

A Learning Process with Process with Children

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"Dreams are heard too."

O. Aruoba



Who learns from whom, who learns from where? Learning is based on communication, isn't it? How do I construct myself?

I have been working with children for only two years. Before that, the last time I remembered being together with children was my own childhood. I have learned lots of things during these two years and I started to question the things that I tend to forget in the rush of life. I saw again that:

- it is necessary to be open to diversity, innovation and surprises
- I discovered that lots of the subjects I thought I had learned or understood recently, I actually learned as a child
- it is worth being and staying different
- human nature can design without special education
- one of the most valuable things in life is dreaming.

I chose to stay as a learner with children. By making boats, kites and planes from paper...I try to enjoy working with children. Although I have a position as a coordinator, I prefer to work, to produce things with children in a children and architecture project run by the Turkey Chamber of Architecture, Ankara Branch. Let me introduce the 'Child and Architecture' Project, especially '1000 Architects @1000 Schools'

The Child and Architecture project has been carried out in two directions. In the first of these, the program is within the education system, and is carried out under the name '1000 Architects at 1000 Schools'. In the second; the program is carried out outside the education system and is called 'Meetings'.

'Meetings' are thought of as supporting the '1000 Architects at 1000 Schools' project.



'1000 Architects at 1000 Schools' - Searching for quality in quantity

An NGO work constructed from the personal contributions of architects. The project started in Ankara as a local initiative. The project is based on the principle of being voluntary; voluntary architect, voluntary school. In the project, the Chamber of Architects does the coordination and organization, the architect is the one who carries out his or her own project at the school as a designer, the school and the officials have a position and help the children and architects to meet.

The finance for the project is provided by the Chamber of Architects. It is the responsibility of the Chamber of Architects to document and publish the projects.

About the application method:

- Each architect (each team) defines the subject or the concept he wants to tell the children.
- He chooses his own method of description freely.
- They participate in a 'Child and Adolescent Seminar' programme.
- The architects determine their own timing, taking into account the time necessary for the concept they want to explain.
- The architects can choose their own school by showing their permit paper, or they can choose a school from a list of those that have applied to the Chamber of Architects.
- The project created by the architect is evaluated by a specialist from the Center of Child Culture.
- Finally the details are negotiated with the teachers and head teacher of the school (time, content, material, choosing a class, etc.).

During the 2003-2004 school year, 28 personal projects were realized, studies

were carried out at 20 schools; we reached 1300 children. '1000 Architects at 1000 Schools' is based on difference and variety. It is fed by differences. The schools vary; the age groups vary. We worked mostly with 11-15 year olds. Conceptual variety is dominant: nearby environment, sensibility, the class in my dreams, park design, time and the city, the layers of the city, city life and communication, playgrounds, the profession of architecture, sports fields, the perception of space, etc. Where are we going?



The evolution of the project...

We have permits for the 2004-2005 academic year to continue the project. New models are being developed to encourage the attendance of other architects. New methods and tools have been developed that will facilitate the project. Sample application projects are being written. We are continuing to work with the support of AU-CCRC to make the project more structured and open to evaluation. We want the project to be carried out by the educators. So we are continuing our preparations to acquire the educational tools and guide books. A study group has been formed to evaluate the new architecture programs for the Council of Instruction and Training, with a view to the regeneration of the new education program.

With this project, I have a chance to think about childhood and architecture, and to meet many different situations. If we realize that the time interval we call childhood is the designator of all the situations we face and the director of all the selections we make, we should be able to think about how we can enrich childhood. Things done or left undone, every difference and innovation picked up in childhood can be factors that affect the direction of our lives. Because of this, we should think how the processes experienced in collaboration with children can affect their lives. We can see that our performances, learning styles and opinions about concepts like freedom and collaboration can affect them deeply on the road to becoming adults. It is necessary to think about the times spent with children. This should be considered at three different times: before meeting, while meeting and after meeting. I think all communication in life is similar to this: there are thoughts and plans at first, during communication; plans can change because of different factors, the thoughts remaining after communication is your interpretation of the situation. Interpretation is personal; consequently everybody can say different things about the same situation. Fortunately, we are all different...



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