Alternative Life Association & Dreams Academy Project

“Art-ist has no barrier..!”
Alternative Life Association-Ayder

• Alternative Life Association, a non-governmental organization that was established in and incorporated under the laws of Turkey, with the purpose of increasing awareness on the needs of socially and physically disadvantaged people, their integration into social life; and developing partnerships among disadvantaged groups and with the governments, local authorities and the private sector. The Ayder is a signatory of the UN Global Compact and committed to the realization of the MDGs.

• AYDER aims to create alternative and innovative social projects which include education, sports, tourism and health elements for the handicapped and disadvantaged groups and thus convert this “major minority” to a productive and active society that can take part in social life independently.
Best Practices & Social Entrepreneurial Projects

Run by Alternative Life Association

Diving is Freedom

(1998-present)

Diving is Freedom is a project based on the standards of Handicapped Scuba Association. This project is a full training programme for people with special needs and for the one who would like to dive with disabled people. Through the programme so far 2000 disabled people has experienced the healing and liberating power of the sea.
“Alternative Camp” is a volunteer effort that strives to establish a foundation for integrating persons with disabilities into the society through sports, education and vacation. Among its many goals is to create social awareness by bridging the gap between different disability groups, different age and gender groups and people of different cultures and languages.
“Alternative Camp” actively participates in “Reha Istanbul” which is an organization to bring together NGOs, private and social enterprises to find cooperative solutions for chronic problems of handicapped, old and other disadvantaged groups.
"Barrier-free Tourism for Everyone" project has been working to ensure that handicapped people, old people and people with diseases can travel free of restrictions and to ensure this we have been working to restructure tourism structures to establish accessibility for everyone.

AYDER with collaboration with TURSAB is the founder of Barrier free Tourism Committee in Turkey. In addition it is the member of European Network of Accessible Tourism (ENAT) and Design for All (DfA)
Best Practices & Social Entrepreneurial Projects

*Run by Alternative Life Association*

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Dreams Academy

*(2008 - present)*

DA is a social responsibility project that aims to improve opportunities for disabled and socially disadvantaged youth in Turkey, to become **active** and **productive** individuals by using **arts** as a means...

DA believes **arts** as one of the most important tools for building up and evaluating creative and productive individuals within society...

*Art can be seen as the most important opportunity for the disabled and socially disadvantaged young population to produce new ideas and actively & equally participation to society*
Dreams Academy 2008-2010: Realizing Dreams

• 1,000 students!
• Painting exhibitions,
• Photography exhibitions,
• Performance nights,
• Film exhibitions,
• Music and theater groups.

• Social Inclusion Band
• Dreams Academy Dance and Theater Company
• Sea stars...
Box: Social inclusion in Turkey: Dreams Academy – Art-ist has no barrier...!

In Turkey, social exclusion is prominent e.g. among persons with disabilities. It is estimated around 8.5 million persons with disabilities live in Turkey who experience exclusion in various forms of their daily life. In order to promote social inclusion of persons with disabilities, UNDP, along with Vodafone Turkey, Besiktaş Municipality and Alternative Life Association initiated the “Making Dreams Come True” project in 2008. The project aims at increasing the opportunities for persons with disabilities to actively participate in public life through arts. Under the project, a set of initiatives have been implemented to train and promote talent among persons with disabilities in various areas of interest: vocal music, dance, film, theatre, etc. For example, the “Social Inclusion Band” and the “Dreams Academy Dance and Theatre Company” have been established under this project. Both are by now employed and perform regularly with professional musicians and actors.

All individual initiatives have one important common component. They are finishing with either an exhibition or a concert to show the wider public but also to other project participants that persons with disabilities are talented and gifted despite their handicaps and that they can make use of their talents to perform art as good as artists without disabilities. The project provides vivid examples that show that it is in the best interest of the society to use and benefit from those talents, which would otherwise remain wasted. In the long-term, the project is expected to become an “internationally standardized education programme”, rather than a short-term project. The project has won a Golden Compass Award by the Turkish Public Relations Association in 2009 for its results and excellence. But it is not the awards that make this project so successful – rather the impact it has on changing the lives of persons with disabilities and equally important, changing attitudes of the wider society.

Dreams Academy gives Turkey hope

Newsweek Turkey
100· Issue Special Edition:
“100 Things in Turkey that give hope”

# 34
Dreams Academy
Dreams Academy is...
“European Social Innovation”

“This is European Social Innovation”


**Purpose:** To identify 10 large-scale successful examples of socially innovative initiatives, to raise the profile of social innovation across Europe.

Source:

100+ projects from 23 countries applied, one of the 10 winners: Dreams Academy
AKBANK JAZZ FESTIVAL REGULARS: SOCIAL INCLUSION BAND

Social Inclusion Band/Jam Session Rhythm workshop and concert performance at Babylon were filmed by the United Nations crew as part of the 10/10/10 “One Day on Earth” film project.
Dreams Academy Success Story

- **Silay Turhan** a 16 year old girl with sight impairment and intensive bone loss. She is very interested in music. In Dreams Academy her talent was discovered. Her success with rhythm instruments and talent in singing improved her confidence. At the parties and events that were organized by Dreams Academy, she had found opportunities to perform in public. At each performance nights crowds loved her voice and she met with long applause from the audience. Now she is one of the singers in a big choir which consists of 300 singers.

- **Tevhit Mert Akgul** a 13 year old boy with hearing impairment from birth. His parents’ protective and conservative manner was making Mert very hard to express himself. During the first Dreams Academy term he was very productive, has shown his talents in classes. As a result he was awarded to continue the courses in the second term as well. His dream is to become a painter, and via Dreams Academy his art pieces are already exhibited in several different art galleries. Now he is a young painter who has abolished the barriers against his dreams.
Dreams Academy 2010-2011: Ataşehir Center
In 15\textsuperscript{th} June 2009, Turkish Human Relations Foundation awarded Dreams Academy as the best social responsibility project of 2009 in the category of art & culture. In the 8\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Golden Compass Human Relations Award, Dreams Academy is nominated and won the award by getting full support from the award juries...