

„Best-Practice“ public libraries in Turkey: İzmir, Van and Bartın/Ulus Public Libraries

Turkish public libraries have had some serious problems for a long time. A central public library system is lacking, there is no national organisational strategy, also an insufficient number of personnel and financial means as well as non-functional school libraries are some of the major reasons that account for this negative situation. Nevertheless, some cases of „Best-Practice“ have been achieved under these hardend conditions. For instance İzmir Atatürk Province Public Library is a good example of „Best-Practice“ from Western Turkey, so are the Van Province Public Library from Eastern Turkey and the Bartın/Ulus Public Library from Northern Turkey.

Öffentliche Bibliotheken als „Best-Practice“ in der Türkei

Die Öffentlichen Bibliotheken in der Türkei haben seit langem einige beträchtliche Probleme. Ein zentrales Bibliothekssystem für Öffentliche Bibliotheken fehlt, es gibt keine landesweite Planung, zu wenig Personal und Mittel sowie funktionsuntüchtige Schulbibliotheken sind einige der Hauptgründe für die negative Situation. Dennoch gibt es einige Beispiele für „Best-Practice“, die unter diesen Bedingungen erreicht wurden: die Izmir Atatürk Provinzbibliothek ist ein gutes Beispiel aus dem Westen, die Van Provinzbibliothek aus dem Osten und die Bartın/Ulus Öffentliche Bibliothek aus dem Norden der Türkei.

Les pratiques les meilleures dans les bibliothèques publiques en Turquie: les bibliothèques publiques d'Izmir, Van et Bartın/Ulus

Depuis longtemps les bibliothèques publiques turques s'affrontent à de sérieux problèmes. Le système central de bibliothèques publiques, le manque d'une stratégie nationale, le nombre insuffisant du personnel, le budget et les bibliothèques scolaires qui ne marchent pas, sont les raisons principales de la situation négative. Néanmoins on observe quelques exemples d'une bonne pratique qui individuellement remplissent ces conditions. La Bibliothèque de province Atatürk à Izmir est un bel exemple à l'ouest de la Turquie, la Bibliothèque de province Van à l'est, et la Bibliothèque publique Bartın / Ulus au nord de la Turquie.

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İZMİR Atatürk Province Public Library



Situated on western Turkey, by the coast of the Aegean Sea and with a history of 8 500 years, İzmir is the third largest city of Turkey, with a population of three million. All the financing and collection necessities of İzmir Atatürk Provincial Public Library, which has been serving as an affiliate of the General Directorate of Libraries and Publications of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism since 1973, are covered by the central government. Local governance also supports the library financially in collection development and other subjects. Volunteer users and students within social voluntary projects are working in various units of the library as well as its own staff. 2003, when the PULMAN-XT Project was applied together with Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir provincial public libraries, has been a significant progress year in the service diversity for Atatürk Provincial Public Library, and the Internet Access Center intended for children and adults is a visible result of this project.

The library, which has been elected to the list of top ten libraries of Turkey in the year 2007, has a comprehensive

children's section, a book lending service, a research hall, a cultural activities hall (with a capacity of 220 people), an exhibition hall and periodicals hall. The library collection and services are online and can be accessed via the internet since 1998. One of the most distinctive features of Atatürk Provincial Public Library which clearly differentiates it from the rest, is the service given to the Visually Impaired. Braille books and audio books produced in this section are lent to the visually impaired individuals all around the country. Two visually impaired employees and 38 volunteer readers are working in this department. Internet service is also available for the visually impaired.

The Library has four branches. These branches are spread in different districts around the city. Besides this, the Atatürk Public Library guides, audits and coordinates all the

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local public libraries in staff education, building-up their collections, development of service variety and effectiveness.



III. 1: İzmir Atatürk Province Public Library

Books, periodicals, movie CDs, music CDs and all other materials are announced to the members (users) by means of bulletin boards and e-mails. Furthermore, new publications and newly subscribed periodicals are exhibited in the library for some period of time. „Mobile library” provides service to 17 districts which does not have a library.



III. 2

The activities offered to users by the library are as follows:

- Each year, a reader among the children and adults is elected and rewarded as „the reader of the year”.
- Brochures which introduce the services of the library are distributed to a large number of people.
- Nylon bags with printed information about the library are given to library users to carry the materials they have borrowed.
- Informative bookmarks are given to the library users.
- The library and its services are introduced during the İzmir Book Fair which is held each year in İzmir.
- Conferences are organized in the library on the various topics such as personal development, public relations, history, archeology, art and etc.
- The staff is given on-the-job training with a special emphasis on public relations.

- Writer-reader meetings are organized both in the children and adult sections.
- Training about the use of library is carried out in the elementary and middle schools in collaboration with the Provincial Directorate of National Education.
- Theatre plays for children are organized both in the Library and also in the branches in collaboration with İzmir Ege University Society Volunteers Foundation.
- Seminars are provided to the Municipality library personnel about library management.
- The library personnel read books in different squares of the city with the users in 2007 Library week, using the slogan „İzmir is Reading Books” and the read books are given as gifts to the participants.



III. 3

The activities which are planned for 2008 are the following:

- Bringing writers and readers together.
- Discussions of chosen books in the visually-impaired section with the volunteer users and the encouragement of the visually-impaired users to participate more in the social activities.
- A teaching course will be opened for the visually-impaired who does not know how to use the Braille writing system.
- Conferences and panels on various topics which are of great interest in general public.
- Nylon bags and bookmarks with information about the library will continue to be distributed.
- To open libraries in two districts that does not have a library, in collaboration with civil society organizations and universities in leadership of our library.
- To introduce the library services in İzmir Book Fair.
- To visit care-homes for the elderly and read books aloud to the old people.

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