

READ TILL YOUR HEIGHT!



AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

- 3. CULTURE AND EDUCATION
- 6. CULTURE, EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION
- 8. CULTURE, INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

**SOCIAL, CAPACITY, SUPPORT, RESILIENCE,
PARTICIPATION, EDUCATION, KNOWLEDGE,
INCLUSION, YOUTH, COVID.**



1. Nilüfer and culture

Nilüfer is the most planned and organized region of Bursa, the 4th largest city of Turkey. With 518 382 inhabitants, provides exemplary services with its modern city planning, social and cultural infrastructure, and outstanding municipal services. It is divided into two as a modern, dynamic city center and countryside with a rich cultural heritage consisting of prehistoric settlements, ancient cities, Byzantine and Ottoman villages.

Nilüfer Municipality Directorate of Library aims to contribute to the formation of an urban culture by disseminating library culture, reading and research culture. The project "Read Till Your Height" is directly related to the Nilüfer Municipality 2020-2024 Strategic Plan in terms of local cultural policy, and was created "to ensure that cultural and artistic activities reach every point of the city", "to spread library and reading culture in Nilüfer" and "to contribute to the empowerment of new generations by increasing the scope of participation through studies for development of children and young people" for a social development purpose, which is included in the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan of Nilüfer Municipality.

"READ TILL YOUR HEIGHT" AIMS TO DEVELOP PERSONAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS WHILE SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S READING HABITS AND LIBRARY USAGE HABITS.

2. Project goals and implementation

2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

The aim of the project is to contribute to the development of the reading habits of children studying in public schools, as well as library usage habits. While it develops writing skills, it also supports the ability to interpret and express what they read, and contributes to social, emotional and academic success of children. Therefore, "Read Till Your Height" aims to develop personal and social skills while supporting children's reading habits.



2.2. Project development

The project was initiated by the Library Directorate of Nilüfer Municipality, and was carried out in cooperation with Nilüfer Rotary Club and with support of the Nilüfer District Directorate of National Education, among other stakeholders. It has been carried out every year since 2010, and its announcement takes place at the beginning of academic year.

The project awards children who read the most books and their classes. Since 2010, more than 14 thousand students have participated in the project, reading approximately 380 thousand books (36 million pages).

The initiative helps teachers and parents to accompany and support the children's reading process, develops writing skills for 2nd and 3rd graders, and the ability to interpret and express what they have read in all grades. In previous years, applications and abstracts were filled in by hand, and were handed in in the library. After September 2020, this process started being entirely digital through the website www.boyunkadarkitapoku.org. During the 2021-2022 education period, the project was carried out on digital platform for the second time. This digitalization resulted in an increased number of participants. In the 2021-2022 academic year, a total of 7329 book summaries were uploaded to the website.

Students who read and summarize the highest number of pages at their class level, and upload their abstracts, are rewarded with the participation in Nilufer Belediyespor Summer Courses. A total of 120 students are awarded as "Reading Champions". All the other participants, students and teachers, are given books as an incentive to continue their interest in reading.



Schools that support their students the most are also rewarded. Prizes are given to first three schools that participate with the highest percentage of students according to school size, as well as the school that participates with the highest number of students regardless of number of students. Also, the student who borrows more books from the library and presents their abstracts is also rewarded with the "Library Friend" award.

Also, schools are given electronic devices they need (computers, printers, projectors, etc.) or books for the school library. Moreover, award ceremonies are held with guests that children like and can be model figures for them.

THE PROJECT AWARDS CHILDREN WHO READ THE MOST BOOKS. SINCE 2010, MORE THAN 14 000 STUDENTS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE PROJECT, READING APPROXIMATELY 380 000 BOOKS.

3. Impacts

3.1. Direct impacts

Our project was implemented to increase reading habits of children who were confined in their homes during the pandemic, and increasing awareness of teachers and parents in this regard. In 2020, the project (which was face-to-face before Covid-19) was transformed into digital. Thus, more children have been provided with easy access without hindrance to distances.

Also, Nilüfer Municipality Libraries reached more people and carried out activities that support their aims in the 2020-2024 Strategic Plan with "Read Till Your Height". Also, the digitalization of the project responded to the needs of society during the Covid-19 period, with more than 14 thousand students participating in the initiative.



3.2. Assessment

The number of abstracts of read books, number of students, teachers and schools that applied for the project are recorded. This is stored and evaluated by comparing it with the data collected in the previous year. This follow-up and evaluation process is carried out by the Nilüfer Municipality Directorate of Library. According to the data obtained, since 2010, more than 14 thousand students have participated in "Read Till Your Height", reading approximately 380 thousand books (36 million pages).

The evaluation of the data pointed out the need for further development and determination to continue with the digital project, since more students and teachers applied and already got used to the digital application.

3.3. Key factors

Key concepts of the project are "innovation", "accessibility" and "sustainability". Innovation comes from transferring this initiative into digital: while children used to send summaries by hand, now they may participate by uploading them through the

website. In this respect, it has also become more accessible. Those who were in quarantine could easily access this project at home, and upload their book abstracts from their smartphones, tablets or computers, either as written text, through photographs, or as audio recordings.

The sustainability of our project has also increased, especially with its digitalization, which expanded the culture of reading books (shown by the data, as children read more books since the digitization of the project). The widespread use of digital education applications on a daily basis also supports the sustainability of our project.

IN 2020, THE PROJECT TRANSFORMED INTO DIGITAL, THUS RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF SOCIETY DURING THE PANDEMIC.

3.4. Continuity

"Read Till Your Height" is suitable for the aim of "Social Development" in 2020-2024 Strategic Plan of Nilüfer Municipality, and is a project of social responsibility. For this reason, its continuity will be ensured to a large extent in terms of local governmental policy.

4. Further information

Nilüfer 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.

This article was written by Buse Sözer, Project Coordinator, Nilüfer, Bursa, Turkey.

Contact: [busesozer \(at\) nilufer.bel.tr](mailto:busesozer(at)nilufer.bel.tr)

Website: www.nilufer.bel.tr

