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Local administrations in life long learning and music education in the context of art education

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Abstract

Today, all aspects of education have started to be discussed in line with the concept of life long learning (LLL). Regarding the field, social service and education studies gained importance in local administrations and studies that are aimed at music education were constituted in the context of art education. The Children's Art Center (CAC) of İstanbul Kadıköy Municipality is an exemplary institution for such studies. This study investigated the facilities of the center, teachers' views about the facilities that are provided for the principles and objectives of LLL in the field of music, knowledge of teachers regarding LLL and the current situation concerning their current and planned activities. As a consequence, the importance of the contribution of the teacher with knowledge and extensification of similar centers for children's music education were expressed in line with the objectives and principles of the process of LLL.

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1. Introduction

Life long learning (LLL), which may be defined as learning activities aimed at the personal, social, and occupational developments and requirements of people in all age groups. LLL is encountered and significantly emphasized by many countries in their future politics today. With the accelerating changes of the information age, the need for regenerating and developing present knowledge and skills has made the requirement of LLL compulsory. In this context, reviewing the educational system in line with the process of LLL has become inevitable and it has become an objective to instill in individuals the habit of LLL. Formal education, informal education and all learning activities aimed at increasing the knowledge and skills of the individual have been included in this process. New regulations associated with education have started to be introduced in many countries within the process of "LLL", especially under the leadership of EU studies.

In recent years, the LLL has also started to be evaluated as an approach within the scope of the education system in Turkey, as in other countries (MNE, 2009). Within the context of Globalization – EU Process and Lisbon 2010 Common Educational Objectives, "LLL" was included in the 9th Development Plan and 17th National Education Council. Turkey envisaged the preparation of a **Document of Life Long Learning Strategy** by the Ministry of National Education following the decision of the Council of Ministers, within the scope of the Adjustment Programme of EU Acquis of the 60th Government Program (Gönültaş, 2010). The **Document and Appendix of**

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Life Long Learning Strategy and Action Plan of Turkey's Life Long Learning Strategy” were constituted, incorporating the opinions of the relevant agencies and institutes, coordinated by the Ministry of National Education. In this document, where strategies aimed at accelerating in the information society which is involved in the Lisbon Strategy gain importance, “increasing the social awareness and constituting the culture of life long learning” were among the subjects that came into prominence. The plan indicates the Ministry of National Education as the responsible institution, but also expresses the necessity for the involvement of non-governmental organizations, occupational organizations and local administrations - as the relevant institutions - to encourage more efficient use of human and pecuniary resources in the process of life long learning.

In parallel with developments in Turkey in perceiving life long learning as including the whole education, there is a need to support the educational infrastructure and a need to support and improve the quality of educational infrastructure (MNE, 2009). Local administrations are bodies that gain importance within the relevant institutions that support the provision of requirements. In the Glossary of Public Administration, local administrations are defined as “a democratic and autonomous administration and a public organization model, that is constituted for the purpose of meeting a common requirement of a local community outside of the central administration, where decision-making bodies are directly elected by the public” (Bozkurt, Sezen & Ergun, 1988).

The process of localization, which shows parallel development with globalization, strengthens the principle of providing public services by the closest government unit (subsidiarity) by force of widespread democratic development and, consequently, the empowerment of local administrations (Köse, 2004). Local administration units, which are comprised of special provincial administrations, municipalities and village administrations, are the closest public corporations that serve the public. Within the scope of the duties and authorizations given to them by the legislation, local administrations provide various services to meet the requirements of residents. These services may be classified as public education services, culture and art services and support services for formal education (Öztaş & Zengin, 2008). In the process of LLL, it became inevitable for local administration units, especially municipalities, to undertake different roles in new regulations and applications related to education.

Today... the “knowledge”, which is brought, wanted to be brought or has to be brought to the agenda with the concepts of “information”, “well-informed person”, “information society”, “information age”, is essentially a whole, consisting of “scientific, technical and artistic information”. The concepts of “information, technique and art” are unalienable elements of the modern person's life, both as a product and as a process. Being arranged and implemented with a content that simultaneously involves science, technique and art, education becomes the most effective process in shaping, directing, changing, developing and improving the competitiveness of individuals and societies (Uçan, 1994). This condition, in which art education is as important as science and technique in terms of adapting to the information age, is important for the relevant agencies and institutes to increase awareness of the field and conduct various studies. In this respect, as one of the principal branches of art education, with its personal, social, cultural, economic and educational functions, music education comprises a field that shall be extended via a conscious approach, drawing upon the importance of music in human life. Field-oriented studies are essential in the process of LLL, which has started to be incorporated into the activities of municipalities.

The objective of this study is to form a basis for developments concerning the field of LLL by determining the LLL approaches available to music education activities, which are performed in local administrations in the context of art education. This study examines the music department of the Children's Art Center (CAC), which was developed by İstanbul Kadıköy Municipality. The CAC is inspired by a similar model in Finland, and is the only children's art education center within the municipality. The center was established in November 2007 and provides education in five different departments: music, ballet, dance, drama and art; It aims to make music a part of life in the process of LLL. The center aims to provide music education for greater numbers of children, and provides a two-year music education course to the 7 – 14 age group. This study examined the question, “What is the viewpoint of local administrations regarding the education they perform in the music education in association with the LLL process, in the context of art education of local administrations?”. The current situation was analyzed by focusing on the views of attendant teachers oriented towards LLL, compliance of the education provided with the objectives and principles of LLL, completed and planned studies, and the facilities of the institution,.

2. Method

The study is a screening study using a descriptive model. A questionnaire survey was prepared with the assistance of specialists. The study included 15 of the 16 music trainers who work at the CAC, focusing on trainers' opinions, knowledge and studies aimed at LLL. Survey responses were analyzed using SPSS; frequency and percentage analysis were conducted for the data. Regarding the music trainers who carry out duty in line with the data of the demographic properties which are formed for the purpose of describing the study sample. It was found that 46.7% of participants were music teaching graduates of Teachers College, 13.3% were graduates of Faculty of Fine Arts, 40% graduated from a conservatory and 40% had completed an additional post graduate or doctorate program.

3. Findings

Table 1. Participants' opinions regarding the field of LLL (N=15)

Opinions of trainers who perform music activities in the CAC, regarding the field of LLL	Level of Participation		
	Yes	Partially	No
01. Did you receive vocational education at the educational institution you graduated from, regarding the field of LLL?	<i>f</i> 4 % 26.7	3 20.0	8 53.3
02. Did you participate in activities related with music activities regarding the education of LLL?	<i>f</i> 5 % 33.3	2 13.3	8 53.3
03. Did you participate in activities related with children's music activities regarding the education of LLL?	<i>f</i> 4 % 26.7	2 13.3	9 60.0
04. Did you participate in in-service education activities regarding the field of LLL?	<i>f</i> 3 % 20.0	3 20.0	9 60.0
05. Do you think that you can reach sufficient information in the field of LLL?	<i>f</i> 9 % 60.0	5 33.3	1 6.7
06. In the direction of the objectives and principles of LLL, do you think that you have sufficient information in your field?	<i>f</i> 3 % 20.0	9 60.0	3 20.0
07. Do you think that you have sufficient information in the field of LLL?	<i>f</i> 4 % 26.7	8 53.3	3 20.0
08. Do you have any information about the activities in the field of LLL abroad?	<i>f</i> 0 % 0.0	7 46.7	8 53.3
09. Do you think that you have information about the similar institutions of the institution you work for abroad?	<i>f</i> 3 % 20.0	9 60.0	3 20.0

A great majority of trainers (53.3%) did not receive vocational education for the field of LLL in the institution they graduated from. Similarly, a great majority (53.3%) indicated that they did not participate in music activities related to LLL. Sixty percent of the trainers did not participate in LLL activities related to children's music education. A large part of the trainers (60.0%) did not participate in in-service education activities regarding the field of LLL. However, a great majority of trainers (60.0%) felt they had access to sufficient information in the field of LLL. Sixty percent of the trainers gave the answer 'partially' to the question, "***In the direction of the objectives and principles of life long learning, do you think that you have sufficient information in your field?***". Similarly, 53.3% of trainers responded 'partially' when asked whether they had sufficient information in the field of LLL. Concerning activities in the field of LLL abroad, 46.7% of the trainers indicated that they had 'partial' information and 53.3% indicated that they had no information. A great majority of trainers (60.0%) expressed that they had 'partial' information about similar educational institutions located abroad.

Table 2. Participants' opinions on institutional opportunities to follow the objectives and principles of the process of LLL (N=15)

Opinions of trainers who work in the institution aimed at assessing the fact that CAC (music activities) provides opportunity to serve for the objectives and principles of the process of LLL	Level of Participation		
	Yes	Partially	No
01. Do you think that CAC (music activities) provides opportunity for the objective of “developing new basic skills for everyone”, which is one of the main principles of life long learning?	<i>f</i> 13 <i>%</i> 86.7	1 6.7	1 6.7
02. Do you think that CAC (music activities) provides opportunity to make greater investments for human resources, in line with the objectives and principles of life long learning?	<i>f</i> 0 <i>%</i> 0.0	11 73.3	4 26.7
03. Does CAC (music activities) contribute to the objective and principle of life long learning regarding the support and assessment of learning?	<i>f</i> 13 <i>%</i> 86.7	1 6.7	1 6.7
04. Can you tell that CAC (music activities) serves for the principle of developing innovations in education and learning, in line with the objectives of life long learning?	<i>f</i> 0 <i>%</i> 0.0	11 73.3	4 26.7
05. Can you tell that music activities of CAC serve for the objective of reconsidering and shaping the guidance and counseling of information?	<i>f</i> 9 <i>%</i> 60.0	5 33.3	1 6.7
06. Do you think that CAC provides a support for bringing the process of learning near the houses, within the scope of life long learning?	<i>f</i> 11 <i>%</i> 73.3	3 20.0	1 6.7
07. Do you think that CAC is included in the process of ‘Life Long Learning’?	<i>f</i> 8 <i>%</i> 53.3	6 40.0	1 6.7

It was found that 86.7% of the trainers think that CAC provides opportunity for the objective of “developing new basic skills for everyone”. Regarding whether CAC provides opportunity to increase investment in human resources, 73.3% of the trainers responded ‘partially’, while the remaining 26.7% responded ‘no’. A large majority of participants (86.7%) responded ‘yes’ to the question, “*Do CAC musical activities contribute to the objective and principle of life long learning, regarding the support and assessment of learning?*”. Regarding whether or not CAC serves the principle of developing innovations in education and learning, 73.3% of the trainers stated ‘partially’ and 26.7% stated ‘yes’. Regarding whether the music activities of CAC serve the objective of the guidance and counseling of information, 60.0% of the participants give positive answers. It was found that 73.3% of trainers think that CAC supports the process of bringing learning closer to people’s homes. Regarding whether CAC is included in the process of LLL, 53.3% of the trainers stated ‘yes’, 40.0% stated ‘partially’ and 6.7% stated ‘no’.

Table 3 Participants' opinions regarding the studies they could perform within the scope of life long learning (N=15)

Opinions of the personnel who serve for CAC (music activities) regarding the studies that could be performed within the scope of the process of LLL	Level of Participation		
	Yes	Partially	No
01. Do you think that conducting joint projects in this field with similar corporations inland would cause a benefit?	<i>f</i> 12 <i>%</i> 80.0	3 20.0	0 0.0
02. Do you think that conducting joint projects in this field with similar corporations abroad would cause a benefit?	<i>f</i> 13 <i>%</i> 86.7	1 6.7	1 6.7
03. Do you agree with the fact that activities to be performed in CAC allow the studies that would enable the music to become a part of life, within the scope of the process of life long learning?	<i>f</i> 13 <i>%</i> 86.7	2 13.3	0 0.0

The results show that 80.0% of the trainers think that conducting joint projects in the field of music activities with similar inland would be beneficial. Likewise, 86.7% thought that conducting joint projects in the field of music activities with similar overseas organizations would be beneficial. The majority of trainers (86.7%) agreed that activities to be performed in the institution would enable music to become a permanent part of their students' lives.

Table 4 Participants' opinions on the activities performed within their organization (N=15)

Opinions of the trainers who serve for CACs regarding the activities they Perform		Level of Participation		
		Yes	Partially	No
		<i>f</i>		
01. Do you conduct joint projects with the associated corporations inland in CAC (music activities)?	<i>f</i>	2	2	11
	<i>%</i>	13.3	13.3	73.3
02. Do you conduct joint projects with the associated corporations abroad in CAC (music activities)?	<i>f</i>	0	2	13
	<i>%</i>	0.0	13.3	86.7
03. Do you think that the activities performed in CAC (music activities) are effective?	<i>f</i>	11	4	0
	<i>%</i>	73.3	26.7	0.0
04. Do you think that the activities performed in CAC (music activities) are sufficient?	<i>f</i>	8	7	0
	<i>%</i>	53.3	46.7	0.0
05. Do you believe that CAC activities are announced sufficiently?	<i>f</i>	10	5	0
	<i>%</i>	66.7	33.3	0.0
06. Do you think that education given at the end of the applied program is effective upon students to continue the activities which are considered to be a follow-up for the field?	<i>f</i>	13	2	0
	<i>%</i>	86.7	13.3	0.0
07. Do you think that activities performed in CAC are the studies that enable the music to become a part of life, within the scope of the process of life long learning?	<i>f</i>	11	4	0
	<i>%</i>	73.3	26.7	0.0

While 73.3% of trainers indicated that they do not conduct CAC activities in conjunction with similar domestic organizations; 86.7% indicated that they do not conduct joint projects with similar organizations abroad. The results show that 73.3% of the trainers find the activities effective and 26.7% of them find them 'partially' effective. In response to the question, "**Do you find the activities performed in Children's Art Center sufficient?**", 53.3% of the trainers stated 'yes' and 46.7% stated 'partially'. While 66.7% of the trainers think that activities are sufficiently publicized, 33.3% responded 'partially'. A large majority of the trainers (86.7%) thought that education given at the end of the applied program influences students to pursue follow-up activities within the field. Regarding whether the Center's activities enable music to become a part of everyday life within the scope of the process of LLL, 73.3% of the participants stated 'yes', while 26.7% stated 'partially'.

Table 5 Participants' opinions of CAC facilities related to LLL (N=15)

Participants' opinions of CAC facilities related to LLL		Level of Participation		
		Yes	Partially	No
		<i>f</i>		
01. Do you think that CAC has physical facilities that enable your activities in the process of LLL?	<i>f</i>	13	2	0
	<i>%</i>	86.7	13.3	0.0
02. Do you think that CAC has sufficient materials and instruments for your fields, within the scope of LLL?	<i>f</i>	14	1	0
	<i>%</i>	93.3	6.7	0.0
03. Do you think that CAC has sufficient personnel within the scope of LLL?	<i>f</i>	12	3	0
	<i>%</i>	80.0	20.0	0.0
04. Do you think that CAC has sufficient pecuniary resource and support for the education, that is performed within the scope of LLL?	<i>f</i>	9	6	0
	<i>%</i>	60.0	40.0	0.0
05. Is sufficient cooperation made with persons, agencies and institutes related with CAC, in the process of LLL?	<i>f</i>	2	6	7
	<i>%</i>	13.3	40.0	46.7

It was found that 86.7% of the CAC trainers think that their institution has physical facilities that enable activities performed within the scope of LLL. Similarly, a very large majority of trainers (93.3%) thought that their institution has sufficient materials and instruments for their field. While 80.0% of the trainers thought that their institution has sufficient personnel, 20.0% responded 'partially'. Regarding whether or not their institution has sufficient pecuniary resources and support, 60.0% of the trainers stated 'yes' and 40.0% stated 'partially'. It was found that 46.7% of trainers thought that their institution does not sufficiently cooperate with relevant persons, agencies and institutes.

4. Conclusion and Discussion

Considering the results; researching and applying new approaches, methods, and techniques; discussing results and making suggestions in an attempt to accelerate and direct the developments in the fields of music and art education; are necessary interventions for development within the context of changing social and educational conditions (Çevik, 2010).

In their opinions about their situations related with LLL, trainers expressed that they did not receive adequate education aimed at their fields at the institutions they graduated from; they have partial information about the field and objectives of LLL; they can not participate in activities such as events aimed at the field, in-service education etc, but they can access adequate information related to the field. It was seen that teachers, who apparently have information about similar organizations overseas, do not have information about music education activities related to LLL abroad.

The emplacement and development of scientific thought in society, and the lifestyle based on this thought can undoubtedly be enabled by an educational system that is based on science and reason , and which has universal values (Tuzcu, 2002). The role of music education, which is one of the principal branches of art education, is indisputable in terms of the development of the person as a whole. Today, where regulations are made in every field related to education in accordance with the process of LLL, it is important to also introduce the required regulations in institutions that train music trainers. Universities also have an important role in promoting LLL skills among individuals in society. After the 1950s, the function of “social services” was also added to the traditional universities functions of “research” and “education” (Soran, Akkoyunlu & Kavak, 2006). It is important to receive the necessary support from competent authorities in order to develop a viewpoint related to LLL, to enable the formation of awareness about the field with the help of studies, such as in-service courses, seminars etc., and to emphasize acquisition of knowledge from similar overseas activities.

It is seen that the CAC facilitated the objectives and principles of LLL, which are related to developing new basic skills for everyone, enabling greater investment in human resources, supporting and assessing the process of learning, developing innovations in education and learning, the guidance and counseling of information, and bringing the learning process closer to people's homes.

From this point of view, in relation to LLL, the necessity of emphasizing studies that would extend the center could be expressed in terms of bringing music education to a wider population. Considering that it is important for music education to be started at an early age, expansion of this education program would provide a remarkable opportunity in this field, both for the individual and for the society. In addition, the necessity for local administrations, which are the closest units to the local public, to provide greater support for the subject, could also be taken into consideration.

Participants indicated that the projects that will be conducted in cooperation with domestic and overseas agencies and institutes in CACs be beneficial, especially for the process of LLL, and the center's objective for music to become a part of life.

It is thought that it would be necessary to work with such agencies and institutes in order to facilitate societal adaptation to the needs of the information age In this context, significant assessment should be made of the constitutions that would emerge, in terms of the facilities they provide for allowing the music become a part of everyday life.

It is seen that the education provided at CAC influences students to pursue follow-up activities in the field. However, there are insufficient joint activities with similar domestic and overseas organizations, despite the view of trainers that it is essential to perform such activities.

1.1. It is important to encourage and support CAC, which was inspired and copied from similar models in Finland, and enable it to conduct joint cooperation projects with agencies and institutes abroad. Extension of LLL activities could be considered necessary, in terms of increasing the knowledge levels of both attendant teachers and students related to the field.

1.2. Trainers' responses emphasize that the center provides sufficient physical facilities. However, there is a prevailing feeling that facilities are not used efficiently enough to provide cooperation with relevant agencies and institutes

1.3. The basic and the most significant characteristic of a person's integrity is that she/he is “aware, conscious of and informed about her/his own life activity” (Uçan, 1997). Within the scope of the process of LLL, it is highly recommended that more studies are conducted with purpose of raising the awareness of music trainers; that new CACs are extended; the range of activities is increased; and that local administrations are encouraged to support the development of children's music education. Increased support for this field is especially important in Turkey, where very little investment is made in art education, including music education, compared to many other countries.

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