Disability Awareness Toolkit for Students of Architecture: ABLE* Universities

I hear and I forget. I see and I remember.

I do and I understand.

Goksenin Inalhan, Assist. Prof. Dr.
Istanbul Technical University
Faculty of Architecture

ABLE*: Accessible- Barrier-free Learning Environments

Goksenin Inalhan, Assist. Prof. Dr.
Vice-Head of Department of Architecture
Istanbul Technical University
Faculty of Architecture
Taskisla-Taksim, TURKEY
inalhang@itu.edu.tr

Aslı Sungur Ergeneoglu, Assist. Prof. Dr.
Yıldız Technical University
Faculty of Architecture
Yıldız. TURKEY
asungur@yildiz.edu.tr

Outline...

- **Overview**

  Accessibility and Inclusivity in HE in Turkey

- **Disability legislation, policy and standards:** Implications for HE in Turkey

- **ABLE Project**:

  Making Social Innovation Happen

- **Conclusions**

- **Future works**

Profile: Turkey

- In contrast to other European countries, has a young population: **71 million, 36 % under the age of 14**.

- The population of 20 to 29 year-olds is expected to increase by 7 to 16 percent over the next decade, an increasing **demand upon the tertiary education** system.

- Turkey is confronted by the future challenges of **access** and **participation in higher education**.

- Equal access to higher education is a **quantity issue** (to provide more educational facilities) and a **quality issue** (to provide barrier-free educational facilities)

Profile: Turkey

Table 1 The proportion of disabled population by completed educational level (age≥25)

	Illiterate	Literate	Literate but no school completed	Primary school	Junior high school and equivalent	High school and equivalent	Higher education
Turkey	36.37	63.62	7.69	40.97	5.64	6.90	2.42
Urban	27.40	72.58	6.85	42.75	8.00	10.62	4.36
Rural	45.36	54.64	8.54	39.17	3.31	3.16	0.47
Male	25.75	74.22	7.95	47.21	6.98	8.98	3.10
Female	51.26	48.74	7.32	32.22	3.78	3.97	1.45

Source: OIB (2002).

The State Institute of Statistic's Disability Survey:

8.5 million persons in Turkey with disabilities
(12.29 % of the total population).
The **educational attainment** for these individuals is
extremely low.

Disability legislation, policy and standards in Turkey

'Law for Disabled People' (The Act No. 5378), July 2005

- aims to help disabled people by alleviating problems in relation to health, **education,** rehabilitation, employment, care and social security.

- within seven years of the implementation of the act (by the year of 2012), facilities for disabled people must be put in place, in terms of them being able **to access** buildings that belong to public institutions.

- **Higher education institutions** in Turkey are also challenged : by the year of 2012 they had to be **accessible to** the increasingly wide variety of students who attend them.

Disability legislation, policy and standards: implications for HE in Turkey

"Directive on Disability in Higher Education", June 2006

- legislation requires that each university maintain a support unit as **'Disability Coordination Unit'**

- Those units are responsible for taking **the essential precautions to facilitate the educational lives of persons with disabilities** that are studying in universities and to make arrangements accordingly .

- **"Accessibility"** for a university student with a disability might include anything from physical access to student halls to learning and testing in the classroom.

Progress so far…

- Disability legislation (July 2005), requiring equal opportunities at all levels of education, including higher education.
- A Directive on Disability in Higher Education (June 2006)
- 5 Turkish annual workshops by universities and their disability support units and Turkish Higher Education Council since October 2007 (220 members from 70 universities, out of 130 universities).

However problems still remain in establishing institutional strategies designed to improve support for disabled students, these problems stem from

- an incomplete understanding of the needs of students with disabilities,
- the lack of reliable statistics,
- difficulties with the interpretation of legal requirements and
- the lack of consistency between standards for implementing those regulations.

"The Blindmen and the Elephant" situation

The failure of Turkey's higher education institutions to perceive such changes in the big picture of disability and in the provision of barrier-free education:

- There is a need to have a **comprehensive framework** and guidelines in the Turkish higher education context
- to help provide **effective guidance** for consistent **implementation** and **application of this legislation**.
- to provide a picture of the whole barrier-free educational elephant.

By such a **holistic approach** we can reconcile the broad and somewhat disparate interpretations of inclusivity and diversity in the context of higher education institutions in Turkey.

ABLE Project:
Making Social Innovation Happen

A project aimed at building a comprehensive framework (ABLE Project)- that shift the focus from inclusive education as a product to inclusive education as processes of social innovation, attitudinal change and development of collaborative learning communities.

- **Project Objectives:**

to lay the foundations of a comprehensive, conceptual framework (ABLE Project) for formulating **inclusive policies**, **programs**, **project development** and **implementation** within the context of **Turkish Higher Education**.

This effort can be implemented as a vehicle for promoting **social innovation**, as well as **social equality** and **justice**, **environmental sustainability**, and **health and well-being.**

ABLE Project:
Making Social Innovation Happen

Towards achieving barrier-free higher education:

Instead of creating courses, services, information technology, and physical spaces for the "typical" student and then making modifications for disabled students,

Our approach has been to address the needs of people by distinguishing the role of each element:

- "learner,"
- "mentor/faculty member,"
- "knowledge/content/skills,"
- "environment" in the learning experience.

One can envision an enabling learning experience featuring the learner "at the center".

Overview of the Project

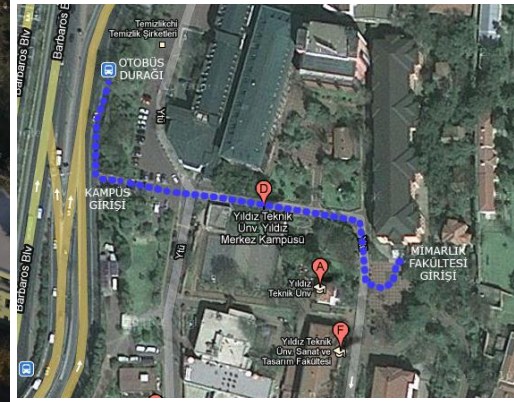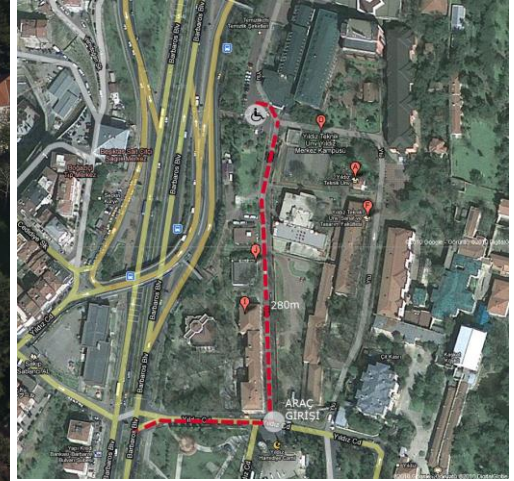**Phase I : Prompts, inspirations and diagnoses**

Phase II : Proposals and ideas

Phase III : Prototyping and pilots

Phase IV : Sustaining

Phase V : Scaling and diffusion

Phase VI : Systemetic change

PILOT:
Yıldız Technical University

Phase 3: PILOT Project

- **3 lecturers (2 authors, 1 disabled lecturer)**
- **10 Graduate students of Yildiz Technical University and**
- **12 Undergraduate students of Istanbul Technical University take part in the first 3 PHASES of the project.**

Methods used:

- **Theory (attending the 14 week course as part of their studies)**
- **User Involvement**
    - Bring disabled people in as lecturer
    - Involve students to evaluate and test
    - Study user requirements through interviews-surveys
    - Study users' way of life (using combination of interviews,observations and awareness questionnaires)
    - Simulation exercises (create awareness through experiencing disabling environments)
- **Evaluation**
    - Audits and evaluation methods (Access Audits)

Outcomes of the PILOT Project

This pilot project has served us number of points:

- it provided the architecture students and architects a **vision and awareness about inclusivity issues**,
- inspiring students to use these **theories and ideas** in their **professional life**.
- to prepare a **detailed documentation** about the accessibility issues (accessibility of physical spaces, accessibility of social facilities and interaction and educational accessibility) of Yildiz Technical University and
- to build **a model for creating a comprehensive framework** of ABLE universities to be use and applied by other university campuses.

Conclusions

- **Social innovation** is the creation of research and knowledge in the development of sustainable solutions for social, environmental and cultural challenges.
- Education and training can be a power-base for **fostering social innovation.**
- If **educational environments** are **inaccessible** or **exclude** people, the university will **become an area of isolated** and **poorly interconnected communities**, thus **hindering** the development of **social innovation**.
- **The provision of accessible educational facilities** is the most important area of concern **for achieving a barrier-free education**.

Future Works

- The European Union (EU) goal is to make Europe "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world"

  - depends on its higher education institutions meet the rapidly-growing demand for high-level skills.

  - **Turkey**'s development plan emphasizes the need **to increase** **educational attainment** and **to develop** **a lifelong education strategy**.

Future Works

Contact Information…

Assist. Prof. Dr. Goksenin Inalhan
Istanbul Technical University
Faculty of Architecture
Taskisla-Taksim, TURKEY
inalhang@itu.edu.tr

Assist. Prof. Dr. Aslı Sungur Ergeneoglu
Yıldız Technical University
Faculty of Architecture
Yıldız. TURKEY
asungur@yildiz.edu.tr