

# BÜYÜKÇEKMECE, CITY OF CULTURE AND ART



## AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



## CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
2. HERITAGE, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY
5. CULTURE AND ECONOMY
6. CULTURE, EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
9. GOVERNANCE OF CULTURE

**CULTURAL RIGHTS, PRECARIOUSNESSES, DIVERSITY,  
GOVERNANCE, COVID, VULNERABILITY, MINORITIES,  
ARTS, PUBLIC SPACE, EQUITY**



## 1. Büyükçekmece and culture

The founders of Büyükçekmece, where the first settlement began in the seventh century BC, were Hellenic. Büyükçekmece came under the rule of the Ottoman Empire in 1453. Today, Büyükçekmece is a district of Istanbul and it maintains its feature of being a bridge between civilizations. The city has numerous cultural, ethnic, and religious groups and social classes. Because of the diversity in the district, cultural services are required to be provided sensitive to the cultural rights of the different groups. This programme was created with the motivation of diversifying the cultural services of the municipality by considering various features of these groups including age, gender, religion, language, ethnicity, and social class, and it has been constantly revised depending on the needs and demands of these groups.

Büyükçekmece Municipality has adopted the principle of reaching all its citizens living in the region through its cultural policies. Through the events, training, and festivals it organizes, it has managed to come together with all its citizens living within the borders of its district. The programme "Büyükçekmece City of Culture and Art" was initiated in 2000 with the aim of promoting cultural democratization and social inclusion. It has collaborated with universities, CSOs, international peers, neighborhood initiatives, the private sector, and cooperatives not only in the implementation phase but also decision-making phase. The program is in line with the development policy of our city, which aims to become a leading city in culture and arts.

**TRAINING, CONCERTS, EXHIBITIONS, WORKSHOPS, FESTIVALS, PERFORMANCES, AND COMPETITIONS HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED UNDER THE PROGRAMME IN ORDER TO ENSURE "THE RIGHT OF EVERYONE TO TAKE PART IN CULTURAL LIFE" AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.**

Because research on the effects of the outbreak pointed out that the vulnerable segments of society such as refugees, Roma, children with disabilities, the elderly, and women as well as cultural workers are disproportionately affected by the negative conditions created by the pandemic, the programme has been revised accordingly. A rapid digital transformation has started in the municipality to ensure that cultural services are not interrupted for these groups. In this process, it was also given special importance not only who benefited from cultural services but also who provided the services. Indeed, the programme attempted to create a space for groups who are most affected by the lockdown measures such as Roma musicians.

## 2. Project goals and implementation

### 2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

The program is implemented to make Büyükçekmece the leading city in Culture and Art. It was launched to ensure social integration, elimination of inequalities, quality education and sustainable economic growth.

### 2.2. Project development

The programme has addressed two main issues 1) how the cultural practitioners have been affected by this process and what our programme could do more to help them: 2) which specific groups have been more affected and what kind of support mechanisms the programme could improve for these groups. Accordingly, many special events as well as competitions -both online and outdoor- have been organized in the fields of theatre, photography, caricature, music, sculpture, dance, puppetry and crafts, on behalf of cultural workers. Because poor and vulnerable population groups were among the hardest hit, the programme ensured access to extra cultural services for these groups. The target audience is mainly the children, youth, and citizens of our city living in disadvantaged areas.

Within the program's scope, the "People's Academy" has moved its training online so that children and young people do not fall behind in their education. Internet and device support are provided to our students who do not have internet access and do not have a suitable device to participate in online training. The International Büyükçekmece Culture and Art Festival, where welcomes thousands of culture and art ambassadors to Büyükçekmece every year since 2000 to represent their culture and country, was held online during the pandemic period.

The most critical obstacle faced within the programme's scope is the inability to follow the event announcements of our older citizens on their social media accounts. To overcome this problem, training was organized on the use of social media and technological devices, especially for senior citizens.



**EVENTS HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS, STREETS, AND AVENUES TO HELP OUR CITIZENS WHO HAVE TO STAY AT HOME FOR A LONG TIME DUE TO THE PANDEMIC.**

## 3. Impacts

### 3.1. Direct impacts

The programme "Büyükçekmece City of Culture and Art" has changed the municipality's approach to culture especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, indeed culture has been treated as a part of the solution for sustainable



and equitable development. In this regard, cultural services have increasingly cooperated with other services such as education, employment, construction, health, and so on.

Each of these impacts has been analyzed with quantitative and qualitative methods. In order to better improve cultural services, different actors of the city including the private sector, local and international cultural organizations, diverse cultural groups, universities, etc. have been contacted. Most recently, a workshop on municipal cultural policies has been organized to deliberate on the future of cultural policies with the participation of all local stakeholders. The municipality is preparing the Vision 2050 report now, which also covers its cultural policies.

**THE PROGRAMME HAS BEEN HIGHLY EFFECTIVE AT DIVERSIFYING CULTURAL SERVICES OFFERED BY THE MUNICIPALITY AS WELL AS DIVERSIFYING GROUPS THAT HAVE BENEFITED FROM THESE SERVICES.**

### **3.2. Assessment**

The evaluation of the activities is carried out at the meetings held under the leadership of the Mayor and with the participation of the relevant department managers. At the end of each activity, citizens give feedback and convey their wishes, and complaints. These collected data are reported and forwarded to the Mayor and the relevant department managers. In this way, within the program citizens are also stakeholders.

### 3.3. Key factors

The programme, carried out under the leadership of the Mayor since 2000, still continues and constantly updates itself thanks to the feedback received from citizens. The most crucial factor in the programme's success is the proper communication with the people and shaping the program according to their wishes and needs.

### 3.4. Continuity

The Municipality has established partnerships with many NGOs, universities, and professional organizations within the programme's scope. In this way, the events were followed and adopted by a large part of society. The most significant stakeholder of the International Büyükçekmece Culture and Art Festival, which is held every year, is FIDAF (Federation of International Dance Festivals). Thanks to this partnership, cultural and artistic collaborations, and intercultural communication were established between FIDAF member countries.

## 4. Further information

Büyükçekmece was a candidate for the fifth "UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21" International Award (February – June 2022). The jury for the award drew up its final report in September 2022, and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

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