

A Social Transformation Project: Literacy Academy “Lifelong Learning Centre”



Murat Aşıcı

Université de Marmara, İstanbul, Turquie
masici@marmara.edu.tr

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Un Projet de Transformation Sociale: Académie de Littératie « Centre de l'apprentissage tout au long de la vie »

Résumé

Selon les pays développés, la transformation et le changement de la société, la continuité des hauts niveaux de l'enseignement scolaire ainsi que dans les domaines industriels et technologiques dépendent de projets et travaux dans le domaine de la littératie. Cette étude porte sur un centre destiné à être mis en place sous la littératie dans un pays sur la voie du développement comme la Turquie. L'objectif général de l'Académie de la littératie considérée comme l'organisation principale dans le développement qui dépend de l'éducation, est d'éduquer les individus alphabétisés fonctionnels et de fournir le développement social, culturel et professionnel de ces personnes. Le Centre de l'éducation permanente de l'Académie de la littératie conçu sera d'abord créé à l'Université de Marmara. Ensuite, ils seront étendus avec des Académies de la littératie créées au sein d'une université sélectionnée dans chaque région, et enfin dans chaque province.

Mots-clés: Littératie, apprentissage tout au long de la vie, culture, enseignement

Toplumsal Değişim Projesi: Okuryazarlık Akademisi “Hayat Boyu Öğrenme Merkezi”

Özet

Gelişmiş ülkeler, toplumun dönüşümünü ve değişimini okullardaki eğitimin yanı sıra sanayi ve teknoloji alanındaki ileri düzeylerinin devamlılığını okuryazarlık alanındaki proje ve çalışmalara bağlı görmektedir. Bu çalışma, Türkiye gibi gelişme yolunda olan bir ülkede, okuryazarlık kavramı altında kurulması düşünülen bir merkez hakkındadır. Eğitime bağlı kalkınmada öncü kuruluş olması düşünülen Okuryazarlık Akademisi'nin genel amacı, işlevsel okuryazar bireyler yetiştirerek, kişilerin sosyal, kültürel ve mesleki olarak geliştirmelerini sağlamaktır. Tasarlanan Okuryazarlık Akademisi, Hayat Boyu Öğrenme merkezi, öncelikle Marmara Üniversite'nde kurulacaktır. Daha sonra her bölgeden seçilen bir üniversitede ve son olarak her ilde kurulacak Okuryazarlık Akademileri ile yaygınlaştırılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Okuryazarlık, Hayat boyu Öğrenme, Kültür, Eğitim

Abstract

Developed countries believe that transformation and change of the society, and sustainment of their advanced level in the fields of industry and technology, as well as in education at schools, are dependent upon the projects and operations in the field of literacy. This study is about established a center under the concept of literacy in Turkey which is going on development. Devised as a pioneer organization in education-dependent development, the Literacy Academy's general purpose ensure social, cultural and professional development of individuals by bringing up functional literate individuals. Designed The Literacy Academy, Lifelong Learning Centre will be established in the Marmara University in the first place and then spread with a university in each region, and ultimately, with Literacy Academies to be established in each province in Turkey.

Keywords: Literacy, Lifelong Learning, Culture, Education

Introduction

Education lies in the foundation of social, cultural and economic development of a country. The authority responsible for planning, guiding, developing and inspecting the education is the governor's offices representing the Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey in the first place.

While education and instruction activities are conducted on subjects specified in the main objectives at schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education, it is also aimed to improve the skills and abilities that will be required by individuals throughout their lives. However, although it is clearly specified in the Curriculum, functional literate individuals cannot be brought up due to a number of reasons (teacher training, preparation for entrance exams of upper government body, crowded classrooms, etc.)

Schools provide the basic literacy skills in the first grade, but fail to develop the reading and writing skills and reading culture required for becoming a good literate person, and to inculcate the habit of reading, and what is more important, they fail to earn new literacy skills such as media literacy, information literacy, internet literacy, etc. that are required to be used by students in this information and communication age (Altun, 2005).

Ministry of Culture and Tourism provides support to the development of the social in terms of literacy with its libraries and exhibitions organized. Contributions of governors affiliated to the Ministry of Internal Affairs to education are restricted to defined duties such as inspection and development, and to provision of infrastructure services. Sometimes, as can be seen in Sakarya governor example, even though governors engage

in operations fitting the importance of the subject within a city, these operations are not sustainable, due to the office period of governors.

This situation emphasizes the requirement for an organization that specifically focuses on the general educational problems of our country, and on literacy status, that is the application of lifelong learning approach. At this point, the Literacy Academy is a non-governmental project that is planned to be implemented bearing this requirement in mind.

This organization, which is devised to provide support to development of literacy policies for the country, and to implementation of these policies, will have three primary duties:

- to investigate literacy status of regions and provinces, and submit the results to the concerned authorities and organizations;
- to raise awareness of all layers of the society about the functional literacy in cooperation with the social and professional groups, to ensure that the functional literacy is perceived at the same level as that in developed societies;
- to provide information, communication and organization support to all concerned authorities and organizations to develop and implement literacy projects.

Considered to be founded under the roof of the Marmara University in the first place, the Literacy Academy is designed as an autonomous and civil organization that can be joined by concerned individuals from all social layers of the society desiring to be involved or participate in literacy projects on the universal ground of the University and under the patronage of the Governor of the province.

As in developed countries, improvement and development of literacy of the society is not solely related to the Ministry of National Education, Ministry of Culture, and education and instruction at schools. Awareness, change and transformation of the society in terms of literacy would be possible only if all individuals and organizations concerned with literacy in the society and all social layers cooperate and produce ideas, projects and work.

- The Literacy Academy, Lifelong Learning Centre, which will shape up the future of the society, is designed to be active in the following areas:
- Develop policies and strategies aimed at promoting and inculcating the habit of reading, which is under the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education and Ministry of Culture;
- Organize activities in a variety of areas to promote and inculcate the reading culture in the country;
- Develop and organize implementation of projects aimed at making individuals

- having basic literacy skills become functional and multi-functional literates;
- Provide contributions to development and education of the society, particularly the new generation, in terms of new fields of literacy such as information literacy, media literacy, technology literacy, etc. that have emerged after rapid development of the information and communication technologies;
 - Raise awareness of the educational institutions on all literacy skills, and particularly the reading literacy, science literacy, and mathematics literacy, and contribute to teacher training in the first place in terms of literacy;
 - Cooperate with individuals and organizations from different segments of the society for development of the literacy skills that is a part of lifelong learning, and promotion of literacy in the society;
 - Develop training programs to improve different types of literacy such as family literacy, culture literacy and environment literacy, etc., and to engage in activities to ensure implementation of these programs.

Activities similar to the above have been carried out by institutes, centres and non-governmental organizations established around the literacy concept under many different names in Europe and the United States of America for decades. Developed countries believe that transformation and change of the society, and sustainment of their advanced level in the fields of industry and technology, as well as in education at schools, are dependent upon the projects and operations in the field of literacy. Therefore, they make innovations at educational institutions in order to improve literacy to increase their achievements at international exams measuring language, science and mathematics literacy of literates, such as PISA survey conducted by OECD, and they get alarmed when their ranking falls, and therefore they allocate new budgets for literacy projects (Eurydice, 2011). For example, after registering 2.8-point fall in its literacy rate in 2010, France allocated Euro 100 million for literacy projects.

Literacy efforts supported by developed countries by allocating considerable budgets from the Ministries of Education, Culture and Internal Affairs since the 1950s must be addressed urgently in our country as well, and the Literacy Academy that will be founded as a “centre” in the Istanbul province should transform into a national organization providing guidance to literacy activities first in Istanbul and then throughout the whole country.

In order for such an organization, which is actually late for Turkey that is a developing country, to be capable of providing effective and efficient services without any bureaucratic obstacles, it is highly important that it becomes a non-governmental organization supported by the government.

The fact that the Literacy Academy, which will be established as a centre within the University under patronage of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, is to be supported by the Governor’s Offices and Special Provincial Administrations will increase the reputation of the Centre before the public, and assist in overcoming the financial problems at the establishment phase.

The Literacy Academy Lifelong Learning Centre, which is planned to be established in the Marmara University in the first place, will implement its projects in a number of towns to be selected as pilot regions in the Istanbul province, and then spread with a university in each region, and ultimately, with Literacy Academies to be established in each province in Turkey.

Such a non-governmental organization to be established with the support of the Ministry of National Education and Ministry of Culture under the leadership of the governors in each province will provide new opportunities and spur educational activities with projects created out of schools with participation of teachers. The Academy will become a “project development and implementation” centre that provides scientific diagnoses and solutions regarding the educational problems of the country by providing training to teachers and conducting researches with the contributions of the academicians at universities.

Devised as a pioneer organization in education-dependent development, the Literacy Academy’s general purpose ensure social, cultural and professional development of individuals by bringing up functional literate individuals. Inculcation of the literacy in this sense means change and transformation of the society in line with the developing conditions in the world.

To this end, focus will be given to projects and programs to ensure that students become functional literates while they are still studying at schools. Furthermore, the Literacy Academy will also provide training and develop projects aimed at raising awareness of students and the society on matters that are a part of the contemporary education in the world today, such as media literacy, information literacy, science literacy, mathematics literacy, etc., whose number and diversity increases as a result of the ever developing technologies. As a consequence of all these, the Academy will provide contributions to bringing up and increasing the number of universal literates in our country as well.

The Academy considered to be established matches the Lifelong Learning concept that is the main theme of the Bologna process of the European Union (Gürdal, 2000). In fact, universities involved in this process are expected to establish Lifelong Learning centres. As a matter of fact, some universities have already established such centres. Difference of the centre to be established at Marmara University will be the focus

on “Literacy”, the main application subject of lifelong learning, and that it will be a non-governmental organization.

In line with the purposes listed above, the Literacy Academy planned to be established will speed up the process of change and transformation of the society through three different types of activities:

a) Teacher Training: The Literacy Academy will organize seminars, conferences and workshops for teachers to provide information on the literacy concept that incessantly changes and diversifies in the world, and on the in-class activities based on this new concept, and provide training on project development and writing.

b) Literacy Researches: As a research centre, this unit will conduct researches to determine the literacy status of specific regions, provinces and towns, and report the results to concerned units. The literacy status of each specific province will be established in details also taking into consideration the results of national and international educational surveys such as OBBS, PISA, TIMS, etc.

c) Project Development: This unit that will be responsible for development and implementation of all kinds of projects related to literacy will ensure development and implementation of projects intended for improving the literacy knowledge, behaviours, and attitude of students and the society in the first place.

As a result of this social change and transformation, the number of individuals, who have adopted the lifelong learning principle, are capable of solving their problems, make correct decisions, and have improved entrepreneurial abilities and creative skills, is expected to increase.

Current Study

The relation between the self-development of individuals and development of the society and the country has been recognized in our country that is classified as a developing country today as well. Today, many intellectuals assert that there is direct proportion between literacy development of individuals and development of the society (Sanders, 2010). Likewise, it is widely believed throughout the world that creation of such a society would be possible only if this concept is always kept up-to-date, and studies and activities are carried out about it.

Literacy studies indicate that education provided solely at educational institutions is not sufficient to create a literate society. Parents, school environment and surroundings should also work for the same purpose. Likewise, it is also asserted that individuals gain literacy skills only if they involve in different types of studies and different activities (Watson, 2004; Ege, 2006).

In addition to development of a common awareness aiming to become literate, it is necessary to conduct studies on the following subjects in order to enable literacy to become a part of the family, school and city culture:

- Preparation of environments and opportunities that will facilitate access to books and written materials,
- Provision of infrastructure services such as children’s libraries, school libraries, public libraries, book houses, book exhibitions, etc.,
- Improvement of skills of utilization of computer environments and sharing information on such environments in professional and individual development stages in order to enable individuals to become information and technology literate (Güldal, 2000).

One of the most important educational problems of our country is the low level of educational perception of the citizens. People with low level of educational perception do not see the education as the only way for personal and social development, and part of the total development of the society. Consequently, this negative perception negatively affects the reading and writing activities and functional literacy. Such individuals cannot develop habit of and interest in reading. This problematic situation in gaining reading culture also reduces academic learning at schools and consequently the overall achievement at educational institutions.

Educational achievement of individual countries and their ranking among all countries in the world are measured with international surveys and exams such as PISA, PIRLS and TIMS. As is known, ranking of our country in the last PISA survey conducted in 2009 was near the bottom of the list. The situation is not much different according to the results of the national “Student Achievement Determination Test” (SADT) (MEB EARGED, 2009). On the other hand, because particularly the PISA exam measures reading skills, and science and mathematics literacy, it is also an indication that the literacy of the Turkish students is far lower compared to the other countries in the world (Yeğitek, 2012).

Following the aforementioned statements, the purpose of Literacy Academy is to determine the literacy status of the city, the district and the country by using various scientific methods and to develop literacy projects that meet those needs.

Sub-purposes under the main purposes of the Literacy Academy are as follows:

- a) Determine the literacy of the province, region and the country using scientific methods
- b) Conduct studies analyzing the literacy status of specific provinces and regions and looking into the relevant problems, and to develop improvement projects based on these studies

- c) Prepare reports based on the results of researches and studies similar to those others conducted in the world, and submit these reports to the concerned governmental bodies and civil and administrative authorities
- d) Hold conferences with the prominent people, artists and journalists to promote the literacy concept that changes and diversifies in the world, to promote the reading culture, and to change the literacy attitudes and behaviours
- e) Cooperate with universities and scientist encourage establishment of literacy departments
- f) Develop Program Development Departments for Universities, as well as Primary Education Integrated Literacy Programs and Family Literacy Programs (Watson, 2006)
- g) Provide support to the 'Turkey Read' project, which has been implemented since 2009 under patronage of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, on provincial and regional bases
- h) Hold meetings with governors, district governors, mayors and other administrative authorities to provide information on and promote literacy
- i) Introduce the literacy concept that changes and diversifies in the world to teachers serving in respective regions in the first place, and conduct activities illustrating what kind of training can be given at schools on the new literacy approaches
- j) Develop and implement reading culture projects aimed at improvement of reading skills of citizens and students, inculcate the reading habit, and change their values and attitudes towards reading
- k) Carry out studies on Information and Communication Technologies, support the studies conducted at schools and other institutions
- l) Implement joint projects with children's literature professionals and writers to make literacy a life culture
- m) Develop and implement projects intended for families and pre-school educational institutions to promote the preliminary literacy knowledge, concepts and skills
- n) Cooperate with writers and educators to develop and implement projects aimed at bringing up functional literate students at all grades of education
- o) Conduct studies aimed at improvement and enrichment of school and classroom libraries, which are of prime importance in bringing up literate individuals, and support similar projects

Develop and implement school environment projects that will encourage broad participation to inculcate and promote the reading culture across the society.

Method of Implementation

In line with its goal “to determine the literacy of the province, region and the country using scientific methods, and to develop literacy projects fitting the situation and requirements”:

- The Literacy Academy will be established in Istanbul, Marmara Region. Following one-year application in Istanbul, a Literacy Academy model suitable for the conditions in Turkey will be developed. The literacy status will be established in two different towns in order to sample Turkey. During these operations, the possibilities and conditions of coordination between these two branches will be researched, and a brand-new institutional model that is peculiar to our country will be created through improvements and arrangements.
- This model will continue to be developed by the end of the first year, and then the number of academies will be gradually increased. Within this framework, branches will be opened in all seven regions of Turkey, and each of them will conduct studies for their respective regions. Finally, the academy branches that will be established in one province in representation of all regions may be established in other provinces as well. Ultimate goal is to transform these branches into National Literacy Academies, which are considered to be non-governmental organizations with wide participation, under patronage of the Presidency of Turkey and supported by provincial governors. The Academy will:
 - provide the administrators, educators and intellectuals with the opportunity to deliberate the issue, promulgating the information gathered using scientific methods.
 - draw attention of all educators from preschool period to university, particularly of the families, to the literacy that is changing in the developing world, and keep the position of literacy in human and social lives up to date.
 - increase the quality of education and achievement of students through Family Literacy program and projects in regions with educational problems.
 - provide contributions to creation of a literate society by inculcating reading culture by means of family, school, district and city projects.
 - serve as the concerned authority in European Union Projects and create a common ground for joint implementation of projects intended for promoting the literacy of the region.
 - contribute to increasing the number of functional and multi-functional literates as defined by UNESCO, and to social, cultural and economic development of the region.
 - develop and implement literacy projects jointly with UNESCO.
 - develop projects on adult literacy, which is one of the problematic areas of

literacy both in our country and all countries across the world, in order to facilitate promotion of basic literacy skills in formal education.

- contribute to literacy development of children with learning disability, who are considered disadvantages group, through “reading and writing in special training/education” projects.
- develop school projects aimed at increasing students’ interest in reading and improving their attitudes towards reading. Thus, students will be inculcated reading habit and reading culture at all levels of schools.
- considering the fact that literacy begins in the family, is shaped at pre-school institutions, and improved at schools, take first steps to attain the literate society goal through family and pre-school projects.
- finally, change the city culture by bringing up literate individuals through neighbouring, town and city projects. Such a change will contribute to change and transformation of the society, serving as a model for other cities in a specific region.

Steps of Implementation

The Literacy Academy is a project aimed at development of an organization model peculiar to our country.

The Literacy Academy that aims for social transformation for Turkey will be structured as a research centre, education centre, and project development and implementation centre. This organization will be created through the following stages:

1. First Stage: “**Current literacy level**” of both towns will be determined using a number of research and analysis techniques. (There are scales developed at Marmara University, and subjected to validation and reliability tests, which can be used in these researches and studied.)
2. Second Stage: “**Current status of literacy studies**” conducted in the world will be investigated using document review method. Examples from the United States of America, the United Kingdom, France and Germany will be examined during these studies.
3. Third Stage: The current and the required literacy levels will be studied systematically. Studies will be carried out to determine the “**required literacy level**” in our country based on the social change and technological advances in the world.
4. Fourth Stage: An “action plan” will be prepared to put the resulting recommendations into practice to the extent of the realities of the country and possibilities of the region and province. (*This action plan will contain arrangements relating*

to laws and regulations, application recommendations for administrative and civilian authorities, activities required to be carried out to achieve the expected level in the region and province, as well as projects based on models existing in the world and original projects.)

5. Fifth Stage: At the end of the first year, the progress made in each stage of all studies and model development operations conducted within the scope of the Project will be reported. In case of continuance of the Project, the studies and researches conducted for the purpose of literacy level will be repeated, and the developments and improvements achieved will be determined through statistical analyses. The final report will be submitted to the Office of the Governor, Ministry of National Education and Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

Finally, all researches, studies and activities carried out since the establishment of the Academy will be interpreted and a model fitting the conditions of our country, region and province will be developed accordingly. The recommendations will be published into a book titled “**A Social Transformation Project: Literacy Academy**”.

The concept on which the Literacy Academy will be established is “literacy”. This main concept of education has changed in terms of the contents from the 1950s to 1980s and 1990s and today (Aşıcı, 2009). Particularly the United States of America and the European countries, especially Austria, have established many institutes and centres to educate and develop their citizens in line with this change; and thousands of literacy programs and projects have been developed and implemented at these centres.

The main reason of this change is the studies showing the connection of literacy with intellectual skills, communication and socializations, and the rapid developments in the information and communications technologies after the 1990s. In an attempt to create a common concept in the world, UNESCO defined literacy in three levels: basic, functional and multi-functional. After the 1990s, the scope of the concept has enhanced and started to be used as a concept corresponding to “analysis, understanding and interpretation” skills of humans (Güneş, 1997). Subsequently, people have started to talk about new types of literacy such as information literacy, internet literacy, technology literacy, universal literacy, etc (Altun, 2005).

All sociological and technological advances in the world have led to a major change in the concept of literacy. In this modern world, where most of the population becomes urbanized, and gets more and more complicated with increasing urbanization, literacy is perceived as a matter related to development and future of countries. (Sanders, 2010) The Literacy Academy is a project that will bring this perception and approach in the world to our country.

The most important characteristic of the Project is that it will be implemented under an academic roof like its counterparts in the world, on the provincial and regional basis, and under the patronage of a governmental organization such as the office of the governor representing the government. In this respect, the Literacy Academy proposes a new model for our country. The model emphasizes that education does not merely consist of schooling, but that all citizens must involve in personal and social development activity.

The Literacy Academy is a centre that will determine the literacy status of the region and province using scientific methods, and facilitate development of solutions based on the information thus obtained. Reporting the results of the studies and researches to the office of governor, town governor as well as to the concerned ministries will enable problems to be solved based on actual situations.

Another feature of the Project is that the Literacy Academy will be the top unit organizing seminars, workshops, conferences, and developing projects related to literacy. Project supports will be provided to everyone desiring to develop projects, and thus, all social layers of the society will be supported to become literates at varying levels, to create a literate society.

A considerable portion of the projects to be developed and implemented by the Literacy Academy will be carried out at schools. These projects will target a change and transformation in teachers, students and parents in the first place.

Today, literacy projects are implemented through joint projects and resources provided by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture and Ministries of Internal and Foreign Affairs in countries such as France and Germany (Eurydice, 2011). And in the United States of America, Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom, as mentioned above, they are rather implemented by non-governmental organizations, foundations and private institutions and organizations, even though they are organized by the government. In Turkey, only basic literacy projects were implemented under patronage of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey until recent years. But as from 2009, the "Turkey Reads" became the first ever project to focus on functional literacy. In this sense, functional literacy activities have already been initiated in Turkey. The Literacy Academy will be a step taken to institutionalize this initiative in the form of a non-governmental organization.

Management of the Literacy Academy will be easy, based on a simple hierarchic structure such as those of other non-governmental organizations. In this structure, a board of directors consisting of volunteers working with social responsibility feeling, and one representative from the sponsor, a President responsible for overall operations of the organization, secretary, accountant, and project assistants will constitute the

main roof of the Literacy Academy. All operations of the organization will be conducted on the basis of projects.

In this respect, the Literacy Academy will be an original non-governmental organization on account of the following:

The Academy will develop the projects itself;

Motivate concerned people to develop projects, provide information with respect to developing projects, and provide support to implementation of such projects;

It will be an effective and guiding supreme institution in implementation of projects, finding sponsors for individuals and organizations developing projects, and providing facilities for implementation.

If the Literacy Academy can be sustained, its operational problems will be eliminated and the Academy will be developed within four years to become a National Literacy Academy suiting the conditions of Turkey. All these model development activities will also be monitories in terms of management and operation of the organization, and progress reports will be prepared.

Following establishment of the Literacy Academy, the experience and knowledge gained during the first year will be used in other branches to be established in other provinces and regions. This project to be initiated in the Marmara Region will be spread throughout the country in provinces desiring to establish a Literacy Academy under the patronage of the governor of that province. These branches to be opened in one province in a specific region will operate on the basis of the same model as per a protocol to be concluded. At the end of the fourth year, Literacy Academies will have been established in all 7 regions of Turkey. It will be possible to open branches of the Academy in other provinces within each region. Finally, having completed the trial and development stages, the non-governmental organization model will be submitted to the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey to request their support and patronage. Likewise, at the end of the first four years, operations will be initiated to make this autonomous and non-governmental organization to become a National Literacy Academy that will be effective in planning and guiding the future of the country.

Institutions For Collaboration

Support of the Governor is considered highly important for Istanbul, where the project will be first implemented. The fact that the National Literacy Academy to be established if this first project becomes successful will be under patronage of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey will be an indication of the importance attached by the government to the issue.

It should be noted here that the relation between development of literacy and development of the country has already been recognized by the highest public authorities, and actions have been taken by governors to raise awareness across the country. The Basic Literacy campaigns conducted under the auspices of the spouse of the President for many years provide reading and writing skills to adults, but for the first time in 2009, a campaign matching the literacy understanding of the developed countries was initiated with the “Turkey Reads” campaign. Activities carried out by the offices of the governors within the framework of this campaign aroused interest of the public, and particularly of educators, in literacy, allowing the public to understand, albeit slightly, the importance of literacy in development of individuals and the society. Here, the Literacy Academy will drive this process further, and serve as a non-governmental organization assisting the government to fulfil this mission.

On the other hand, because provincial governors are extremely busy, they are unable to be efficient and effective as expected, although they attach importance to the issue that is under their responsibility. Establishment of the Literacy Academy by an educational and scientific institution like university, effective position of scientists in this organization, and being implemented under patronage of the governors will give confidence to those who want to develop and implement relevant projects, and particularly to individuals and companies who want to sponsor the education projects.

On the other hand, the Literacy Academy, whose core field of activity will be an educational concept, i.e. literacy, will facilitate governors’ responsibilities related to education. Patronage of a university, and of the offices of the governor as the representative of the government, will enhance the prestige of this non-governmental organization for those who want to develop, implement, take part in projects, and those who want to provide financial support to these projects. It will encourage the people who want to develop projects, honour those who take part in such projects, and please the sponsors with correct use of the funds provided by them.

As mentioned above, Literacy Projects are supported by the Ministries of Education, Culture and Internal Affairs in European countries and the United States of America. All projects and activities to be implemented and carried out by the Literacy Academy will be supported by the Ministries of Education, Culture and Internal Affairs in this project. The Literacy Academy will cooperate with the concerned ministries and their units as necessary, within the framework of protocols. Particularly, the permanent personnel to be employed at the research and development and education units of the Academy, as well as in the accounting department and secretarial office, will consist of individuals who will be appointed by these authorities in line with the respective protocols. All appointed and volunteer personnel will serve under management of the President and Board of Directors of the Academy.

Studies and researches conducted show that productivity and peace increase in countries, depending on the basic functional and multi-functional literacy status of individuals as defined by UNESCO. Therefore, the Literacy Academy will be effective in achieving civil peace, enhancing welfare, decreasing unemployment and crimes by enabling individual development and affecting the social, cultural and economic development of the society in the region it is established. In this sense, the Literacy projects receive support particularly from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Labour in European countries.

It is directly related to being functional literate that our citizens living abroad maintain their language and culture, and become qualified and peaceful individuals of the country they live in. All these matter fall within the area of responsibility and interest of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Turkey. The Literacy Academy can develop projects in this field as well jointly with the countries where our citizens live. In this respect, the Academy will be able to receive and implement projects from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Literacy Academy Project is a social transformation project prepared by the academic members of the Marmara University. For this reason, the first branch will be established in Istanbul, and then the administrative centre will be Istanbul. Activities required for establishment of the Academy in other provinces will be carried out in two towns of Istanbul, exemplifying Turkey. The Literacy Academy will conduct all literacy assessments and activities aimed at raising awareness about the subject, as well as all relevant project activities in Uskudar and Beykoz towns of Istanbul.

The Literacy Academy is a project that will develop these two towns in terms of education and culture in the short term, and in economic terms in the long term. It is undisputable that it will take time to have the fruits of all activities to be carried out by the Academy, as in all other educational investments. Social development problems and educational and cultural problems of the society are the result of accumulation of the same during past years. These problems will be gradually solved through projects that receive broad participation from the people living in the region, not merely with administrative measures.

As is known, governors in Turkey are **“authorized and responsible for contributing to social and cultural development”** under the Special Provincial Administration Law Number 5302. It is believed that the Literacy Academy that will be established within the Marmara University under patronage of the Governor of Istanbul will draw interest and provide services on account of the following reasons:

- Businessmen, top level administrators or their spouses of both regions will develop projects or participate in projects based on the social responsibility feelings. What is more, written and oral appreciation of such projects by a top-level bureaucrat like governor will add prestige to these activities.
- The literacy projects to be implemented under patronage and support of the governors will also draw attention of the industrialists, businessmen, concerned non-governmental organizations and craftsmen in the region. Because all activities will be identified with the governor that represents the government, this fact will provide confidence to those who want to participate in such projects, enabling them to do so with contentment.
- Intellectuals, educators, artists and teachers in these regions will embrace these projects, which are reliable and in the limelight of the public, as a social mission.
- The Academy will also provide guidance to the project coordinators in finding projects, developing projects and finding financial support.
- The Literacy Academy will be a serious organization for companies and charitable individuals desiring to provide financial support to education and culture within the framework of social responsibility.
- The Academy will be able to request a share from the budget of the Special Provincial Administration, which is a legal entity, for the projects to be implemented, in addition to the financial support from individuals and companies.
- Social Service Applications should be a course that needs to be taught on project basis at the Faculties of Education of Universities. Within the scope of this course, university students will develop and implement literacy projects jointly with professors and academic members.
- In addition to the school and family projects, the Literacy Academy will provide direct and indirect contributions to education of teachers and families through seminars and conferences intended for the same.

Expected Results

In case of realisation of the Project, the contributions it will make to education of individuals and the country, and to development of the society are summarized below:

- The Literacy Academy will produce substantial information obtained using scientific methods on the literacy status of our country through many researches and studies to be conducted on children's interest in reading, use of libraries, publication of books, situation of the school libraries, etc. Determinations and information thus obtained will enable the educators and administrators to take more purposeful steps towards elimination of pertinent problems.

- The data bank and the specialization library to be established in such an organization will enable easy access to information about literacy, and scientist, intellectuals and public will be continuously informed of the developments via an e-journal and website.
- This Organization, whose principal field of activity will be literacy, will serve as a centre where projects are developed, and subsequently as a forum where ideas and opinions relating to the literacy problems of the country are discussed.
- The Literacy Academy will serve as an assistant non-governmental organization in implementation of the projects of the Ministry of National Education and Ministry of Culture.
- The Literacy Academy will serve as a stakeholder, partner or contact organization for European Union Projects relating to literacy.
- The Literacy Academy will serve as a model for other countries, particularly to those countries speaking Turkish.
- The Academy will provide support to projects of Yunus Emre Culture Centres aimed at development of the literacy of Turkish people living abroad.
- Adults will be provided with basic literacy skills and students will be inculcated reading habits through special projects.
- The Academy will provide assistance to new generations and particularly the people living in cities to become information and communication technology literates.
- The Academy will play an important role in enabling parents and teachers serving at pre-school institutions to know how they can contribute to literacy development of the children.

The Academy will also serve as a training and culture centre to enable parents and teachers serving at preschool institutions to bring up well-educated and intellectual people in the city and the region.

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