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CO-EVALUATION



PARTNERS TEMPLATE FOR
OUTPUT TWO

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Name of Country: Turkey

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Please answer the questions below, providing as much detail as you can. Each partner is expected to send their responses to the Yeditepe University Team by October 03, 2022.

Demographic Questions

⇒ Please provide the following demographic data pertaining to the participants of your local process. You may either use individual data or statistical averages (~ 400 words)(*).

Age: Between 14-20

Place of Birth: The birthplace of one of the participants is **Sakarya**, the other is **Ordu**. The rest of them were born in **Istanbul**.

Gender: 9F, 4M

Education: One participant is high school graduate; others are high school students.

Employment: None of them work

(*) The word counts are given as approximate guide.



Questions for the Researchers/Volunteers/Facilitators of the Local Process

1- What were the general expectations of the participants before the local process?

- ⇒ How did the participants approach your local process? (Prejudice? Enthusiasm? Doubt? Excitement? etc.) What did they expect/anticipate? Please give as much detail as you can, relying on your observations or informal conversations, or formal interviews, focus groups and surveys you may have conducted (~ 400 words).

As part of the local process, we organized a summer school attended by 14 young people from different places in Istanbul and nine separate high schools. Before the summer school we held, as the Turkish team, we had meetings via Zoom with a few participants and tried to organize the summer school program using the feedback and wishes of the young people. The idea of attending a summer school where they were asked for their own opinions was an exciting thing for them. In addition, in the Zoom meetings, we learned that some participants were interested in drama, visual design, camera usage, and editing. So, having a workshop program on these areas excited them.

Even though information about the program content and workshops was given during meetings, the participants had questions about the contents. The fact that the summer school will be held on the university campus was fully new and exciting for the participants because most had never been in a university environment before. Apart from being attractive, this situation also caused prejudice in some participants. Since university campuses in Turkey are entirely closed to the outside, and great precautions are taken even when visitors are accepted from the outside, they can be places that are mysterious, intriguing, and of course, prejudiced for someone who is an outsider.

The workshops, which were organized as part of the summer school, with the contents of the study visit, drama, and social awareness-raising, offered the participants an alternative education different from the conventional or mainstream. For this reason, our summer school became an unfamiliar area for the participants. However, thanks to the short interviews made at the end of the summer school, we found out that although they were an outsider to the university campus and the alternative education program on the first day, they got used to it and even started to enjoy it in the following days.

2- How did the participants evaluate the local process?

⇒ Overall? Particular phases/aspects of the local process? What did they like? What did they dislike? Did they have any recommendations? etc.
(~ 800 words)

We carried out our local process at the Yeditepe University campus. On the first day of the summer school, we set a campus tour to introduce the participants to the campus. Since the university campus is next to a forest area with plenty of green spaces, plant and animal diversity is higher compared to other parts of the city. For this reason, we wanted the participants to see and experience this opportunity. After lunch, the tour started with a short conversation about the sustainability studies conducted on campus. During the tour, we walked around the campus a lot and visited the arboretum, which is also a part of the campus. The long and tiring tour caused a shock to the participants since they were exhausted. At the end of the day, they all expressed that they were very tired in their short interviews. However, the rest of the week required to be even more active physically. The participants, who rarely sat down during the drama workshop, became more sincere friends with each other through dances and music, and they did work that strengthened their creativity. On another day, the tour in Pera was also full of walking. Although they complain about walking too much on the first day, in the following ones the participants never expressed that they were tired; for some, they were the most admired workshops.

Participants liked different workshops according to their interests and tastes. Drama and gender workshops, Pera tour and exhibition were among the most popular ones. Seeing that the university environment is not as complex as they thought, one-on-one contact with faculty members and students from the university was something that all participants loved. Those interested in sports among the participants stated that sports-related workshops could have been added within the scope of the summer school. Towards the end of the summer school, we listened to and answered the questions and curiosities of the young people who participated, together with university graduates, our friends who are currently students at the university, and our professors from the academic staff. The questions they asked in this section did not stop. Especially the students in the last year of high school struggled with the ignorance of not knowing what to do after graduating from high school; they constantly asked questions with the excitement of entering a completely different world, which they observed on campus and listened to residences of it. Especially high school students, who did not expect the campus residents to be smiling and entertaining, stated that they now have a greater desire to be a part of the university after summer school.

Here, it may be taken as a recommendation to be mindful of how university residents are perceived by outsiders, even if they are not verbally and directly expressed as a recommendation. Unfortunately, the system in Turkey turns universities into closed boxes. Still, university students and professors (especially those working in the social sciences field) should consider how they are perceived from the outside and try to break their negative image. Social scientists can do this by including society with their subjects a little more in their working processes, by sharing more information and holding meetings about the research results they think may be useful to the public, by getting more ideas from outsider people and of course by organizing social responsibility projects.

3- Any observations you might have had about the participants, before and/or after the local process?

⇒ Participants' attitudes/feelings/concerns/expressed thoughts? Any eureka moments on your part? (~ 800 words)

At the Zoom meetings, we held before the summer school, the participants were excited and happy to participate in such work. On the first day of summer school, the participants had the day introvertedly due to the excitement and the tension of entering a new environment. The first day of the summer school was more crowded than other days in terms of the number of participants because some participants came to the summer camp on the first day and decided not to attend the other days. The rest of the participants got warmer daily, and when the last day came, none wanted summer school to end.

Within the scope of this summer school, the participants' perspective toward the university changed after the days spent on the university campus. As mentioned, none of them have ever been on a university campus. In Turkey, unfortunately, university campuses are not allowed to visit. They have high security, and most of them have metal detectors. University campuses have seen a sort of fortress. Even if you are a student and forget your id, it is not allowed to enter the campus. In addition to that, preparing for the university exam is a challenging and severe process in Turkey. Young people involved in this process naturally perceive that the university environment is tense and frightening. These are the reasons make young people think this way. Because of that, the time they spent on campus was highly enlightening for them. At the end of the summer school, the participants concluded that they had the wrong idea about the university, and neither the university nor the environment had a tense atmosphere.

One of the workshops as part of the summer school was the camera usage and video editing workshop. Within the scope of this study, the participants would interview each other at the end of the days, shoot each other in the workshops, and on the last day, they would edit these videos and produce short footage. While we put this workshop in the program as a creative activity, we gave the participants responsibility and set them free. They asked each other questions, evaluated the workshops, days overall, and finally brought together the short videos that they shot. Even though the video was small, giving responsibility and creating an environment where they could make their own decisions positively affected the self-confidence of these participants. At the end of the five days, the participants left with the confidence to create something and take responsibility.

4- Self-reflective thoughts/concluding remarks?

⇒ What have you learned during and after your local process? Anything that worked great, and you would recommend to other practitioners? Anything you would have done differently if you had to design and carry out your local process all over again? (~ 500 words).

The local process showed us that young people who grow up in countries like Turkey that rely on multiple-choice examination systems should increase the number of interactive courses they can participate in. Because young people develop their skills based on memorization and question-solving reflexes, their problem-solving and idea-generating skills become dull under the influence of the education system they have passed through. We observed this in the interactive workshops we organized as young people get stuck at the points where they need to develop ideas and solutions.

It should be noted that the young people who participated in the summer school predominantly came from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. However, a tiny minority had relatively higher socioeconomic backgrounds because of their educated parents with degrees. As a result, there were marked differences in problem-solving, idea generation, and perspective between students from two different student profiles. This situation again showed us how much the advantages brought by the family in the background could affect the type of capital young people will have (Bourdieu, 1986).

Therefore, on the occasion of summer school, we learned that such a process contributes more to the relatively more disadvantaged students among the participants, opens an entirely different perspective for them, and creates a more significant difference. Therefore, if we were to redesign the local process, we would try to include young people from similar levels as much as possible so that there are no more disadvantaged young people who will participate. In addition, groups with different reasons for being disadvantaged (such as LGBTQ+) could have been tried to be more involved in the process.

At the end of the summer school, the young people who were strangers for the first two days got used to the university campus and us and started to warm up to the summer school. They said they wished the school would be longer on the last day. Based on this wish, the summer school could be spread over two weeks. The first week of school could have been planned to be more intense, but the second week to be more relaxed. Thus, while the first week would mingle with the venue (campus) and other participants with the planned activities, they could be encouraged to make more artistic production in their spare time in the second week.

Finally, the participating student profile could have been better studied beforehand. Knowing what the young people's interests and likes are beyond their demographic information could contribute to the preparation of a program that would better attract their attention and encourage them to produce. Unfortunately, we had difficulty in creating the effect we intended, as the young people avoided exchanging information beyond their excitement and happiness at the Zoom meetings held for this purpose before summer school. Here, once again, the importance of expressing oneself and one's opinion showed itself. The fact that they did not (or could not) express themselves despite the arranged meetings with young people many times before planning the summer school may result from several factors. The education system they come from and their inability to find a place to express themselves in society may have caused them not to know how to express themselves. In addition, university residents' sullen and serious image may have driven young people to refrain from expressing themselves.

Bourdieu, P., (1986), 'The forms of capital', in Richardson, J.G. (ed.), Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education, New York: Greenwood Press.

