

FENER-BALAT DISTRICTS SURVEY REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. APPROACH	4
1.2. PREPARATIONS	5
2. METHODOLOGY of the SURVEY	6
2.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	6
2.2. DIFFICULTIES FACED DURING THE STUDY	6
2.3. THE SAMPLE AND TECHNIQUE	7
3. EVALUATION of RESEARCH FINDINGS	8
3.1. GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE REGION	8
3.1.1. *An Introduction of Fener Balat District	8
3.1.2. Population and Number of Buildings per Neighbourhood	8
3.1.3. Status of Service Institutions	9
3.1.4. Properties of Locals	10
3.2. PROFILE OF THE INTERVIEWED WOMEN	10
3.2.1. Age Group	10
3.2.2. Hometown, Being a Local vs. Immigrant	11
3.2.3. Educational Level of Women and Children	12
3.2.4. Occupation, Income Level and Poverty	13
3.2.5. Marital Status, Number of Children and Persons Living at Home	14
3.3. NEIGHBOURHOOD PROBLEMS AND URBAN SERVICES	15
3.4. CHILDREN AND YOUTH	18
3.5. POVERTY	22
3.6. EARTHQUAKE PREPARATIONS AND CONDITION OF THE HOUSING	24
3.7. ECONOMIC SITUATION	26
4. CONCLUSION	33
4.1. THE STATE OF THE DISTRICT AND THE BASIC SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT	33
4.2. WOMEN'S ROLE IN LEADERSHIP	34
4.3. POVERTY	34
4.4. THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS	35

4.5.	THE HISTORY AND CULTURAL VALUES OF THE DISTRICT _____	35
5.	ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS for the SOCIAL CENTER – The Developed Solution Suggestions _____	36
5.1.	TARGET AND AIMS _____	36
5.2.	WORK PRINCIPLES _____	36
5.3.	BASIC WORK FIELDS AND ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS _____	36
5.3.1.	Neighbourhood Problems and Urban Services _____	36
5.3.2.	Children and Youngsters _____	37
5.3.3.	Health Services _____	37
5.3.4.	Poverty _____	38
5.3.5.	Economic Strengthening _____	38
5.3.6.	Raising Awareness on the Historical and Cultural Values of the District _____	39
5.3.7.	Individual and Organizational Capacity Development _____	39
5.4.	FUNCTIONS OF THE SOCIAL CENTER _____	39
5.5.	MANAGEMENT OF THE SOCIAL CENTER _____	40
5.6.	SUSTAINABILITY _____	40

1. INTRODUCTION

This study has been conducted by Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (FSWW) within the framework of Fener-Balat Rehabilitation Program, supported by EC, in order to determine the problems, priorities and needs of Fener Balat District so that it can serve as a guide to the NGOs that will work in the field on the issue of starting a social centre from which women, children and youngsters can benefit. The study also aims to help local women participate the project development process and to compile the information gathered from the authorities on the problems women face in their neighbourhoods.

The report not only includes the results of 300 questionnaires conducted by local women with the help of university students within the dates of March 3-10 2004, but also suggestions based on the findings of the study for activity and management plans of the Social Centre.

We would like to thank the following persons who contributed to the study: women participants - Gülsüm Pektaş, Beyhan Yaşar , Hamdiye Gökhan, Suzan Öztürk, Sevgin Kal, Selime Şaduman, Neşe Yalçın, Aycan Yıldız, Tarık Us Primary School Principal Mehmet Taşkın, Kırımlı Aslan Primary School Vice Principal Muazzez Yel, Hızır Çavuş Neighbourhood Muhktar Halil İbrahim Koçan, Kadir Has University Statistics Department Member of Teaching Staff Fazıl Güler and his students Aslı Koç and Özge Cömert, İstanbul University Sociology Department graduates and students Sebla Güngören, Seda Bilan, Müge Oktay, Ceylan Bağbakan, Elvan Bensason and Aslı Bilgiç.

1.1. APPROACH

Within the framework of the study, women, children and youngsters were determined to be the target group. On the other hand, women formed the backbone of the communication and solidarity among locals, were directly prone to many problems of the neighbourhood and were the key to the solution of problems related to home and children due to their traditional roles related to these. Women acting as leaders for themselves as well as for children and youngsters also form the basis of the approach in terms of the Program. For this reason, the questionnaires were applied only to the women living in the district.

Women were tried to be made active in the research and development of solution suggestions. In addition, social centre management was designed in a way that permits women to participate actively. The following are attended to in the work related to women's leadership:

1. Those in need create service areas of their own for themselves; hence, sustainability of the service is ensured.
2. Because priorities and solutions are developed by those who suffer from the problems, labour, money and time are channelled to the right areas and participation increases.
3. Women ensure that the provided opportunities are used effectively and in line with the needs and the investments are made in the right fields in this process, through which women get stronger.
4. Women keep the neighbourhood together and are the major actresses of neighbourhood life and collaboration; these no-name roles that they naturally assume are made visible.

1.2. PREPARATIONS

The first step of the fieldwork was having interviews with local resources (mukhtars, Balat-Fener Association, school principals, local resource persons etc.) to gather information. In these interviews, information was submitted on Fener-Balat Rehabilitation Program and was collected on the major problems of the region; in addition, women were asked for their support for the organization of neighbourhood meetings.

Subsequently, meetings with women groups (6 meetings with the total participation of 110 women) were held in order to identify problem areas. In these meetings, the women were asked to evaluate their neighbourhoods for themselves and their children, problems were discussed in detail and priorities were tried to be set. Moreover, women were informed of the Program and the targets of social centre work were explained. During social centre planning work, the importance of women participation was emphasized. In the meetings, 6 basic issues (problems of the neighbourhood, education of children and the youth, health, economic opportunities, condition of the housing, poverty) were identified to be high priority problem areas. The research application plan and survey questions were prepared based on these meetings. During data collection phase, additional questions, arising from the needs of the program team, were generated and added to the survey questions.

Also, leader women who wanted to participate to the study emerged in these meetings. Regular meetings with them were started. During these meetings, the women were informed of the study and were trained on applying the questionnaires.

A total of 300 local women filled in questionnaires on 6 different topics, as listed below:

- Evaluation of neighbourhood problems and local services
- Education of children and youth
- Poverty
- Economic initiatives
- Health problems and evaluation of related services
- Earthquake preparation and the condition of the housing

In the beginning, it was planned that the women undertake the questionnaire work. This was also seen as an important strategy, which will lead women to actively participate future project activities. A group of women were trained in questionnaire work and they did a portion of the questionnaires work. However, subsequently, a team of 6 consisting of İstanbul University's Sociology Department students was formed to support the women during of the study. This group, who were trained on the survey and its aims, linked women with contacted local resources. In the questionnaire phase, 2 teams, one consisting of the students and the other of the local women, cooperated. Local women helped the student team by taking them to schools and places where they can have the questionnaires filled in and by introducing them to principals, vice principals, their neighbours and mukhtars. Reaching women one to one during the survey was very beneficial in terms of promoting the Program, and more specifically, promoting the social centre in the region.

The women who were interviewed during the survey were subsequently invited to meetings to discuss the findings of the research. Within this framework, 8 focus group meetings with a total participation of 101 women were held. In focus group meetings, the results of the survey were shared with the participants and solution suggestions were made. The planning, application, evaluation of the research as well as the suggestions to overcome local problems and to establish a social centre developed by local women based on the findings of the study are discussed in detail under separate headings in Section 5 of this report.

2. METHODOLOGY of the SURVEY

2.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

With the survey, rather than an assumption based explanatory study, a descriptive study revealing the problems of the district was conducted.

This study can be evaluated as women's own work to collect data on their neighbourhoods. The aim was permitting women to acquire the needed data to clearly acknowledge the problems (their scope and sources etc.), to develop the most appropriate solutions to these problems and to start cooperating various sectors in the region to materialize the solutions.

To sum up, the study aimed women to:

- gather and have the experience of working together,
- to discover their own resources as well as other resources in the region,
- to start the process of developing shared solutions for shared problems,

Other objectives of the study were:

- Presenting a reliable source of information for other institutions working in the district as well as submitting clear definitions for the problems and needs in the region,
- Providing women the opportunity to bring out their own problems and priorities to the local agenda with the power of knowledge,
- Acting as an intermediary between women and local sectors in order to start cooperation for the solution of local problems

2.2. DIFFICULTIES FACED DURING THE STUDY

One of the main problems in neighbourhoods with high migration rates is that people tend to build relations according to their ethnic identity or the amount of time they spent in their new environment and communication among these different groups remains low. This situation is one of the factors, which make cooperation in pursuit of a common goal more difficult.

Another problem was that the locals of the district were not open and that they had a very insecure approach to newcomers, which led to communicational difficulties. This problem was tried to be overcome with the support from the trusted institutions and individuals such as muhktars and school principals.

Still another problem was that inhabitants of the district grouped the people living in their district according to their ethnical backgrounds or duration of time they lived in the region. As the district consisted of immigrants coming from many different cities, cooperation around a shared aim was difficult.

Another factor that had a negative impact on the study was that the locals were foreign to such social work and that there was no structure to facilitate materialization of social work like a social centre. Therefore, especially during the planning phase, difficulties were faced in terms of women's participation. To overcome this problem, leader women who participated the meetings were invited to

FSWW Centre where they watched films to see what could be done and how solutions could be developed, and they were conveyed the work of other women groups. On the other hand, a significantly positive response was maintained for the following question from the survey: “would you like to participate to the related work in the district?” Furthermore, the district has the active neighbourhood initiatives such as school-family unions and the social service kitchen in Hızır Çavuş Neighbourhood. It is believed that this problem will be surmounted as the work materializes.

2.3. THE SAMPLE AND TECHNIQUE

When selecting the locations of the study, the implementation area of the project was considered. The survey was undertaken in a way that covers the 8 neighbourhoods in the region. More interviews were conducted in central neighbourhoods such as Hızır Çavuş or Tevkii Cafer. The per neighbourhood ratio of the survey is as follows: Hızır Çavuş - %21, Tevkii Cafer - 20%, Kazım Gürani - 11%, Tahta Minare - 11%, Balat Karabaş - 10%, Hamami Muhittin - 9%, Molla Aşkı - 9%, Abdi Subaşı 9%.

During the survey, questionnaires on 6 different topics were filled in by a total of 300 women. Each separate questionnaire was conducted to 50 participants. For some questionnaires the sample was selected at random whereas for others the sample was selected in accordance with the topic of the questionnaires. Especially for the questionnaires on poverty and education of children and youth, the sample was chosen through mukhtars and schools.

Additionally, the initial part of every questionnaire contained common questions regarding the general profile. The tables in Section 3.2. were formed by gathering the data on the general properties of the 300 subjects. Some other questions were also asked in several questionnaires. These are evaluated as context based feedback, not repetitions.

3. EVALUATION of RESEARCH FINDINGS

3.1. GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE REGION

In order to compile the data related to the general structure of the region, initially, a source scan was undertaken reaching findings of previous research in the region and revising previous articles on the historical development of the district. Also, schools and mukhtars of the district were contacted to evaluate the condition of services at the time of the study.

3.1.1. *An Introduction of Fener and Balat District

Until 1940s, Fener Balat was a district where the Greek dwelled. However, as these initial dwellers started to move to other districts such as the Islands, Kadıköy, Yeşilköy and Şişli, the district went through significant changes in terms of social structure. The factories and workshops established on the Golden Horn coast also greatly influenced the change in the district. Although the district was considerably rich with historical qualities, the departure of the minorities led to changes. Presently, the income level of the district is quite low as is the educational background of the current dwellers. Immigrants from many different cities in Turkey, but especially from Kastamonu, have moved to the district because of its proximity to central occupational regions and the cheapness of the rents. The rooted Greek culture of the district has been replaced by the culture of rural immigrants today. Interestingly, there is a tendency to outcast new comers in these neighbourhoods, where almost all the inhabitants are immigrants from other cities. Recently, the group that is most severely affected by this tendency is the “Easterners”, who started to move to the area lately. Fener Balat has become both a living area and a work area for its new dwellers who neglect it due to economic reasons and lack of awareness. The number of dwellers who were actually born in this district keeps on diminishing, as these original dwellers tend to leave the area due to their old buildings that fall into ruins, the poor dwellers and the degeneration in the district. And the ones that remain behind do so only because of economic concerns.¹

3.1.2. Population and Number of Buildings per Neighbourhood 2

(Based on Fatih Municipality 2000 Census)	Population	Number of Buildings
Abdi Subaşı	3389	321
Hızır Çavuş	3446	473
Balat Karabaş	680	293
Kasım Gürani	5651	517
Tahta Minare	812	232
Tevkii Cafer	3833	461
Hamami Muhittin	4843	436
Molla Aşkı	4590	738

¹ **Dünden Bugüne İstanbul Ansiklopedisi.** İstanbul Tarih Vakfı Yayınları, 1993, Cilt 3 (Volume 3)

² www.fatih-bld.gov.tr web address has been used.

3.1.3. Status of Service Institutions 3

	Health Institution	Pharmacy	School	Children's Park	Transportation/ Station	Other
Hızır Çavuş	None	3	Tarık Us Primary School	None	None	Postal Services Office
Tahta Minare	None	None	None	None	1	Library for Women's Work
Tevkii Cafer	None	None	None	None	None	Basketball Court, Murat Molla Public Library
Kasım Gürani	None	None	Edirnekapı Primary School	None	1	Altınay Sports Club, Sinepop
Balat Karabaş	Balat Musevi Hospital	2	None	None	2	Mini Football Field
Hamami Muhittin*	None		Muallim Naci Primary School	None	None	None
Abdi Subaşı*	None	None	Özel Maraşlı Rum Primary School	None	2	
Molla Aşkı*	None	1	Kırımlı Aslanbey, Ulubatlı Hasan	Available	None	

* A section of this neighbourhood is within the scope of Fener-Balat Rehabilitation Program.

The services offered in the primary schools of the district are presented in the following table:

Current Services	Tarık Us Primary School	Kırımlı Aslan Primary School	Muallim Naci Primary School	Ulubatlı Hasan Primary School	Edirnekapı Primary School
Number of students	850	700	1200	635	840
Pre-school	Available	None	Available	None	Available (45 children)
Number of disabled students	7	2	None	None	3
School-Family Union	Available	None	Available	None	Available
Counsellor	None	None	Available	None	Available
Health scan	Available	Available	Available	Available	Available
Training for parents	Literacy course	Literacy course	Seminars on healthy diet etc.	Literacy course	None
Aid for poor students	None	Available	None	None	Available

Though health scan and vaccinations are not regular, they are organized by Ministry of Education or with the support of private institutions (private hospitals, Lions Club etc.). Aid to the poor students is arranged by the individual endeavour of school directors and generally entails irregular in kind aid such as shoes, clothes, and food. Moreover, in Kırımlı Aslan Primary School, with the contribution of

³ www.ibb.gov.tr the information in the Current City Map, results of the interviews with mukhtars and school principals has been used.

parents, school uniforms, stationary etc. are collected from students at the end of the year to be distributed to poor students.

3.1.4. Properties of Locals ⁴

Hometowns

According to the findings of a survey conducted in September – October 1997 on 236 houses, half the interviewed district locals were from the Black sea Region; to be more precise, one third of them were from Kastamonu. The second biggest group living in the district were from the Marmora Region where as the third one were immigrants from the East and South East of Turkey.

Distributions of House Owners and Renters

In 1997, 60% of the dwellers in the district were renters whereas 39% were property owners. The remaining 1% lives in houses belonging to associations or foundations.

Economic Status of Locals

While the poverty border of a family of 4 was 425 ECU (1 ECU corresponding to 190.000 TL) per month in Turkey in 1997, 70% of the interviewed district locals had monthly income less than 255 ECU; approximately half of the interviewed locals had less than 170 ECU monthly income. Hence, it can be said that the inhabitants of the district are socially and economically poor. This survey also indicates that the poverty problem persists.

Educational Background of Locals

Although the ratio of the illiterate was 5% according to the 1990 census, this ratio has risen to 19% among women.

Age Group Distribution of the Population

Again, according to the 1990 census, the population of children younger than 6 comprises 12%, those between the ages of 6 and 14 20% and between the ages of 15 and 19 11% of the district population. Thus, the youth under the age of 20 comprises 43% of district population.

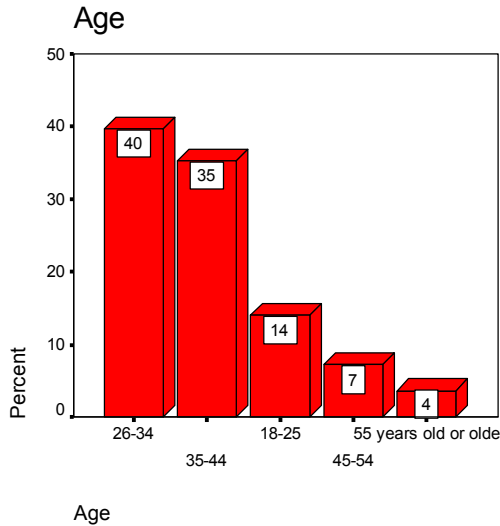
3.2. PROFILE OF THE INTERVIEWED WOMEN

Demographical questions were asked in all of the 6 separate questionnaires. The following data reveal the profile of the 300 women subjects.

3.2.1. Age Group

Among the 300 women subjects who participated the study, 40% were in the 26-34, 35% 35-44, 14% 18-25 and 11% in the 45 and above age group.

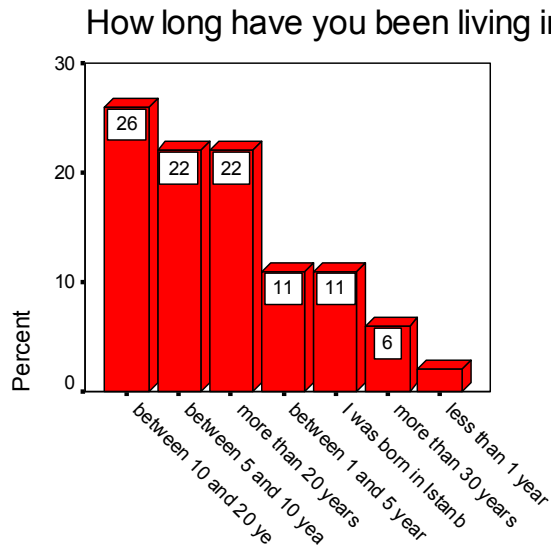
⁴ **Balat ve Fener Semtlerinin Rehabilitasyonu. Analiz ve Düzenleme Önerileri**, Şubat 1998. Fatih Belediyesi, Avrupa Birliği, Unesco Dünya Mirası Merkezi, Fransız Anadolu Araştırmaları Enstitüsü



3.2.2. Hometown, Being a Local vs. Immigrant

The survey results point out that the district has immigrants from 42 different cities. The most intense immigration has been from the Black sea Region with a ratio of 58%, 27% of which is from Kastamonu and 7% from Zonguldak. The proportion of those who state that they are from İstanbul is 8%.

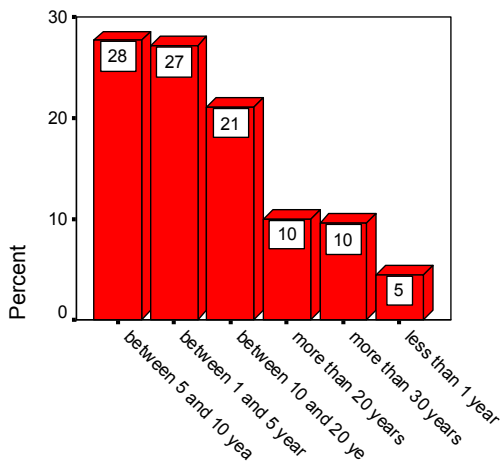
According to the findings of the study conducted in 1997, 50% of district population emigrated from the Black sea Region whereas 12% from the East and South East of Turkey. This research, on the other hand, shows that the ratio of those from the Black sea Region is 58% while those from East and South East of Turkey are 18%. These findings, research observations as well as the duration that the inhabitants have been living in the district indicate that immigrant dwellers do not perceive the district as a temporary residence and have settled in the district.



How long have you been living in İstanbul?

Sixty-five percent of the women who participated to the study state that they have been living in İstanbul for 10 or more years.

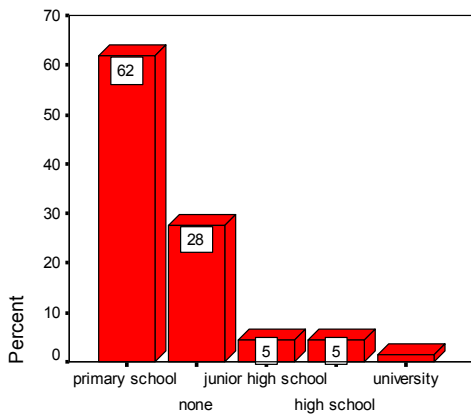
Residence duration in the neighbour



Residence duration in the neighbourhood

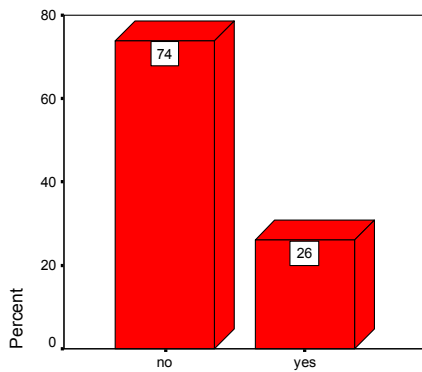
3.2.3. Educational Level of Women and Children

Education



Education

Literacy among the people who has never

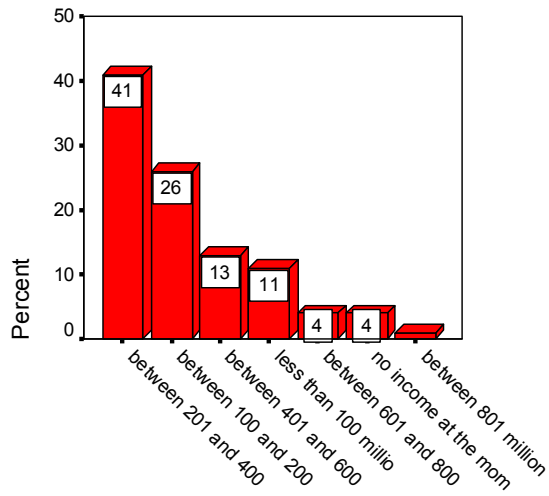


Literacy among the people who has never

The illiteracy problem of women living in the district, which was revealed in the 1990 census, has also been reflected in this study. According to the study, the ratio of women who have never been to school is 28% in the district; approximately a quarter of this group has indicated that they are literate.

3.2.4. Occupation, Income Level and Poverty

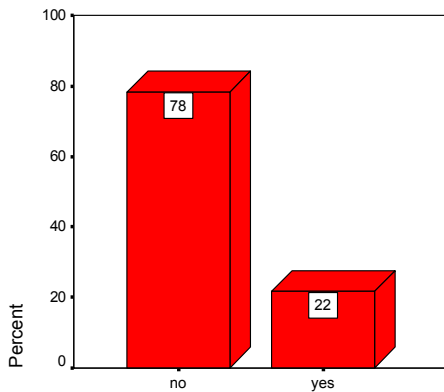
How much is your family's monthly i



How much is your family's monthly income?"

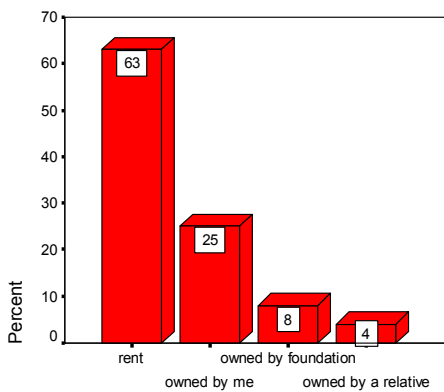
Of the interviewed subjects, 78% stated that their family income is TL 400 millions or less per month. More dramatically, 4% of the subjects indicated that they had no income, but lived on aid and debt at the time of the study.

Do you have social security?



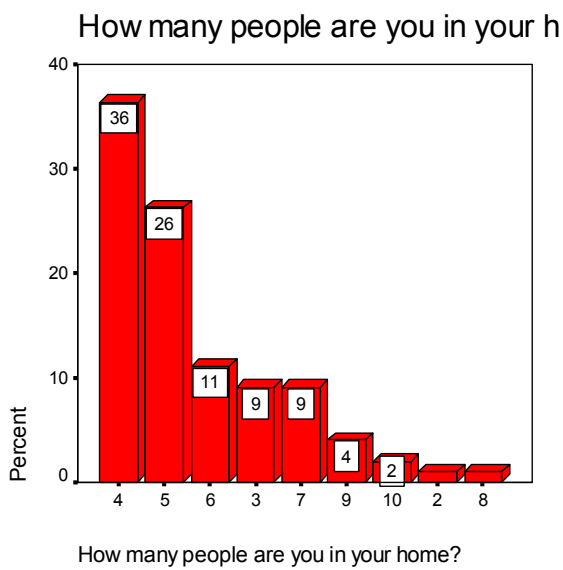
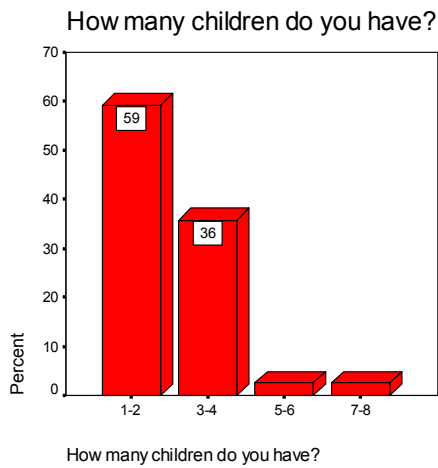
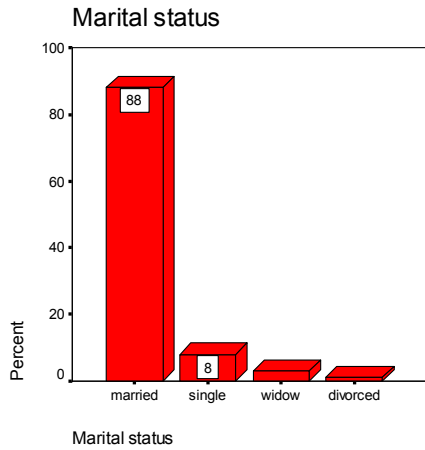
Do you have social security?

Are you a house owner or renter?



Are you a house owner or renter?

3.2.5. Marital Status, Number of Children and Persons Living at Home



The survey reveals that 36% of the participants have families of 4 persons. The total ratio of 4 and 5 person families are 62%.

3.3. NEIGHBOURHOOD PROBLEMS AND URBAN SERVICES

The survey on this issue aimed to collect data on the current state of the services in the district, sources of the problems (residents, authorities etc.) and the state of current solution mechanisms.

Fifty-seven percent of the women who participated to the survey indicated that they moved to this district due to economic reasons. While 19% of the women stated that they moved to the district because of marriage, 10% stated that they were born in the district. Only one woman declared that she moved to Balat because she liked it.

When asked whether they considered moving back to their hometowns, 92% of the participants responded negatively. The women within the 8% range who said that they considered returning to their hometowns showed poor economic conditions of the district as the reason; yet, they did not have a definite plan about when to go back.

Sixty-two percent of the subjects pointed out that they did not plan to move to another part of Istanbul. When participants' feedback to all the questions is also evaluated, the response to this specific question seems to indicate that the participants did not have any alternative due to difficult life conditions rather than their contentment of the district. The 36% percent who indicated that they planned to move from the district basically expressed that they were not happy about the house they lived in. However, when asked when they will move, the subjects said as soon as possible, but could not give a definite date.

Although 67% of the participants expressed that they had relatives in the district, 42% remarked that they could not see their relatives frequently. Only 20% of the subjects indicated that there were associations of their hometowns in the district and out of these only 3 persons stated that they were members of hometown associations. Recent social studies also point out that the fellow countrymanship, which used to be the main mode of cooperation in urban slums, started to depreciate; with the strong impact of poor economic conditions, the cooperation in city slums started to shift from being relatives or fellow countrymanship towards self-interest. Likewise, the response to another question from the survey about trusting neighbours and relatives was negative by 40%.

The percentage of subjects, which stated that neighbourhood relations were good in Balat, was 67%. However, this figure is still low when compared with the other above-mentioned studies, which reflected that main cooperation was between neighbours rather than relatives or fellow countryman. When those not happy about neighbourhood relations were asked for the reasons, they primarily indicated cultural differences to be the main factor and expressed that people did not talk to others. The sum of these 2 ratios is 89%. In this sense, local women's union, blending and coming around shared objectives seems to be difficult.

Sixty-one percent of women expressed that they were happy about living in the neighbourhood; for 56% of the women this was due to neighbourhood and fellow countrymanship relations. Although this appears to contradict the above data, it might be pointing out that no matter how narrow, closed and restricted the life of the locals are, they have strong social relationships within these restrictions. That is, while they have intense social relations with the restricted group they trust, they remain as distant as possible from other parties. Indeed, responses to other questions verify this. When those discontented of living in the district were asked for the reasons, the first reason was not being happy with the neighbours, the second was insecurity of the region and the third was not having a neat or

clean neighbourhood; these responses amounted to 70%. Neighbours were displayed as the major sources of both contentment and discontentment, which reveals that the social relations in Balat are in such a way that there is a narrow, restricted and intense cooperation distant from untrusted parties.

Reasons why glad of living in the neighbourhood?	
Contented of neighbours	%56
Convenient location (central, seaside)	%23
Good educational, health, municipality services	%3
Clean and neat	% 3
Safe	% 6
Reasonable rents	% 6
Having historical qualities	% 3
Reasons why not glad of living in the neighbourhood?	
Discontented of neighbours	%29
Not Safe	%29
Not clean or neat enough	%21
No sports or playground facilities for children	%14
Inconvenient location (far, hard to reach other places)	%7

Local women were aware of the historical value of the district by 86%. The feedback for the question to reveal the source of historical value is as follows:

In your opinion, which is the most significant historical feature of this neighbourhood?	
Having old buildings	%53
Having religious buildings (mosques, churches)	%35
People from many different cultures living together	12%

When asked about the basic problems of the neighbourhoods, local women indicated lack of health services (45%), lack of infrastructure (15%), education (15%) and safety (15%).

The response to the question of how many times garbage was collected weekly were twice a week by 70% and every day by 26%. The ratio of women who indicated that they had a garbage container next to their residences was 74%. One interesting point was their feedback on how many times they threw garbage weekly. While 58% threw garbage twice a week, 36% did so every day. As where they threw the garbage, 42% said to the garbage-collecting vehicle, 28% to the street and 16% to the garbage containers. Regarding if garbage accumulated in the streets, 56% replied no, 2% sometimes and 40% yes. What the participants stated when asked why garbage accumulated in the streets is significant. The response of the majority was that the locals were not careful about this. As a solution to this problem, 65% of women stated that there should be garbage containers in every street. The women thought the solution lay in providing garbage containers and raising the awareness of the public.

Sixty-six percents of the participants stated that they were contented about the utilities such as electricity, water, and sewage services. However, unavailability of natural gas in the area combined with use of low quality coal due to economic reasons creates intense air pollution in the district. Also,

78% stated that there were not dangerous conditions in their neighbourhood such as uncovered wells or electricity cables.

Related to security problems, 66% expressed theft whereas 20% mentioned fights. Only 26% of the subjects declared that the security services in the neighbourhoods were adequate. Reasons of inadequacy were listed to be firstly lack of police stations or policemen in the neighbourhoods, followed by far away police stations and late arrival of the police in case of need.

In addition, only 18% of the women stated that they could move around freely every hour of the day. Sixty-six percent stated that they could go around freely during daytime whereas 8% gave a negative response to this question.

A negative response was given by 76% of the participants to the question of whether the streets were safe for their children. It was stated that the streets served as play ground for the children and that being run down by vehicles was the biggest danger for them.

If no, what is the most frequently encountered danger?	
Being run down by vehicle traffic	% 51
Dangerous persons, being kidnapped	% 32
Getting disease or being poisoned due to garbage	% 2
Uncovered wells, electricity cables etc	% 2
Drunkards or snatch and run thieves	% 2

In terms of transportation services, 60% indicated that they did not have any problems. Those who expressed that there were problems pointed out that there were not buses going to all destinations and that there were not enough bus stops.

Fifty-eight percent of the subjects believed that road maintenance services were inadequate showing neglected roads, holes on the streets and lightening problems as the reasons.

The ratio of participants who said that fires occurred in their neighbourhood was 42%. This ratio is very close to the one related to the question of whether subjects thought fire brigade services were adequate. Those that expressed their discontentment with the fire department services pointed out the main factor to be the difficulties arising from the narrowness of the streets.

The ratio of women who thought that not everyone in the neighbourhood could reach the services was 56%. They explained the reasons as follows:

If no, who has the most difficulty in reaching the service?	
Those with poor income	%56
New immigrants	%20
They give services to their relatives	%12
The disabled	%8
Those with different political opinions	%4

The first factor for not benefiting enough from the services was not getting informed; this was followed by indifference of the officials and being badly treated by the officials.

While 50% responded as yes to the question of, “do you know where to apply related to the problems and deficiencies in your neighbourhood?” 50% responded negatively. Only 22% of the participants contacted the authorities regarding the problems in their neighbourhoods; the contacted authorities were either the muhtar or municipality officials. Twenty-five percent of the subjects state that they got negative responses to such initiatives. Those that did not contact the authorities related to neighbourhood problems as a group from the neighbourhood declared that this was because they did not find it necessary or they were shy about it. Regarding this, 20% stated that they were involved in such initiatives and only 12% of these stated that they did not get positive responses. Those that said no expressed that the principle reason why they did not take part in a shared initiative was that the neighbourhood dwellers could not come together.

Another interesting outcome was regarding whether neighbourhood dwellers would participate a collective work to solve the problems of the neighbourhood. Sixty percent of the women agreed.

3.4. CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Women who had children between the 0-18 age group were filled in the questionnaires on this topic. The objective was to identify the problems and needs of children and teenagers, to reveal the conditions and opportunities of the district, to find out about educational opportunities and resources and obtain suggestions about what could be done.

Among the interviewed women, 50% had children in the 0-6 age group. While 88% of the women with children did not work, only 10%, that is 5 women, worked. Of these 5 women, 4 worked at home and one worked in her own business. Forty-four percent of the women who did not work stated that they could not work because they did not have anyone or any place to leave their children. On the other hand, 18% declared that they could not work because their spouses' did not permit them. Another reason for not working was health problems (16%), not finding it necessary (11%) and not being able to find jobs (the rest).

Although it was thought that families could have others' children from their hometowns in their homes or that their own children could be back in their hometowns as the families were mostly immigrants, and hence, related questions were included in the questionnaires, such a case was not traced. Findings of other researches also indicate poor ties with hometowns. The interviewed women justified this topic by stating that people could hardly take care of themselves.

Six of the 50 subjects stated that they had school-aged children that did not go to school. While 4 women pointed out physical disability of their children as the reason, one pointed out mental disability and one economic difficulty. Of the 5 disabled children, 3 went to institutions for special care and education. Only one family's child attended to pre-school education of a school affiliated to Turkish Ministry of Education. In this school a few hours of training was available only in the afternoons; the fee was less than 50 millions TL per month. Yet, even though this fee does not seem to be much, in comparison with economic level of the locals, it is seen that it is actually a high amount for them.

As the schools in the district were in neighbourhoods, 95 % of children went to school on foot. One interesting point is that 59% of the participants escorted their children to school or made sure that

another adult walked with them. The reasons for this were narrow streets without pavements or dangerous people in the district.

Related to schools, 40% of the parents indicated that poor physical circumstances were the biggest problem of schools. It is a fact that the physical conditions of the schools in the district are not very good. Yet, school principals and family-school unions have engaged in initiatives to ameliorate these conditions. Twenty-eight percent of the parents declared that they did not experience difficulties related to schools. In addition, theatre plays or trips are organized in certain periods. Moreover, there are some weekend courses at schools. However, no matter how low the fees are, not all students can benefit from these.

Furthermore, Balat-Fener Association runs a project with the support of the volunteers in which 40 students are helped with their school lessons in a study hall.

The ratio of parents who met their children's teachers was 95%. The main topics of these meetings were children's problems in their lessons (%76), followed by children's behaviour at school (%18).

While 22% of the parents said that there were school-family unions at schools, the rest indicated that there were not or that they did not know about them. The parents had insufficient information on this issue.

Eleven percent of the parents stated that their children could not go to school because they got ill frequently. There were not any school age daughters that were not sent to school because they were girls. However, as depicted by the study in 1997, such tendencies persist in the area. The study revealed some school age children who abandoned secondary school for economic reasons working 6 days of the week for more than 10 hours daily for a wage of 100-200 millions TL.

According to the mothers who were interviewed, 66% of the children can only sometimes consume meat and such foods whereas 14% of the children rarely consume them. It was seen that 54-56% of the families could sometimes consume cheaper food in comparison to meat such as vegetables and milk. The striking fact is that the dominant nutrition was based on cheap food like bulgur, pasta or rice. Eighty-eight percent of the children frequently consumed these foods.

Up to 60-65% of parents stated that children could not benefit enough from educational, health and play ground services. At this point 70% of women indicated that the source of the problem was economic. Especially regarding the health and playground services, they pointed out that these inadequacies were linked to lack of places to provide these services.

Most of the women (60%) mentioned that they needed a place to leave their children when they had affairs. While 48% of the women needed such a place for 1-2 hours daily, 18% required such a place for 3-4 hours daily. On the other hand, a group of 34% stated that they needed such a place once every fortnight or month, which was significant to display how much women are secluded in their homes.

Fifty-two percent of the women stated that there was not a nearby playground. The ones who said that there was a playground near their house indicated that the playground were inadequate. While 50% of the women pointed out that the playgrounds were not safe, 16 % stated that they should be cleaned and another 16% said there should be more variety. Finally, 11% declared that playgrounds should be enlarged. The inadequacy of the playgrounds resulted in children who played in the streets.

Among the children 56% played in the streets, 26% at home as their families did not permit them to play in the streets due to security reasons and 6% in the garden of their homes. Yet, there are not many residences with gardens in the area. Only 12% of the children played in the parks. In short, children mainly play in the streets and parks, as a result of which some security problems are created. One principle problem is the danger of traffic accidents and being run down (62%). Other emphasized dangers were being kidnapped (31%) and getting sick due to garbage (5%).

Children’s means for reaching resources such as books or toys was limited. Mostly, they were restricted by what they get at home. Only 18% could reach such resources from school and 2% from libraries; 18% indicated that they could not benefit from such resources at all.

Although 80% of the women stated that they spent one to one time with their children, when asked what they did in these periods, they firstly replied by saying that they watched TV (30%), worked together (8%). The remaining 62% stated that they spent this time more efficiently by playing together, studying together or chatting.

A considerable portion (46%) of the interviewed women indicated that they did not get any support from anyone on childcare. Twenty-four percent stated that they get help from their children, 22% from their spouses, 4% from family elders and 2% from their older children. Nevertheless, 58% of the women who got help pointed out that the help was insufficient. Hence, women stated that they needed more knowledge on the following topics: 24% on child development, 22% child health, 10% child communication, 6% on dealing with bad habits, 2% on passing the time effectively with their children, 4% on nutrition and 22% on all these topics. Only 10% of the subjects indicated that they did not need knowledge.

Are you contented of bringing up your children in this neighbourhood?	
No	%76
Yes	%24

One of the most striking outcomes of this study is the table above. When the reason was asked the majority (60%) pointed out that the district was not safe. The other reasons were: 23% inadequacy of health services, 8% inadequacy of educational services, 4% children being discontented with their friends and 2% lack of play grounds or sports facilities.

Another problem of the district was the street kids in some neighbourhoods who lived in deserted houses. According to the survey, 36% of the women mentioned having street kids around their homes. Yet, the women do not have any information on whether there are institutions or individuals who help street children.

As a response to one of the most important question of the questionnaires on what kind of education centre is demanded for 0-6 age group children, 52% of the women indicated that they wanted an institution where they could go with their children and receive various trainings. On the other hand, 26% stated that they wanted a centre where they could go on certain days and 22% wanted a centre where they could get childcare and educational services all day long.

For school age children 45% of the participants asked for a centre where children could go after school to get help related to their lessons at school and another 45% asked for a centre that provided

skills that would help children to get a job after graduation. Ten percent, on the other hand, declared that they needed a centre where social activities were undertaken.

All of the participants stated that they were willing to send their children to such centres. Yet, they indicated that the centre should be free as allocating money for such an activity was not easy for them.

Most of the women (72%) stated that they wanted to participate to the work related to childcare in the neighbourhood; 28% gave a negative response. The major reason for the negative response was not getting permission from spouses.

The most mentioned problem in the neighbourhood meetings was lack or inadequacy of basic health service institutions. Within this framework, the survey included questions aimed to determine the need on health and to identify the state of health institutions.

According to the findings of the study, 57% of the interviewed families had permanent disorders or disorders that required regular treatment. In the sample group of the current study, mostly children and women suffered from such disorders. The most common disorder was diabetes followed by heart diseases, shortness of breath, hernia, kidney disorders as well as disorders related to growing up. Eighth-eight percent of adults with kidney problems stated that they could not work at all or work regularly because of their health problems. As for the children with health problems, 82% could not go to school at all or regularly. These were to great extent children with physically or mentally disabled. While 58% of the locals went to hospitals for treatment, 21 disorder went to health clinics or Red Crescent. A small group of 8% stated that they had to go to private doctors. Finally, 13% of the subjects, a significant ratio, stated that they could not go to any institutions for the treatment of their disorders.

While 38% of the women stated that they did not remember when they went to the doctor, 32% said that they last went to the doctor 1-2 years ago. The major reasons for seeing a doctor were gynaecological diseases, hernia, breathing disorders and giving birth. Fifty percent of the women declared that they went to the dentist one or more years ago. On the other hand, 28% of the women stated that they had never been to the dentist. Ninety-six percent of the women pointed out that their families did not regularly see the doctor whereas 97% stated that they did not regularly see the dentist. Finally, 54% said that health check ups and vaccinations were available for children in schools.

All the women participating the study had given birth (50% one or twice, the rest 3 or more times). Only 12% of the women had given birth at home; the rest had given birth in hospitals or polyclinics. Twenty percent of the women had lost of infants during birth or when the babies were in the 6 months-1 year age group. While 48% of the women stated that they regularly went to the doctor during pregnancy, 45% of the women, which is a considerable ratio, indicated that they did not have the chance to go to the doctor during their pregnancy. Moreover, 78% of the women indicated that their babies or themselves did not receive any kind of care after the birth. As seen, some of the women who benefited from health services during pregnancy were deprived of these services after birth. As for the babies, 37% suffered from mainly hepatitis as well as eclampsia, diarrhoea, measles and bronchitis. The ratio of women who had miscarriages was 27%, which includes women who stated that they had miscarriage only once as well as those who had it 3 or 4 times. Another important point is that 40% of the women stated to have had abortion. Among these women 18% stated that they had 2 or more abortions and that doctors did the operation. Sixty-eight percent of the couples stated that they used birth control methods. Eighty-four percent of the women stated that they used the birth control method (mainly spirals were used and very few women took birth control pills); a very small portion indicated that their husbands use birth control techniques. Nevertheless, 9% of the women

stated that they had never been to a gynaecologist and 63% they had been to one 2 or more years ago. The main reasons for going to the doctor were birth or birth control.

Only 22% of the families had social security. The local women stated that they basically went to hospitals, health clinics or Red Crescent for health problems. Sixty percent declared that they had use transportation to get these institutions. The reasons why these institutions were preferred were first of all being cheap (38%), not having any other nearby institutions (25%), being the closest institution (20%) as well as the validity of social security or green card in these institutions. Most of the subjects (88%) stated that they did not easily access health services. The reasons for this were (from high to low ratio) expensiveness of treatment or medicine, too long queues in hospitals, not having a nearby health institution. Especially in emergencies, not having nearby health institutions causes serious problems. Eighty-seven percent of the women thought that the health services were inadequate in their neighbourhoods because of (from high to low ratio) indifference of officials, inadequate number of health officials, not having expert doctors on every branch, not having enough equipment for analysis or films, unskilled health officials and high costs.

Pharmacies were the institutions that locals firstly contacted when subjects needed information related to health by 60%. Other sources of information were neighbours, relatives and newspapers. The issue on which women mostly wanted to be informed about were the diseases that could be cured at home, women health, psychological problems, first aid etc. The difficulties in reaching health services increases women's need for practical knowledge that can be applied at home.

The topic listed as the situations that generated danger in terms of health at home or in the neighbourhoods were: accumulation of garbage (47%), drinking water (35%) and the condition of the bathrooms and toilets (17%).

The ratio of the women who wanted to participate and contribute to related work was 60%.

3.5. POVERTY

In order to complete this part of the study, the school principals were contacted via neighbourhood women. The poor families whose children attended the schools were called to the school for the purposes of the study. Also, some poor women were reached through muhktars.

When the poor women were asked the reasons for moving to the district, 35% pointed out reasonable rents or house prices and 16% stated the availability of relatives or acquaintances.

One of the major problems was that their residences were small and unhealthy. Based on the observations done during the study, some families shared these 3 floor narrow houses with others so that one floor was allotted to each family to decrease the usual 300 millions TL rent to 100 millions TL per family. Twenty-four percent said that there were out of family people living in their residences.

While 85% of the women stated that only one person worked in the family, in 11% of the families' women and children also worked and in 4% of the families nobody worked at the time of the study.

The work areas of the locals were: collecting paper, lathe operator, tea maker, textiles worker, watchman, driver and own work (generally, seasonal work was meant by this).

Women generally went to houses for cleaning. Yet, only working outside home was perceived to be work and women did not readily mentioned that they sewed scarf at home, which is common to many women in the district. Scarf sewing was such a common work in the district because women could easily reach scarf from the warehouses in the district and they could do it at home (see the Section on Economic Initiatives for details).

Among the subjects, 40% stated that they monthly required minimum 600-800 millions TL, 32% 400-600 millions TL and 18% 1 billions and above TL to live on.

Also, 52% of the families stated that they spent their monthly income mostly on food, 38% stated on rent, 8% on heating and 2% on health expenditure.

Sixty-two percent of the families indicated that the area where they would like to spent money, but could not do so was health. Not having social security made health services even more expensive for the locals. The families complained about not being able to allocate money for heating (16%), rent (10%), education (especially, the annual contribution fee of 15 millions TL is meant - 10%) and food (2%). The nutritional habits mentioned in Section 3.4 also reveal that food expenditure was indeed significantly restricted.

While 72% of the locals stated that they borrowed money when they could not live on, 16% stated that they benefited from poverty aid. Although the sample for the poverty questionnaire was determined through the school-family unions, 89% of the subjects stated that they did not receive regular poverty aid. The ones that declared that they benefited from poverty aid meant having green cards, receiving food from the municipality once a week etc. Also, 55% of the families indicated that they did not benefit from irregular aids either. The rest of the group (45%) mentioned food and heating aid they received from municipality or muhktars' offices especially in the month of Ramadan. The main centres for aid distribution were muhktars' offices in the district. Additionally, only one subject received medicine aid from the governorship of the district. All the families stated that they could not reach these aids when they were in need and that the amounts were small and inadequate. Moreover, they emphasized that they also needed aid regarding heating and clothing.

Another prominent point was that 91% of the poor women thought that reaching the aid was not possible unless one had some acquaintances. These subjects stated that aid distribution was not done in a fair manner as the aid did not reach the truly in need (49%) and was distributed to acquaintances (42%). Also, 86% of the participants pointed out that they had difficulty in reaching aid because they did not know where to apply or that there were too many applications.

The participants indicated that they applied to institutions for poverty aid, but were rejected: 42% to muhktar's office, 32% municipality, 12% governorship of the district, and a very small portion applied to associations, schools or other sources. While some of the participants who applied to the aids thought that they were rejected because they were not cared about, others mentioned it was because they were not renters, they could not fill in the forms, were not informed about the application time. Among the participants, 84% complained that there was not cooperation in the neighbourhood and 93% did not receive any help from their hometowns.

As for the greatest obstacle to improve their economic situation, 28% identified it to be not finding jobs, 8% not having the skills or capital to find jobs or set up businesses, 22% health problems and 20% high family expenses.

Moreover, 32% stated that they needed to find work to improve their condition whereas 30% mentioned regular poverty aid and 24% mentioned in kind aid.

3.6. EARTHQUAKE PREPARATIONS AND CONDITION OF THE HOUSING

Another questionnaire was related to the condition of available housing and earthquake preparedness.

Thirty-seven percent of the subjects stated that they owned the house where as the rest stated that they were renters or the houses belonged to their relatives and they stayed without paying rent. Only 2 of the house owners declared that they might sell their house. Also, the renters were asked if the house owners planned to sell their property and almost all of them responded as no; only one renter stated that the house owner considered selling the house.

Most of the residences are 3 or 4 floors, sum of which is 72%.

How many floors does your building have?		
	Number	Percent
3 floors	19	% 38
4 floors	17	% 34
2 floors	11	% 22
1 floor	1	% 2
8 floors	1	% 2
5 floors	1	% 2

While 50% of the families lived in residences that are 50 years old or even older, 20% lived in residences 30-40 years old; only one woman stated that their residence was younger than 10 years.

In addition, 46% of the residences were concrete, 26% built of brick and 20% wooden. Those who lived in historical residences stated that they would move if possible (71%) due to the smallness of the residence (42%) or the dilapidatedness, unsafety or oldness of the building. Moreover, 48% stated that the building was previously repaired. These repairs regarded (in order of frequency) water system, roof, heating system, strengthening the building. The repairs were mostly not undertaken by experts.

Who did the repairs?	
Master workman	61%
Myself	13%
House owner	13%
Building contractor	2%
Architect-engineer	2%
Myself and master workman	2%

While 33% of the women indicated that their residences did not require repairs, the rest did and the repair needs were listed as follows:

If yes, what kind of repairs is needed?	
All kinds of	24%
Roof	21%
Inner walls	18%
Outer walls	12%
Ceilings and floors	9%
Water installation	6%
Columns	6%
There is sliding	3%

A considerable ratio of the women (36%) heard of the restoration-repair project during the interview for the first time, and 60% wanted their building to take part in the project. The subjects that said no showed the following reasons: they were renters, the building did not need it, they could not trust. When asked how they can contribute to the project 56% stated that they could not and a major portion of the rest stated that they could only let others hear it.

The participants stated that they did not have structures or conditions that could induce danger during earthquakes such as gas stations, industrial area, streams, land slides or high voltage electricity lines around their residences. However, 76% stated that there are weak buildings that might collapse during an earthquake around their residences. The responses to the question related to damages caused in previous earthquakes are as follows:

Was your residence damaged in the previous earthquakes?	
Not at all	40%
Slightly	50%
Severely	6%
Living in it started to be dangerous	4%

The response to the question of “Was damage inspection conducted in your house after the 1999 earthquakes?” was negative by 92%. Four families had an inspection done with their own resources and again did repair work with their own efforts to their buildings found to be moderately or slightly damaged.

The ratio of subjects who stated “I know the necessarily earthquake preparations” was 60% and the subjects said they learnt these from the media. The ratio of subjects who took solid precautions against earthquake such as preparing earthquake bag, stabilizing the furniture in the house was only 18%. Eighty-two percent of the families are not insured against earthquakes saying that they could not allocate money for this or that the house owner had to do this. Many participants (78%) indicated that they had already thought about where to go during earthquake; they generally stated that this would be a nearby park or open land. Sixty-four percent of the women pointed out that they needed to be informed about earthquake preparedness and listed the following topic:

If yes, on which topics?	
Protection during earthquakes	31%
Strengthening buildings against earthquakes	21%
All	21%
Institutions providing support post-earthquake	15%
First aid	10%

However, 70% of the women stated that there were not any places from where they could get this information. Others thought they could be informed through the media. The ratio of women who was not aware of the earthquake preparedness activities of municipalities or other such institutions or did not believe that such activities were undertaken was 94%.

Related to the 1999 earthquake, 33% stated they continued to stay in their houses whereas the rest waited on the coast, parks and gardens. Those who stated that neighbourhood cooperation were inadequate after the earthquake was 54%. It was mentioned that toilet was the biggest problem outside after the earthquake and having a place to stay or sleep followed this. Nine-six percent of the women stated that they did not speak to any authorities related to earthquakes. Only one subject talked with a technical specialist on the strength of the houses.

Considering that the information provided by neighbours is very important in post-earthquake rescue period, some questions related to the neighbour's houses were also asked. As feedback, 48% of the women pointed out that they did not know the plans of their neighbour's houses; moreover 28% stated that they did not have any idea about how many persons lived in their neighbour's houses.

3.7. ECONOMIC SITUATION

The aim of this questionnaire was to learn about the work and skills of women living in the district as well as perceiving the job opportunities in the district to help women get work or set up their own businesses. The sample consisted of both women that worked and did not work to discern the situation from the point of view of both groups.

Thirty-eight percent of the interviewed women worked. Of the workingwomen while 11 worked outside (4 in hairdressers -1 owned the shop whereas the other 3 worked with wages-, 2 cleaners in offices or homes, 4 in textile sector), 9 worked at home (1 produced "mantri", a pasta-like traditional Turkish food, and 8 did textiles related work).

What is your occupation?

Hairdresser (4), handicrafts (4), textile worker (3), sewing scarf (3), office-house cleaner (2), making accessories (belts, buttons) (1), pastry (1), free lance (1)

One of the women who cooked "mantri", a pasta-like traditional Turkish food, earned 300 millions TL. She stated this was the easiest way of contributing family budget, but complained because she could not allocate enough time for housework.

Among the other 8 women working at home, 7 sewed scarf whereas one produced belts, hairpins etc. While 3 women stated that they got the orders directly from shops, the others said they got the orders

through neighbours, relatives or intermediaries. Only one woman got the work through an intermediary outside the neighbourhood and she complained about it. The above-mentioned shops were again shops of intermediaries. In other words, women are not directly related to the business. As these shops were in the neighbourhood, the women were following new orders and the information was retrieved from the intermediary shops. Also, sometimes differences in prices occurred among these shops and the women also pursued this. Seven of the women stated that they received continuous and regular work.

The money earned from these work done at home was less than 500.000 TL per piece. Three of the 8 women produced 25-50 pieces per week whereas 3 others produced and finally 2 produced more than 100 pieces weekly. That is, the monthly income attained from this work is quite low. While 3 women earned less than 50 millions TL, 3 earned 50-100 millions TL, 1 earned 100-200 millions TL. Finally, one woman who said she sewed clothes at home earned more than 500 millions TL per month.

As for the duration of the work, 5 of the women stated that they did this work for 1-5 years, 2 for 5-10 years and 1 for more than 20 years.

Almost all women involved in such work stated that they were not happy with it and they had to do it to contribute to family budget. They complained that they did not learn new skills to be used in other work and could not develop themselves. Additionally, they indicated that they could not produce enough due to housework and children.

As for the jobs of the spouses, 78% had regular work, although these work could be referred as “unqualified” or “intermediary”, whereas 22% was unemployed.

What is your spouses' occupation?

Ready made clothing/textiles worker (5), lathe operator (4), free lance (4), retired (3), car/building painter (2), waiter (2), tea house/ coffee house worker (2), porter (2), shop assistant (1), publisher (1), technician (1), butcher (1), leather worker (1), hair-dresser (1), driver (1), construction worker (1), delicatessen tradesman (1), civil worker (1), car hood repairman (1), seller in open markets (1), bread maker (1), tailor (1), interior designer (1)

	Number	Ratio
Spouses with definite jobs	39	78%
Unemployed	11	22%

In 14% of the families (7 families) children also worked whereas in %12 of the families (6 families) another relative that lived with them also worked.

The general income of the families revealed that 84% of the families earned less than 600 millions TL or less. The response to another question discloses that almost all of the total income went to the home expenditure (92%) with 78% of the women stating that they could not allocate any money at all for personal expenditure.

How much is your family's monthly income?	
100-200 millions TL	10%
201-400 millions TL	36%
401-600 millions TL	38%
601-800 millions TL	6%
801 millions-1 billion TL	8%
1 billions TL and above	2%

Majority of the women (68%) stated that income less than 1 billions TL per month could be enough to live on.

How much income is necessary for your family to live on?	
401-600 millions TL	26%
601-800 millions TL	16%
801 millions-1 billion TL	26%
1 billions TL and above	32%

Despite all 18% of the women stated that they could save; almost all of the women who were able to save stated that this saving was not their own, but their families'. Three participants who declared that this was their own saving invested in gold.

Of the 11 women working outside home, 3 worked in far away districts (2 in ready made clothing sector 1 daily cleaning) where as the rest worked in the neighbourhood or close by districts. Nine of the women had been working for 1-5 years whereas 2 worked for more than 5 years. Only one of the women who worked outside had social security and she owned her own hairdresser in the neighbourhood.

The income the women earned from outside work was very low:

How much do you earn from work outside your home?	Persons
100-250 millions TL	7
Less than 100 millions TL	3
250-500 millions TL	1

The women stated that the positive aspect of these work were that the income was continuous and regular and the work places were close to their homes. The most prominent complaints were low income and getting tired. Almost all women got their work through friends whereas one got it through her neighbour and another through a wall adds.

Among the women working outside 68% never worked in another job whereas the others stated that they worked as ready-made clothing worker. The main reason of leaving work was marriage followed by giving birth.

Women stated that they got the news related to work opportunities from friends-relatives-neighbours.

Where do you mostly hear the news about work opportunities?	
From friends and relatives	46%
Neighbours	22%
Newspapers	13%
I cannot get information	11%
Posters	5%
My spouse	2%

The women's response to the main obstacle hindering them from getting better income in case they did not work or were not happy with their work was as follows: initially child care followed by not getting permission from the family, yet this is also related to child care. The other mentioned obstacles were lack of knowledge, skills contacts or capital.

What is the greatest obstacle to earn more in case you do not work or are not happy with your work?	
I do not have a place to leave my child(ren)	38%
My family does not give permission	20%
I do not know how to do it	8%
I do not have money for investments	8%
I do not have connections to find work	8%
There are not convenient opportunities	4%
I do not have enough knowledge or skills	4%
I cannot abandon my responsibilities at home	4%
I do not know	4%
I do not have a profession	2%

Majority of the women (86%) stated that they would set up their own businesses if possible.

Would you consider setting up your own business if you had the chance?	
Yes	86%
No	12%
Already my own business	2%

The responses to the question regarding what kind of business they would set up mainly dwell on commerce, ready-made clothing and handicraft. The full list is below:

Beauty centre (1), sundries shop (6), stationary (1), commerce, ready made clothing (3), grocery (7), wedding dress store (1), needlework, embroidery store (2), carpet store (2), clothing store (1), pastry shop (1), handicraft store (1), accessories store (1), commerce (1), graphical design (1), textiles work (1), hairdresser (1), I do not have any specific idea (7).

When asked which of their properties they trust approximately 45% stated self-confidence, skills and experience. In addition, 22% stated that rather than hindering them, their spouses would support them. When both groups are considered a slight contradiction with the previous responses can be discerned. Opinions seem to change depending on making generalizations or talking about a specific

concrete business idea. Nevertheless, this condition can be evaluated as a tendency and request; it would be beneficial to identify the support needs of the women also considering the findings of the data from the following sections.

Which of your qualities do you rely on to set up a business?	
I have self-confidence and courage	25%
My family and husband would not hinder, but support me	22%
All	15%
None	16%
I have skills	13%
I have experience	6%

The skills of the women revolve around durable homemade food such as pasta, pickles, tomato paste, handicrafts and sewing, which is a natural outcome of their traditional roles. These skills have been turned into businesses in a very restricted sense and rather cutting and sewing work, which cannot be developed into a business, were concentrated on.

Most of the women did not have calculation; marketing, accounting or computer skills and almost all women stated that they did not understand commerce. The significant outcome of these statements is that although women have skills such as preparing durable homemade food or producing handicrafts, they face great difficulties in transforming these into businesses due to their lack of understanding of commerce as well as calculation and accounting. That is, women need support and help on these issues.

Skills	Yes	No
Sewing, tailor	32%	68%
Embroidery, needlework	22%	78%
Handicraft (lacework etc.)	48%	52%
Cooking	84%	16%
Accounting	2%	98%
Computer	4%	96%
Growing vegetables, flowers	22%	78%
Commerce	0	100%
Marketing	8%	92%
Calculations	4%	96%
Preparing durable homemade food e.g. pasta, pickles, tomato paste	28%	72%

Other Skills	Number of Persons
Textile designer	1
Textile worker	1
Graphical designer	1
Carpet weaver	2
Hairdresser	3

Women acquired skills related to sewing, embroidery, computer, hairdressing etc. from public training centres near their homes or in their hometowns. In addition, in 2003-2004, 23 women benefited from a sewing course by Balat-Fener Association with the support of Public Training Centre; the sewed work was displayed and sold.

Majority of the women (78%) indicated that they wanted to participate to courses that would provide them with skills to get work or to set up business; however, they said they could only attend these in case they are free of charge. The women who gave a negative response explained the reasons mainly as not getting permission from family and not having places to leave their children.

To inquire about women’s skill transfer capacity, the skills that they could teach to other women were asked.

Do you have skills that you can teach to other women in the neighbourhood?	
Yes	54%
No	46%

The ones who responded as yes identified these skills to be: Sewing and embroidery (15), stories, fairy tales, games (2), literacy (7), knowledge on health (3), machine knit fabric (1), handicrafts (1), knitting (1), marketing (1), carpet weaving (1), hairdressing (1), machine work (1) art and music (1).

Almost all the interviewed women thought that there was not any work that they could do in the neighbourhood under the circumstances of the time. When asked what kind of work they wanted to earn income, women mainly uttered having their own workplace (39%) and a work that they could do at home (35%).

What the women thought they needed to set up their own businesses were: capital (68%), knowledge and skills (22%). They stated that they needed the knowledge and skills on the technical properties of the work they would undertake.

What do you additionally need most to set up your own business?	
Capital	68%
Knowledge-skills	22%
I cannot do it alone, partners (friends)	8%
I already have my own business	2%

When asked whether they could get support from their environment in case they needed it 44% said yes. The sources of support were mainly spouse, friends, relatives and neighbours. They perceived the muhktars’ offices as the institutions where they could get support; no other institution was mentioned.

Sixty-six percent of the women declared that they could get support in terms of ideas.

On which aspects can you be supported?	
Providing ideas	66%
Providing knowledge and skills	14%
Providing capital	14%
All	4%

Fifty-eight percent of the women stated that they could reach all goods and services in the neighbourhood when asked about which goods or services they could not attain from the neighbourhood. The rest stated that they basically lacked the following: clothing, market goods, carpentry, shoe store and house goods and they met these needs from other districts.

A high percentage of women (82%) stated that they preserved their ties with their hometowns with 63% declaring that they went to their hometowns every year. Those who did not visit their hometowns at all were 17%. Sixty-three percent indicated that they are sent goods produced in their hometown, compatible with the ratio of those women visiting their hometowns. Hence, the relation with the hometown also has an economic aspect. The goods coming from the hometowns were basically grains, pulses and cheese etc. Yet, according to 82% of the women the goods came at one trip and were less than 10 kilograms annually. Women explained this as those in their hometowns could hardly take care of themselves and nobody had the means of supporting others. The women stated that they used these goods for their own needs and did not engage in commerce. However, while 60% of the women thought that such a business would be profitable, 39% thought it would be unprofitable.

The last questionnaire was about the historical and touristic aspects of Fener-Balat District. Ninety percent of the women were aware of the historical and touristic importance of the district. However, 96% thought that the tourists coming to the district did not induce an economic contribution to the district. Again 86% stated that a relation did not occur between the locals of the district and incoming tourists. When asked about what kind of touristic work they can do, 60% stated that they had no idea whereas 28% indicated they could produce and sell touristic goods and 6% said they could start a cafe or restaurant.

Finally, women were asked whether they would like to contribute to work related to developing work fields for women and the youth. Forty percent of the participant women negatively responded with the thought that their families or spouses would not permit or that they are not knowledgeable or skilled enough.

4. CONCLUSION

This section comprises a general evaluation of the study's results as well as the strategy suggestions regarding the work to be done in the district.

4.1. THE STATE OF THE DISTRICT AND THE BASIC SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT

- According to the census in 2000, a total number of 27.244 persons live in the 4371 residences in the district. Forty-three percent of the population is made up of those younger than 20 years of age. However, the services provided for the local children and youngsters in the district are limited by primary schools of Ministry of Education. For this reason, it seems that organizing the social centre in order to provide services related to early child care and training for 0-6 age group children, development of children's and youngsters' creativity, giving psycho-social support and facilitating employment for them will meet a significant need of the district.
- The locals of the district in general plan to continue living in their neighbourhoods; the tendency to move from the district is not high. The reasons for living in the district are low rents, proximity to the city's centre and having neighbours or countrymen. Hence, to ensure that the effects of the investments to be done in the district within the framework of the Fener-Balat Rehabilitation Program are long term, it is very important that the investments are initially made to the locals and that full participation of locals is achieved.
- The district is separated into groups according to locals' ethnical background or the duration they have been living there. Although these groups display strong relations and collaboration within themselves, the communication among different groups is weak. In addition, prejudice is observed in the communication among different groups. In this sense, it is expected that the social centre will serve as a platform with the function of strengthening the communication across groups. However, it is thought that some systems such as formation of meeting procedures and management mechanisms and related trainings / workshops will help support this function of the social centre.
- The locals starting an initiative to solve district's problems in respect to basic services appear to be the most important strategy for accepting and implementing solutions and maintaining their sustainability. Yet, the locals' experience on this issue is little and their knowledge on where or who to apply for help is restricted. Although such problems are the basic issues of women's agenda as it is mainly the women who face the problems or are expected to solve them, unfortunately, women do not have the means to reach knowledge that will augment their capacity. The sources from which they can acquire knowledge are stated to be neighbours, relatives, mukhtars and media on some specific topics. It is crucial that women reach sources on issues like education and health, where women can generate a service field for themselves.
- Regarding the plans related to the neighbourhood, locals usually have picked up information; therefore, locals and women do not have the opportunity to follow up the process and to evaluate its conformity to their own needs. The same situation is also valid for the development of the available services. Thus, it is suggested that those in need and service providing institutions are to be related and their partnership is to be enhanced.
- Also important for the work to be done in the district, are generation of new and creative ideas and sources for accessing basic services as well as ensuring that the services are not limited

to the work of the institutions providing the services. Besides the fact that public resources are inadequate, it is believed that “institutional” structures will not be enough to achieve locals’ participation or to offer flexible services in line with their needs.

4.2. WOMEN’S ROLE IN LEADERSHIP

- In general, the following work is undertaken by women: care of children, patients and the elderly, follow up of children’s school performance, increase in family income, and contacting official institutions on behalf of the family for various reasons such as aid or official work. However, all such work accomplished by women is usually invisible.
- Yet, women’s experience and links in contacting official institutions and authorities in a unified and organized way is minor. Nevertheless, various initiatives, seen to be the initiative of neighbourhoods, such as aid and training provided to the poor through schools and the kitchen in Hızır Çavuş Neighbourhood, which runs in the month of Ramadan to help the poor, are mainly run by women’s leadership. Moreover, communication and conveying of information within neighbourhoods are to a great extent accomplished via women.
- Therefore, women’s leadership and empowering this leadership is of utmost importance for the work to be done in the district. Women already act as leaders for the solution of their family’s or neighbourhood’s problems. However, they need to develop their knowledge and skills to undertake this leadership systematically and visibly. Within this context, it is crucial that women enhance their cooperation, development of shared rules and problem solving skills and strengthen the understanding of shared-interest instead of self-interest. Yet, there are no official or unofficial mechanisms to support women in empowering collective leadership or to develop their dialogue with local authorities or other officials.
- One of the most significant obstacles of women’s active participation to such work is lack of childcare and education services for 0-6 age group children. Consequently, it is suggested that women are supported by structures that will provide such services. Likewise, to maintain that women’s initiatives and individual participation are supported by their family and community, their work should be visible; hence, crediting women for the work they do is very important.

4.3. POVERTY

- Among the families interviewed within the scope of the study, 78 % have to live by less than 400 millions TL monthly. Hence, aid program is of great importance for some groups. Even though there are some aid programs for the poor families, they are inadequate and also inappropriate for their needs in terms of time and content. Additionally, women stated that those who are really in need could not access the aid because the aid was distributed to acquaintances, the poor did not know where to apply for aid and there was a high demand for aid. Supporting the locals to develop their own solutions against poverty again emerges as a major strategy. Locals are the most significant and effective resource to identify the poor, to link aid programs with the poor and to shape the available aid to meet the needs. Local initiative needs regarding this are improvement and increase of current resources as well as having links with authorities and potential resources.

4.4. THE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

- The works that local women engage in are: tailoring in homes, cleaning, ready-made clothing worker and hairdressing, which are usually temporary low-income work without social security. Women basically define their participating economic life as setting up their own businesses. When Turkey is observed as a whole, setting up their own business stands out as the main method of participating economic life for poor women due to these women's limited opportunities to find work (related to their low income, knowledge and experience). Hence, supporting women's economic initiatives is one of the main aspects of economic empowerment work.
- Women suffer from lack of knowledge / skills and contacts in respect to economic life. The suggested strategies to overcome this problem are providing entrepreneurship training to women, discovering and evaluating the business potential of the region and relating women to local resources to develop business fields. The knowledge that women will acquire within this process should be compiled systematically to be shared with other women. In this context, women themselves should be discerned as a resource and what they can contribute to the process (teaching their skills to each other, announcing available business opportunities etc.) should be utilized effectively.

4.5. THE HISTORY AND CULTURAL VALUES OF THE DISTRICT

- The locals are aware of the districts' historical and cultural values to a great extent. However, this awareness stays at the level of a general impression. On the other hand, the locals agree that people in general have a negative impression of the district. In addition, the historical and cultural values of the district do not reflect to local family's daily life. Just the opposite, the oldness and dilapidatedness of the district cause difficulties in daily life as well as infrastructural problems. The visits of the tourists do not usually have social or economic impacts on the district. Hence, organizing social or economic activities through which locals can benefit from the values of the district, utilizing the potentials that values of the district create for the locals and protection of the district by the locals will be supported within the framework of the project.

5. ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS for the SOCIAL CENTER – The Developed Solution Suggestions

This section is based on the focus group meetings, participated by the local women, on the study's results. These suggestions were developed by brainstorming technique and then were categorized.

5.1. TARGET AND AIMS

With the activities of the Social Centre, activating locals' resources to develop social service fields for women, children and youngsters with the leadership of women is aimed. Specific objectives within this framework are summarized as follows:

- Increasing access to basic services in the district and shaping available or currently planned basic services to the needs of the locals through locals' monitoring.
- Developing the culture of being from the same neighbourhood and living together, creating a platform to solve shared problems together and improving the dialogue with officials.
- As leaders, enhancing the communication among women, local resources and service providers, improving the approaches and attitudes these parties have for each other and starting a cooperation process.
- Facilitating the announcement and attainment of current services, forming a local information centre for women and locals to ensure sharing of information on educational and economic opportunities.
- Generating resources to facilitate women's endeavour to acquire income, to offer social services and to develop solutions to local problems and to support the started initiatives for these purposes.

5.2. WORK PRINCIPLES

- Starting from the needs and priorities of locals, especially women and children
- Ensuring women's participation and making women's leadership visible
- Ensuring participation of locals and activation of local resources
- Starting with small, applicable projects, following processes that will ensure locals' participation (decision making and supervision of the used resources will be undertaken by women) and gradually expanding the projects
- Having transparency and regular flow of information
- Achieving sustainability

5.3. BASIC WORK FIELDS AND ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

5.3.1. Neighbourhood Problems and Urban Services

- Providing training to women and youngsters on local administration and legal rights
- Identifying the official persons women can address to regarding neighbourhood problems and preparing a resource list

- Organizing regular meetings with local authorities and sector representatives, where women are also represented, to developing solutions for the district's shared problems and to start a phase of cooperation
- Organizing a women group to follow up the outcomes of these meetings and to continue cooperation
- Organizing trainings on issues such as acceptance of differences, living together, prejudices and discrimination to enhance awareness of being from the same neighbourhood
- Organizing trainings to raise awareness on the topic of neighbourhood protection and preparedness against disasters and starting neighbourhood initiatives on these issues and supporting small projects
- Developing environment protection, utilization of package wastes and recycling projects and organizing the neighbourhoods around these projects

5.3.2. Children and Youngsters

Establishing a centre that provides full day care and education to 0-6 age group children to facilitate women's participation to economic and social activities

Organizing frequent creative activities for children and developing models that are suitable to the district for this purpose such as play rooms, street activities, toy library etc.

Providing study hall and study period services for 7-12 age group children going to school

Providing child care and education training for women, which could be repeated in certain periods, and organizing the women who benefited from the trainings to actively take roles in activities for the children

Providing regular psychological counselling to youngsters and mothers, for both themselves and their children, in the centre

Supporting women to start initiatives for creating play areas for children and developing the available ones and helping women contact institutions that can give support

Organizing regular meetings with the teachers and principals of the schools in the district to monitor children's educational states and expanding the roles of School-Family Unions in schools

Forming an educational centre for children and youngsters where they can come together and encouraging them to participate in the management and running of this centre

Providing various training geared towards employment (computer, web page design, English, accounting, tourist guide, graphics, "tourism volunteers" etc) for children and youngsters, developing after school support programs, creating creative opportunities (art, music, theatre, photography, video films, sports, etc.) and setting up a library and film room / archives to help them reach information

5.3.3. Health Services

- Organizing trainings on protective health services (hygiene, vaccinations etc.), illnesses that can be cured at home, widespread children's diseases, nutrition, reproductive health, sexual health, first aid, psychological problems for women to deepen their knowledge on these issues
- Ensuring that women and locals follow up the initiatives to start new health institutions in the district, starting initiatives to ensure that available and planned health institutions serve the meet the locals' needs, developing alternatives to provide health services in the district (health caravan, having medical students do their internship in the district, medicine

collection campaigns etc.) and contacting related institutions to provide regular health scan and vaccination in schools

- Forming a health team from women to organize Mother-Child health training and supporting women get organized to make this training more widespread, identifying and regularly following up pregnant women or women with 0-6 age group children (the same can be applied for disabled children, patients and the elderly)
- Preparing small projects to evaluate the health conditions of the surroundings and residences, to identify problematic regions (streets, unoccupied land, schools etc) and to overcome the problems in these areas and contacting locals, authorities and supportive institutions in cooperation with the local neighbourhood problems team

5.3.4. Poverty

- Organizing women to prepare a list of the poorest in the neighbourhood as well as their needs and relating the persons in this list with aid programs
- Starting an initiative to develop new aid resources and to ensure that the new and available aid is used in such a way that it reaches those in need on time, meets their needs and is accessed by those in need
- Training women to give counselling to the poor to help the poor benefit from aid services
- Starting a second hand goods (especially, school belongings, books, clothes etc.) campaign that can also be contributed from outside the district to strengthen the locals' helping each other mechanisms and eventually converting this activity into a business field for women
- Developing skills development courses (as explained in more detail in the Economic Opportunities Section) for women to facilitate their participation to economic life as well as running business plan development and contacting credit sources activities and developing related projects.

5.3.5. Economic Strengthening

- Organizing cooperation meetings with local women and representatives of the sectors in the district to identify the business opportunities in the district
- Evaluating the business suggestions brought out in the meetings and those suggestions made by women, conducting feasibility studies and turning them into projects
- Organizing visits to important wholesale and retail sales shops and fairs to develop women's "market" concept
- Providing entrepreneurship, setting up businesses and management training for women to help them establish individual or joint businesses and preparing related handbooks for women
- Developing women's skills on calculation, literacy and marketing
- Helping women to choose among the businesses whose feasibility study have been done and supporting them to come together around these businesses
- Designing new marketable goods (keeping touristic potentials in mind) that can be produced by women, forming production groups and running capacity development work
- Managing resource creation work (identification of local support, project development, helping women to contact credit providing institutions etc.)
- Helping women to act in unison related to the sewing work they already do at homes such as sewing scarves to ameliorate work conditions

5.3.6. Raising Awareness on the Historical and Cultural Values of the District

- Training children and youngsters on the cultural wealth of the district
- Organizing youngsters to work on the historical and cultural wealth of the district and providing them with skills (English, photography, tourist guide etc.) to serve this purpose
- Identifying people who have been living in the district for a long time and bringing them together to engage in a simple oral history work including unknown stories, legends, and the famous from the district, stories of certain buildings etc.
- Identifying important buildings and organizing the locals and local resources to clean these buildings' surroundings
- Researching economic opportunities that can be developed around this wealth (forming a touristic office where youngsters and women work, tour organization, selling souvenirs, tea gardens, restaurants etc.) and starting initiatives on these as well as helping locals contact supporting resource persons
- Organizing story telling meetings in the district and inviting famous people from the district to social centre meetings
- Supporting locals to develop small projects on these issues, to find funds for these projects and to implement the projects

5.3.7. Individual and Organizational Capacity Development

- Providing leadership training for women
- Having a series of meetings with participating women to prepare the code and principles of the social centre and converting these to written form to be shared with everyone
- Determining the shared targets and aims of the social centre, developing its organizational plan and management style with women and determining the division of labour keeping the contributing parties like the youngsters in mind.
- Likewise, developing the registry and accounting system of the social centre and doing related division of labour
- Planning coordination, follow up and evaluation processes together with women
- Organizing training programs (literacy, communication, problem solving, basic rights, women's rights, consumer rights, vision formation, project development etc.) in line with women's needs to develop their individual and institutional capacities
- Promoting to ensure women's work becomes visible at various levels (spouses, elders, authorities etc.) and to increase participation
- Supporting women to establish their independent institutions within 3 months (legal identity, cooperative etc.), to take over the management of the centre and continuing technical support during this process

5.4. FUNCTIONS OF THE SOCIAL CENTER

The centre will serve the following functions for women, youngsters and children:

- A social space
- An educational centre (flexibly structured to meet needs)
- An information collection and distribution centre (central and local programs, project activities on district's needs and priorities, resources etc.)
- A meeting place to develop shared solutions and to contact local resources and volunteers

- A training place for economic initiatives and applications
- An office for the local organizations women arrange

More than one location will be used for these functions. Lot 7, 8, 9 (Çilingir Street), basement floor and garden of Dimitri Kantemir House and a shop in the market of Balat have been identified to serve these functions.

5.5. MANAGEMENT OF THE SOCIAL CENTER

Committees will be formed among women related to each activity field. For each committee, leaders who will act as representatives and provide coordination will be elected. The committees will fulfil the following work in their fields:

- Coordination / Organization
- Education
- Lobbying / Bringing forth the priorities of women, children and youngsters to the local agenda
- Follow up
- Collecting and conveying information
- Needs analysis / Project development, implementation and resource search at the level of the district

One or 2 persons from each committee will form an administrative body and will meet regularly. The decisions regarding the management of the social centre will be taken in these meetings as well as the planning and follow up. Part-time or full-time employees will be hired for the social centre for the activities that require expertise (pre-school education etc.) or for general management. Furthermore, payments will be done to the persons in charge of the organization of centre activities and short-term instructors.

5.6. SUSTAINABILITY

- Institutional sustainability will be possible with women acquiring their legal identities. Additionally, this will facilitate economic initiatives (registration will enable the chance to expand businesses) and institutional records will be possible.
- Economic initiatives will be designed in a way that can sustain itself and can contribute to the general income of the centre.
- A contribution fee will be taken from child care and education services.
- Women will be supported to develop shared projects, and projects will be proposed to available resources (EC etc.).
- There will be an endeavour to acquire regular contribution from public resources or local administration for the services provided by women, which can be classified as public services (pre-school education etc.).
- Trainers will be provided from available public programs (Public Training etc.) for courses and trainings.
- Other NGOs will be encouraged to shift their investment or long-term work to the district.