvement: Theoretical and methodological considerations. *Review of Educational Research*, 80, 576-610.

**115** McClanahan, W.S., & Hartmann, T. A. (2017). Raising the barre and stretching the canvas: Implementing high-quality arts programming in a national youth serving organization. Wallace Foundation Report. Access: <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Raising-the-Barre-Report.pdf>

**116** Montgomery, D., Rogovin, P., & Persaud, N. (2013). Something to say: Success principles for afterschool arts programs from urban youth and other experts. Wallace Foundation Report. Access: <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Something-to-Say-Success-Principles-for-Afterschool-Arts-Programs.pdf>

**117** McClanahan, W. S., & Hartmann, T. A. (2018). Designing for engagement: The experiences of tweens in the boys & girls clubs' youth arts initiative. Wallace Foundation Report. Access: <https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/pages/designing-for-engagement-the-experiences-of-tweens-in-the-boys-and-girls-clubs%E2%80%99-youth-arts-initiative.aspx>

**118** Peterson, T. K., Fowler, S., Partner, F., & Dunham, L. T. F. (2013). Creating the recent force field: A growing infrastructure for quality afterschool and summer learning opportunities. *Expanding and Opportunities*. Access: [https://www.expandinglearning.org/sites/default/files/em\\_articles/6\\_creatingtherecent.pdf](https://www.expandinglearning.org/sites/default/files/em_articles/6_creatingtherecent.pdf)

**119** Wright, R. (2007). A conceptual and methodological framework for designing and evaluating community-based after-school art programs. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 13, 123-132.

This chapter tells about the principles that determine the quality indicators of programmes that offer art workshops. These principles can be applied to one-time workshops but are especially instructive to improve the quality of programmes with long-term workshops.

### 10 Fundamental Quality Indicators of Successful Programmes

1. Professional workshop instructors
2. Positive relationships in the workshop environment
3. High expectations and respect for creative expression in the workshop culture
4. Providing children with leadership opportunities
5. Venue that provides physical and emotional safety
6. Venue that inspire children
7. Developing creative projects by making use of equipment/technology
8. Public performances/shows
9. Active management by the programme executives
10. A support network by the programme collaborators

### Professional Workshop Instructors

A culture and art workshop is more successful when it is run by an artist or a professional in the field.

\* In addition to having the desire and skillset to work with children and youth, workshop instructors being professionals in their fields implies that they have acquired the technical knowledge and the awareness of creative process to actively support the children. They act as guides in the process of **thinking, planning, creating, presenting**, and rethinking in the creative cycle.

\* When children regard the workshop instructors as experts, they feel love and respect mixed with admiration towards them. Meeting the high standards and expectations set by the instructor is a motivational element for children.

\* It is an enriching learning experience for participants see the connection between their work and that of the artist.

## 2. Positive Relationships in the Workshop Environment

The supportive attitude of the workshop instructor and the opportunity to develop friendships allow children to build positive relationships in the workshop environment.

### a) The Supportive Attitude of the Workshop Instructor

- When the workshop instructors share their knowledge and experience, listen to the children and encourage them, have belief in their creativity, respect their ideas, show pleasure in working with them, and guide them in challenging processes, children develop a sense of trust. This sense of trust enables children to explore more comfortably and to be more enthusiastic about learning and expressing themselves.

- The workshop instructors who emphasize improving one's self rather than being better than other children define mistakes as an inseparable part of learning and create opportunities for children to learn from their mistakes and from challenges. They appreciate not only the achievements but also the efforts of the children. Talking about self-improvement contributes to the 'developmental mentality' in children. In other words, children start believing that they can change and improve their skills by trying. Research shows that children with developmental mentality are more optimistic and work more to reach their goals.<sup>120</sup>



### b) Children's Relationship with Each Other in the Workshop Environment

- It makes it easier for children to make friends if they have the opportunity to get to know each other and explore common interests.
- It is important to include teamwork activities that require cooperation and to encourage children to show each other appreciation, respect, and support in both success and failure in order to meet the needs of belonging to and being accepted by a group.

### 3. High Expectations and Respect for Creative Expression in the Workshop Culture

In successful programmes, the workshop instructors have high expectations of children and frequently express their belief in children to achieve them.

- Every instructor defines the artistic and social skills they aim to teach the children through the workshop activities at the beginning. In order to teach these skills, the activities in the programme are held in a certain order with the active participation of children while focusing on a certain learning goal at each step.
- Instructors have high expectations of children, who in turn perceive this and feel more self-confident and competent.
- Behavioural expectations are declared in the programme brochures and posters. The most frequent messages are 'work hard', 'don't give up, ask for help', 'put 100% effort in everything you do', 'know everybody in the team', and 'believe in yourself'.
- Each child's ideas and efforts are respected. This attitude is displayed at first by the workshop instructors to set an example for the children.

## Positive Relationship Culture in the Workshop Environment

### Support

1. Focus on the children's strengths, not weaknesses.
2. Improve the relations between the children in the group.
3. Encourage them to support each other.
4. Pair the children who can help each other.

### Effort

5. Remind them that for success, making an effort is more important than having talent.
6. Describe mistakes and failures as opportunities for growth.
7. Appreciate the children who make an effort.

### Goals

8. Ask the children about their goals and remind them when necessary.
9. Encourage them to think forward and to work now to realize those dreams.

### Ideas

10. Help them to think differently about the things they do not want to do or believe to be challenging.

### Feelings

11. Try to explore the sparks that make the students excited.
12. Spark up the learning process with the students' sparks of excitement.
13. Follow and appreciate their development.

*(Kent Pekel, 2016. Search Institute)*

### 3. Venue that Provides Physical and Emotional Safety

Another important characteristic of exemplary programmes is that the venues that host the workshops provide children with emotional safety as well as physical.

- Art workshops are places where children blend their inner worlds and ideas with their imagination to produce creative works. This creative and sharing process is an experience during which children take a social risk and are evaluated by their peers and adults.
- An emotionally safe venue means being attentive and respectful towards group exchanges, and there are certain rules about sharing within a group. The decisions for these rules are made together.

### 4. Venue that Inspires Children

In successful programmes, the workshop venue possesses characteristics that reflect the appreciation for creativity, productivity, and success.

- The works of the children who participate in the workshop are displayed at the venue.
- New places, new experiences, and new people are explored to broaden the minds of children and youth (e.g. taking the children attending a music workshop to a concert, hosting a guest artist in the workshop, or taking high school students on trips to university campuses and career seminars)

## 5. Prioritizing Creativity and Imagination

Children create an original work – lyrics, a dance choreography, or a digital illustration – by doing research and exchanging ideas rather than following an example or the directions of the workshop instructor.

- Children are expected to develop an idea or a project.
- In the artistic creative process, experiencing various stages such as planning, creating, presentation, reflection, and finding solutions when confronted with problems contribute to the development of sense of competence in the children.

**Marwen** is a programme offering free-of-charge art workshops to children and youth in Chicago, U.S. The programme organizes workshops in the field of visual arts, such as painting, sculpture, clay, photography, design, and animation, for children between the 6th and 12th grade from low-income families. With a view to meet their need for free and creative thinking, the programme provides the children with many opportunities for identity development, as well as for developing self-confidence and friendships.<sup>121</sup>

The major subjects and contents that spark up creativity in this programme are as follows:

**Analog and Digital Collage:** Children learn to make a collage of their own out of different pictures and photographs and to digitize them in Photoshop.

**Digital Character Design:** Children draw their own characters and give them life by using 3D modelling software.

**Portrait Studio:** Children learn to take portraits of their families and friends.

<sup>121</sup> For more information, see: <https://marwen.org/courses-and-workshops>

**Short Animations:** Children learn to make short animations by using software such as Photoshop and After Effects. First, they create a character and then make their own story with sounds, colours, and a short screenplay.

**From Pencil to Pixel - Character Design:** Children first draw their imaginary character on paper and then digitize it in Photoshop.

**Cartoon Drawing Techniques:** Children make their own cartoon characters and write a story for them.

**Waste Sculpture:** Children build sculptures with the waste materials they collect.

**Giant Sculptures:** Children make the sculptures of their favourite daily objects much bigger than their original size, out of materials such as plaster and paint.

## **6. Providing Children with Leadership Opportunities**

The participants can be involved in some decision-making processes, collaborate to solve problems, and take on leadership roles.

- Participants can make choices and decisions within their fields of interest.
- Workshop instructors ask children's opinion and create opportunities for them to make decisions on their own.
- Participants are asked to undertake responsibilities in certain matters.
- Regardless of the workshop content, it is important for children and youth to experience other roles (For instance, being responsible for a technical job or partaking in the organisation of a social event at the institution that holds the workshop).

## 7. Developing Creative Projects by Making Use of Equipment/ Technology

The surveys reveal that children are very much interested in workshops that combine art and technology. Works that integrate the use of technology while opening up space for creativity allow for children to acquire skills that are important in today's world.

- It proves to be motivational for youth between the ages of 14 and 18, when participation in art activities is rather low, to learn a new skill through application, by using a new technology or equipment.
- Collaborations can be made with universities in situations where it is hard to find resources for practices that blend art and technology.
- Donation campaigns can be held to reinforce the technical infrastructure of the programmes.

The Multicultural Youth Centre in Maryland, U.S. has a **Digital Storytelling / Video Production** programme in which young people tell their stories by using visual media. The programme comprises three stages: pre-production, production, and sharing. In the first stage, the participants work on writing a screenplay and developing their creative writing skills. During the production phase, they take pictures as a team and create a story by putting the pictures in a sequence and using software such as iMovie and Final Cut Pro X. The final version of the video is shared on social media.

The **Music Production** programme offers creative, theoretical, and technical workshops in which young people learn about melody, rhythm, harmony, and arrangement and compose original music. They also learn to mix and record sounds and rhythms with software programs such as Adobe Audition.

In the city of Boston in the U.S., a summer program entitled ZUMIX<sup>122</sup> was launched in 1991 to fight the increasing youth crime rate. Starting off with 24 participants, this songwriting programme aimed for the youth to express themselves by writing lyrics about the things that influence their lives. The participants not only wrote lyrics but also put on an original performance with music, song, and dance. The ZUMIX program team comprised musicians and experts in music technologies. The programme now caters to nearly 1,000 young people every year, who perform for an audience of over 10,000 people at festivals and neighbourhood festivities.

## 8. Public Performances/Shows

A public show or presentation is held at the end of the workshop.

- While motivating children to work towards a certain goal, public shows also enable their efforts to be seen and appreciated by their families, friends, peers, and even media which can be regarded as an exciting, motivational, and a positive source of stress.
- The case analyses have shown that children do not feel anxious of year-end shows but they feel like true artists instead and believe the excitement and pride they feel in sharing their work and showcasing their talent to be one of the most important aspects of the workshop experience.

<sup>122</sup> For more information, see: <https://www.zumix.org/>

- Doubtlessly, there is the social risk of making a mistake or being criticized when displaying their work or performing in front of an audience. However, even if they make a mistake, knowing how to fix it is regarded as one of the most important aspects of personal development.

- Though successful programmes do care about public shows, their educational approach focuses on the process, not the result.

### **9. Active Quality Management by the Programme Executives**

The case analyses have shown that only some of the executives of successful art workshop programmes are artists but majority of them are successful executives who are also art enthusiasts.

- The major responsibilities of the executives are maintaining the visibility and recognition of the programmes, communicating regularly with the workshop instructors, being responsive to the needs of the instructors and supporting them, planning the content and diversity of the programmes, and raising funds.



## 10. A Support Network by the Program Collaborators

The goal is to reach a variety of supporters for the financial sustainability of the workshops.

- Workshop executives make connections with collaborators such as media, private sector, or health industry to create awareness and increase the visibility of the programmes, and to raise financial support.
- It is recommended to promote these art workshop programmes to different sections of the society. Making connections with different collaborators, ranging from Departments of Parks and Recreation in the municipalities to the local health system, besides schools and foundations, enhances the capacity of reaching out to children and families who could benefit from these workshops.
- The art workshops organised by an institution should be widely known and embraced within the other departments of that institution.
- It is good to utilize the children's activities in the context of social services (i.e. the chorus giving a concert at a nursing home).
- It is important to be in contact with the local art network.

The **Art + Media House** at the Latin American Youth Centre collaborates with the National Park Services in the city to realize children's projects that combine nature and contemporary media arts. The children first visit the parks for research, using the sources of the National Park Services and interviewing the officials. Then, they reflect on what they have learned, make a short video out of their observations and evaluations, and present it to their peers.

The **Zeytin Çekirdekleri Projesi**<sup>123</sup> (Olive Seeds Project) has been run by the Ayvalık Municipality in collaboration with the Ayvalık District Governorship, Boğaziçi University, District Directorate of National Education, school administrations in Ayvalık, various associations including the Zeytin Çekirdekleri Foundation, NGOs, craftsmen, and the private sector players since 2015. The project was inspired by El Sistema, Venezuela's National System of Children's and Youth Orchestras and Choirs. Within the scope of the Zeytin Çekirdekleri Project, summer camps are held during the summer holiday and free afterschool workshops on music (strings, rhythm, choir), arts, science, and sports are held during the academic year for children in the district of Ayvalık. So far, children have performed drama and music at different venues including the Ayvalık Art Factory and Boğaziçi University.

## 8 RECOMMENDATIONS

The evaluations in this report and the recommendations below aim to contribute to the future plans of all organizations that run art workshops for children and youth or that wish to work in this field in Turkey. The cultural policies to be developed in this field are categorized into collaborations, access and participation, and programming and venue design.

Taking into consideration the requirements mentioned in the report, expectations of the children and youth, and the principles of quality programmes, tangible recommendations for developing and implementing art workshops in which children and youth participate actively are listed here below.

### 8 1 COLLABORATIONS

- Organizations that offer art workshops can develop interesting interdisciplinary programmes by designing sustainable collaborations with cultural institutions.
- Collaborations between Youth Centres, local administrations and NGOs can play an important role in reaching out to more children, youth, and families.
- Collaborations between organizations can increase the employment opportunities for child development experts, educators, and art instructors.
- Collaborating with the Turkish National Agency<sup>124</sup> can make it possible to work with experienced consultants, to develop collaboration protocols between organizations, and to provide incentive support to relevant establishments.

<sup>124</sup> The public institute responsible for the management of education, youth, and sports grants within the scope of the European Union's Erasmus+ Program.

**8 2 ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION**

- Municipalities that are effective in accessing local citizens can support individuals or establishments who wish to work in this field. The effect of the programmes could be enhanced and participation could be increased with the efforts of municipalities in including the issue in their strategic plans, reserving the budget, and offering evaluations about the events.

- For local administrations to develop action plans to meet the needs, they should first determine the parts of the city and districts with the least access to culture and arts and the reasons behind it.

- In addition to the number of children participating in workshops, information about age groups, gender, and where the children live can give a better idea about the diversity of the participants.

- Measures could be taken to increase the means of access and transportation to the current programmes for families living far from the workshops.

Through collaborations with schools, children can be given the opportunity to participate in culture and arts workshops in their own classrooms after school.

Mobile workshops can be designed for places without sufficient infrastructure.

For easier access to current workshops, new bus stops could be added near these venues in collaboration with the Transportation Coordination Centres.

- The inequality in access can be diminished by improving and increasing the number of the Children's University models, which aims to reach children studying mostly at state schools.

- More effort can be put into informing the families and increasing visibility.

Schools can inform parents about extracurricular activities.

The promotional materials can emphasize the fun, exciting, and intriguing aspects of the workshops and the opportunity to make new friends in order to encourage children to participate willingly.

Attending trial classes can make it easier for children to decide. It is advised for the workshop instructor to encourage children's participation during the trial class.

Inviting children who have never participated in a workshop to events that display their peers' works/performances can increase their interest in the matter.

## 8 3 PROGRAMMING

Culture and arts programmes can be developed to include children and youth with limited access due to disability or refugee status besides socioeconomic inequalities and to mingle them with the other children in the society. Examples in this regard can be multiplied and promoted.

For the rather overlooked early-childhood period (0-6 ages), activities can be organised that combine books, storytelling, music, dance, and play.

The youth between the ages of 15 and 18, who are cognitively and socially more competent, can be given the opportunity to experience developing a project with workshops that combine various branches of art such as film, animation, photography, visual and digital design, and creative writing.

- New programmes and projects can be designed by compiling information about the interests of children and youth and with regards to their curiosity about popular culture. Design workshops with a focus on new media art, science, and sports can have the potential to attract especially boys.
- The applied children's library model, which is interesting to children and their families, can be popularised. Playrooms can be designed for children between the ages of zero and three and publications and play materials for the age group between three and six.
- Libraries can employ child development experts, educators, and art instructors to host creative workshops.
- When designing workshops, collaboration can be made between art professionals, child development experts, psychologists, educators, and art instructors.
- Peer support and development programmes can be held for the professional development of workshop instructors.
- Periodical tracking and evaluation can be run on the development of children who participate in workshops.
- Regular changes and improvements can be made to workshop programmes in light of the principles presented in this report.
- Influence research can be increased for workshop programmes.

**8** | **4** | **VENUE DESIGN**

- When designing the venues for workshops, necessary arrangements should be made for children with special needs.
- Cultural centres and multipurpose halls built by municipalities can be rearranged according to the needs of instructors and artists to better suit workshops.
- Venues can be designed in a way to allow future changes to keep children's curiosity alive and to attract their attention.
- The workshop venue should allow for an active space for freedom where children can enhance their interests, work asynchronously, make changes in the venue design, and easily reach the materials.

**9 THE AUTHOR**

Prof. Dr. Feyza Çorapçı has been a professor at the Department of Psychology at Boğaziçi University since 2006. She completed her master's degree and doctorate in Clinical Psychology at Purdue University in the U.S. In her studies, Prof. Dr. Çorapçı researches the individual, familial, and environmental factors that contribute to the socio-emotional development of children with a focus on the psycho-social applications for children under risk. She's an academic consultant to the projects of İKSV Alt Kat: Learning and Interaction Space founded by Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV) in order to increase access to and participation in the culture and arts events. Prof. Dr. Çorapçı is also a member of the academic staff for the Istanbul95 programme which paves the way to make Istanbul a city suitable for children between the ages of zero and three and their families.



### **ISTANBUL FOUNDATION FOR CULTURE AND ARTS (İKSV)**

Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV) is a non-profit cultural institution. Since 1973, the Foundation continues its efforts to enrich Istanbul's cultural and artistic life. İKSV regularly organises the Istanbul Festivals of Music, Film, Theatre and Jazz, the Istanbul Biennial, the Istanbul Design Biennial, Leyla Gencer Voice Competition, autumn film week Filmekimi and realises one-off events throughout the year. The Foundation hosts cultural and artistic events from various disciplines at its performance venue Salon İKSV, located at the Nejat Eczacıbaşı Building, and offers creative events programme for children and youngsters at İKSV Alt Kat.

İKSV organises the Pavilion of Turkey at the International Art and Architecture Exhibitions of la Biennale di Venezia, conducts studies and drafts reports with the aim of contributing to cultural policy development, and supports artistic and cultural production through presenting awards at its festivals, commissioning works, taking part in international and local co-productions and coordinating an artist residency programme at Cité Internationale des Arts in France, as well as the annual Aydın Gün Encouragement, Talât Sait Halman Translation, and Gülriz Sururi-Engin Cezzar Theatre Encouragement Awards.

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