

# CULTURAL POLICY OF POSITIONING BEYLİKDÜZÜ AS A SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE CULTURAL CENTER IN THE URBAN PERIPHERY



## AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



## CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
3. CULTURE AND EDUCATION
6. CULTURE, EQUALITY, AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
8. CULTURE, INFORMATION, AND KNOWLEDGE
9. GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

DEVELOPMENT, CULTURAL, GOVERNANCE, PARTICIPATION, PUBLIC SPACE, PLANNING, IDENTITY, TRADITION, ACCESS, TRAINING, SUSTAINABLE, CLIMATE CHANGE, EDUCATION

# 1. Context

Beylikdüzü, with around 350.000 inhabitants, is a district of Istanbul, that has experienced a rapid population growth and urbanization process. Due to the distance of Beylikdüzü from the city center, the policy of transforming an ordinary district into a center of attraction has been developed. To that end, the social and cultural needs of the individuals, especially divorced families and the economic differences inside the district have been considered to implement policies that increase the citizens' quality of life, promote adaptation, social inclusion and mitigate this economic distinction.

## 2. Beylikdüzü and culture

Beylikduzu Municipality's general policies towards culture and art aim to promote artistic and cultural forms of expression of all citizens increasing their participation in cultural life and ensuring cultural diversity, prioritizing educational activities for transferring it to future generations.

**THE POLICY AIMS TO POSITION BEYLIKDÜZÜ AS A SUSTAINABLE ALTERNATIVE CULTURAL CENTER IN THE CITY AND PROVIDE MAXIMUM SOCIAL BENEFIT TO ALL CITIZENS WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION**

The geographical location of Beylikdüzü creates a huge amount of commuters and mobilization between Beylikdüzü and city centre that negatively affect traffic congestion in Istanbul and its environmental dimension. Therefore, making Beylikdüzü a cultural and artistic hub in the urban periphery would help to keep dwellers of Western Istanbul in Beylikdüzü. Also, there is a need of municipal assistance for the low-income communities of the district to include them in cultural activities.

## 3. Goals and project implementation

### 3.1. Main aim and specific goals

Based on the strategic and integrated usage of the city's cultural resources in public planning, the policy aims to position Beylikdüzü as a sustainable alternative cultural center in the city and provide social benefit to all citizens without discrimination.

The main purpose is to become aware and support the cultural vitality underlying the establishment of a sustainable and healthy society, improving the citizens' welfare and quality of life, and encouraging them to become world citizens with a cultural identity. Consequently, they will be able to enjoy their cultural rights, have easy access to cultural services, active participation in cultural processes and the opportunity to develop their own talents.

Various programs have been developed considering citizens' right to lifelong learning, to produce and receive information, and to benefit from all public spaces culturally.

**WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY, CITIZENS FROM ALL SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY BENEFIT EQUALLY FROM BASIC CULTURAL SERVICES AND CAN PARTICIPATE IN CULTURAL PRACTICES AND CULTURAL PRODUCTION.**

### **3.2. Development of the project**

#### **Main actions carried out**

This cultural policy aims to activate the social life and develop activities that contribute to the cultural development of the region by promoting the cultural and artistic perspective of the society.

Beylikdüzü Atatürk Culture and Art Center holds events and activities that appeal to people of all ages and interests and aims to include culture and art in their active life. It is based on the idea that citizens should be served in public spaces equipped with the best conditions. Therefore, since May 19th, 2018, it serves around 2500 art lovers daily in an area of 25.000 m<sup>2</sup>.

In order to organize humanitarian wellbeing, health and active cultural practices, the center has a professional theater stage, a multi-purpose hall, a library, a library for children aged 0-6, a Book Cafe, Sedefhane (Pearl Inlay House), meeting halls, exhibition halls, cinema and visual halls, and artistic and auditory art classes. As part of the policies for the protection of both tangible and intangible heritage, Sedefhane Art Workshop was launched to keep alive the Turkish handicraft and it to our youth.

Some of the activities have been:

- Events
- Cultural Education Center
- Music and theater ensembles
- Adile Naşit Children's Library
- Yaşar Kemal Library Community Information Center
- Beylikdüzü municipal libraries & partner entities

The Accessible Library unit of Yaşar Kemal Library also provides the database of the Visually Impaired Technology and Education Center for the visually impaired. In order to enable disadvantaged individuals to enjoy cultural rights under equal conditions, the copier, which can print in Braille alphabet for our visually impaired citizens, can access information by listening to the reading materials converted into sound.

**TRADITIONAL FESTIVALS HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED TO DEVELOP A SENSE OF UNITY AND BELONGING TO A COMMUNITY THROUGH FACTORS, SUCH AS INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE, WHICH MAY BE LESS VISIBLE BUT CARRIES EXISTENTIAL MEANING FOR THE SOCIETY.**

# 4. Impacts

## 4.1. Direct impacts

### Impacts on the local government

Local governments have gradually given more importance to culture and arts during the last two decades in Turkey. The cultural policy implemented in the last five years points out the effect of cultural planning and its positive impact on the quality of life of the citizens, which is a relatively new practice in local governments. It also advocates that culture should be included in planning processes to enable citizens to live together, in addition to its powerful city model and strong influence on the economy.

### Impact on culture and on local cultural actors

The people of Beylikdüzü have become world citizens who can produce, participate in social life, develop their talents, know their rights and benefit from them, as well as have a sustainable cultural perspective. Moreover, the participants were able to become self-sufficient with the cultural output they produced to contribute to cultural economic development. At this point, a multi-actor governance model comes into play. It is seen that there is a cultural integration in cooperation with non-governmental organizations, the private sector and universities.

### Impact on the territory and population

With this policy, citizens from all segments of society benefit equally from basic cultural services and can participate in cultural practices and production. These cultural indicators, which can be used to measure the positive effect of participation in cultural life on the psychological and physical health of individuals and reinforce the sense of belonging and sharing, are qualitative determinants of the impact of the policy implementation.

At the same time, Beylikdüzü cultural policy also interacts with ecological sustainability policy improving its environmental situation, since it prevents the need to go to the city center to participate in cultural life. The carbon footprint of one person driving to the city center only for one day is at least 0.027 tons of carbon dioxide. In ecological terms and sustainable development values, consumption is sought to be prevented.

## 4.2. Evaluation

The methods used to measure whether the targets are reached and to determine some activities according to the needs of the citizens are face to face interviews, focus groups and survey techniques. Two different studies were carried out for the survey techniques, using structured questions and social media.

In the survey technique, a data source has been created to draw conclusions such as the effects of the activities on the participants' daily lives, the segments they could not reach and their reasons, and their expectations from the activities. The survey was conducted mostly through the course, workshop participants and library readers and visitors. In addition, the social media survey method has been used to ensure public participation in the implementation of cultural policies. In face-to-face and focus group studies, it was possible to determine the satisfaction level of citizens related to the enjoyment of their cultural rights. All the results are processed annually in Performance Programs and Annual Reports with the implementation of the policy.

## 4.3. Key factors

The aim has been to develop a culture vision based on a qualitative policy rather than a quantitative policy. Otherwise, when the cultural services provided are focused only on the number of events or participants, the participation, practices and production may not receive due attention. In this policy, local governments should undertake, in a transparent manner, the implementation of a proper cultural governance to create a sustainable cultural living space for each citizen from the perspective of a fair, equal, democratic, peaceful, participatory, culturally rich economic and social functioning.

#### 4.4. Continuity

The sub-projects of this cultural policy were developed according to the demographic infrastructure and social needs of the citizens. Cultural planning should observe not only the cultural infrastructure, superstructure and structured environmental characteristics and indicators such as tangible cultural heritage but also other lifestyles prevailing in the city, daily life, habits, and intangible cultural heritage. Thus, traditional festivals have been organized to develop a sense of belonging to a community, through elements such as the intangible cultural heritage, which may be less visible but carries existential meaning for the society.

The projects developed under the policy were designed to support each other. Consequently, their continuity is ensured.

## 5. Further information

Beylikdüzü was a candidate for the fourth "UCLG Mexico City – Culture 21 International Award" (November 2019 – May 2020). The jury for the award drew up its final report in June of 2020, and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

**This article was written by Meltem Başa, Deputy Mayor of Beylikdüzü Municipality, Turkey.**

Contact: [meltembasa@beylikduzu.istanbul](mailto:meltembasa@beylikduzu.istanbul)

Website: [www.beylikduzu.istanbul](http://www.beylikduzu.istanbul)

#### Supported by



The European Union

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union



Sweden  
Sverige

This document has been financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida. Sida does not necessarily share the views expressed in this material. Responsibility for its content rests entirely with the author.