



EURO
CITIES



Beyoglu district mansions

social care and lifelong learning

Twelve 'district mansions', located in different neighbourhoods of Beyoglu, in Istanbul, Turkey, provide local residents with vital services, professional and educational training and social spaces. The mansions are particularly aimed at women and disadvantaged members of the community who did not complete their education and feel disconnected from their local community.

The district mansions provide Beyoglu's 254,000 residents with essential services, either free of charge or at a discounted rate, including: healthcare, childcare, tuition, professional training, laundry, hot meals and cooking facilities, showers, post offices, workshops, internet cafes, libraries and cinemas.

Vital services for the vulnerable

While all Beyoglu residents are welcome at the district mansions, the scheme is primarily aimed at women and poorer members of the community: those without access to basic facilities, no longer in mainstream education or unemployed. Eight out of the 12 district mansions now offer basic healthcare services, provided in collaboration with several NGOs, including the Breast Foundation and the Turkish Heart Foundation. The health centres provide services such as vaccination, heart screening, diabetes testing and blood pressure monitoring. The services are aimed at those without easy access to hospitals or clinics, and around 300 residents are benefitting from healthcare at the mansions each day.

There is also a strong focus on education and training. The mansions offer professional training for all residents over the age of 16, in fields such as hairdressing, computing, graphic design and tourism. All of the professional training courses offer certificates approved by the regional directorate of public education, and to date more than 28,000 trainees have benefited from the services.



For many women, the mansions are like their homes. Thanks to the energy, commitment and support extended to them through these mansions, we are able to restore a sense of belonging and bring new life to our neighbourhoods and to the city.

Ahmet Misbah Demircan, mayor of Beyoglu

cities in action

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where: Beyoglu, Turkey
what: social affairs
when: 1994+

Some training courses target children, and the mansions provide extra tuition in subjects such as Turkish, English and maths for those students whose parents cannot afford private classes. In addition, eight of the mansions provide nursery school facilities for children aged three to six, allowing their mothers the freedom to participate in other training and services on offer under the same roof.

Caring for the community

The mansions are about caring for those less fortunate members of the community. A 'social market' operates in four of the district mansions. Poorer residents can stock up on the essentials using a pre-loaded 'credit card'. The card is loaded with credit on a monthly basis, with families graded A, B and C according to their financial status. This helps the municipality to determine the amount of support households need.

The market operates like a normal supermarket, giving people the freedom to choose the goods they need without compromising their dignity. The supplies come via a food bank, which was set up by the municipality in 2010 in agreement with the Turkish Red Crescent and the Beyoglu District Social Aid and Fraternity Foundation. Goods are provided by citizens and businesses.

Meeting neighbourhood needs

The 12 district mansions are closely adapted to the needs of each particular neighbourhood. For example, if residents do not have easy access to a post office, the municipality provides one in the local district mansion.

The mayor holds weekly meetings at different district mansions in order to meet directly with citizens and gauge their needs. The mukhtarate, the offices of the heads of local

government, are also located within several of the district mansions, which helps to give citizens better access to decision makers.

The mansions are designed to provide an inclusive and welcoming social space. They provide gardens, cafes and even halls available for hire – free of charge or at a discount – for weddings and ceremonies.

By providing these essential services, they help to create a more cohesive neighbourhood community and support the integration and access to employment



of those who would otherwise stay at home, without education, training or even adequate sanitary and cooking facilities.

Because of the success of the mansions, the municipality is keen to spread the scheme further afield to neighbouring districts.



I was bored at home doing the same thing all the time. Consequently, I suffered from depression. Here I had the chance to broaden my friendship circle and build relationships. I also learnt to express myself through art and can even earn pocket money here by selling my paintings!

Serap Ördök, Beyoglu resident

