

BASELINE ASSESSMENT

The Statement of Kadıköy Municipality for the Event “Age-Friendly Cities Symposium”

The Role of Local Governments in Active Ageing and the Model of Kadıköy

Summary

Starting from the mid-20th century, the proportion of senior citizens within the total global population has been continuing to increase. Both on international and national level, recent studies reveal that ageing will become one of the major subjects of the societies and politics in the near future. The studies and practices in Turkey tend to consider the subject of ageing as a “problem”. New approaches are required to move the concept of ageing outside this parochial approach. Considering the developments in the practices about ageing both in the world and in Turkey, it is observed that the approach of “at a local level” is gaining focus. In this respect, the local governments are becoming more and more responsible. In this study, the new roles that must be taken by local governments in the field of active and in-place ageing will be analyzed through the model of Kadıköy. In this context, information will be provided about the practices in the Social Center of Kadıköy Municipality as well as about the activities in the Volunteer Centers in 21 districts of Kadıköy, which are at the same time function as active ageing centers. Additionally, in this study, home care, Active Ageing and Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia Day Care Center, nursing services as well as age-friendly urban space design projects will also be described.

According to data collected for the year 2014, in Istanbul, which has population of 14.377.018, 6% of the total population is above 65 years of age whereas in Kadıköy, which has population of 482.571, this proportion is as high as 17%. Kadıköy has an elderly population rate that is much higher than Turkey’s national average of 8% and has already reached the elderly proportion figures that Turkey will not reach before the middle of this century. In this respect, Kadıköy aspires to become an “Age-Friendly City” as an innovative and pioneering local government in the field of ageing.

Introduction

Starting from the mid-20th century, the proportion of senior citizens within the total global population has been continuing to increase. It is observed that global ageing of population is a subject that is on the agenda of all countries worldwide and especially of the developed countries.

According to a definition by the United Nations, if the share of elderly population in the entire population of a country is between 8 and 10%, the population of that country is considered as “old” whereas in cases when such share is above 10%, the population of a country is considered as “very old”. According to population projections, the share of the elderly in Turkey’s population will reach 10.2% in 2023 and Turkey will therefore be among the countries with “very old” populations.

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figures that Turkey will not reach before the middle of this century. (BU PARAGRAF BELKİ BURDAN YA DA YUKARIDAN ÇIKARILABİLİR; ÇOK FAZLA TEKRAR EDİYOR)

The global ageing of population is a consequence of decreasing fertility rates, the rise in the median age as a result of the improvements in nutrition and basic health care services and the decline in the early mortality rates down to manageable levels.

The global ageing of population has urged the United Nations and many other international organizations to take action. World Assembly on Ageing, which was organized by the United Nations for the first time in 1982 in Vienna and for the second time in 2002 in Madrid, the concept of ageing was highlighted for the attention of all countries of the world. The 5th of the “Health for All Targets” defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) directly concerns senior citizens and the 13th of the Targets regulates the supply of healthy environments. At the International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo in 1994, the social and economic impacts of the global population ageing were focused on and it was underlined that the senior citizens should be taken up as a significant resource in the development of societies. In this context, the concepts of “Age-Friendly Society” and “Age-Friendly City” gained importance. The concept of “Age-Friendly City” is a program recognized by WHO in 2006 and is an international endeavor to ensure active and healthy ageing in all societies.

The criteria for “Age-Friendliness” were categorized as the “8 interconnected domains of urban life” by the World Health Organization, as below:

- 1- Community and Health Care
- 2- Transportation
- 3- Housing
- 4- Social Participation
- 5- Outdoor Spaces and Buildings
- 6- Respect and Social Inclusion
- 7- Civic Participation and Engagement
- 8- Communication and Information

There are also existing practices about senior citizens in Turkey. “The National Action Plan for Ageing and the Conditions of the Elderly in Turkey” is regulated by the resolution of the Higher Board of Planning, dated 01.05.2007 and numbered 2007/17. The action plan targets the development of services for senior citizens within the scope of active ageing and inter-generational solidarity.

Current services for senior citizens in Turkey are provided by the Disabled and Elderly Services Directorate bound to the Ministry of Family and Social Services. The approach which is based on the localness of social policy services and their provision by local governments is widely accepted by the policy makers, national and local authorities. The local governments in Turkey therefore began providing services for senior citizens.

Accessible Kadıköy and Age-Friendly Urban Spaces

Kadıköy Municipality has adopted the policy of “Accessible Kadıköy for Everyone” with the aim of eliminating the violations of the rights and freedoms of all individuals including the persons with disabilities, as well as eliminating the inequality of opportunities, discrimination and exclusion.

Physical and Architectural Accessibility

With the principle of “Universal Design” and the TARGET OF SPACES AND AREAS shared by all people, including the persons with disabilities and shared social activities it is aimed that instead of venues that isolate, the spaces will be rearranged based on functions, in order to adapt these spaces to the needs of different individuals.

With the “Accessible Routes” studies initiated by Kadıköy Municipality, in line with the needs of people with disabilities, two commissions were formed with related municipal offices in order to make social life more accessible in indoor and outdoor spaces. The commission meetings are attended by Social Support Office, Zoning and City Planning Office, Building Inspection Office, License and Control Office, Landscaping Office, Engineering Office, Municipal Police Office, Supportive Services Office, Urban Design Office and Social Works and Projects Office of Kadıköy Municipality.

Another significant aspect of Accessible Kadıköy policies is the aim of creating Age-Friendly urban spaces. In this respect, the Urban Design Office of Kadıköy Municipality has been carrying out activities in order to develop age-friendly designs for urban areas highly populated by senior citizens.

Social Center

Old age is a stage in one’s lifespan that covers the period of age 65 and above, during which, bodily and mental changes take place. In this period, decreasing social roles and negative changes in physical conditions may cause isolation and disassociation. Our aim is to help the citizens of the aforementioned age group in active ageing, to provide them with psychological support, to contribute their socialization processes and personal developments with protective, preventive and supportive services.

Our targets include

- Providing basic health care services to all citizens aged 65 and above,
- Carrying out informative education in health in order to enable the target group to protect and improve their own health status in the long run,
- Offering psychological and social support for the target group,
- For the citizens aged 65 and above, who are unable to carry out their personal care, offering personal grooming and basic needs service (nail and hair cut, diabetic foot care etc.),
- Considering the common characteristics of old age, supporting the social adaptation of the individual with outdoor events and social-cultural activities,

- Organizing courses and education programs especially for the target group and thus contributing to the personal development of individuals.

In one of the neighborhood social centers of Kadıköy, in Sahrayıcedid, in addition to the social service specialists, psychologists and nurses are also available.

Ambulance and Home Health Care Services

Kadıköy Municipality employs staff of 7 people including MDs, paramedics and emergency (cases reported by the general emergency line 112 and social indications) medical technicians. Emergency transport vehicles from home to hospital and from one hospital to another are also provided. Kadıköy Municipality also provides wheelchair and stretcher services for the citizens that live in high apartment blocks.

Home health care services are also planned as part of interventional nursing service. According to the current laws, it is sufficient for municipalities to make a council resolution in order to provide home health care services. However, for providing health care services at home, municipalities need new units in their structure as well as a responsible person and a call center. Kadıköy Municipality, however, initiated home health care services through interventional nursing service, assisted by ambulance call center. Home health care teams of the municipality offer services on daily basis within the municipality's working hours. The prearranged cases are looked after by EMT or paramedic personnel. Doctors are directed for required cases.

Other Kadıköy Municipality services for the senior citizens include home delivered hairdresser service, free computer literacy educations at the municipal education centers, in-kind support (including the provision of wheel chairs, medical beds, underpads, food delivery etc.) where the elderly has disabilities, free-of-charge cardiology service, free medical checkups on diabetes and other diseases and free attendance to the cultural events organized by Kadıköy Municipality.

Trainings on Active Ageing

In cooperation with Maltepe University Active and Smart Ageing Center, seminars on the "Preservation of Mental Level in Old Age" are organized. The seminars aim at raising consciousness and giving information about the preservation of brain activity in all phases of ageing after 40 years of age. The target audience of these trainings include specialists at universities and educational institutions, specialists in nursing homes, nursing home specialists, specialists from the local governments, specialists from private enterprises, employers and specialists from workers' umbrella organizations, health care institution specialists, researchers and all other volunteers that work in the area.

Volunteer Centers of Kadıköy Municipality

The Volunteers Initiative of Kadıköy Municipality was established in 1995 and they have been carrying out activities as municipal volunteers according to the article 73 of the municipal law no 5393. Volunteer centers are available in 19 neighborhoods of Kadıköy. Volunteer Centers function as active ageing centers, where around 6000 senior citizens benefit from the activities. In these centers, sports activities as well as artistic activities, including music and painting courses, are carried out. Additionally, monthly seminars on health related issues are organized and volunteering programs are conducted in order to involve senior citizens in an active way of life.

Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Day Care Center

The Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Day Care Center will be established in one of the neighborhoods of Kadıköy, 19 Mayıs, and will also conduct active and smart ageing programs. The architectural design of this project is being carried out by Kadıköy Municipality's project office and with the interactive and participatory "Kadıköy in My Mind" campaign; the designing process will also involve citizens of Kadıköy, who will be able to take part in the project.

To conclude, with the activities and facilities that Kadıköy Municipality has been conducting and is planning for the future, Kadıköy aspires to become a model among Age-Friendly Cities. Kadıköy Municipality targets approaching old age not as a problem but as a human condition and citizen-oriented subject; and therefore developing a pioneering approach for the future. We aspire to become the Accessible and Equal Kadıköy with high level of awareness and dialogue between generations by also combating ageism.