

# meydan



30 JULY  
2019

ISTANBUL

**“WHAT IS THE ROLE OF LOCAL  
ADMINISTRATIONS IN EDUCATION?”  
MEYDAN MEET UP**



yada



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# INTRODUCTION



On 30 July 2019, the third Meydan meeting was organized by the Yaşama Dair Foundation (YADA Foundation) and the Civil Pages in Istanbul to come together to discuss “The Role of Local Administration in Education”. We wish to thank you for your participation and contributions.

Since 2005, the YADA Foundation has been producing information related to a variety of areas related to social life and tries to transform these into practice. We conduct research on how CSOs impact citizens and decision-makers and attempt to explain the impact on the decisions and opinions on politics and decisions of public opinion. With the research and activities, we carry out, we try to develop the capacity of CSOs’ in their efforts to have an impact on decision making and conduct activities focusing on strengthening their dialogue. We aim to produce common platforms whereby CSOs can discuss, exchange information and create new opportunities for cooperation.

By organizing the Meydan activities, it is our aim to physically bring people together to create an area for a common platform, whereby civil society actors of different fields, opinions and approaches come together and be exposed to each other.

Our desire is for diversities to be able to meet each other, to know of each other, to be able to discuss and to be informed of each other. Once again, we wish to thank you for joining us in the Meydan to discuss, listen and deliberate on issues related to Turkey.

# Agenda

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09.00 - 09.30	<b>Registration</b>
09.30 - 10.00	<b>Opening</b>
10.00 - 11.15	<b>Icebreaker speed dating</b>
11.15 - 11.30	<b>BREAK</b>
11.30 - 13.00	<b>Actors/Needs of the Education Ecosystem</b>
13.00 - 14.00	<b>Lunch</b>
14.00 - 16.00	<b>Open Meydan</b>
16.00 - 16.15	<b>BREAK</b>
16.15 - 17.00	<b>Closing</b>



# OPENING: Welcome to the Meydan





Meydan emerged as a result of years of research and observation by YADA, with the aim of creating a platform for dialogue and discussion by establishing an area for common sharing and working in order to overcome the state of withdrawal of civil society. The research conducted by YADA found that the reason underlying the inactiveness of civil society is this “state of withdrawal”. This withdrawal shows itself as a state of not being open to the matters at hand, withdrawal from the subject of study and identity and not wanting to come together with those who are not alike.

Meydan was established for the first time in June 2018 as a tool to meet the need to create dialogue within the Turkish civil society by making a call for a platform for dialogue and discussion. More than a year has passed since the first Meydan Meet Up and since, a series of small and large scale Meydan Meet Ups were held in different provinces. Meydan has become an area where different actors can talk about their position in regard to issues, listened to be other actors and has become a means by which actors can have discussions with each other. To date, experiences of co-existence and opportunities were discussed under heading of issues such as environment, cities, refugees/ migration, education, disabilities.

On the 13th of July 2019, the 3rd Meydan was set up in Istanbul to discuss the question, “What is the Role of Local Administration in Education?”, in regard to the relationship between local administration, children and education together with civil society with the participation of 66 people from 61 institutions. In the opening speech of Pınar Gürer, Board Member of the YADA Foundation, during the Meydan Meet Up that was held with the theme “What is the Role of Local Administrations in Education?” shortly after the local elections, it was mentioned that the desire was to create an area where the projects undertaking children and education (as a priority area in election promises) could be evaluated qualitatively, and not quantitatively. She stated that the aim was to evaluate the role of civil society and local administrations, which was re-structured after the local elections, to see what the shortcomings and opportunities are and to keep informed about the expectations and needs collectively. amaçladıklarımı dile getirdi.

# MAIN SESSION: Actors In the Education Ecosystem



After the icebreaking activity, the technique of role cards was used to bring the matters related to education in the main session. By using the role cards, participants voiced the concerns of the actors of the education ecosystem in regard to the needs as seen by the participants. Participants were asked to answer the questions given below as the education ecosystem actors as statements identified prior and during the session.

- What are the problems you face in relation to education?
- What are the things that you want other people to know about in this topic area?
- What are your needs? What do you expect, from whom?

At the end of the allocated period of time, those discussing in the groups offered their contributions. The roles cards included: working mother with a child aged 0-6, non-working mother with a child aged 0-6, working father with a child aged 0-6, working parent with school aged child, non-working parent with school aged child, female child, male child, autistic child, child with mental disability, child with physical disability, Kurdish child, Syrian child, Syrian woman, mayor, deputy mayor responsible for education, rural primary school teacher, primary school teacher in private school, school principal, director of a dormitory, president of parent-school association, parent of child with disability, CSO representative active in early childhood and education.

The role cards added by participants were gifted child, parent of gifted child and media representative. The role cards which were not selected were working parent with school aged child, male child, child with mental disability, child with physical disability, president of parent-school association, mayor and primary school teacher in private school. The roles selected by participants and discussions related to these are given below.

## **Gifted Children Have Difficulties In Accessing Appropriate Education**

Gifted children have problems in accessing education appropriate to their individual development process and adaptation at school. Among the demands of gifted children were being accepted by their teachers and friends and their parents to be aware of their education needs.

## **Working Fathers of 0-6 Aged Children Do Not Spend Enough Time with Their Children**

Working fathers who have children between the ages of 0-6 years cannot spend enough time with their children. Due to the long working hours and the long periods of time it takes to return home from work in big cities, working parents cannot spare the time they need with their children. Local governments and the private sector are expected to take steps for working fathers who have children between the ages of 0-6 years, as this is the period which children most need to establish relationships with their parents.

## **Working Mothers of 0-6 Aged Children Demand Longer Paid Leave And Free Childcare**

Working mothers who have children between the ages of 0-6 years want to spend more time with their children and at the same time they do not want to neglect their career. In this regard, she has the request to have paid leave to be extended to two years, and for fathers to be given the right to take leave. They request municipalities to open free creches in neighborhoods close to the workplace and to provide parents and grandparents with parenthood training on child development. Emphasis is placed on being aware of the needs

of children within the 0-6 age range and that their needs differ according to age. It is suggested that municipalities may be able to provide materials to support families throughout this period.

## **The Image of Non-Working Mother of 0-6 Aged Children Needs to Change**

The main needs of non-working mothers who have children between the ages of 0-6 years can be stated as child development and right to education. In society, it is assumed that non-working mothers do not have to send their children to creche therefore they are made to take the full responsibility of their children and spouse, and they cannot spare time for themselves. It is expected that there should be an equal distribution of responsibilities among parents within the family and the image of the mother being responsible for everything needs to change within society.



## **CSO Representatives In Early Childhood And Education Should Foremostly Be Able to Explain Their Working Areas to Authorities**

The work conducted by CSOs and the difference they make is not visible to the public and decision makers. Therefore, some problems are experienced in getting certain permissions and support. The CSOs themselves need to correctly convey the work that they do to the public and decision makers.

## **Parents of Children with Disabilities Require Psycho-Social Support Mechanisms**

Parents of children with disabilities need to accompany their children because the children cannot independently meet their own needs in the common areas which do not provide appropriate physical conditions. In most cases, and most often the mother, need to leave their jobs. Parent who are under a heavy responsibility are in need of psycho-social support. They have difficulty in accessing resources and support mechanisms where they can receive information regarding their children. There are difficulties in accessing healthcare.



## **Quality Education for Autistic Children is Not Only a Right, but is Also the Only Option**

As parents are not sufficiently informed about autism, the process of diagnosis is delayed or hindered. It is expected that parents are provided support by means of the family support units of local administrations. While costs of education are covered by the state in other countries, in Turkey only 12 hours are covered. As the comprehensive and continuous education of autistic children is a right and a means of treatment, there is a need for the state to provide support on this matter. Autistic children are discriminated against in schools. Parents need to be reminded that education is an area where it should be taught to respect diversities.

## **Non-working Parents with School Aged Children Cannot Meet the Basic Education Related Needs of Their Children**

The main problem of non-working parents with school aged children is not being able to meet the basic education needs of their children. Parents feel that they are insufficient in this matter. Non-working parents with school aged children have a need for vocational training and employment. They are in expectation of the local administrations to provide support to meet children's nutrition and school cost needs.

## **Deputy Mayors Responsible for Education Are Faced with Bureaucratic Barriers**

The main problem faced by deputy mayors responsible for education is bureaucratic barriers/hurdles. In the provision of the right to education, the support of local administration and civil society and the participation of the public is important.

## **School Principals Expect the Support of Parents And Teachers**

School principals expect the support of students and parents in regard to the problems and solutions for the school. It is recommended for students and parents to use environmental resources correctly (water, electricity, soil, etc.) and for this to be brought to agenda.

## **The Negative Image of Dormitory Managers Creates Difficulties In Their Work**

Due to the negative image of dormitories in the media, the work of dormitory managers become difficult from time to time. In many cases, the dormitories are hosting students above capacity and the risk of disaster is increasing. They need social activities which are local to the dormitory where they can refer the students. There is a need to work more closely with the central government and to ensure the security of the dormitories.

## **Primary Education Teachers Working In Rural Schools Do Not Want to Feel Alone**

After a difficult process of gaining assignment as a teacher, primary school teachers who work in schools in rural areas are generally inexperienced and can feel isolated in their places of work. Teachers working in rural areas need to know they are not alone and require motivation and support. While financial and social support is expected of the Ministry of National Education, there is also the request to local administrations to increase their support in providing safe transportation to schools and social opportunities.



## **Syrian Children are Subject to Discrimination**

Marginalization and discrimination are among the main problems of Syrian children. There is a need for equal opportunity in education. It is expected of local administrations to provide support on social cohesion within the public and also language training.

## **Syrian Women are Struggling with Financial Difficulties**

It is thought that there is a need to access clean food and clothing, to not be marginalized and for men and women to access information about women's health and sexual health. On the other hand, the contribution of participants inform that the large majority of Syrian refugees/migrants do not experience financial difficulty and that this is a misconception even in civil society.



## **The Rights of Girls Should be Protected, Parents Should be Informed**

Girls can become disadvantaged due to early marriages and in some cases, they need to act as a parent to their younger siblings. They may be receiving limited education due to the pressure of gender roles and being seen as domestic labor in the household. Support may be provided in regard to rights and responsibilities in terms raising of awareness of parents about rights and early marriages.



In the evaluation section of the session, the following topic headings were discussed.

## **When Undertaking the Roles, Positive And Negative Prejudices are Brought Forward And It is Difficult to Produce Solutions**

In the session where questions were answered in the roles, the participants informed and made self-criticism that they brought their own positive or negative prejudices to the roles they assumed. For example, it was thought that roles of local administration and public administration representatives acted optimistically, with a problem-solving approach within their own perspectives and that the system is not this optimistic/positive. It was a self-critique of participants that there is a feeling of learned helplessness and there is a cycle of not being able to produce solutions.

## **People In Different Positions In Different Roles May Change Over Time**

Persons of various organizations which undertake different roles can behave differently when they have the responsibility of a new role. For example, a person who has worked in civil society may start to work in a municipality and as the role and authorities of this person is now different, their opinion/perspectives and actions may also change accordingly.

## **There is a Need for Developing Relationships between CSOs And Local Administration**

It is possible to expand the areas of impact by empowering victims and increasing the awareness of local administrations. Civil society is not aware of the activities of local administration and civil society should also review themselves in terms of relationships and provision of services with local administration and providing information about the resources they have.

## **Thought Should be Put into Taking the Most Effective Path In Relationships between Civil Society And Local Administrations**

Local administrations in Turkey work within boundaries which are limited due to bureaucracy and organizations should not be thought of as black and white. There is a need keep in mind the challenges experienced by public institutions and the responsibilities they have. There is a need to think about how to effectively use relationships in light of the responsibilities of civil society and local administration.

## **Representatives of the Subjects of CSOs Should be Followed**

The wellness of CSOs should be reviewed and how effectively CSOs represent the persons they conduct activities for and how they advocate for their rights are should be questioned. There should be a follow up of the social impact of their activities after they conduct their projects and implementation of campaigns and contributions should be made to create environments which are representative of the subjects who they work with.



# OPEN MEYDAN: MarketPlace



In the afternoon session, a marketplace was set up in the Open Meydan session where participants shared their own agenda topics. Participants were asked the question “What is the Role of Local Administration in Education?” which was discussed in the Meydan and which topics they wanted to bring to agenda. The discussion area recommendations were grouped into 8 topic areas and participants came together in different groups to discuss the issues.

## **Including Users In the Use And Design of Education Tools Increases their Impact**

At the table where examples of good practice were discussed regarding the use and design of educational tools, the participation of children and young people in the design process was emphasized. Involving children and young people as beneficiaries in the design of educational spaces promotes the ownership of learning and the learning space in children and young people. In this framework, education tools should be identified according to the needs when conducting activities in the field of education and learning and sustainability is better ensured by designing activities with the participation of the groups who will be benefiting from the activities. It is important for municipalities or CSOs to conduct R&D activities before designing educational tools and to understand the users and sector related needs for the materials. In this process, cooperation can be developed between municipalities and CSOs. Municipalities may be able to offer learning rooms and environments in learning centers for CSOs working in the field of education. Joint programs can be implemented.



## **There is a Need for Cooperation for Refugee/ Migrant Children and Social Cohesion**

The discussion table for migrant children and social cohesion mostly shared experiences. The discussion was about the process of strategies to be put in place about removing barriers for those who have not worked with migrant children before or how to implement these strategies. For example, it was suggested that activities based on physical participation are more effective than activities which required interpreters. There were self-criticisms that not much discourse about the education of refugee children with disabilities was carried out. Services provided by municipalities are not known by CSOs. However, civil society can be a good tool in bringing together local administrations with high service provision capacity and communities which require the services. It is thought that an important first step would be to ensure civil society and local government are aware of each other through social networks.



## **It is Important to Support Parent Training by Local Administration**

At the table of discussion concerning the contributions of local administrations providing parent training, the importance of providing counselling to parents and the internalization of educational concepts by local administrations was emphasized. It is considered important to determine the needs of each region locally and to provide child and parent counselling according to the needs of that particular region. It is important that the counselling process covers the 0-18 age group but focusing on the 0-3 age group is of significant importance. The problem related to monitoring and reporting about the activities needs to be overcome and support needs to be provided to develop parenting skills and to ensure it becomes a sustainable skill.

## **There are Many Steps to be Taken In the Triangulation of Autism, Education And Local Administrations**

At the table where examples of good practice, activities and possible collaborations were discussed, cooperation and different topics learned of CSOs working with autistic individuals came to agenda for the CSOs and local administrations who were not working directly with autistic individuals. For example, autistic children have not been included in the Music for Peace orchestra until now, but they autistic children can easily be a part of this project. It is thought that the Hayat Sende Association and the Child Protection Agencies can cooperate with the Tohum Autism Foundation for the education of autistic individuals living in orphanages. Municipalities can easily request the support and cooperation of CSOs who are active in the area of education of autistic individuals.

## **It is Possible to Use Sports And Physical Activities In Education to Develop Social Skills**

The table which focused on the importance of sports and physical activity in education, focused on the effect of physical activity on developing social skills. Participants from the local administrations expressed their willingness to seek support from CSOs on the use of sport to develop social skills. For example, there may be opportunities for cooperation between the Istanbul Greater City Municipality and the Sulukule Association working in the Fatih district on the methods and techniques they have developed. The place of sports education in the curriculum and its future were among the topics discussed.

## **There are Many Potential Projects That Can Be Conducted with Local Administration**

The example of Siverek was used as a basis for suggestions and steps that can be taken regarding potential activities and projects to be implemented with local governments at this discussion table. In this regard, municipalities can contribute to early childhood education by opening more creches and bring together unemployed teachers and students to create employment opportunities and support the education of children. With “training of the trainer” training to be provided to their staff, municipalities can take one more step closer to sustainability of their projects, can take the leadership in providing new experiences for young people with youth exchange programs and can provide material support to families with babies.

## **There is a Need to Strengthen Cooperation For Children to Learn About Their Inclusion Rights**

At the table where child participation was discussed, it was stated that there should be cooperation for empowerment programs for children to learn about their rights. A child-friendly hotline can be established. Playgrounds and play areas for children can be established together with children. It is necessary to ensure that the basic principle should be to act together with children, not on behalf of children, when conducting activities. It is important to support the initiatives of children where they are the instigator and implementer against the risk factors. If children can establish their own information networks by organizing locally, this can strengthen their relationship with the city. In cooperation with local authorities, it is necessary to pay attention to the establishment of child-friendly toilets suitable for children.



## **Local Administrations as Stakeholders In Environmental Education And Climate Change Awareness Projects Create Trust in Citizens**

Attention was drawn to the relationship between local administration and civil society at the table where the environmental education and climate change activities of local administration was discussed. It is thought that relationships and activities with municipalities will become easier if civil society objectively explains their project objectives and shows sincerity in the work that they do. Instead of organizations applying to municipalities individually, it is found more appropriate to cooperate with stakeholders of the civil initiatives. Organizations conducting different activities have a tendency to become withdrawn and cannot see the various activities and examples conducted in the field. It was seen that municipalities are an actor which provides trust in the public and their interactions. It is important to cooperate with the municipality in activities that are implemented with an impact to affect the opinion of citizens. Examples of best practice can be given as the Green Municipality certificate, water collection project, green office certificate, ecological literacy training for municipality staff of the Eskişehir municipality, environmental children's council of Tepebaşı municipality and the Kadıköy municipality environment volunteers. Cooperation can be developed with municipalities in the preparation of the climate action plan for the strategic action plan.



# Conclusion And Evaluation

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As the YADA Foundation and Civil Pages first set out to establish Meydan, our biggest objective was to ensure that those who were not similar to each other could listen, talk, discuss and cooperate with each other without compromising from themselves. In each meeting we organize, we try to create a ground where we implement different methods, so they are not like regular meetings. It is gratifying to see that we take another step forward in each meeting, however it is clear that there is still a long way to go for steps taken for civil society.

In this Meydan, where the theme of the meet up was “What is the Role of Local Administration in Education?”, we came together with representatives of organizations active in the area of education and an advisory board was established. We aimed to undertake the activities related to education and children, which were among the majority of recent election promises and the agenda of Turkey, by the advisory board in the meetings. Our main motivation was to bring together representatives of local administration and civil society to put on the table what exists, what does not exist and what can be done.

As had been seen in previous meetings, again we observed that the issue of civil society not knowing how to interact with the public sphere continued. One of the reasons underlying this problem is the prejudice that exists between CSOs and local administration. While CSOs see local administration as organizations which cannot be cooperated with, local administration seemed to be the party which was willing to cooperate with CSOs. Local administration has difficulty in conducting activities due to bureaucracy. Civil society experience the problem of finding resources. Due to these issues which seem to be seen as unresolvable, representatives of both local administration and CSOs are challenged to find solutions and it was collectively observed that there was a case of learned helplessness.

As the organizers of Meydan, we believe that we partially met the need for bringing together organizations who are active in the field of education and issues regarding children and it was seen that many potential cooperation ideas were found throughout the day. We hope that the number of activities and opportunities for cooperation between local administration and CSOs will increase. We will be organizing the Meydan Workshop to take a further step towards putting the issues to practice, as a follow up from the Meydan Meet up which asked the question, “What is the Role of Local Administration in Education?” in regard to the relationship between local administrations, children and education. You, the participant, those reading this report and any actors of civil society are invited to the Meydan. See you all at the Meydan!





# Annex 1: List of Participants

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Institution	Participant
Teacher's and Science Labour Union (EđitimSen)	Alaaddin Dinđer
Önder Association for Imam Hatip Students & Alumni	Ali Çiçek
Khan Academy	Alp Köksal
Gündem Çocuk (Agenda: Children)	Alper Şen
Teachers Academy Foundation	Anıl Derkuş
Turkish Environmental Education Foundation (TÜRÇEV)	Aynur Çimenci
Turkish Education Volunteers Foundation (TEGV)	Aynur Kolbay Hülya
Genç Hayat Foundation	Aysel Savaş
Siverek Municipality	Aysun Avcıkıran
WWF Turkey	Ayşe Doğrubak
Diyarbakır Initiative for Education Monitoring and Reform (DİERG)	Aziz Yağan
Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (KEDV)	Bahar Yalçın
Kadıköy Social Equality Unit	Berna Baklacı
Tohum Autism Foundation	Betül Selcen Özer
Social Research and Free Thought Association)	Bilal Seçkin
Mother-Child Education Foundation (AÇEV)	Burcu Gündüz
Beşiktaş Municipality	Canberk Tanođlu
Humanist Bureau	Cansu Cabucak
Şişli Municipality Social Equality Unit	Ceren Suntekin
Turkish Green Crescent	Deniz Deren Önen
Mardin Greater City Municipality Youth Centre	Dilan Beyazköy
BoMoVu	Dilek Üstünalan
EKİP	Ebru Ođuz
Private Nadide High School	Ebru Yıldız
Çankaya Municipality City Council Youth Council	Elif Cabadak

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Institution	Participant
Civil Pages (Sivil Sayfalar)	Emine Uçak
Children of One World	Ersin Tek
Association for Lawyers for Freedom Association for Lawyers for Freedom	Evin Kılıç
Önder Association for Imam Hatip Students & Alumni	Feyzullah Yılmaztürk
Şehir Dedektifi (City Dedective)	Gizem Kıyığı
ÇEKÜL Foundation	Gülşen Hazal Çatalbaş
Sultanbeyli Municipality	Hacer Aktaş
Keyder Little Prince Academy	Halime Miray Sümer
Green Crescent Youth	Hilal Eker
Şimdilik Science Art and Philosophy Association	Hüner Aydın
Teachers Network	Irmak Akıncı
Kızlar Sahada (Girls on the Soccer Field)	Kiraz Öcal
Hayat Sende Association	Mehmet Saraç
Transformation of Village Schools Network (KODA)	Menekşe Canatan
Youth Network Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Mertcan Topal
Bilgi University	Mesude Atay
Sosyal Akıl Derneği (Social Mind Association)	Mesut Dünder
Civil Life Association	Muhammet Ali Yazgan
Genç Düşünce Enstitüsü (Institute of Young Thought)	Muratcan Işıldak
Istanbul Greater City Sporting Club	Mustafa Önal Tığ
Kadırga Primary School	Nehir Sevimli
Music for Peace Foundation	Nilgün Öztunalı
Ada Education Culture Art Design and Research Association	Osman Çağrı Şahin
Education Reform Initiative (ERG)	Özgenur Korlu

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Institution	Participant
Genç Düşünce Enstitüsü (Institute of Young Thought)	Özgün Kaplama
Bir İz Association	Pınar Şimşek
Mersin Yenişehir Municipality	Raif Çakmak
Sultanbeyli Municipality	Sevda Pamay
Istanbul Greater City Sporting Club	Sevilay Çelik
Independent	Seyhan Kutlu Aydınol
Citizens Assembly	Soner Şimşek
Civil Initiative for Ecological Volunteers and Entrepreneurs	Şebnem Özkan
Sulukule Volunteers Association	Şefika Kübra Kalender
Yeşil Gelecek Derneği (Green Future Association)	Şima Topaloglu
Kadıköy Municipality	Yazgülü Kırık
Rengarenk Umutlar Association	Yeter Erel Tuma
Bernard van Leer Foundation	Yiğit Aksakoğlu
Öğrenme Tasarımları (Learning Designs)	Yunus Emre Benli
Sosyal Akıl Derneği (Social Mind Association)	Yunus Öz
Sabancı Foundation	Zeynep Arslan
Dutağacı Solidarity Association	Zeynep Şıkgenç



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