Students with Disabilities

and Educational Equity

in Turkey

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Focus on Universities
- Example: METU
- Photographs
Statistics

- 8.5 million (12.29%)
- 1.1 million
- 500,000

Source: Turkish Daily News; UK Home Office; TURKSTAT; Prime Minister Administration for Disabled People
History of Education for People with Disabilities in Turkey

- 1951, Ministry of National Education
- Schools for the Blind in Ankara (1950s):
  - Goreneller Korler Okulu (Aydinlikevler, Ankara)*
  - Mithat Enc Korler Okulu (Gazi Mahallesi, Ankara)
- 0.74% of disabled children were receiving special education (OECD, 1995); many receiving education in mainstream schools without any support

*mandatory English lessons

Legislation related to Students with Disabilities in Turkey

- **Turkish Disability Act (July, 2005), Law No. 5378**
  - (Article 15), “The right of education of the disabled people cannot be prevented by any reason. The disabled children, youngsters and adults are provided with equal education with the non-disabled people and in inclusive environments by taking the special conditions and differences into consideration.”

- **Higher Education Council (YÖK) directive (June, 2006)**
  - Universities in Turkey must establish a Disability Coordination Unit, and students with disabilities can now apply for suitable support.

Universities with Disability Support Coordinators

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Example:

Middle East Technical University

• Policies toward Students with Disabilities
  pre-2004
  • Often exempt from quizzes, but not from exams.
  • Students with a hearing impairment were automatically
    exempt from listening quizzes, regardless of % of
    impairment

• Post-2004
  • Disability Special Interest Group at METU (1990s) aims
    to minimize and eventually exclude exemptions

Source: Interview with METU Disability Support Coordinator, March 18, 2007
Example:

Middle East Technical University

- Disability Support Coordinator established 2004 to support students with varying needs
- 1st university to do so
- preceded the legislation

Source:
Example:

Middle East Technical University

- Actions and changes post-2004
  - Taxi policy for students with physical disabilities
  - Series of seminars, workshops

- Future Challenges
  - Expansion of Disability Support staff
  - Issues of Accessibility: Buildings, pathways across campus, etc.

Source: http://www.eot.metu.edu.tr/engelsiz_taksi_hizmeti.html
Photographs -

✓ New building for the Department of Basic English, METU
Completed Winter 2006/2007
Further Information

- YÜKSEKÖĞRETİM KURUMLARI ÖZÜRLÜLER DANIŞMA VE KOORDİNASYON YÖNETMELİĞİ. [Laws regarding Disability Information and Coordination in Higher Education] [http://www.ozida.gov.tr/mevzuat/yokozurlukoordinasyon.htm](http://www.ozida.gov.tr/mevzuat/yokozurlukoordinasyon.htm)