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GRANT SCHEME FOR PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS



READING CULTURE MAPPING STUDY OCTOBER 2019

ORTAKLIKLAR ve AĞLAR HİBE PROGRAMI // GRANT SCHEME FOR PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS



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INTRODUCTION

This report comprises of the results of the Mapping Study carried out by the YADA Foundation (“Yaşama Dair Vakıf”, YADA) for the Dissemination of Reading Culture (OKUYAY) Project implemented by the Turkish Publishers Association.

Aim

The aim of the study was to map the levels and types of contributions to reading culture by civil society organisations and other non-institutional individuals and organisations who are directly or indirectly involved in the development and wide spreading of reading culture. In light of this aim, the objective was to collect the opinions of the motivations of joining the network of the Turkish Publishers Association, their expectations of the network and possible contribution that they could make and to establish a database. In addition, it was aimed to put forward the perceptions and approaches that came to the forefront regarding the various aspects of reading culture for the so-mentioned individuals and organisations.

Scope

This study includes in its scope civil society organisations, university communities, community centres, informal groups and individuals contributing to reading culture. The criteria of producing content related to reading, having the capacity to produce content and having a power of impact was considered as a basis when identifying the so-mentioned individuals and organisations to be included in the scope.

The scope of the study extended to the provinces of Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, Diyarbakır, Adana, Bursa, Samsun, and Kocaeli, to meet the needs of the OKUYAY Project. With the purpose of providing diversity, the provinces of Muğla, Muş, and Şanlıurfa were included in the mapping study. In addition to the related organisations in the identified regions of the study, interviews were also held with opinion leaders bookstores that have a say and conduct activities related to reading culture (in addition to their commercial activities).

Method

The mapping study was conducted in two stages.

➤ Desk Study

A desk study was conducted to establish the current population for reading culture in Turkey and a list of approximately 300 individuals and organisations was created. The list was established by screening the NGO databases and informal groups and by a review of the social media accounts of persons conducting activities in the topic area. The individuals and organisations directly or indirectly conducting activities regarding the topic area were categorised according to aims. By using this list, a sample was selected according to the aims of the project and which would be most reflective of the population and would provide the details desired in the study.

➤ **In-depth Interviews**

Face-to-face in-depth interviews lasting approximately 1 hour was held with 150 individuals and representatives of organisations selected as a sample during the desk study. During the interviews, other participants were reached by means of the snowball method. The websites, publications, products and documents of the individuals and organisations met were reviewed. A database was established with the data collected by means of open-ended questions during the interviews and information about the below listed headings.

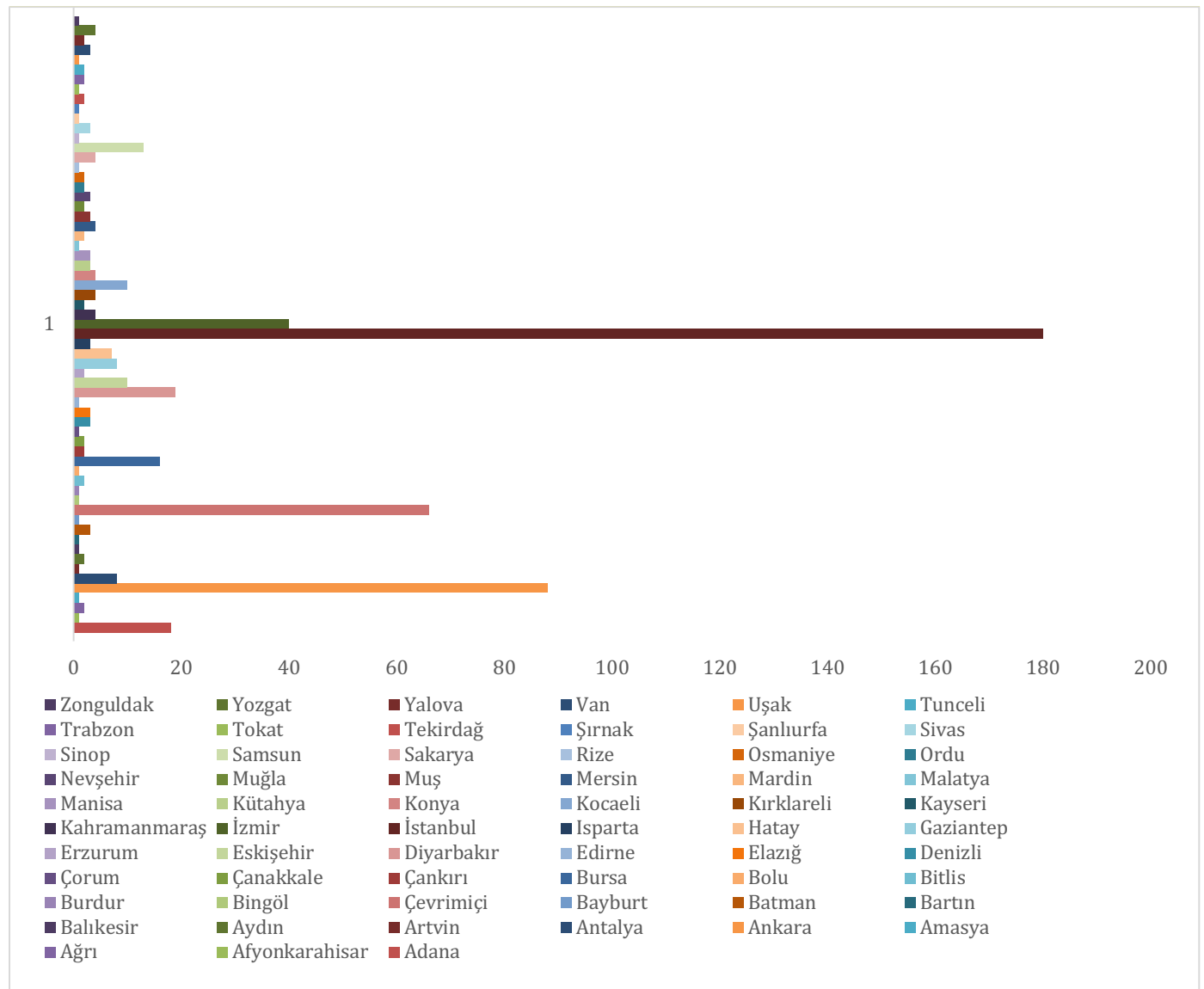
- Name
- Type of organisation
- Province
- Target Group
- Thematic Area
- Activities
- Projects
- How many of all activities, are reading culture activities?
- Relevance to the topic (Direct/Indirect)
- Frequency of project implementation
- Level of cooperation
- Reasons for avoiding cooperation
- The Perspective of the Network
- Gains from the Network
- Contributions to the Network
- Leaning toward the topic / Motivation
- Level of impact
- Activity level
- Website, social media accounts, contact information

PROFILE

Regional Distribution

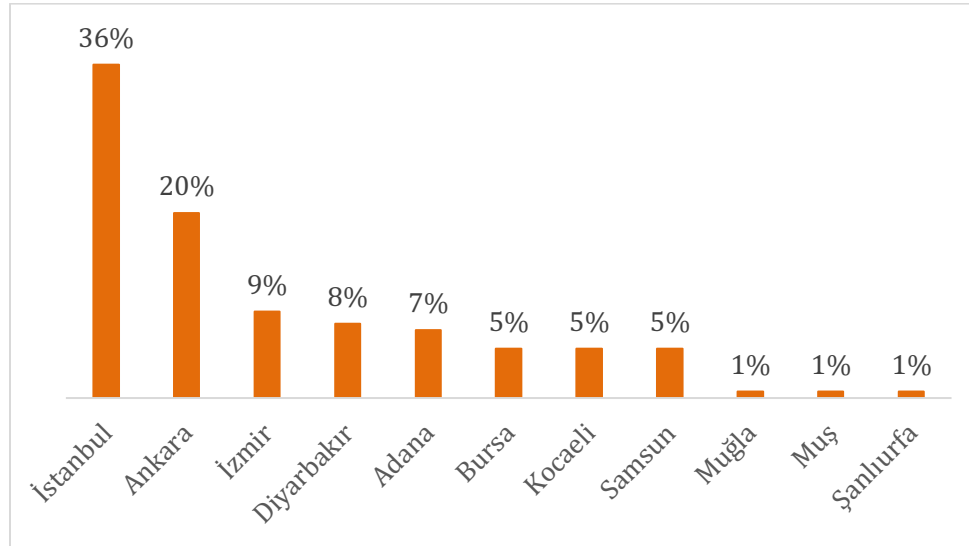
A review of individuals and organisations which conduct activities on reading culture shows that the highest concentration is in Istanbul, followed by the province of Ankara. Provinces of Izmir, Diyarbakır, and Adana are also provinces where there is a concentration of reading culture groups, with small differences between them. These five provinces are the most active in regard to reading culture activities. (See Graph 1)

Graph 1: Distribution of individuals and organisations according to province



The distribution of interviews/meetings by province as held in light of the data provided by the general distribution is given in the graphic.

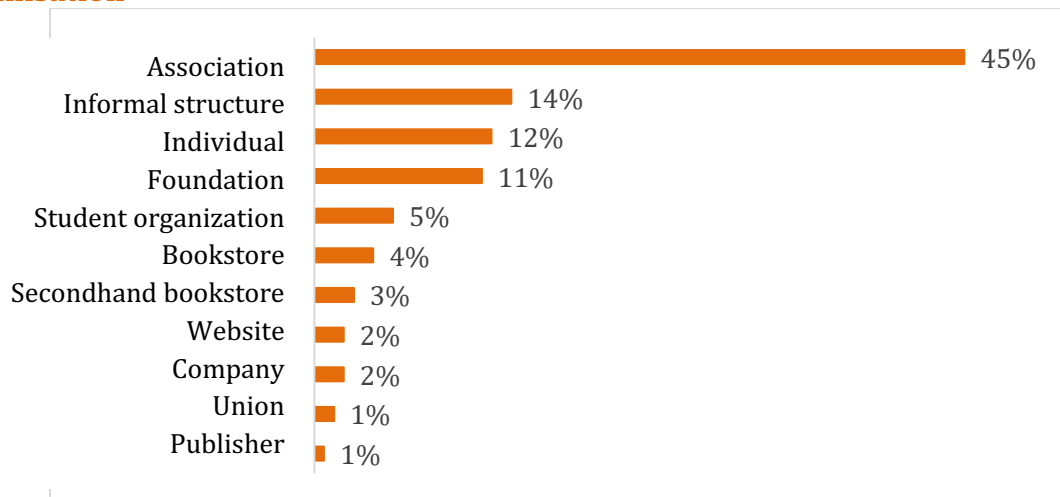
Graphic 2: Distribution of individuals and organisations met



Distribution According to Type of Organisation

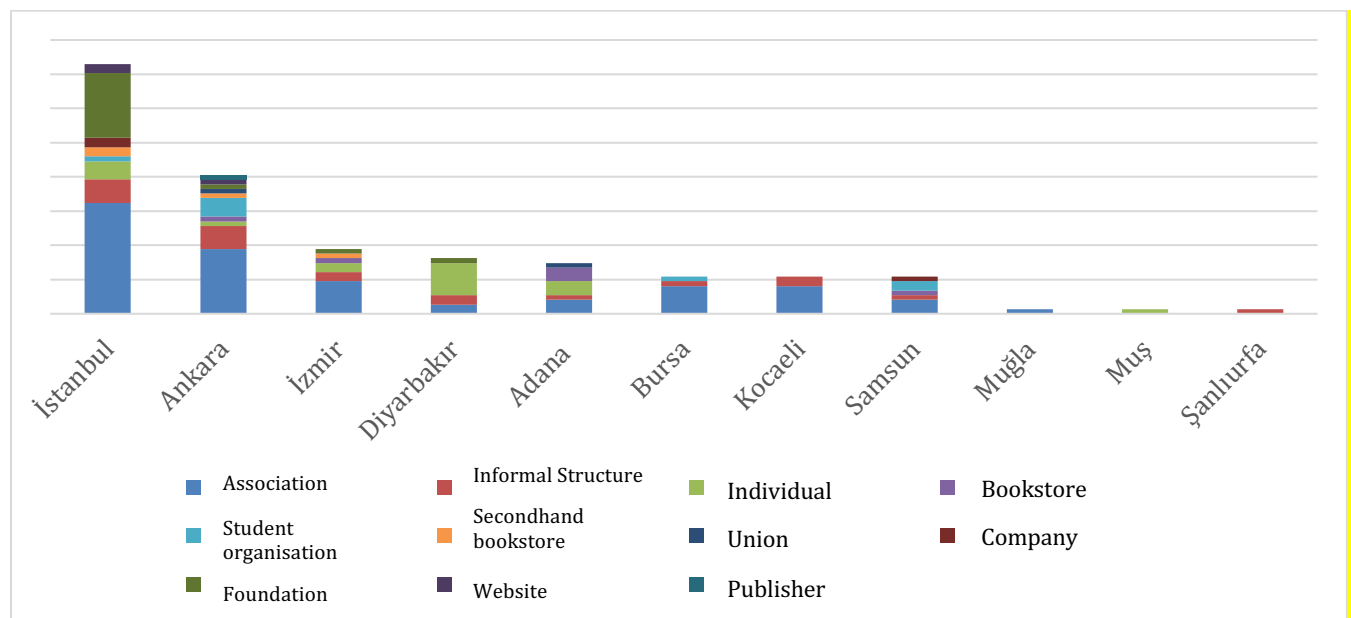
An assessment of the interviews conducted about reading culture with related organisations, it was seen that the most common type of organisation was in the form of associations and that other organisational structures were less common. Informal organisational structures and individuals follow the associations. (See Graph 2)

Graph 3: Distribution of individuals and organisations met according to type of organisation



An assessment of the types of organisations according to province shows that the top three provinces with a concentration of associations are Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. (See Graphic 3) Among these three provinces, Istanbul differs from the other three provinces as having a higher concentration of foundations, whereas in Ankara, the number of student organisations is higher in amount. In the example of Diyarbakır, it is interesting to see that individuals are more than organised structures. This may be explained by the limitations of civil society movements in the region and by stronger informal relationships. A general evaluation shows that, excluding the provinces of Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir, individual and informal structures are organised at the local level to establish reading groups as the need arises, in addition to the branches and volunteers of associations based in Istanbul and Ankara.

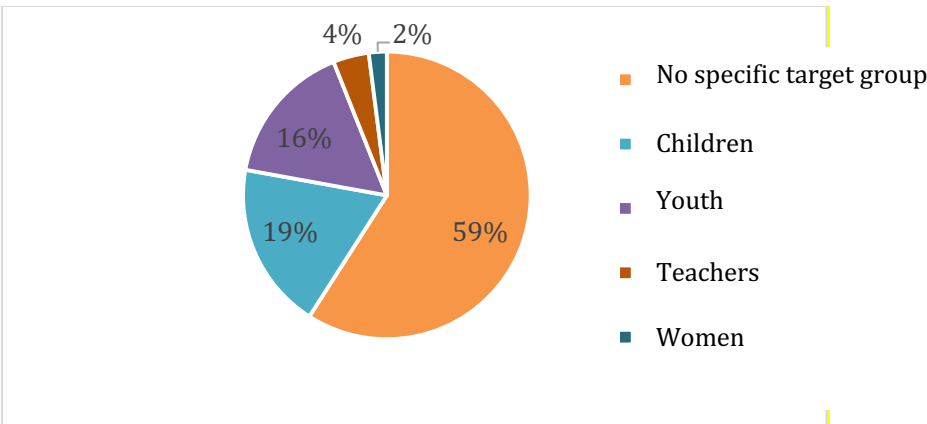
Graph 4: Distribution of types of organisation according to province



Distribution According to Target Group

It can be seen that activities of individuals or organisations related to reading culture are generally not specifically targeted to a group. However, as can be seen in the graph, reading culture activities for children and youth are exceptionally common and individuals and organisations which conduct activities for adults are limited (Graph 4). Moreover, it was observed that, while individuals and organisations targeting children and youth generally stay loyal to their objectives, while those targeting teachers and women generally expand in their scope and thus also lean towards children.

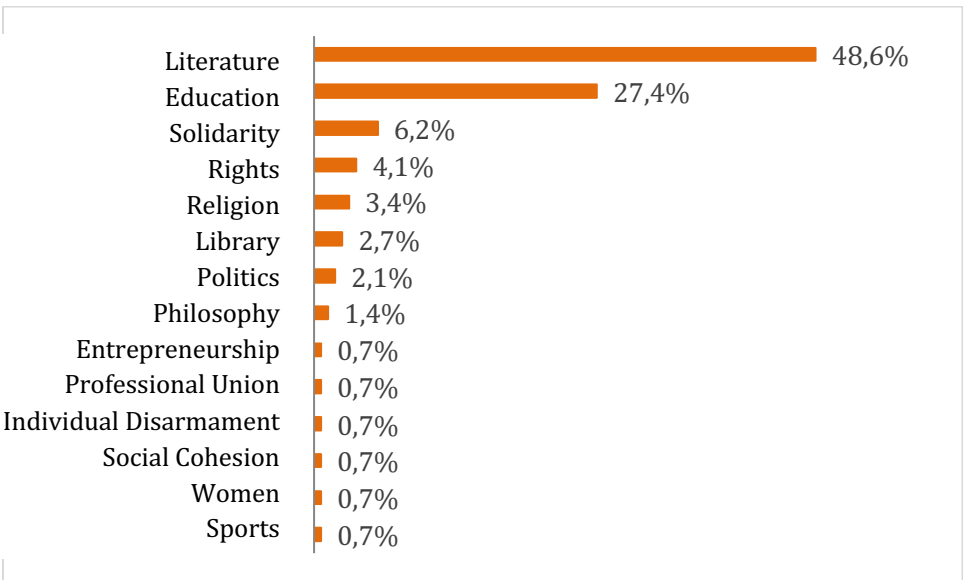
Graph 5: Distribution of target groups met



Thematic Distribution

A review of the thematic distribution graph according to the aims of individuals and organisations shows that the highest level of contribution is in the areas of literature and education, followed by the contributions of individuals and groups focused on solidarity, religion, and rights (Graph 5). In addition, those active in other thematic areas generally have an indirect contribution; however, it is observed that the contributions are activity-based.

Graph 6: Distribution of thematic areas in meetings/interviews



Activities Conducted

As a result of an analysis of activities conducted by persons and organisations in the area of reading culture, it was seen that the below activity types are most commonly conducted.

- Reading activity
- Book donations
- Establishing a library
- Establishing a reading group
- Meeting and interviews with authors
- Workshop activities
- Producing academic publications (on reading, language development, critical thinking skills)
- Reaching readers and/or social groups with online and printed publications
- Organising festivals

Reading activities can be organised in two different ways: regular and irregular. They can also be organised as a closed activity of the community or organisation or it can be open to the general public. It is observed that, in general, a theme is identified in line with the organisations' objectives and the activity is conducted as a "meet up". **Reading groups** differ from reading activities that they are organised as a more regular and systematic meet up activity. It is observed that almost all organised groups, such as associations, foundations, unions and especially religion-based organisations with related activities, have a reading group. Reading group meetings comprise of a meeting program, reading activity and an evaluation of the text read. It is stated that the impact of the reading activity on its own is weak and should be followed by a discussion and evaluation process.

Activities organised for book donations are among the most common activities which contribute to the reading culture of individuals and organisations. This activity is generally conducted on a volunteer basis and occasionally books can be collected by the initiative of the private sector and publishers. The **activity of establishing a library** can be thought of as a more systematic next step on from book donations. It is observed that the process generally follows the steps of getting in touch with a school or regional representative in need, establishing cooperation to allocate a suitable location, setting up shelves at the location and provision of choice of materials (such as computers, chess, games, tables, chairs) and to establish the library according to preference.

It is found that activities such as **meetings and interviews with authors** are organised by professional associations (such as poetry or writer associations). In addition to their

commercial activity, bookstores also organise such events to act as a meeting platform for authors and readers.

Organisations which contribute to reading culture by **producing academic publications** are generally those which carry out studies with their own resources while stating that they require support to be able to conduct wider scale research studies.

It was seen that web-based communities contribute by **creating recommended reading lists, sharing reviews and publishing interviews conducted with authors** with their readers. Some of these websites (i.e. “Ne Okuyorum”) **collect data** about reading habits.

Although limited, the related organisations organise **ateliers, festivals, workshops and symposiums** related to reading culture. The “*Kiraathane İstanbul Edebiyat Evi*”, which is a company legal entity located in Istanbul comes to the forefront in this aspect.

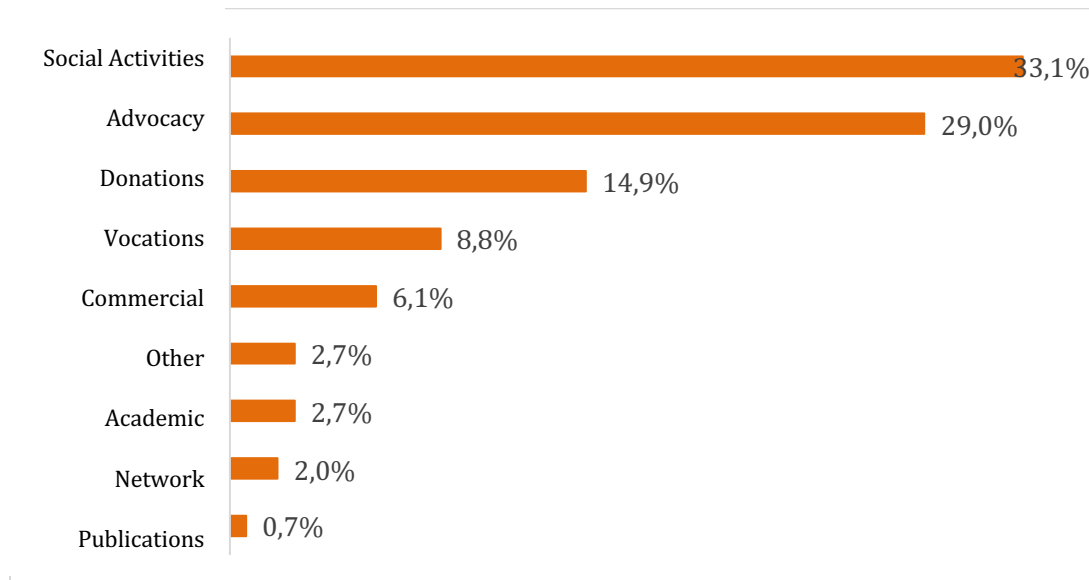
Motivation

It is observed that the motivation of the dispositions of individuals and organisations related to reading culture (or in other words, the activities which are implemented) differ. Their motivations are closely related to the aims of their organisation for continuing their reading activities. When reviewed categorically, the dispositions may be listed as follows:

- ✓ Social activities
- ✓ Advocacy
- ✓ Donations
- ✓ Vocations
- ✓ Commercial
- ✓ Academic
- ✓ Network
- ✓ Publications

The prevalence of motivation behind reading culture activities can be seen in the graphic below. (See Graphic 7)

Graph 7: Motivations of individuals and organisations in the area of reading culture



Advocacy activities, which are mostly conducted by legal entities such as associations or foundations, were conducted with the aim of acquiring a habit of reading, establishing reading habits, producing and sharing content related to the topic, establishing and maintaining cooperation. Another area which may be considered as a part of advocacy activities are **academic** motivations. Most of academic knowledge production seems to be focused on how to ensure changes in behaviour and attitude in regard to reading.

It was seen that for those who establish their connection with the topic with the motivation of **social activities** are generally informal organisations and conduct activities aimed toward socialisation, establishing a platform for discussion, exchange and collaborate.

Motivation with a **professional** focus is generally held by individuals of a particular professional group, such as second-hand book dealers or teachers, and it is observed that their activities related to reading culture are generally indirect.

It was observed that a limited number of groups who aimed at establishing a **network** was actually the groups with the highest impact area and that they mostly made efforts to create a network with their own activities (such as by means of a library they had established), rather than attempting to bring together work conducted in the related field.

Legal entities conducting **commercial** activities are not in the scope of the study but are an important profile in the region in terms of reading culture and it was stated that although they are companies, many of their staff are working free of charge.

PERCEPTIONS and APPROACHES

Perception of Reading Culture

Common opinion: “There is no reading culture in Turkey”

In general, reading culture is mentioned alongside the concept of “**habit**” which goes hand in hand with processes such as critical thinking skills and comprehension (of what is being read) (Figure 1). The general perception is that there is no reading culture in Turkey. Among the most common reasons for this were as follows:

- Effects of the education system,
- Reading habits are not gained at childhood,
- No quality reading environments,
- Preference for reading visual tools of technology, and
- High level of use of social media.

It is thought that the family is the most influential structure at the micro level in regard to the **acquisition of reading behaviour/habits**. This is followed by peers and those individuals who are non-family members. Role models and the activities they implement (reading activities, book donations, and reviews, etc) also have an impact. It was stated that activities conducted in rural areas and villages are considered important by students and the local community and a “connection is established” with reading culture. Associations that conduct activities especially such as book donations and establishing libraries emphasise the importance of **updating** the books in addition to establishing the library and **sustained** communication with those responsible for the library.

A few numbers of participants who believe that a reading culture exists in Turkey convey their opinion on personal observations (“in my opinion” or “I see people with books in their hands”) rather than substantiating their opinions on a particular basis. There are also those who state that reading done from digital sources are not measured and that if these were included in the reading percentages, then the percentages would increase. When asked to rate the reading performance of Turkey out of 100, the scores are below average, despite the

high scores given (40) by those who believe a reading culture exists. The scores are between 20 and 40.

"(...) I don't think it's too bad, I have hope. I cannot say none. I am seeing people with books in their hand more often, that's why I said 40."

(Association employee, M.A.)

"I would say at most 40, and that's at best."

(Member of informal structure, L.Ö.)

Recommendation for Solution:

➤ People should be far more exposed to books

It was seen that higher visibility of books and people reading books and book related posts on social networks have an impact on triggering behaviour, especially in children and young people. This is the foundational idea behind establishing a library. There is the opinion that reading activities should not be limited to encouraging reading or giving books as gifts, but they should be followed up with a process of evaluation and exchange.

"The child should at least see books on a shelf; at a certain point, they will take interest in books."

(Individual, E.A.)

➤ Books should evoke "curiosity" and "desire"

The common opinion of those conducting activities on reading culture is that books should be presented as rewards instead of a punishment. It is emphasised that rather than being presented with a reward for reading books, the incentive to attain book should be the reward in the steps leading to it. It was understood that mechanisms such as curiosity, popularity, author, book cover, recommendations, etc. had an effect on whether a book was read or not.

➤ A culture of sharing should be supported

It is thought that the number of book sales do not reflect the rate of reading. The culture of sharing and especially reading of downloaded e-books or pdf format books are emphasised. It is recommended to conduct a study concerning reading, where figures for digital reading and borrowing from libraries are included. However, e-books and digital sources are generally preferred with the aim of conducting academic research and those who already have a reading habit. Further, the materials gain importance when they are accessible by more than one person, free of charge in reading activities of reading groups. Mobile libraries are important in terms of exposure and ease of access. Individual initiatives such as the

'Library Donkey' or the 'Cycling Librarian' are frequently shown as examples of best practices for mobile libraries.

Evaluation of Opportunities for Reading

When access to books is mentioned, the first thing that generally comes to mind is ordering books online or purchasing from bookstores. Book fairs are not preferred when purchasing books as the rate of discounts are lower in comparison to the internet or bookstores. Libraries come to mind as the last source when it comes to access to books.

Access to books is no longer considered a difficulty

There is no challenge in access to books in big cities. There was mention of difficulty of access in the rural regions, where the reasons for this challenge was due to the cost of books, financial constraints, low number of bookstores and low diversity of the books distributed to these regions by publishers due to low reading rates. It is stated that the reading culture "quality" cannot develop if all books are not distributed to each province and each district.

Associations that are active in book donations and/or establishing libraries complain about the book donations, stating that donors see book donations as "clearing out trash from their homes". It was stated that there is a need to develop a culture for book donating and thus groups can better utilise their energy to distribute the books rather than trying to sort and categorise them.

e-Books and social networks facilitate access to books

It was stated that there is a negative perception towards e-books and they are not personally preferred as they do not have the "smell of books" and you "cannot hold them in your hand". However, everyone agrees that they will have a contribution to reading culture. e-Books are considered effective as they do not take up physical space and they are easy to carry. Nonetheless, as books have been associated with a smell that adds an additional sense to reading and the absence of this sense in an e-book is a criticism that is frequently mentioned.

Representatives of groups whose target group is young people and who work with youth are of the opinion that are we "accept the digital age" and "catch" the age groups who have a tendency toward e-books. The most well-known literary social network is Wattpad. It is thought to contribute to reading culture, but as it does not have a supervision mechanism, it is found to be "worrying". Besides this, it is thought that meet ups and gatherings are an opportunity for social network book groups visibility. Activities are developed on the networks. *Book fairs are crowded and do not appeal to the qualified reader*

Book fairs generally have negative associations in the perception of participants. The crowds and being likened to a marketplace are especially seen as the most irritating aspect of the fairs. They are thought of as non-functional activities in which a limited group take pleasure in. The positive aspects of fairs are commented as being enabling the opportunity for children and young people to get acquainted with and be around books, the opportunities for organising book signing events and a place where the “smell of books” is present.

Nonetheless, fairs are considered to make a contribution to reading culture because it facilitates physical access to books and is a place to get recommendations. But it is not a place for those who are seeking to “buy cheap books”. Considering that the internet sale prices and the prices at fairs are the same, fairs have lost their previous attraction for many people. It is suggested that more author-reader meet ups and activities may increase the impact of book fairs. There was frequent reminiscing of the Tepebaşı Book Fair in Istanbul. It is suggested that more than one in different parts of the city should be organised in big cities.

One of the adverse effects of fairs on reading culture suggested was that fairs organised in provinces outside the big cities lead to falls in sales of independent bookstores. It is thought by bookstores in these provinces that fairs should be organised, not as a sales area, but rather more of a platform to meet up.

“In my opinion, book fairs create a barrier for independent bookstores. Think of it like this: you sell books here, the publisher sells the book to you with a certain discount via a certain distributor. Then they sell the book at a lower or similar price in front of your door and then the independent bookstore cannot sell anything for months.”

(Bookstore, N.Ö.)

Libraries are a place for studying rather than a place for reading

Especially young people think of libraries as a place to study, to prepare for exams or to conduct academic research.

While everyone is in agreement that libraries are the cornerstone for access to books, it was seen that there were only memberships to university libraries were the case when seeking responses to the question, “do you or anyone you know have a library membership?”

Use of libraries was considerably limited. Among the reasons for a low interest in libraries, the highest ranking response was the libraries were not seen as a centre of attraction. The factors which are barriers to libraries from being centres of attraction are that there no

professions referring children to libraries, they have early closing hours, there are few libraries in cities and new releases are not added to the library.

The most common recommendations regarding libraries were increasing the capacity of libraries, increasing the diversity of books, providing comfortable reading areas and employing qualified library staff. Individuals and organisations conducting activities related to establishing a library are generally aiming to provide areas for reading. In addition to a library of books, they are also creating games areas for chess or table tennis and also computers. It is observed that their aim is to ensure the library utility is maximised.

EXPECTATIONS and POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION

Current Relationships with Stakeholders

Local administrations seem open to cooperate

A high level of cooperation is made with local administrations while conducting activities related to reading culture and the Kadıköy, Seferihisar, Nilüfer and Çankaya District Municipalities are the most cooperating. Local administrations are effective in wide spreading reading habits and are known to organisations which are open to cooperation. However, it is mentioned that reading culture activities were not a priority when developing strategic plans. No financial support is expected of local administrations, on the contrary, it is considered a factor which damages dignity. Instead, the requests to use their facilities and vehicles during reading activities, festivals, or delivering donations village schools are made and these requests are generally met.

Public institutions are found effective but non-functional

It seems necessary for establishing cooperation with public institutions regarding book donations to schools and reaching students. It is considered that public institutions are generally open to cooperation. However, examples of best practice or projects conducted by public institutions are so few that almost none come to mind. Projects implemented by public institutions are considered to be “empty vessels”, “not serving a purpose other than to have done it” and as having a “mindset of a public officer”.

“It’s bad. A public sphere is not created for us to be able to discuss these issues.”

(Individual, F.F.)

“If they wanted, people would be reading like crazy and there would be no need for us. But it’s not the case. The system needs to change. You can’t just say, here’s a building for you to use; it doesn’t work that way.”

(Association employee, M.T.)

“Thankfully, our relationships with ministries and especially the Ministry of National Education is good. They have full trust in us because the work we do is clear. Actually, if we did not establish relationships with them, we would not be able to bring books to schools, or anything...”

(Individual, E.A.)

The awareness of Public Reading Houses is considerably low. Activities conducted, the book capacity or whether people are visiting them are not known by participants. It is mentioned that the cultural codes of the concept of “reading houses” are most commonly perceived as coffee houses. They are seen as an example of public institutions as constructing buildings, not “filling” the buildings and take a barren approach in developing projects related to the topic area.

The approach of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) toward books and reading are frequently criticised. There is mention of the list of 100 Great Works and other classics are forced upon young people and children and distance them from reading habits and that the literature questions in the Secondary Education Entrance Exam lead children to memorise authors and works, rather than encouraging them to read. Reading behaviours are generally the result of initiatives of individual subject area teachers.

Despite this, as the MoNE is seen as an enforcer over the local administrations, they are seen as an effective stakeholder. It is observed that the MoNE is a strong collaborator with, especially, teacher associations.

It is expected for the private sector to be more effective

Individuals and organisations active in the area of reading culture are of the opinion that the private sector should be more effective in the acquirement of reading behaviour. It is stated that companies can provide books and that this gesture would raise their reputation. More institutionalised associations do have cooperation with private sector companies and some

founders of associations provide grant support from their own private companies to implement activities.

Private sector cooperation is generally established for bookshelves and book donations. Individuals and groups who establish libraries and make book donations consider the publishers as 'ruthless'. There is the perception that, "if they wanted to", publishers "could reduce their sales costs".

One other expectation of private sector companies is that they should become sponsors to arts and culture related programs. It is mentioned that this would contribute to, at least, creating a discussion platform about reading culture and that this platform would be valuable.

Approach to New Cooperation

Almost all interview individuals and organisation state that they are **open to contact and cooperation**, however it is observed that there is **no regular cooperation and dialogue** between themselves, except for the established associations and foundations which are working systematically. Groups implementing similar activities generally do not know of each other or they have limited dialogue. The barriers to this are stated as being the political activities of the organisations, having different political opinions to themselves, being discriminatory or gender biased or that they do not see respect for their values. Organisations such as the Supporting Modern Life Association (ÇYDD), the Mother-Child Education Foundation (AÇEV) and Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG) are seen to be associations which are providing the most contribution to reading culture.

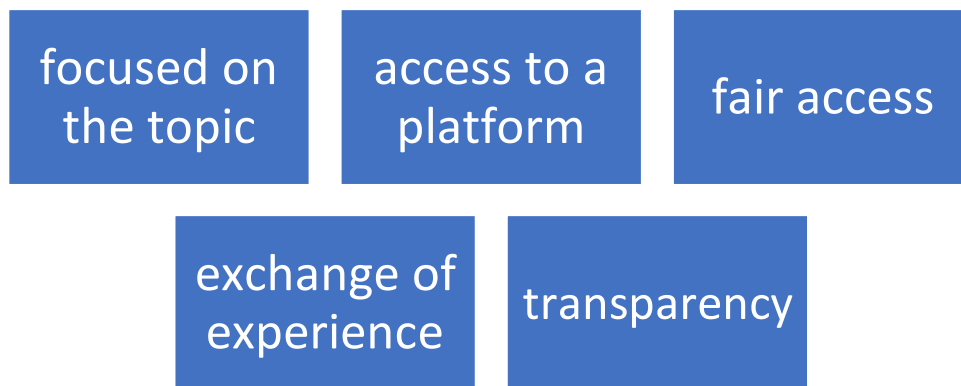
The project for establishing a network is greeted positively. Participants stated that they thought this may be the first initiative and they were 'excited' about this and they would be 'more than happy' to be a part of it. There is agreement that a strong civil society network would be effective in developing a reading culture. It was emphasised that individuals and groups could provide support and it would also be an important contribution to themselves.

Among the contributions of the network are increasing the visibility and sharing current activities and project management, especially for small scale associations.

"We want our efforts to be visible..."
(Association director, G.K.)

Other expectations of the network to be established can be summarised as follows: focusing on the topic, creating of a platform where individuals and organisations freely express

themselves, ensuring fair access for participation on the topic, exchanging examples of best practice and experiences and providing guidance and for the network and project implementers to be transparent.



On the other hand, it was also observed that the individuals and organisations did not have a clear opinion as to how they would provide a contribution to such a network.

Although few in number, there are some individuals and groups which have reservations about joining the network. The reason for this is that they use their spare time from their current activities for volunteer activities and therefore by joining the network would bring about additional responsibilities. Those whose focal point is not reading culture and who provide indirect contributions inform that they would only be able to provide limited efforts for the network. Some organisations inform that they would provide the necessary support but do not find it necessary to be in regular contact.

Concepts such as “literacy campaigns” have lost their effect on most of the individuals and organisations. They informed that the concept and aims of the project should be well explained.

EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

Among activities which contribute to reading culture, there are two projects that come to the forefront as examples of best practice:

➤ I Read, I Play Project – Educational Volunteers of Turkey (TEGV)

Aim: The main objective of this project, whose target group is children, is to increase the

motivation for literacy. TEGV aims to reach 150 thousand children with this project. The area of impact which is of a high level for the project is implemented in various cities of Turkey.

Activities: Volunteers read to children of different age groups in rooms designed as islands and which are called the Reading Island. Volunteers are provided with a 2-day training where they are informed about topics such as reading culture, creating reading and active reading. The most important feature of the room is that the children are provided with free space for movement. Before the reading event, volunteers conduct an icebreaking game which allows the children to make a connection with the content of the book they will read. Then, while one volunteer reads to the book, another volunteer shows the pictures of the book to the children. The reading activity is interrupted with questions prepared prior by the volunteers and thus an interactive activity is implemented with the children. Once the book is finished, the activity is completed with a wrap up game.

Characteristics which create a difference: Considering the basic needs of children such as playing and being active, interactive content design, volunteer training to include the perspective of reading culture

➤ Game Library Project- Children Who Read Books Platform

Aim: The Game Library Project aims to establish a children's library within municipalities, which is structured to target children between the ages of 0-6 and 6-12. It is expected that these libraries are a place where children can acquire reading habits and their families can socialise.

Activities: The platform is a room within the existing centrally located building of the municipality which is organised as a children's library. It is suggested that these libraries are organised to meet the needs of pre-school children and become an active social hub.

Characteristics that create a difference: cooperation established with municipalities, involving families in the process

➤ A World of Hope Association

Aim: The Association aims to ensure equal opportunity in education for socially disadvantaged children living in rural areas by establishing a library in their villages.

Activities: Contact is made with pre-selected schools and books are sent to the schools by means of a call for volunteer support. Once the library is established, reading activities are

implemented. Volunteers stay in the houses of the children and they continue their reading activities at the homes in which they are a guest.

Characteristics that create a difference: They conduct monitoring and evaluation activities in regard to reading behaviour and conduct reading activities by emphasising the concept of the “role model”.

➤ The Children’s Foundation

Aim: By establishing a Children’s Literature School to widespread a culture of pre-school, childhood and teen literature, their aim is to produce academic publications, develop guidance books for children, parents and teachers, and design and implement local and national levels projects.

Activities: Projects framework is established with seminars and workshops.

Characteristics that create a difference: Carrying out a systematic activity directly aimed towards reading culture.

➤ Reason Out Association

Aim: The target group of the Association is young people and they aim to make reading behaviour regular and increase critical thinking skills. The general objective of these activities is to establish the “Düşün Taşın University”.

Activities: Reading activities and discourse activities are held in the Domino Book Café, which was opened within the Association. There is an educator present who is present with the young people.

Characteristics that create a difference: Having a reading area and ensuring the active use of this area, cooperation with the public.

➤ Community Volunteers Foundation (TOG)

Aim: The general objective of TOG is to support the personal development of young people and to provide them with raised awareness regarding their rights. They aim to contribute indirectly to reading culture by means of reading activities they conduct in their youth centres.

Activities: They provide leadership in young people’s initiatives to collect books and conduct reading activities. In addition, they also run reading camps in Istanbul.

Characteristics that create a difference: Ability to reach a high number of young people

➤ Seven Greats Reading Project– Seven Crescent Association

Aim: Aims to read and review 7 authors and works determined for each semester

Activities: Each 'reading circle' has a lecturer and works are analysed in detail. Among the activities of the circle are to organise symposiums, meeting up with living authors whose works are selected, conducting visits to libraries.

Characteristics that create a difference: Having a large number of reading groups, having a variety of reading group activities.

➤ Other projects and initiatives

- **Aim:** Increasing access to books

Activities: Book donations, implementing campaigns

Characteristics that create a difference: The most important factor in the relative success of organisations or groups which have activities in increasing access to books is a high level of cooperation. The cooperation is shaped with personal social networks, high numbers of volunteers, cooperation with organisations, support from the private sector, opinion leaders who have a wide impact area, contacts with local administrations and public administration.

Examples of organisations and individuals: Herkese Her Yerde Kitap Vakfı [Books for Everyone Everywhere] (Kitapcan Project), Supporting Modern Life Association, Mesut Tim (The Atatürk Children's Library Project), Erzan Aktar (One Book, One Future Project)

- **Aim:** Establishing Networks

Activities: To bring together professional groups to establish a network and communication between professionals, ensuring the exchange of experiences.

Characteristics which create a difference: As an umbrella organisation for organisations which directly conduct activities regarding reading and reading culture, to support the communication between those who are conducting activities in this area.

Examples of organisations and individuals: Teachers Network, Teachers Academy Foundation, Village Schools Transformation Network

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The most active provinces and most open to development in regard to reading culture are **İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Diyarbakır, and Adana**. This is a signal that activities in other provinces are low and that the energy focused on the network and project in these five provinces will be well utilised. Regardless, it is important that the primary characteristics of these regions are taken into consideration in terms of reading culture; for example, in Diyarbakır, communication is more effective when ensured through individuals rather than institutional structures.
- Individuals and organisations activities being focused on children and youth points to an important gap in this area. There is an opportunity to bring a fresh perspective on activities regarding reading habits for **different target groups (such as adults, elderly, women, and persons with disabilities, etc)**. A specific objective can be identified to specifically conducting activities for adult groups such as women, teachers and other groups and to strengthen their contributions.
- As can be commonly seen within civil society and also in many structures in Turkey, the **most prevalent reason for lack of cooperation and dialogue is political polarisation**. Bringing to the agenda the lack of communication due to political differences as an important reason shows that the polarisation can be experienced even in a topic such as reading culture which is seemingly distant from the political arena. In order to reduce the adverse effects of this matter, it is important to bring to the forefront a method of communication that **focuses on contacts and common goals** rather than identities within the network and to strongly emphasise “transparency” and “fair access” among expectations, as previously above.
- It is seen that the main motivation of individuals and organisation in the field of reading culture to join the network is to gain contributions, rather than providing contributions. It is considered important to emphasise the foreseen positive impact of the network in terms of triggering motivations to contribute by informing the participants to further develop the reading culture in **answer to their question of “what’s in it for me?”**.

ANNEX 1

Reading Culture population, “OKUYAY_Tasnif_Final” Excel file.

Translation by
Bordo Tercüme



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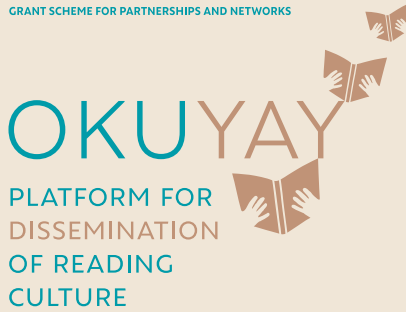
ABOUT OKUYAY PLATFORM

OKUYAY - Reading Culture Dissemination Platform was founded by the **Turkish Publishers Association** who undertakes the dissemination of reading culture within our country as one of its study topics, within the **Grant Scheme for Partnerships and Networks of Civil Society Sector** run by **T. C. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Union Presidency**. **OKUYAY Platform** aims to spread the best practices of Europe and Turkey to the general public of Turkey, by supporting the CSOs, activists and volunteers who work to promote a reading culture.

OKUYAY Platform who works in partnership with **Turkish Librarians Association (TKD)**, **Mother-Child Education Foundation (AÇEV)**, **Kadıköy Municipality** and **Kingston University (UK)**, will execute 4 pilot projects in selected cities in Turkey by bringing children, parents, teachers, public institutions, libraries and civil society together with publishing stakeholders. "The Guide for Supporting to Improve Reading Culture", which will be prepared at the end of the project, is expected to be an important reference in this field.

OKUYAY Platform aims to bring together NGOs, activists and volunteers who can support the development of reading culture through meetings and events organized in the work office in Taksim, Istanbul. Besides, the library established within the platform, which is themed up as "Reading Culture" will be open to researchers to use. After the completion of the 2-year project, **OKUYAY Platform** is aimed to be maintained by **The Turkish Publishers Association**.

GRANT SCHEME FOR PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS



OKUYAY PLATFORM

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The Turkish Publishers Association

The Turkish Publishers Association which is the only member of the **International Publishers Association-IPA** representing Turkey, is working to improve publishing profession, to solve sectoral problems, to support the fight against pirate publishing, to protect copyright and freedom to publish, to contribute to the development of reading culture and to make Turkey a publishing centre on an international scale. Founded in 1985, **The Turkish Publishers Association's** President of the Board is conducted by **Kenan Kocaturk**.

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