

İZMİR#

GOVERNANCE

OF CULTURE

AND PILOT

PROJECTS





Overview

Izmir is located at the West coast of Turkey and in the midway on the coastline of the Aegean Region. It belongs to the wider area of Southeast Europe, and is one of the key cities in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The province of Izmir stretches over an area of over 12.000 km² (excluding lakes) and is comprised of 30 city districts of which 11 amount as the central metropolitan area.

The geographical characteristics have always been an advantage. The city has brought different civilizations, cultures and religions together for over 8500 years.

While the city was under the governance of Ottoman Empire in the 17th century, it became a major international port and attracted significant overseas business. Along with the developing trade, diversity also increased with Levantines, Greek Orthodox, Armenian, Jewish and Muslim Turks, who together formed a city of tolerance.

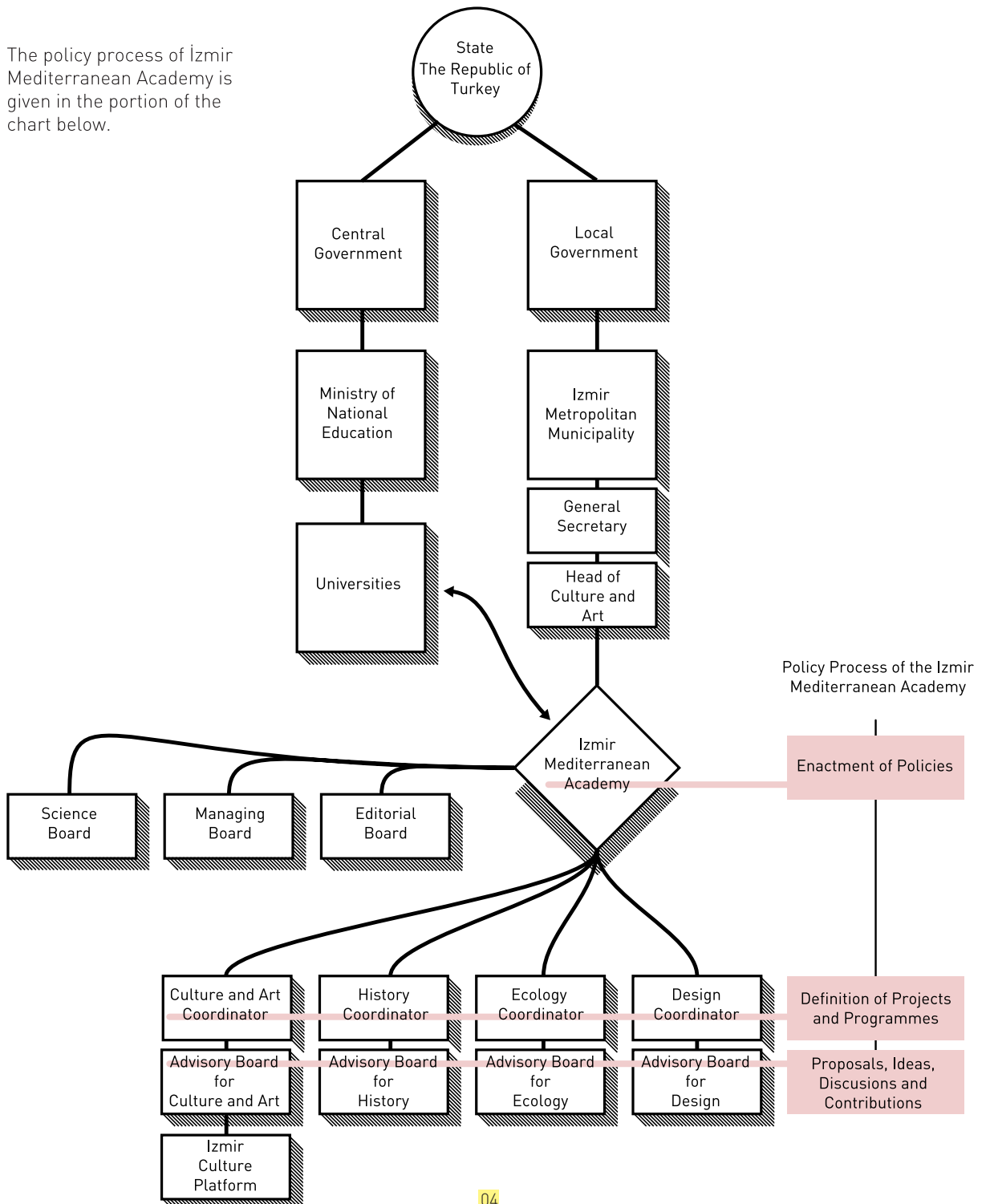
Trade unified and enriched these people so that Izmir became a city where people from every nation and goods from east and west could be seen in its streets and markets. It was a bridge of trade between Asia and Europe.

Izmir is a Mediterranean city with Aegean climate, food, and a healthy life. It is a living city known for its life 'on the streets'. This life is combined with the culture of all citizens using the sea and the waterfront.

The sea is part of the daily life of the people. Perception of a slow and calm lifestyle is part of the culture, which sometimes contradicts with its global economic ambitions.

The city perceives this two speed as a unique characteristic and pursues its strategies of development accordingly.

The policy process of İzmir Mediterranean Academy is given in the portion of the chart below.



Local Governance of Culture



Izmir Cultural Workshop, in October 24th, 2009, provided the first and utmost important step towards to a new cultural vision and a cultural strategy to be built in İzmir. The vision regulated in this workshop with its outlines and the suggestions were scored in more comprehensive long-term works thoroughly.

One of the main products of this workshop, attended by artistic and intellectual circles both from İzmir and also those who love İzmir –alongside public opinion leaders of the city– was to create a consensus over a vision for İzmir. The first element of this vision was to enable the qualification of İzmir as a city of design and innovation; the second element was to develop İzmir's international relations by transforming it into an effective node within the network of Major Mediterranean Cities; and the third element was the implementation of governmental practices that are sensitive to participatory processes, respectful of human honour.

The İzmir Mediterranean Academy has emerged as part of the İzmir Culture Workshop.



Izmir Mediterranean Academy: An Innovative Form of Cultural Management

Izmir Mediterranean Academy is both a think-tank and a democratic platform for urban development, history, and design. Through its unique administrative structure within the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality, it operates as an autonomous body that consists of a science committee, a group of coordinators, and advisory boards.

Izmir Mediterranean Academy has basically two functions. Firstly it is a think tank that develops the strategies which will actualize the vision of the city, in this way it broadens Izmir's horizon. It does not work in routines yet it is open to continuous innovation and contribution to improve Izmir's vision.

The second function of Izmir Mediterranean Academy is to provide a platform where stakeholders will interact with each other, where functions that they undertake in realizing vision will be determined, where appli-

cation promises will be given. It is an institution which will realize both of the functions makes it authentic.

Rather than being an unwieldy institution that has large staffs, generates ideas by itself, makes researches by itself and tries to carry out solutions by itself, Izmir Mediterranean Academy has a flexible and innovative mentality, which triggers capacities of Izmir and Izmir lovers, which brings them together, encourages them to do, and provides their commitment to functions.

The Academy has an original organization structure. It can be considered as an innovation in city management and in the structure of local government. It consists hubs for design, arts and culture, ecology and history. The Academy works with coordinators and advisory boards dedicated for promotion of each of the thematic areas. Both the coordinators and members of the advisory boards work voluntarily on this purpose. Besides the advisory boards, there are ad hoc groups that meet on certain purpose.

Izmir Mediterranean Academy is the coordinating body of the Pilot Cities Izmir Programme.

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İzmir History Design Atelier

İzmir History Design Atelier is a sub-unit of the İzmir History project, which was established in one of the historical houses in Basmane district of the city. The district is the oldest preserved area in the city center and almost totally inhabited with domestic and international immigrants.

The aim of the unit can be summarized as to solve the regional problems in the historic city center with the language of design ensuring the participation of the inhabitants, who are mainly immigrants and an introverted community. First design workshops in the building were carried out by the universities and children of the district. Reaching the children made to reach the adults easier. There were many design workshops in the building, in the square and in the playground where design processes were carried out. In these workshops and meetings, local people come together with the designers, uni-

versity students as well as artists, and started to shape their environment with them. In course of time the building and its surroundings started to become an attraction point of tourists and artists. Today, İzmir History Design Workshop Building and the small square in front of it, serves as a meeting point for the inhabitants of the historical city center, designers and tourists who visit this area.

Design workshops, which are organized and carried out by İzmir History Design Atelier, are accessible to all participants from different disciplines such as sociologists and historians. Within this content, different workshops such as City Walking Routes, Bicycle Routes and Landscape workshops were realised.

As an example; “Agora, My Playground!” is a joint participatory project of İzmir History Design Atelier and KA-Participation Atelier to enable children, living in Basmane district, to adopt to their environment, to strengthen their sense of belonging, and to create their own playgrounds. Project started with an entertaining ‘history education program’, continued with ‘design together’ activity for planning their playgrounds, and ended with the implementation of the project.



İKPG

İzmirKültür
Pla+formu
Girişimi

The İzmir Culture Platform (ICP)

The ICP is an initiative under the İzmir Mediterranean Academy. The goal of the platform is to bring together citizens, artists and other cultural producers under an independent and sustainable hub where they can meet, discuss, propose and develop solutions.

The ICP also connects the members of the initiative with actors from other coastal cities and regions of the Mediterranean.

The ICP functions also as an archive that keeps records of İzmir's cultural and artistic past.

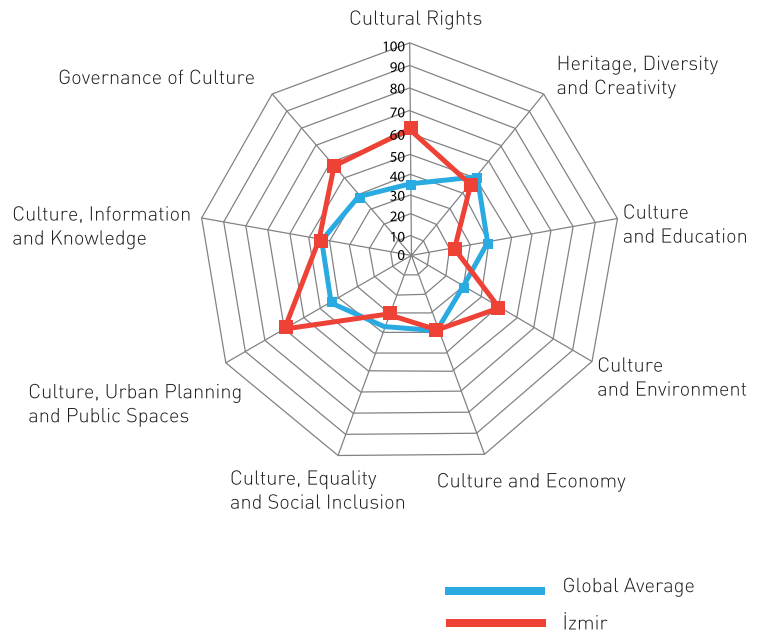
It is an initiative that sets up collaborations with other organizations in and around İzmir and the Mediterranean, and it opens the city thereby to an ever growing network that allows to connect the local to the global.

Izmir Pilot City Programme

Within the framework of its participation in the Pilot Cities in Europe Program under Agenda 21 for Culture in 2015-2017, the city of İzmir conducted a self-assessment practice regarding its policies in the field of culture and sustainable development in March 2016. The practice is based on the “Culture 21 Actions”, which was adopted by the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) Committee in March 2015, and which provides a model for examining the strengths and weaknesses of cities worldwide in this field.

This practice was conducted within the context of the preliminary workshop for the İzmir Pilot Cities Program, and was aimed at designing a work program to be implemented in 2016 and 2017, which would reveal the city’s perceived strengths, and allow addressing certain defined weaknesses thereof. During the workshop, the participants examined İzmir’s current situation within the context of the thematic fields constituting the nine ‘Commitments’ or the Culture 21 Actions.

Self-assessment results of the 2016 Workshop*



*Source: UCLG Committee on Culture, on the basis of results provided by participants in the initial workshop convened by the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality and the İzmir Mediterranean Academy (İzmir, 11 March 2016) and the average obtained from a world panel of 34 experts.

Priorities

Among the other outputs of the workshop are various difficulties encountered in the city in cultural development and shortcomings in culture and education, social inclusion and the economic support of culture.

The Pilot Cities Working Group listed the priorities in this field as follows:

Encouraging cultural institutions (such as museums, theatres and art centres) to design and implement informal educational projects,

Feasibility study for educational programs regarding culture management, culture policies, and other fields of sustainable development,

Establishment of an 'innovation fund', or a mechanism that would allow access to capital for innovative cultural projects,

Developing the cultural participation and visibility of groups that are disadvantaged in terms of culture and social inclusion (e.g. through the efforts of public cultural institutions or any cultural formations receiving public support),

Developing diversity and creativity as an important part of local culture policies, Strengthening information channels in relation to cultural activities, and extending the international cooperation opportunities for cultural actors,

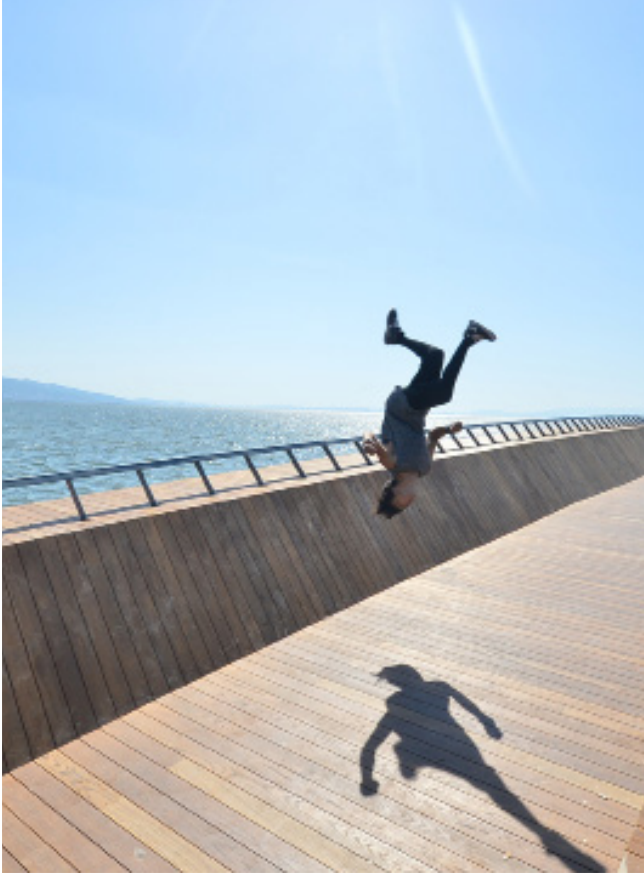
Challenges and Urgencies

The fact that non-governmental organisations interviewed for a financial support mechanism required in the creative sectors and culture field, expect support in this field from the local governments

The necessity to increase the visibility of projects existing in the field of culture and education, to gather the projects that are in concordance with the priorities under a single roof, and to cooperate with other public bodies and non-governmental organisations

The absence of mechanisms supporting the independent production of culture

The need for creating incubator areas for creative sectors, and for support with regard to cultural vitality.



PROJECTS

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GOOD DESIGN

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Good Design İzmir is an annual 3-days design event, involving exhibitions, conferences, talks, workshops and street events, with the aim of promoting creative industries.

The aim of Good Design İzmir is to make design a distinctive feature of the city as well as increasing the competitive capacity by bringing together designers, producers, non-governmental organizations and investors operating on the field.

The event has been organized by İzmir Mediterranean Academy and with the collaboration of İzmir Design Platform Initiative, which is a platform of design related civil organisations from various disciplines. Therefore the framework of the event has been drawn jointly by the local government and civil society. The first Good Design İzmir took place 17 to 19 November 2017. Overall more than 15 organisations was interested in taking part in the overall event. Around 1000 people were expected to join the opening activities; the attendees were double the estimated number.

10 exhibitions, 9 workshops, conferences, panels and presentations, 90 student projects from 5 universities and more than 15 institutions took part in the first event.

Association of Industrial Designers, Chamber of interior designers, İzmir Directorate of Research and Development, Aegean Clothing Manufacturer's Association, İzmir Chamber of Architects, İzmir Foundation for Culture, Arts and Education, KETA (Municipality of Karabaglar Urban Design Studio), Design and Design History Community were some of the organisations that supported Good Design İzmir.



kültürLab

İZMİR

Why

The Pilot City İzmir Self-Assessment Workshop, conducted through the participation of representatives of the culture departments of the İzmir Metropolitan Municipality, non-governmental organisations active in the field of culture, and other actors, upon an invitation issued by the Pilot City İzmir programme, revealed the fact that “Culture and Education” deserves greater attention in İzmir for the near future.

Departing from these results, the Pilot City İzmir Programme Coordination provided for the establishment of a network referred to as kültürLab among stakeholder organisations and institutions.

What

kültürLab is an inter-institutional cooperation network aiming at bringing together organisations and institutions that are active in the field of culture, within the framework of culture-oriented quality education. Commencing its operations with a forum attended by seventeen corporations in May 2017, kültürLab is a network that keeps expanding. It aims at becoming a democratic sharing platform for the purpose of developing cooperation, collaboration and capacity within the context of supporting cultural education.

Who

kültürLab aims at covering organisations and institutions that are active in the field of culture in İzmir and have a regular program. While among these, museums, art centres, and the relevant departments of public institutions are of priority, the network is not limited to these.

How

kültürLab's priorities:

- Rendering cultural education part of the formal and life-long learning in a way to cover individuals of all ages and all segments of the society,
- Extending the awareness on city culture, history and legacy,
- Bringing together the actors contributing to the city's culture and the city's inhabitants,
- Introducing the creative industries to future producers of culture and art,
- Ensuring cultural rights, inter-cultural interaction and diversity,
- Adopting a holistic approach to culture (such as gastronomy, customs etc.) by taking local history and cultural sensitivities into consideration.

kültürLab is supported by;



A Map of the Culture and Art Venues of İzmir – 2017

As a result of a series of research meetings conducted in March 2016, İKPG(ICP) identified the criteria determining the scope of content of “Pla+form: A Map of the Culture and Art Venues of İzmir – 2017”, and its coverage of the city, and commenced its work with an editorial team of four. The geographical coverage for the first issue was limited to the areas of settlement characterised as the “central districts,” which surround the Gulf of İzmir from the northwest to the east, and from the east to the south: Data regarding Çiğli, Karşıyaka, Bayraklı, Bornova, Buca, Karabağlar, Gazimir, Konak, Balçova, Narlıdere and Güzelbahçe were gathered in five pools identified as “public venues,” “venues belonging to the local government,” “venues belonging to the private sector,” “independent venues,” and “public areas.” In the following stage, the editorial team observed the district boundaries and the quarters at which they are centered, listed the venues, and marked them on regional maps.

Criteria Regarding the Scope

The editorial team lists the criteria it considered in choosing the venues marked and mapped on the “Pla+form: A Map of Culture and Art Venues of İzmir - 2017” in the following manner:

The venue being in a continuous process of producing cultural / artistic activities, and persisting in such efforts; in other words, it having achieved sustainability in the production of events;

Hosting events in multiple disciplines, if possible;

Continuously updating the strategies it follows for the purpose of developing an audience;

That the activities it hosts are open not only to its own segment, but to all segments of the community;

That it encourages culture and art actors of İzmir to produce new events, to perform, to archive, to learn, to cooperate and to exhibit;

That it serves as a meeting point for active sub-culture communities;

That it leads an effort of accumulating products and experiences.

In accordance with these criteria, art centres organising courses aimed at fostering skills, venues choosing to provide a regular music program instead of concerts, and bookshops and second-hand booksellers that have never organised any event so far, were not included in the scope. Venues that serve as gathering points for subcultures, and that are particularly focused on archiving the physical copies of albums and independent publications, however, were especially included in the scope. The same approach was adopted also for venues organising gastrocultural events open to outside participation; for it was considered that both venues made extraordinary contributions to the urban culture.

Method

VENUES BELONGING TO THE PUBLIC AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

The listing efforts were started by scanning official webpages belonging to the Ministry of Culture. Afterwards, the team retrospectively scanned municipalities' culture and art pages, cultural event news on national and regional newspapers' websites, and culture portals and social media accounts active in İzmir, thereby brought together all venues that have hosted any event organised since 2015. The combined list was confirmed by sharing it with the authorised units of the concerned municipalities. At the last stage, list was updated by adding certain cultural centres, construction of which was completed and which were put into service during the preparation of the publication.

VENUES BELONGING TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR

While listing these venues, the research team conducted a comprehensive survey of educational institutions, capital groups and commercial organisations holding events open to outside participation.

INDEPENDENT VENUES

Under this heading, commercial venues organising events at their own expense, culture centres representing various countries, and non-profit venues engaged in the field of culture and art with the support of art collectives including cultural initiatives were grouped.

In creating a list of independent venues, the editorial team employed a method similar to

that used in the listing work conducted for culture and art venues belonging to the Ministry of Culture. In order to complete any possible gaps in the list, they issued an open call to over a hundred artists, archivers and event designers from İzmir and, in accordance with the information obtained, continuously updated the list according to the venues that are closed down, changed address or opened during the preparation process for the publication. When the list took its final form on 1 June 2017, they proceeded to verify the contact information of the venues.

PUBLIC AREAS

The central districts of İzmir, the people of which spend an important part of the year outdoor as in all Mediterranean countries due to climactic characteristics and deep-rooted living habits, contain many public venues, part of which have been used for decades, and some recently opened. The public areas comprising squares, recreation areas, marketplaces, urban woods, and certain streets and boulevards were marked and listed on a map in a separate part of the publication.

Number of culture and art venues belonging to the Ministry of Culture: 23
Number of culture and art venues belonging to local governments: 53
Number of culture and art venues belonging to the private sector: 23
Number of independent culture and art venues: 116
Number of public areas hosting culture and art events, and managed by local governments: 33

Basmane Environmental Design Project

Creating environmental design for the Basmane Anafartalar Street, which reflect the historic and current characteristics.

Project Area User Analysis and Suggestions

Basmane and the Anafartalar Street, which constitutes a starting point where you take an initial step into the city and which has survived to date as a stop point where “the roads intersect”, is a considerably strategic region of İzmir, which has welcomed those arriving from different geographies for many centuries, treasuring up history and memories. Having served as a home as well as a witness to abandonments, Basmane shed its skin as a result of the depression areas that formed following the 1940s, losing the importance that it deserves.

Looking at the region’s current situation, it can be seen that, due to the gradually changing social and physical dynamics, the region’s existing values are no longer potentials revealing its identity, but disadvantages. The main departure point of this project rests on the underlying objectives of contributing to projects aimed at reviving the region, underlining the region’s values, and creating a sustainable awareness.

Objectives

Contributing to the project of reviving the region, creating a triggering effect, raising awareness by drawing attention to the Region’s social and historic values, positively supporting the interaction in the Region.

Targets

The process that has started with the İzmir History Project in the previous years was aimed at strengthening the memory of the people of İzmir, and their relationship with history. The Basmane Environmental Design Project, which can be considered as a micro-leg of this macro project, was created with the same macro-target in view. The aim of our project is to target access largely within the social and cultural framework rather than seeking a solution for functional needs. In this sense, the targets are;

- developing culture-oriented forms of communication in the region,
- paving the way for the possibilities of “meeting,” “intersecting,” and “leaving a mark” among people, rendering the same sustainable, and reviving the region and transforming it into a multicultural centre of attraction,
- attracting the target group consisting of foreign tourists, local tourists from Turkey, residents of İzmir arriving for shopping and tourism purposes (especially the youth, children and women of İzmir), and those interested in art, to the region and boosting the external demand,
- providing a healthier visual perception, and emphasising the commercial activities and the “cultural feature” of the region that creates “experience”.



Method

During the initial phase of the project, the research part was completed. In this phase, first of all the region's history was examined, and efforts were made to reveal the important features of Basmane and the Anafartalar Street. Afterwards, observation and photography work was conducted at the Anafartalar Street, and tradespeople, visitors and NGOs were interviewed in order to obtain positive and negative views on the region. The roadmap planned for the project, the social tendencies existing in the world, and similar examples throughout the world were researched in order to form design criteria and a design guide in line with local values, regional history, the current situation and the design approach.



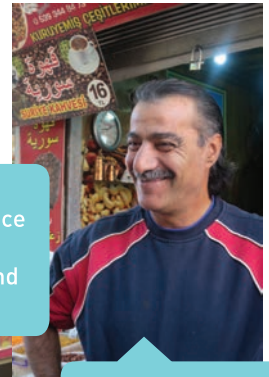
"A street is not alive if women do not come to that street."



"After the shoemakers, textile workers and tailors left, the street lost its vividness"



"Agora should become a vivid place again, the street should be clean and well-lit."



"I've been selling nuts here for 3 years now. I like here and the people. The number of my Turkish customers is increasing."



"This place used to be active for 24 hours. There are no more good neighbourhood relationships."



"I wouldn't go back even if the war is over because my wife and child is here. But we are not happy..."



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