Reducing obstacles to young people's access to culture

Many meetings, exhibitions and screenings are held in the halls and event areas of the National Library, which are also accessible to young people. Each year, more than 100 gatherings supported by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism that contribute to the scientific and cultural life, such as conferences, seminars and panels as well as artistic activities such as classical Turkish music concerts and theater plays are organized. Recently, the visuals representing the Democracy Watch and the pictures drawn by students from all around Turkey have been exhibited within the scope of “July 15 Democracy and National Unity Day” (15 Temmuz Demokrasi ve Millî Birlik Günü).

Moreover, no fee is charged for the activities carried out by the Yunus Emre Institute that operates abroad, facilitating the young people' access to culture and art.

So far, approximately 8 million people have purchased Museum Cards under the Museum Card project initiated in 2008 in order to ensure that our citizens, particularly young people, can visit museums at lower prices. Besides, MuseumPass card project was initiated to facilitate foreign visitors’ access to the cultural heritage of Turkey.

With the “living library” approach that prioritizes user preferences and recent developments, libraries are equipped with technological innovations that will make daily lives of users easier and encourage them to visit library building more frequently, and the spatial design of libraries is enriched with new elements (such as Internet access points) that enhance participation and use. Mobile libraries are available for citizens that live in areas without a library or do not have access to library services. Thus, efforts are made to improve the reading habit of young people.

In order to enhance the communication of the local community with the library and thus improve the reading and researching habits of children, young people and adults, cultural activities such as panel
discussions, conferences, concerts, book reading hours, seminars, theater performances, autograph sessions are organized in the public and children’s libraries.

In fine art galleries, one of the founding purposes of which is to support young artists, courses on painting and other branches of fine arts are delivered to talented and interested people, encouraging the participation of people from various segments of the society in cultural and artistic life.

The General Directorate of Education, Culture and Research within the Ministry of Youth and Sports reprints classical books for young people to access them easily and holds seminars that will increase people’s awareness of and interest in various branches of art and culture, introducing cultural and artistic activities to young people.

Within the framework of the theme “Common Values, Common Future and Young Leaders”, the General Directorate of Youth Services within the Ministry of Youth and Sports organizes international youth camps in which young people from the countries that have a common civilization, history and culture heritage come together and which are intended to strengthen the friendship and fraternity ties between young people and between communities. In total 240 young people from Turkey and foreign countries participated in the camps. The program included not only camping and sports activities and cultural/artistic activities, but also training courses on the pre-determined themes. The themes addressed during the camp included volunteering and contribution to society, fighting discrimination and Islamophobia, problems of young people and solutions.

Under the project “Cities and Cultures” carried out between July 22-September 10, 2015, the training and culture programs organized in 30 host provinces aimed to ensure that young people get acquainted with the historical and cultural values of their country, meet their peers living in those provinces, gain an insight into volunteering and receive training courses on the themes selected by the Ministry of Youth and Sports. 21,732 young people between 14-29 years of age benefited from the project that was carried out in 10 periods.

In order to ensure that young people get acquainted with the historical and cultural values of their own provinces and the provinces with a rich history and culture and meet their peers living in those provinces and to contribute to the development of a dialogue between young people, the project titled “Cities and Culture - Our Regions” (Şehirler ve Kültürler-Yörelerimiz) was implemented to cover all 81 provinces. The programs organized under the project were intended to ensure that the young people between 14-29 years of age, particularly those living in rural areas or disadvantageous conditions, get acquainted with their own provinces and the provinces with a rich history and culture and meet their peers living in those provinces and to contribute to the development of a dialogue between young people.

Disseminating information on cultural opportunities

The Ministry of Culture and Tourism is engaged in activities in the areas of opera, ballet and polyphonic music. Like people from all age groups, young people benefit from our services as well. In this context, the activities aimed at young people and/or activities in which young people are interested can be classified as follows:

**Representation:** Apart from those aimed at children, all pieces staged in the resident halls and tours by the State Opera and Ballet Directorates are strike young people’s fancy as well.

**University events:** As per the protocols concluded between the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and universities, the State Opera and Ballet Directorates perform in the festivals organized by universities.
**Competitions:** Events such as Izmir Singing Contest and International Istanbul Ballet Competition are intended to discover and promote talented young people.

**Educational activities:** The educational activities currently organized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism for primary and secondary school students are planned to be made more widespread by preparing pieces in a format suitable for high school students. As perception and appreciation of music is shaped at early ages, students are visited at their schools and are given the opportunity to watch Training Concerts as well as to get acquainted with classic music and the main instruments of this music through entertaining and theatrical narration in order to incite the student’s sense of wonder regarding universal classical music so that they become listeners of quality music and even artists of the future.

Moreover, particular attention is paid by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to the facilitation of young people’s access to artistic activities and their involvement in the productions in preparing the repertoire of State Theaters.

77 cultural centers, in which citizens of any age actively attend conventional and modern artistic events and which reinforce the urban and cultural phenomena, ensuring that cultural values (manners and customs, handicraft, regional cuisines, etc.) are maintained through various activities (courses, shows, exhibitions, etc.) and passed down to next generations, and which were restructured as to become the cultural memory of the cities, carry out activities under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and 35 of them which have been allocated to the local administrations and other public agencies contribute to the promotion of culture and art.

Promotion materials (brochures, maps, CDs, etc.) that represent historical, cultural and artistic values are prepared with interesting contents and visuals and offered to target groups, thereby enabling citizens to realize the cultural wealth and gain knowledge of and insight into the conservation of cultural heritage.

Additionally, the Yunus Emre Institute operating abroad promote traditional handicrafts that have almost sunk into oblivion with projects such as “From Master to Apprentice” to young people who are then employed as instructors in these courses.

The General Directorate of Education, Culture and Research within the Ministry of Youth and Sports plays an important role in attracting the attention of young people to culture and art with its publications on youth and culture.

**Knowledge of cultural heritage amongst young people**

By enhancing the interest of children and young people in “Battle of Gallipoli Museums and Historical Area” (Çanakkale Savaşları Müzeleri ve Tarihi Alan), the Ministry of Culture and Tourism aims to contribute to the raising of generations with sufficient self-confidence and fund of knowledge that recognize their cultural values in the globalizing world and can describe through which struggles their country have gone to make it to the present day. In this scope, the following activities were carried out:

1. For high school students, Cultural Excursions were organized in the Historical Area of Çanakkale as well as in Bursa, Istanbul and Edirne, and Battle of Gallipoli corners were prepared at more than 100 schools across the country within the scope of the 102nd Anniversary of the March 18 Martyrs’ Day and Çanakkale Victory.
2. The oral history study titled “Living History Project” was prepared to contribute to the maintenance and development of the Historical Area with its historical, cultural and moral values and to the historical memory of the Battle of Gallipoli.

3. Theater plays titled “Çanakkale Spirit” were staged at various points of the Historical Area in order to ensure that young generation can gain insight to patriotism, unity and solidarity and that visitors can imagine what happened in those days.

4. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism leads the organization of the “Gallipoli Marathon” and “Çanakkale Bike Tour: Troia and Respect to Martyrs Stage” which ensure international interaction and healthy development of young people through sport activities in a historical and cultural environment.

5. Young people coming to the Historical Area from all around Turkey and foreign countries are given the opportunity to visit the simulation and museum sites of the Çanakkale Epic Promotion Center free of charge or at discounted prices and gain insight into the cultural and historical heritage.

6. To facilitate the young generations’ access to information on the Battle of Gallipoli, the efforts to establish the Battle of Gallipoli Research Center and Library are underway.

7. As the Internet usage among young people is high, interesting websites are developed to help this group get acquainted with the Battle of Gallipoli museums and the Historical Area.

The Museum Directorates within the Ministry of Culture and Tourism became an institutional member of the website www.gencgonulluler.gov.tr [4], developed by the Ministry of Youth and Sports for young people. Thus, it is ensured that young people participate in efforts for raising awareness and gaining knowledge of cultural heritage protected in museums.

Yunus Emre Institute makes efforts to raise awareness among young people regarding the cultural heritage of Turkey and to disseminate information with documents and/or data on the digital environment through the project titled “Reconstruction of Cultural Heritage in the Balkans [5]” (Balkanlar’da Kültürel Mirasın Yeniden İnşaası).

In order to contribute to the personal and cultural development of young people by enabling them to commemorate the Çanakkale martyrs that became a legend with their chivalry in the Battle of Gallipoli, particularly the 57th Infantry Regiment, and ensuring that young people travel to Çanakkale and meet their peers, the Ministry of Youth and Sports carries out the project titled "57th [6] Regiment Loyalty March [6]" (57. Alay Vefa Yürüyüşü) on April 24-25 each year. Young people between 18-29 years of age can apply to the project. Those that participate in the project are taken to Çanakkale by means of the Provincial Directorates of Youth Services and Sports and their costs are borne by the Provincial Directorates. Applications to the project are received by the Provincial Directorates in person or by phone.