

YEDIKULE FORTRESS RESTORATION AND CULTURE AND ART SPACE PROJECT



AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
2. HERITAGE, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY
3. CULTURE AND EDUCATION
7. CULTURE, URBAN PLANNING AND PUBLIC SPACE

COVID, PUBLIC SPACE, TOURISM, ARTS, HERITAGE,
RESILIENCE, EDUCATION, HISTORY, ATTRACTIVENESS,
WELL-BEING, REGENERATION



1. Fatih and culture

Fatih has been the capital of three great empires - the Byzantine, Roman and Ottoman Empires - and home to various cultures in its 8,500-year history. İstanbul has 34.715 registered cultural assets, and 10,520 are located in Fatih District. Fatih has undergone many changes and transformations, and crises such as the emergence of health problems and epidemics have made necessary to develop a strategy to become resilient. The governing policy focuses on emphasizing this multi-layered cultural richness of Fatih, by making this precious cultural heritage spirit sensible and liveable for citizens.

The strategy "Planning Fatih with culture" offers a life combined with culture and revive Fatih's tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The most concrete reflection of this view is bringing Yedikule Fortress into use as a Culture and Art Space.

Yedikule Fortress, which is the intersection point of Ottoman and Byzantine history, is being restored by Fatih Municipality as a place of culture, art and tourism. The Fortress area construction dates back to 413 and was left idle for a long time. Thanks to the project, the area has turned into a culture and art space for a densely populated region where green spaces and socio-cultural spaces are needed. Before waiting for the long restoration processes to finish, Yedikule's legendary garden opened to visitors and hosted many cultural events during the pandemic process. Its open-air spaces have been an advantage in terms of access to culture in this context.

The revitalization vision of this monument was created in line with national and international development goals. The duties and importance of local governments are emphasized worldwide for sustainable development in terms of combatting social inequalities and poverty, providing access to cultural rights, etc.

YEDIKULE HAS BECOME A NEW CENTER FOR ISTANBUL WITH EVENTS, EXHIBITIONS, CONCERTS, TALKS, SPECIAL TOURS AND INSTALLATIONS THAT MAY ATTRACT INTERNATIONAL ATTENTION, SUCH AS VIDEO MAPPING.



2. Project goals and implementation

2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

The general objective of the Project is to plan Fatih with culture and to ensure that the cultural heritage of the district is lived and kept alive, re-designing human and space relations under strategic policies such as cultural rights, sustaining socio-cultural development, reviving tourism in the district, protecting cultural heritage and facilitating access for re-discovery and new experiences. The project serves profits at the national and international level as well as benefits the locals in terms of providing for the demands, such as open-air activities and psychological support in the face of the pandemic.

2.2. Project development

The story of the Yedikule Fortress Restoration and Culture Art Space Project started with the restoration part. Functioning project work and the revised reconstruction project work on the mosque are continuing in stages the foundations were reached as a result of excavation. The Fortress is Turkey's first open-to-visit restoration site. In this direction, it is among the plans to serve as a restoration academy in which training workshops are organized and frequently visited by the experts on the subject in the advancing years.

To dynamize the project, social and cultural projects were implemented in the open areas. The first step towards this goal was organizing a workshop on October 7, 2020, with the participation of 50 experts and academicians. In the workshop, Restoration and Functioning, Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage, Tourism, Society and Life were discussed.

Another pillar of the promotion, communication and accessibility project is the "Touring the Service Places" project, for which the municipality provides mobility services. With the project, locals have a chance to visit the Fortress and get to know services places of the municipality.



The Yeditepe Biennial, an open-air art exhibition which exhibits the work of artists from Turkey and around the world, helped transforming the Yedikule Fortress into an open-air exhibition space, with the support of the Turkish Islamic Arts Foundation. In addition, many universities such as Istanbul University, ITU, Yıldız Technical, etc. have engaged in the project: experts and students participate in technical trips organized in the Fortress with the support of NGOs such as the Union of Historic Cities and Çekul Foundation. The trips have created awareness of historical sights and provided opportunities to experience outdoor education at the same time.

THANKS TO PARTNERSHIPS, TIES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED WITH ART AND EDUCATION FOUNDATIONS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL LIFE, DEVELOPING A MUTUAL SPHERE OF INFLUENCE, AND ENSURING COOPERATION AND SOLIDARITY WITH CIVIL SOCIETY.

3. Impacts

3.1. Direct impacts

The project has international importance due to its multi-layered historical texture. The vision of the Yedikule Fortress to be restored by a district municipality has attracted the attention of many important domestic and foreign institutions. The negative psychological impact of the pandemic has been reduced through the promotion of a historical value.



THANKS TO THE PLANNING OF YEDİKULE FORTRESS AS A CULTURAL SPACE PROJECT, A SUSTAINABLE AND PERMANENT CULTURE-TOURISM SPACE HAS BEEN REVIVED IN A MUSEUM-CITY CONCEPT.

As of April 5, 2021, within the scope of the operations of Yedikule Fortress as a Cultural Space, 6,005 people participated in the Fortress Historical Tours, and 806 people participated within "Touring the Service Places" project. As of January 7, 2022, 10,542 people visited our Yedikule Fortress exhibition area, which is used as part of the Yeditepe Biennial.

3.2. Assessment

The periods of restoration within the scope of the tenders reveal tangible conditions regarding the completion dates of the Yedikule Fortress.

The visitor applications are received through online tracking system through which the density and attraction potentials of the Fortress are examined. Moreover, the quality of the provided service is measured by "Service Satisfaction Surveys".

3.3. Key factors

The project responded to a critical need for the locals and created a huge outdoor activity space for different cultural gatherings. The Fortress is also functioning as an outdoor education institute, as a training place for students and academicians from different disciplines. The overall project has components that match the goals of SDGs, the "New Urban Agenda" and especially "The 2020 Rome Charter."



3.4. Continuity

Sustainability is the primary element of the success of the project.

The monument's touristic value naturally makes the fortress a center of attraction. Fatih Municipality has a joint project with the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure in the line of Kazlıçeşme- Sirkeci which will provide accessibility to the Fortress with an integrated transportation line.

In addition to that, Fatih Municipality's social research team is visiting the houses of people in the district to promote the projects and services. The project provides recognition and participation for the activities in the Fortress.

4. Further information

Fatih was a candidate for the fifth "UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21" International Award (February – June 2022). The jury for the award drew up its final report in September 2022, and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

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