

## *Practices of Age-Friendly Cities in Turkey*

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UDK 35.071:28-483(560)  
316.346.32:352-053.9(560)  
<https://doi.org/10.31297/hkju.22.3.7>  
Preliminary report / prethodno znanstveno priopćenje  
Received / primljeno: 2. 2. 2022.  
Accepted / prihvaćeno: 8. 7. 2022.

It is predicted that the proportion of the elderly population in the total population will increase significantly in following decades. Central state institutions and local government organisations increase the services and expenditures for the elderly population as a requirement of the social state understanding. Municipalities should ensure the active participation of the elderly population in production and consumption activities. For this reason, it is usual for age-friendly cities to increase in number and services in developed countries. This research aims to explain the concept of an age-friendly city in the context of silver economy and active old age, and to outline the basic features

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of an age-friendly city. Available services in the context of an age-friendly city will be analysed across selected cities in the world and Turkey. This article aims to indicate the necessity of cooperation between municipalities and the creation of local social support systems.

*Keywords:* silver economy, aging, active aging, social state, age-friendly cities, municipal services, Turkey

## 1. Introduction

The duties and responsibilities of the state in economic and social life are increasing continuously in terms of quality and quantity. In the classical approach identified by A. Smith, rules such as neutrality of the state, being minimal, and not interfering with the economy and social life have been dominant for a long time. However, with the economic depression in 1929, the concept of a neutral state was abandoned. With the ideas put forward by Keynes, the economy and social life are now intervened in by the state. The World War II and the negativities it brought caused the concept of social state to become widespread (Güler, 2020, p. 135). The social state increased social transfer expenditures in terms of volume and variety in order to minimize the injustices in income distribution. Increasing public services and consequently the need for public financing have increased the share of the public in national economies. With the increase in the share of the public in national economy, especially their positive externalities, are of great importance. Financial and social transfer expenditures have an important place in public budgets to eliminate the inequality of income distribution between individuals, sectors, regions, and even occupational groups.

Social state is a structure created with the idea of intervening in the functioning of market mechanism as a result of political decisions (Jespersen, 1996, p. 58). The intervention corrects the market failures of welfare state. The intervention of social state is primarily effective in two areas. The first of these is the regulation of rules regarding the functioning of the market. The second effect is a fairer distribution of the income obtained as a result of production (Walker & Wong, 2004, p. 120). In this context, social state is a structure where organized power is used deliberately to provide minimum income security, narrow the scope of social uncertainties, and promote social services (Briggs, 1961, p. 228; Flora & Heidenheimer, 1981, pp. 23-24; Parry, 1985, pp. 287–296). Social state has been identified with social se-

curity based on social risks (Esping-Andersen, 1999, p. 40). Social risks can be distributed on the market, covered by social state, or internalized in the family (Gough, 1979, p. 1). Similarly, Parry (1985) argues that social state is a structure organized at a collective level to alleviate the effects of different social risks, especially health, poverty, unemployment, and old age. Social state has expanded the employer role of the state, expanded the scope of social security system, legitimized mass consumption and trade unions, and institutionalized the class struggle (Berger, 1990, pp. 107–109).

The terms “old age” and “aging” could be explained as the distance that living things make over time. Considering factors such as old age, chronic diseases, genetic inheritance, and lifestyle, it is classified as chronological, physical, social, and psychological aging (Salık, 2017). Health problems and diseases start or increase in people’s old age. Their quality of life decreases. Their social and functional lives and their cognitive and emotional states undergo negative changes. First in developed societies and then in developing and underdeveloped societies, the number of elderly people and their ratio in the society is gradually increasing (Alaydın, 2019, p. 61). The demands and expectations of the elderly population are increasing day by day. From the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it is accepted as the beginning of a change and transformation in the world’s demographic structure (Yüceşahin, 2011, p. 15). The average lifespan increased from 48 years in 1797 to 65 years in 1947 and from 46 to 66 between 1950–2000. It is predicted that it might reach 76 years in 2050. Although it is difficult to determine the beginning of old age (Şentürk, 2018, p. 17), according to the World Health Organization (WHO), the old age starts at 65 years.

The two global trends shaping the 21<sup>st</sup> century are population aging and urbanization. An age-friendly city promotes active aging by optimizing health opportunities. They adapt their structures and services so that elderly people can access them (WHO, 2007, p. 1). Eurostat estimates that the number of people over 65 (65+) in EU countries will increase from 17% to 30% between 2010 and 2060. On the other hand, the European Commission predicts that until 2060, age-related expenditures such as health services and pensions will constitute approximately 30% of GDP and 50% of general public expenditures in EU countries (European Commission, 2019).

The justified and expected interventions of the state in economic and social life are increasing day by day. State budgets include expenditures for those who cannot get a sufficient share of the income, the disabled, the elderly, and those who experience inequality of opportunity. Social transfer expenditures are made by central state institutions, municipalities, associ-

ations, foundations, non-governmental organizations, private companies, international organizations. The silver economy, which includes spending for the elderly, has become a popular topic in recent years. The increase in the proportion of the elderly population in the total population has led to an increase in services for the elderly. Social transfer issues such as poverty, income distribution, unfairness, decrease in social welfare, decrease in happiness and confidence indexes, employment problems, education, and health problems, a decrease of loyalty to the state, or increasing anti-state opposition are very important for the future of states, economies, and social peace.

The paper consists of six parts. The transition from neutral state to interventionist state and social state is explained in the introduction. In the second chapter, paper defines concepts of active aging, silver economy, and age-friendly cities. The third chapter explains the basic features of age-friendly cities. The fourth chapter covers examples of age-friendly city applications from around the world. The fifth chapter analyses age-friendly urban practices in some cities in Turkey. Final part of the paper summarizes main findings. This article aims to indicate the necessity of cooperation between municipalities and the creation of local social support systems.

## 2. Active Aging, Silver Economy, and Age-Friendly Cities

The current population estimates for the elderly in developed countries and the aging rate vary widely geographically. As the average life expectancy increases, the concept of “oldest” changes. The number of elderly people is a small part of the total population in the world. According to demographic data, the portion of the elderly population is increasing rapidly all over the world and especially in developed countries (Oğlak & Canatan, 2019, p. 131). Thanks to developments in nutrition, health, and medicine, the population aged 100 and over has reached a significant numerical size for the first time in history. (Kinsella-Velkoff, 2001, p. 7, p. 22). The prolongation of lifespan means a longer period of aging for the individual. Over time, physiological changes occur in functions such as vision, hearing, and movement ability. These changes decrease the quality of life (WHO, 2003, pp. 1–2). With aging, physiological changes, chronic diseases, psycho-social problems, and inactivity result in consequences, and thus a vicious circle occurs (Butler et al., 2009, p. 8; WHO 2003, p. 2).

The World Health Organization has defined active aging as the process of optimizing the health, participation, and safety conditions and opportunities to increase the quality of life of people in old age (WHO, 2002, p. 12). This concept was developed in the 1990s through WHO and some countries. It covers policies that establish relations between the state and non-governmental organizations (Paul, Ribeiro & Teixeira, 2012, p. 1). Active aging predicts healthy and active aging of the individual to prevent and reduce the effects of problems that may arise with the increasing portion of elderly population. There are various factors in the emergence of active aging. These can be classified as follows: demographic reasons, economic reasons and transformation in family structure and humanitarian reasons.

The challenges of active aging are health, independence, and psychological variables. Interventions are inevitable in the issues of health measures taken in youth, increasing psychological resistance, avoiding loneliness, keeping pensions high, increasing individual happiness and well-being (Paul, Ribeiro & Teixeira, 2012, p. 9). According to Plato, old age is the period of wisdom (2004, p. 300). For this reason, older adults tend to continue to stay at work in meaningful roles. On the one hand, they want to protect their welfare and health, and on the other hand, they want to contribute to their families and society (Özen & Özbek, 2017, p. 569). Various regulations are required for the elderly to be able to continue their lives as active individuals in economic and social life with an active aging approach. Changes in traditional policies and practices are a must. The foundations of active aging policies are tools such as extending employment periods, increasing opportunities to participate in social life, adopting preventive approaches in the field of health, enabling independent and safe life, and increasing intergenerational solidarity.

The silver economy includes policies such as arranging the environment suitable for the elderly, providing job opportunities for people aged 50 and over, lifelong learning, keeping talents up-to-date, safe working environments, appropriate regulation of working conditions, prevention of age discrimination, and preventive health services. The purpose of the silver economy is to enable elderly people to participate in society and economic activities. Increasing the quality of life of the elderly is to create up-to-date policies, products, and services that will meet their needs, and to support active aging (Zimnoch, 2013, p. 24). Until recently, the fact that the age group 50 and over constitutes a strong market has been widely neglected. Services and products suitable for this group have not been designed. How-

ever, the concept of the silver economy includes all products and services that will result in expenditure (Zsarnoczky, 2016, p. 105).

The silver economy supports people who are past the golden age to overcome their losses. The main objectives of the silver economy are to increase the quality of life of the elderly, ensure their participation in life, enable them to continue their education and self-realization, enable them to stay longer in business life, and to live in independent and harmonious environments. Silver economy means new jobs and new growth opportunities arising from government spending and consumption expenditures related to special needs of the population over 50 (EC, 2015, p. 3). In the context of silver economy, public expenditures for active and healthy living are considered expenditures in the public budget, but also public investments. To realize strategic public investments in silver economy, public spending policies should be applied to issues such as active and healthy aging, social cohesion and independent aging (EC, 2015, p. 4). Silver economy, which will have a significant share in public expenditures, may bring about financial difficulties for the country's economy in economic crisis and other unforeseen situations (Ahtonen, 2012).

Regulations in the form of positive discrimination in areas such as health, transportation, housing, and environment for elderly people to live a better-quality life are described as "age-friendly". With the increasing demand, practices such as age-friendly cities, age-friendly universities, age-friendly hospitals, age-friendly hotels, and age-friendly housing were initiated (Bal Özkaptan & Ceylan, 2017, p. 12). "Age-friendly society" is defined as a society that has adopted policies for promoting the talents, productivity, self-sufficiency of the elderly, respecting their ideas and lifestyles, protecting the vulnerable, and encouraging participation in all areas and every moment of life. Another concept developed by the World Health Organization based on the concept of age-friendly society is the concept of "age-friendly city" (Caner et al., 2003, p. 2). The concept of an age-friendly city has emerged with the formation of the Age-Friendly Cities Guide by evaluating it together with the Human Rights, UN Elderly Principles, and Active Aging Framework Text. It is noteworthy that the concepts of equality, participation, health, safety, independence, and honour are prioritized in all these sources. According to the McKinsey Institute, the easy growth of world cities is now over. We live in the age where demographic change will affect the level of welfare (Gordon, 2017, p. 6).

The quality and quantity of public spaces are important for the elderly. Public spaces and public services should be carefully arranged for the elderly living alone in cities to socialize (Köse & Erkan, 2014, p. 40). It has been deter-

mined that living in suitable environments gives positive results. Age-friendly concepts are mainly introduced in the developed countries, whose population has been gradually aging at faster rate. (Kalınkara, 2017, p. 236).

While the majority of the elderly in developed countries live in cities, they live in rural areas in developing countries. While young people are migrating to cities in developing countries, the elderly have remained in rural areas. However, there have been migrants to rural areas among the elderly living in cities (Mandıracıoğlu, 2010, p. 44). It is predicted that by 2025, 82% of the elderly in developed countries and 50% of the elderly in developing countries will live in cities (Köse & Erkan, 2014, p. 44). For the first time in 2008, the number of elderly people living in the city exceeded that living in rural areas. While planning urban transformation in developed countries, elderly people should be considered in environmental and infrastructural arrangements, since environmental factors have a high effect on the elderly (Kalınkara, 2017, pp. 232–233).

### 3. Features of the Age-Friendly Cities

The reasons for the emergence of the concept of an age-friendly city are that the elderly population increases with the rate of old age in the world's population, older people will play important roles in societies, and that effective policies are required due to demographic aging. An age-friendly city refers to a comprehensive and accessible urban environment that supports active aging. An age-friendly city refers to clean, safe, liveable, and sustainable urban environments where elderly people are provided with an environment and opportunities to live a harmonious life together with other segments of society. With these characteristics, the age-friendly city refers to a live environment related to the city, where regulations are made and measures are put into practice not only for the elderly community but also for the benefit of all the people of the city, especially children and disabled people (Caner et al., 2013., p. 9).

According to The Toronto Declaration on Equity and Health adopted at the Second International Conference of the International Society for Equity in Health in 2002, equality is also effective in developing a friendly urban environment that supports the elderly in everyday life (Kanström et al., 2008, p. 13).

World Health Organization has put forward a new understanding of urban design with the age-friendly cities project and has prepared a guide

and checklist to measure the level of age-friendliness of a city by intensifying its work on this issue. The World Health Organization has also declared to the world that cities should be revised by the following criteria (Akyıldız & Akbaş, 2020, p. 86):

- Outdoor spaces and buildings,
- Transportation,
- Sheltering,
- Social Participation,
- Respect and social inclusion,
- Civil participation and working life,
- Communication and information,
- Community involvement and healthcare.

Municipalities have a critical role and importance in creating environments and opportunities for physical activity and active living. The city's decision-making mechanisms can provide a foundation that provides leadership, legitimacy, and opportunity for the development and implementation of policies that support active living for all citizens (Edwards & Tsouros, 2006, p. 8). Thus, a positive step is taken for an age-friendly city.

Number 11 “Sustainable Cities and Communities” Development Goal has 7 sub-aims. These sub-aims (especially children, women, disabled people, and elderly people) (UN DESA, 2020) include:

- accessible and safe housing for all,
- accessible and sustainable public transport facilities for all, sustainable and inclusive urban planning,
- protection of cultural heritage,
- protecting poor and vulnerable people from disasters,
- reducing negative environmental factors by paying attention to waste management,
- creating safe, inclusive, and green environments.

The WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities, established in 2010, connects cities, communities and organizations worldwide with the common vision of making their community a great place to grow old in. The WHO Global Network currently includes 1,333 cities and communities in 47 countries, covering over 298 million people worldwide. Membership to the Network is not an accreditation for age-friendliness. Rather, it reflects cities' commitment to listen to the needs of their



ageing population, assess and monitor their age-friendliness and work collaboratively with older people and across sectors to create age-friendly physical and social environments. Membership is also a commitment to share experience, achievements and lessons learnt with other cities and communities (WHO, n.d.).

## 4. Age-Friendly City Services from World Cities

### 4.1. Rossgburn / Manitoba Age-Friendly Accessibility Awareness Event

In Manitoba, 14.8% of the population is 65 years or older. Manitoba's elderly population is expected to increase 43% over the next 20 years (Age Friendly Manitoba, n.d.). In Rossgburn, Manitoba, Canada, it was decided to raise awareness among young people and local business owners about the difficulties older people can face when going out for daily work and shopping. In this context, both primary and high school students were required to exhibit their performances in using walkers, canes, or wheelchairs. Some students also wore very dark glasses that helped them understand problems which people with visual impairments need to face. The whole event was recorded on camera, and staff and students gave short presentations about how they felt after the event. Based on this, a report on the obstacles that older people face in shops was prepared and shared with local businesses and the relevant ministry (Age Friendly Manitoba, n.d.).

### 4.2. Odivelas School Pass Patrol

The project was realized in Portugal Odivelas; it involved retired people between the age 55 to 70, who were previously trained by Safe School PSP (School of Security). In this project, traffic monitors/guards were appointed by the Municipality to the places that have high traffic, fast traffic flows, and thus present a dangerous environment for students going to and from school. The primary role of the observers was to make it safe for students to cross the pedestrian crossing, especially at school arrivals and departures and at noon, during peak hour (WHO, 2017).

### 4.3. Leeds, Dance in Time

This is a one-year program that is related to the project of giving dance training to groups of older people with limited access to dancing in three different regions of Leeds, England. The program has been developed through research in a way that facilitates and removes the barriers to connect older people with dance. Sessions are held twice a week and are fun and uplifting. The dance involves movement and creative improvisation, planned over 10 weeks, with a choreography developed by the group and staged in a small group to celebrate the work. In addition to the benefits gained from physical and musical stimulation, participants' socialization increases while they enjoy tea and biscuits together after each session. The work takes place in local venues, in partnership with neighbourhood networks, which provide services and events for the elderly. The program is authorized by the Leeds City Council and training is taught by professionally trained dance artists from the Yorkshire Dance School (New Dance Classes for People Aged 55+ in Leeds, 2018).

### 4.4. Volgograd, a Kinder World

Volgograd joined the Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities in 2012 as a part of its commitment to creating an inclusive environment for senior residents. Over the years, Volgograd has made the following initiatives to better support seniors: In 2008, a senior's club was established. The club has eight branches, employing 40 permanent employees, 31 of which are retired. These employees generate ideas and act as a link between the municipality and the elderly population. The municipality provided a venue and a microbus to each regional branch and covered maintenance costs. The municipality invests 7.7 million rubles (US\$ 258,600) in the club each year. The main activities of the club are the provision of leisure activities for the elderly, the development of intergenerational solidarity, programs to improve the mobility of the elderly, and provision of information and support to the elderly. The "Kinder World" aims to strengthen intergenerational relations by having creative and philanthropic actions targeting preschool and school-age orphaned children together with older people. The main objectives of the program are to provide elderly people with intergenerational socialization and individual satisfaction and to support their contribution to the society in which they live (WHO, 2018).

## 4.5. Clarence, Food Festival

Food is one of the most important activities that connect people. In this context, projects are carried out in Clarence, Australia, to prevent the isolation of old people from society, to ensure that elderly people have access to healthy meals, have fun and make new friendships. The program aims to provide healthy foods to isolated elderly people and to increase their access to healthy foods. The program is supported by a wide range of stakeholders, including many volunteers, such as local communities, schools, various organizations, and companies working and preparing meals with care, attention, and commitment.

Clarence City Council joined the World Health Organization (WHO) global network of age-friendly cities and communities in 2014. The age-friendly title recognizes the Council's work to include and serve elderly residents and to be more inclusive for people of all ages. The Council focuses on ensuring and continually improving the factors in eight sectors identified in the WHO Age-Friendly Cities Guide (The City of Clarence, n.d.).

## 4.6. Gothenburg, Walker Rally

Senior citizens participating in the Walker Rally, one of the events organized by the City of Gothenburg in the week of October 1, World Elderly Day, have the opportunity to have fun, go out and test their physical abilities. Walker Rally, organized by the Municipality of Gothenburg, promotes active aging and the use of the city centre by senior citizens while providing a fun activity for the participating seniors. The main purpose of the event is to emphasize that Gothenburg is a city for all ages and to make the city centre accessible, safe, and interesting for the elderly (WHO, 2020).

## 4.7. Ljubljana, Age-Friendly Perspective

Slovenia's City of Ljubljana has been organizing computer literacy courses since 2007 to empower the elderly and enable them to benefit from new technology and communication tools. Computer literacy courses are provided free of charge to the elderly. The entire cost of the courses is covered by the budget of the City of Ljubljana. The average age of the participating citizens is 68 and the oldest registered citizen is 94 years old. It is stated that women show more interest in the courses. Computer literacy

courses are held in 12-person classrooms and neighbourhood centres. The courses are taught by trainers with special education and experience, at 08.00, 11.00 and 14.00, in three separate sessions in a day. In the sample included in the World Health Organization (WHO) Age-Friendly City Practices Database, it is stated that the questionnaires filled out by the citizens participating in the course reflect a high level of satisfaction. The total population of the City of Ljubljana is 282,741. 24% of the population consists of citizens aged 60 and over. The city of Ljubljana, in partnership with civil society, provides financial resources for the implementation of various special programs concerning services for seniors.

#### 4.8. West Chester, Intergenerational Learning and Mentorship Program

This is an age-friendly city application set out with intergenerational communication and learning goals. The “West Chester Intergenerational Learning and Mentorship Program”, implemented in West Chester, a city in Pennsylvania, USA, and included in the World Health Organization’s Age-Friendly City Practices Database, offers undergraduate and graduate programs to students studying at West Chester University. It brings them together with senior citizens from different backgrounds and enables them to learn and create a mentoring relationship together. The goals of the intergenerational mentoring program include combating social problems such as age-based discrimination and age-based stereotyping and aim to achieve sharing and transfer of knowledge, experience, talent, and wisdom between generations and cultural groups. In the database, it is stated that the ratio of the population over 60 to the general population is between 10 and 19 percent, and the number of volunteers has increased on-demand within the program carried out voluntarily (“Age Friendly” West Chester Universities Intergenerational-Mentoring, 2017).

#### 4.9. Burlington, Age-Friendly Program

In Burlington, a city of Halton District on the west side of Lake Ontario, the Housing Committee of the Senior Citizens’ Council, established under the Age-Friendly Burlington Program, has developed the Halton HomeShare Handbook on the housing sharing system implemented in many other regions under the name of “HomeShare”. It provides a resource that can be used by citizens who want to get information and con-

sider this model as a settlement alternative. In the HomeShare system, usually, two citizens share the same house, each has its own space and common areas such as the guest room and kitchen are defined. Responsibilities for the layout of the house are shared, or the party undertaking to provide these services can do so in exchange for accommodation or a reduction in the accommodation fee. For example, senior citizens, who are the primary target group of this system, can open their homes to young people and university students, who are defined as secondary target groups, and receive services such as gardening, cleaning the house, shopping, and taking care of pets. In this way, the HomeShare system prevents seniors from being alone and provides a safe and secure home environment. According to the information given in the application example in the WHO Age-Friendly Cities Database, the rate of the population over the age of 60 living in Burlington in the total population is between 10 and 19 percent. The primary goal of the program and the content is stated as reducing the loneliness of the elderly and enabling the elderly to continue their lives at home (Burlington Age Friendly Council, 2018).

#### 4.10. Waterloo, Housing Project

According to the information entered in the WHO's Age-Friendly City Applications Database by Canada's Waterloo Municipality, the Waterloo Municipality carried out its first study in this field on "Housing", which is among the improvement criteria stipulated by the WHO, after joining the age-friendly cities network. In the summary of the report submitted to the Council by the Age-Friendly City Advisory Committee of the Mayor of Waterloo in 2013, there was an action plan recommendation for continuing the improvements to make Waterloo a sustainable and age-friendly city. One of the recommended issues was the development and publication of a housing and accommodation guide to meet the specific accommodation needs of senior citizens. The housing and accommodation stock in Waterloo is presented as "Independent Living" focused housing units, "Living with Supportive Services" and "Long-Term Care Homes" in the guide content. The ratio of the population aged 60 and over to the general population in the city of Waterloo is stated to be between 10 and 19%. The "age-friendly committee" established in Waterloo consists of citizens and municipal officials and it works directly with the mayor. It is stated that senior citizens were also consulted during the process of creating the accommodation guide (WHO, 2018a).

#### 4.11. Finland, *Kotitori* Concept

Working as an information office for seniors, *Kotitori* (literal meaning in Finnish is “marketplace”) gathers public and private services in one place. Operating as a multi-supplier model, this model focuses on concepts such as home care services and independent living at home. “One Point” means the transmission of information across multiple channels: a physical place for visits within the city hall, a call centre for answering phones, and a service model open to access as an internet portal. The *Kotitori* concept is described as a new approach to organizing services that support aging and a joint venture between the public and private sectors. It offers citizens an integrated channel to access information and services provided by both public and private sectors (WHO, 2017a).

Among the tasks undertaken by *Kotitori* is the management of regular home care services for 300 citizens receiving these, and the management and support of all municipal services that serve approximately 2,600 citizens. Support services cover topics such as security and safety, shopping, and short-term home care. *Kotitori* was opened in 2009. As of September 2015, welfare technology, information service for all citizens, and provision of temporary home care services for families were added to the service issues (City of Tampere, n.d.).

#### 4.12. Cleveland, Care Calls Program

This program provides an automated call centre that makes daily calls to elderly people living alone and who cannot participate in social life in the Cleveland urban area and provides emergency services for a larger group of senior citizens living in the urban area. Cleveland Care Calls is an automated telephone reassurance system being offered to Cleveland Seniors 60 and over or adults 18-59 with a disability by the Department of Aging and Public Safety (City of Cleveland, Department of Aging and Public Safety, n.d.).

#### 4.13. Akita City

It is estimated that the ratio of the population aged 65 or over in the total population will reach 34.2% by 2040 in Akita City. Akita City is among the frontrunners in terms of the population-ageing rate in Japan (Kadoya,

2013). In 2011, Akita City became the first in Japan to join the WHO's Global Network of Age-friendly Cities and Communities. Akita City's Age-Friendly City Plan features actions by both the government and citizens themselves. The "active aging" citizen plan promotes age-friendliness at stores and other facilities, in part to fight isolation of the elderly, and offers public awareness campaigns to dispel the negative image of aging. Even the process of creating a symbol for Age-Friendly Akita City included submissions from residents as old as 80 and as young as 13 (Firestone, 2018).

## 5. Age-Friendly Cities Practices in Turkey

Turkey is an advantageous country in terms of the proportion of the elderly population compared with the general population in European countries. When the data of the European Union Statistics Office (EUROSTAT) for 2019 are analysed, the ratio of the population over the age of 65 to the total population in European countries is 20.3%. This rate is 8.8% in Turkey (EUROSTAT, 2019).

From this point of view, shares of the central government and local administrations allocated from their budgets for the elderly population are at lower levels compared to European countries. However, with the legal regulations and local policies to be made, it will be possible to cope more easily with the old age rates that will rise to the level of European countries in the future. We shall first discuss the legislation within the framework of Turkey's social policies on how to create a policy on the elderly and old age. The evaluation of practices of age-friendly cities will follow thereafter.

### 5.1. Regulatory Framework

Due to their mission, municipalities come to the fore more than other sub-national institutions in terms of responsibilities for social policies and social services. Municipalities, providing activities to solve social problems of the people, especially of the disadvantaged groups (disabled, children, elderly, women, etc.) and contributing to the creation of these services, are called *social municipalities* (Genç et al., 2020, p. 239).

The duties, powers, and responsibilities of municipalities in this area are determined by the 5393 Municipality Law. According to Article 14,

metropolitan municipalities and municipalities with a population of over 100,000 must open shelters for women and children. Other municipalities can open shelters for women and children by assessing their finances and service priorities. The order of priority in the provision of these services will be determined by the financial situation of the municipality and the urgency of the service. In the provision of services, methods appropriate to the situation of the disabled, elderly and poor are applied. According to the Article 77 “Municipalities shall carry out programs designed to encourage the voluntary participation of individuals with a view to ensuring solidarity and participation in provision of health care, educational, sporting and environmental services, social welfare and assistance services, libraries, parks, traffic and cultural services and services for the elderly people, women, children, people with disabilities, the poor and destitute, and to increase effectiveness, economy and efficiency in service provision”. Also, metropolitan municipalities within the provincial boundaries, provincial municipalities within the boundaries of municipalities and adjacent areas, and municipalities with a population of more than 10,000 may allocate immovables to projects that will improve social services, with the approval of the Ministry of Interior, free of charge or at a low cost, provided that they are not used for other purposes.

## 5.2. Services Provided by Age-Friendly Municipalities in Turkey

To be included in the “Age-Friendly Cities Global Network”, all requirements of the four-stage system must be fulfilled completely (planning, implementation, evaluation of progress and continuous improvement) during at least five years (Caner et al., 2013, p. 9–10). There are a metropolitan municipality (Mersin Metropolitan Municipality) and three district municipalities (Kadıköy Municipality, Beşiktaş Municipality, Muratpaşa Municipality) included in this global network from Turkey. This research covers and discusses both the works of four municipalities included in this global network were evaluated and the works of those municipalities that are not included in this network but carry out age-friendly activities.

*Eskişehir Tepebaşı Municipality.* Alzheimer Guest Houses and Life Village started to serve as of 2014 to facilitate the lives of residents with Alzheimer’s disease and their families, and to support their participation in social life. Alzheimer Guesthouses continue to serve with three guest-



houses and 64 beds in total. Also, 20 residents of the city with Alzheimer's disease benefit from the municipality's day-care services free of charge two days a week (Life Village and Alzheimer Guest House, n.d.). Theatre performances and music concerts are organized for the elderly to socialize and meet young people (Tepebaşı Municipality, 2019, p. 176). Tepebaşı Municipality Health Affairs Directorate teams carry out health checks of citizens aged 50 and over at regular intervals. These health screenings include checking the blood pressure, sugar, cholesterol, and heart rate values, followed by health recommendations to the citizens. While the health screenings of the citizens who cannot leave their homes are carried out in their homes, the citizens who want to get the flu vaccine are directed to the relevant health institutions when necessary.

*Istanbul Kadıköy Municipality.* It has been accepted to the World Health Organization Age-Friendly Cities Network of Kadıköy Municipality on the 22 February 2016. The "Barrier-Free Route" program was initiated by the Municipality of Kadıköy in order to make certain routes unobstructed. One of the most important elements of the Barrier-Free Kadıköy policy is the creation of age-friendly places suitable for the citizens (Peştereli, 2015, p. 389). Muhtar Özkaya Public Library, affiliated with Kadıköy Municipality, lends books to the homes of home-dependent sick, elderly, and disabled people with the slogan "If you cannot go to the book, the book will come to you". Book deliveries are made throughout the county. The only condition of this service is that the reader is sick, elderly, disabled, or house ridden. Readers who want to use the services of the library can choose the books they request from the library list as members of the library via phone, internet, or their families. Selected books are left to the address requested by the municipality officials. The book is collected from the address when the reader notifies the library upon reading the book.

Kadıköy Municipality Sahrayıcedit Social Life House started to serve on the 4 December 2013. It is a centre opened to prevent individuals over 65 who have left their active working life or retired from staying at home, to create new socialization environments by meeting with their peers, to have a good time, and to ensure their productivity. The second Social Life House, which was first put into service in Sahrayıcedit District, was opened in 19 Mayıs District on 21 September 2017 by forming a complex with Alzheimer's Centre. The Alzheimer's Centre; is aimed to connect patients to life, to ensure that they have a pleasant daily life, to increase their quality of life, and to delay the progression of the disease with mental rehabilitation activities. Besides, supporting the relatives of patients, raising

awareness and including them in social life, and creating social awareness about the disease are among the goals (Süzme, 2018, p. 55-56).

*Izmir Gaziemir Municipality.* Thanks to the Ancestor House Healthy Aging Centre, which was established within the framework of the cooperation of Izmir Metropolitan Municipality and Gaziemir Municipality, elderly citizens re-establish strong ties with social life. In addition to socializing and making new friendships, elderly individuals are provided with the opportunity to acquire different hobbies according to their abilities and to do sports for active aging. In this centre, which is called healthy aging, cultural and artistic activities are also carried out in the presence of psychologists (Ata House Healthy Aging Center, n.d.).

*Antalya Muratpaşa Municipality.* Within the framework of the strategic goal of developing social assistance and social services by creating a safe, peaceful, and aesthetic city and increasing the quality of municipal services by strengthening the city economy, with the understanding of human-oriented municipalism, the Muratpaşa Municipality is “providing care and counselling services for citizens over 60, promotes their active participation in society and implements modern elderly service-provision models” (Muratpaşa Municipality, 2019: 47). The Muratpaşa municipality was the first to be included in the network of age-friendly cities in Turkey. In this context, a nursing home was opened for the social care and rehabilitation program of citizens aged 60 and over. Courses for citizens aged 60 and over are organized in this nursing home, where lifelong learning is continued through programs and workshops where they can develop themselves and realize their existing abilities without breaking away from social life (Muratpaşa Municipality, 2019: 139).

*Mersin Metropolitan Municipality.* “Conducting services to increase the quality of life of the elderly and ensure their active aging” is included in the activity areas of the Social Services Department of the Municipality. The Department of Disabled and Health Services, provides “health checks of elderly people together with other disadvantaged groups and providing psychological support, physical therapy, personal care, and home cleaning services”. Their goal is also “to increase the quality of life of the citizens with Alzheimer’s and dementia and to spend pleasant and quality time. Rehabilitation services are provided with the aim of slowing down the course of the disease” (Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, 2019: 36). After the Mersin Metropolitan Municipality applied for the inclusion in the age-friendly cities network, it conducted research of the social texture. In places where it is difficult to access health units with mobile health vehicles, such as rural areas, mobile dental health screening services are

provided especially for elderly, bedridden, and disabled citizens on weekdays and at weekends. The number of beneficiaries of these examinations reached 1859. In addition to dental health screening, 313 citizens were also screened for heart health (Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, 2019: 170). The city residents who are in need of help and cannot cook at home due to reasons such as poverty, disability, old age, or health problems are provided a single meal a day, including lunch and dinner, every weekday (Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, 2019: 164).

*Sakarya Metropolitan Municipality.* Within the scope of the Elderly Support Project, the Elderly Support Center (YADEM) unit was put into practice, and it provides hobby courses, services of home cleaning, personal care, psychological support, physical therapy, home care, awareness seminars, and cinema projections to seniors, including free health check-ups every month. Social activities such as birthday celebrations, home visits, excursions, and nature walks are also among the services for the elderly (Genç et. al., 2020, p. 249).

*Istanbul Beşiktaş Municipality.* The Beşiktaş Municipality, where approximately one-fifth of the population consists of individuals over the age of 60, submitted an application to the age-friendly cities network in 2017 and was included in this network in 2019. The “Social Alarm” project has been implemented to meet health service and other needs of the elderly in the district where individuals over 60 live. With this project, individuals who have a “social alarm” device in their homes have the opportunity to call an ambulance with just two buttons or reach the call centre of Beşiktaş Municipality (Beşiktaş Municipality, n.d.).

*Ankara Metropolitan Municipality.* The Elderly Service Centre, which has been serving since 1994, was established within the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality. This centre serves as a home care service model for elderly people who are socially and economically deprived to continue their lives in a peaceful home environment, to protect their physical and mental health, and to improve their social relations. The services of the centre include supportive cleaning services to elderly people who have difficulties in doing their daily routine at home, accompanied by a bathroom and barber service for elderly people who have difficulties with self-care, and technical services provided in case they need repairments. Also, the municipality staff cooks for elderly individuals who are unable to cook. Finally, psychological support and health services are provided to the elderly (Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, n.d.).

## 6. Conclusions

All cities are in constant motion (Uşaklıgil, 2014, p. 23). If the changes in demographic structure are not positively reflected in urban policies within this cycle, it may be the beginning of the end for urban administrations. In this respect, the power to make decisions vital for the cities should not be left only to central governments, local governments, or experts. Without active participation of citizens, a good city cannot be created for them (Bumin, 1990, p. 20).

A good city means that individuals from all age groups of all statuses can directly access the same service and ensure that their satisfaction levels are kept high. This is the reason why social policy practices are important to prepare and maintain this environment of equivalence and equality.

The social state in Turkey continues to grow both in central and local governments. The situation in which the state is in a position to organize and supervise the processes with the new public administration approach will efficiently strengthen the economy. This situation will increase the social state expenditures and thus ensure an easier implementation of social-economic policies. Increasing welfare will thus be distributed more equitably to the general society (Özer, 2015, pp. 92–93).

When we look at the services presented in this research; Eskişehir Tepebaşı Municipality meets the needs of elderly people in need of care with Alzheimer Guest House. Besides, the health of the elderly is given importance through regular health checks. Istanbul Kadıköy Municipality has created barrier-free routes for elderly people to participate in social life more, and provides books to individuals who cannot come to the library. İzmir Gazimir Municipality and Antalya Muratpaşa Municipality contribute to the socialisation of the elderly in the areas of interest through the centres they have established. Every elderly person is encouraged to remain active at older age through sports and hobbies.

The support centre established within the Sakarya Metropolitan Municipality focuses on services for elderly people who cannot fulfil their household chores and self-care, while carrying out activities aimed at the socialization of the elderly. Mersin Metropolitan Municipality provides services to ensure that the elderly, especially individuals with dementia, do not break away from life. Istanbul Beşiktaş Municipality has initiated a social alert project for elderly people to easily access services.

Ankara Metropolitan Municipality operates by establishing a service centre for the elderly to provide help to elderly citizens with their housework.

One of the most important aspects of social policy practices are elderly individuals. Spatial adaptation problems begin with the aging of the elderly. The desire to go somewhere after a certain age or the decision to stay in the same place can only be possible with spatial changes. Architects, city planners, and city managers produce solutions in this regard (İrgil, 2018, p. 71). A social policy should be developed without ignoring the efforts of elderly citizens to socialize by doing their physical activities, as well as by making the spaces and environments suitable for elderly people.

The main problem here is the discontinuity of policies in municipalities where politicians shape their policies without the involvement of other relevant stakeholders. This discontinuity is manifested in the archiving of the decisions made by previous administrations without prior evaluation. This seems obvious for municipalities that are included in the age-friendly cities network. The city's mission to become an age-friendly city, implemented as one of the most important decisions of a long-term policy change, is ignored after winning the local elections and wasting the budget. The implementation of new policies and the decisions taken in this direction can be considered a waste of municipal budget, thus reducing the quality of life of urban residents.

The silver economy concept promotes active aging. Elderly people do not leave their social life thanks to preventive health services provided by employment. In Turkey, elderly people are more involved in the social life of their municipalities through social benefits, self-care, sports activities and various hobbies. Social policy should not only include social assistance and similar practices; it is also important in terms of psychological support to help bring elderly people together with the right social activities, while reducing the health burden of the country with preventive health policies.

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## PRACTICES OF AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES IN TURKEY

### *Summary*

*It is predicted that the proportion of the elderly population in the total population will increase. Technological developments, social state development, and innovations in medical science have increased life expectancy. Central state institutions and local government organizations increase the services and expenditures for the elderly population as a requirement of the social state. The concept of an age-friendly city and its applications have gained importance since the 1980s. Municipalities closest to the public have to produce more services to create more suitable and less dangerous areas for elderly people. Municipalities should ensure the active participation of the elderly population in production and consumption activities. It is thus expected to provide services in the fields of education, infrastructure services, health, accessibility and sports. In recent years, the elderly population in developed countries is relatively higher compared to the total population. For this reason, it is usual for age-friendly cities to increase in number and services in developed countries. In this research, the concept of an age-friendly city will be explained in the context of the silver economy and active old age. The basic features of the age-friendly city will be explained. This paper analyses the services provided in selected cities in the world and Turkey in the context of an age-friendly city.*

*Keywords: silver economy, aging, active aging, social state, age-friendly cities, municipal services, Turkey*

## PRAKSE DOBNO PRILAGOĐENIH GRADOVA U TURSKOJ

### Sažetak

*Predviđanja pokazuju porast broja starijih ljudi u ukupnom broju stanovnika. Tehnološki razvitak, razvitak tzv. socijalne države i inovacije u medicini utjecali su na povećanje životnoga vijeka. To je dovelo do povećanja broja usluga, a samim time i do povećanih troškova za stariju populaciju u proračunima središnjih državnih institucija, ali i organizacija na lokalnoj razini. Od osamdesetih godina 20. stoljeća raste važnost koncepta dobno prilagođenih gradova kao i njegova praktična primjena. Općine, koje upravljaju javnim politikama najbližima građanima i njihovim svakodnevnim potrebama, trebaju osigurati dodatne usluge kako bi se pobrinule da uspostave sigurnije i primjerenije prostore za stariju populaciju. Općine također trebaju osigurati aktivno sudjelovanje starijeg stanovništva u proizvodnji i korištenju javnih aktivnosti. Na temelju toga potrebno je da općine osiguraju usluge u područjima obrazovanja, infrastrukture, zdravlja, dostupnosti i sporta. S obzirom na to da je posljednjih godina postotak starije populacije relativno veći od populacija ostalih dobnih skupina, ne začuđuje porast broja takvih gradova i njihovih usluga u razvijenim državama. U ovom je istraživanju koncept dobno prilagođenih gradova analiziran i pojašnjen u kontekstu srebrne ekonomije, odnosno ekonomije starenja kao i u kontekstu aktivnog življenja u starijoj dobi. Pritom će se gradovi i njihove usluge analizirati i pojasniti usporedbom nekih svjetskih gradova i onih gradova u Turskoj koji su razvili taj koncept.*

*Ključne riječi: srebrna ekonomija, starenje, aktivno starenje, socijalna država, dobno prilagođeni gradovi, javne usluge, Turska*