

## **DISTANCE EDUCATION IN TURKEY\***

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### **Introduction**

This paper presented at the EADL (European Associations for Distance Learning) Conference 2004 in Istanbul, does not cover all details of open and distance education implementations by neither Anadolu University nor by the Ministry of National Education. I am not also going to deal with the implementations of FONO Correspondence Education Institute either, only and the oldest private one. As a social scientist specialized in urban and rural development, I am interested in adult education aspects of distance education. Therefore, my observations and comments will be confined to adult education and social development. As an introduction I'm giving a brief history Turkish experience in open and distance education. Then, I am explaining developments as consequent of latest technological developments in communication and informatics. In the light of conditions prevailing in the country's social, economic, political and cultural life, I try to explain the need for open and distance education. Turkey has enough accumulation of experiences in this field of learning. As I conclude, I suggest a nation wide system of open and distance education as to meet the needs of educational needs of Turkish Society in general. From adult education point of view, programs must also be covering nonformal education of adults, concerning with democratization programs covering the subjects of democracy, human rights, secular education, peace, environment and other problems at local, national and global levels,

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as to create consciousness of citizenship on the part of ordinary individuals. I would like to start by referring to new and basic concepts concerning distance learning and open education.

### **Some Basic Concepts**

#### *Lifelong Education*

By using informatics, pedagogy has been transformed into androgogy which oriented toward educating adults through their life long learning. Schools at any level must provide the necessary conditions for internet based programs to all people. Libraries and computer centers must be open to those persons making studies and researches.

#### *Distance Education and Literacy of Computers*

Literacy of computers must be spread through the country covering all sections of the society. In order to develop distance education system, researches must be made and supported with the aim of evaluating existing programs supplied by different institutions. For this purpose “learning net” should be established.

#### *Qualifications of Teachers*

Projects involving the successful use of technology have failed repeatedly due to lack of instructor training in the use of technology. Generally, it is not the lack of available equipment, but rather the lack of training in how to use it. This is related with problems experienced in adopting new technology. To be successful in integrating computer technology in schools, teacher training is crucial. Teacher preparation for using technologies should cover the subjects concerning with solid understanding of possibilities informatics and media. Teacher preparation should not be based on training only for “computer literacy”, but Teachers should be taught *about* technology and also learn *how to use* it.

#### *The Role of Teacher in Informatics*

Teaching in an interactive, digital environment is very different from teaching in a lecture hall. There is not *one correct* understanding and there is not one correct way of approaching a problem. New pedagogical model moves from teacher centered to information centered. By leading students to appropriate information sources and provides guidance as to enable the student to discover the information needed, teacher becomes more important than before.

### *E-Literacy*

We are witnessing on-going changes and developments in the field of information technology. These changes are continuously reflected upon the social norms and regulations, such as e-government, e-law, e-commerce. However, in order to make these concepts meaningful, it is important to introduce this new concept of e-literacy in its broader sense and to introduce a better conceptual understanding of e-literacy we must make necessary educational arrangements (Shetzer & Warschauer, 2000).

### *E-Reading*

Reading the screen is something different from reading any printed material. This does mean that it only understands the alphabet, or pictures or graphics. It is also a process of interpreting what is read and seen at the screen. What is seen at the screen is a text has been so arranged and enriched so that it is possible to be reached by using any communication system. E-readers can reach all sites of information and use other sources provided by different sites.

### *E-Learning*

E-learning means electronic learning or learning based on technology. It is a process of learning that is implemented in cooperation with web-based learning, virtual classes, digital techniques (Facts, Figures and Forces Behind e-Learning, August 2000). In terms of educational periods, e-learning has been the recent stage of development of educational processes. Before 1983 (the first period of distance education), there was only education in the class, distance education based on correspondence. In between 1984 and 1993 (the second period of distance education), education supported by computer based programs. Since 1994 (the third period of distance education), as a consequent of developments in internet system, web supported learning has started. Since the year 2000, by using networks e-learning has opened a new era of educational systems.

E-learning method may also utilizes other educational techniques, equipments and materials including class-rooms, CD-ROM's, radio and television broadcasting, internet, satellite communication, cable television, interactive television, audio and audio-visual lectures, printed materials.

In e-learning process, communication has been realized between the learner and the instructor either by synchronous or asynchronous ways of communication. It is also possible to exchange letters and printed materials by the two.

*Distance Education and Learning based on Internet*

One of the features of e-learning at this stage of distance education, education has become interactive. Interactive method of learning has not been **learning centered but on teaching how to learn**. Not mandatory, but constructive. Not only interactive, but also cooperation. Its theoretical base is not behavioral, but cognitive. Learner has been more active in the process since distance learning has not been based on information transferring, but a model of cognitive interchange.

*Reading Internet*

New information technologies and electronics allow organizing knowledge in different ways as to alter individual's habits and spare time activities. New technologies also influence students reading comprehension skill at school and at home. Research findings indicates that students having access to internet score lower at reading comprehension test than the ones not having access to internet. Developing reading comprehension skill and using internet must be taught in schools.

*Electronic and Digital Libraries*

Use of digital libraries, in collaboration with distance education enables the learner an opportunity for lifelong learning, the use of digital libraries regarding the various needs of this age of information to better understanding social and political changes. Digital libraries provide information to students of distance education they need (Önel, 1998-1999). These libraries bring the texts to who desired. Another function of digital libraries is to give visual documents. Libraries of hypertext may make it easy to access and deposit important texts. In some electronic libraries books and other documents are made available to the student. Any electronic library may carry out more than one function we referred to. It is a fact that only ULAK-BIM in Turkey exercise electronic library functions.

*Right for Distance Education, as an Extension of Right of Education*

Distance Education programs and application of these programs should be analysed in view of differences and similarities between distance education system and formal education system. In addition to formal education given at schools, distance education contributes to achieving equity in application of the right of education. Although programs of the two systems, there differences in terms of aims, contents and the population they serve. Distance programs must be annex to and be parallel to formal

education programs. In comparison with formal education, distance education, distance education system is expected to be more flexible and be of various sorts. It also offers opportunities for in service training and lifelong education, by extending educational services to those individuals from different social and economic stratum living in remote settlements in underdeveloped areas. Open education is not only a system and educational technology, but in the meantime a program reaching the needy individuals and groups, at any time, at any place and at any subject they want to learn (Selvi, 2002).

Right of education, as stated at constitutions and international declarations, is considered as a fundamental right of individuals to participate into any educational institution, from preschool to higher education (Nowak, 1997). Right of education includes the **equity** and **opportunity of education** as to access all institutions without facing any discrimination. The government is responsible to realize this right for all (Uluğ, 2000, 430-431).

Another important point should be observed the fact that right of education must be effectuated at any age of the individual, as a consequent to the concept of lifelong education which has been guaranteed by many international declarations and conventions (Gülmez, 2000:312).

#### *Internet Based Education Model Supported and Enriched With Alternative Educational Technologies*

Nowadays there are a lot of Internet Based Instruction (IBI) software packages supplied by different institutions of higher education. This educational software can be enriched with educational materials such as book, software, digital video, academic consultant service; Information Administration programs must supply exams. This model of education differs from the traditional model in regards to the philosophy and substance. Internet may serve as a medium for the learner to get education at any place and at any time thorough synchronous and asynchronous communication (Mutlu, Öztürk and Çetinöz, 2001).

#### **Brief History of Distance Education And Adult Education In Turkey**

Distance education is not new in Turkey. It has been started by private educational institutions (namely FONON and Limasollu Naci for teaching English) and as a public service, governmental authorities in early 1950's. In 1951, MEB (Ministry of National Education) established the Center for Educative Films to produce educational films to reach to rural people in villages. Later, in addition to film production, this center

transformed into a center of production and communication preparing radio and television programs as educational aids.

First correspondence course was started, within higher education, by the Institute of Banking and Commerce, in the year 1954, Law Faculty of Ankara University (Karayalçın, 1957). In 1970, MEB started educational programs by correspondence. Then, a higher education program (briefly YAYKUR) started in 1975 by the Ministry of National Education, which was cancelled in early years of 1980's, when Higher Education Institute (YÖK) was established (Geray, 1978).

After having experiences by correspondence education, the Ministry of National Education, in 1982, established its open distance education program at Anadolu University, which was supported, by Radio and Television Institution of Turkey (cited as TRT) made eligible to use its channels.

#### *Need for Distance Education in Turkey*

There are several reasons and possibilities to promote and continue to utilize effectively distance education methods and techniques in teaching those who have not the opportunity of schooling within primary, secondary or higher education levels. Regional variations at levels of education, like differences between rural and urban areas, between males and females necessitated out of school education oriented towards adults. There are around 2 millions of ignorant and illiterate adults who were not able to attend primary schools, most of which are women.

There has been a huge discrepancy in the educational levels among developed and developing countries. In order to eliminate this gap in developing countries, educational system must be reorganized as to be adoptive in using new communication and education technologies.

To be successful in raising the opportunities for new generations who constitutes a substantial portion of the population, it is a must that diffusion of knowledge and innovations rapidly among those who could not get into the school system, by spreading distance education facilities all over Turkey.

New technologies of informatics, mass communication possibilities and internet offer variety of opportunities for the general public to learn by themselves by using distance education programs. In order to make these people get educated, Turkish Ministry of National Education started distance education programs leading to diploma degree at different levels.

Since 1982, University of Anatolia (Anadolu Üniversitesi in Turkish) has been offering an opportunity of attending an “open university program”, leading a diploma at undergraduate level. This has been a unique opportunity for those who are not admitted into a regular university program because of different reasons.

## **Distance Education in Higher Education in Turkey**

### *Demand for Higher Education*

Due to increase of young population, demand for higher education has been growing each year (Table-1). The system of higher education does not compete with this increasing demand. (<http://www.yok.gov.tr> [mart 2003]).

Statistical data indicates the fact that this demand for higher education comes from the graduates of general secondary schools in comparison with graduates of vocational and technical secondary schools.

There was more than 5.5 millions of population at the age of higher education out of which only 2 hundred thousand were accepted into Universities (Table-2).(<http://www.yok.gov.tr/egitim/raporlar/mart2003/baslik.pdf>)

Statistics given in Table 2 are concerned with those allocated/placed and registered in any program at undergraduate level of two years, license and graduate levels. It is a fact that only small portion of the population (% 8.5 to 9.5) at the age of higher education. Another point that is indicated by this table is the fact that between percent 28 to 32 of those who applied for higher education could enter into Universities. These figures highlight the need for expanded educational opportunities in Turkey. Anadolu’s enrollments, now over 600,000 students, make it one of the three largest distance education systems in the world.

### *Supply by Higher Education*

Statistical data shows that the supply of higher education system offers does not meet the demand for. In the year 2001, only 296,425 students were registered in one of higher education schools (Table 3). According to the national press news (Cumhuriyet and Hürriyet newspapers, dated as 16 May 2004) it has been announced that out of more than 1.9 millions of young people applied for entrance only 298,000 will be accepted to Universities.

Table 1  
Secondary School Graduates at the Academic Year 2001-2002 in Turkey

Type of Secondary Schools	Number of Graduates	Percentage (%)
Special Training Schools for Disabled Children	230	0.03
School for Religious Training	25,437	3.6
Commercial and Tourism Schools	66,515	9.3
General Education	290,116	41.2
Technical Schools for Girls	26,594	3.8
Technical Schools for Boys	87,909	12.5
Technical and Vocational Schools	207,280	29.5
Other Schools	595	0.07
TOTAL	704,676	100.00

YÖK, T.C. Yükseköğretim Kurumu, (Higher Education Council of Turkish Republic), **Türk Yükseköğretiminin Bugünkü Durumu**, (Existing Situation of Higher Education) Kasım 2001, pp.29-32.

*Açıköğretim Fakültesi (Open Education Faculty) of Anadolu (Anatoly) University*

It is understood that demand for Open University has been too low in comparison with traditional university programs. By using other informative and interactive methods this capacity can be enlarged. Open Education Faculty (the *Açıköğretim Fakültesi*), began in 1982 with two programs; one in Economics and one in Business Administration. The goal was to provide additional education to students all around Turkey who were not able to enter higher education because of limited numbers of places, or because their homes were too far from centers of education. From its beginning with around 30,000 students, the Open Education Faculty grew to its present enrollment of more than 600,000. During this period text-



based instruction, video and online projects were part of Anadolu's delivery systems. The past 20 years have been years of tremendous growth not only in terms of numbers of students served, but in terms of programs as well. In addition to the original areas of study in business and economics, the Distance Education System offers associate degrees, bachelor's degrees and vocational programs in Education Sciences, Health Sciences, Continuing Education and Informatics. New programs are being developed each year to meet the needs of a growing and changing population (Curabay and Demiray, 2002).

. Table 2

Number of Young People at the Age of Higher Education (199-2001)

Years	Number of Young People at the Age Of Higher Education (A)	Applied for and Took the Examination (B)	Registered at Universities and open University (C)	Percentage (%) C/A	Percentage (%) C/B
1999	5,063,000	1,478,365	484,475	9.6	32.8
2000	5,025,000	1,414,823	439,061	8.7	31.0
2001	5,371,000	1,473,908	416,271	8.5	28.2

YÖK, T.C. Yükseköğretim Kurumu, (Higher Education Council of Turkish Republic), **Türk Yükseköğretiminin Bugünkü Durumu**, (Existing Situation of Higher Education) Kasım 2001, pp.29-32.

In 2001 almost one and a half million students applied to take the university entrance exams. About 31 percent were admitted to traditional universities and Anadolu's Open Education System. Of these, 282,000 were accepted into traditional universities. Less than 19 percent of students who took the exams found places in traditional institutions of higher education. What happened to the remaining 81 percent of young people who were seeking educational opportunities? An additional 173,000 students or approximately 11 percent were admitted to Anadolu University's Open Education System. However, delivery technologies are changing.

Table 3

Students those Allocated and Registered at Universities and Professional and Vocational (two years training) High Schools in 2001

Type of Schools	Allocated (A)	Registered (B)	Difference ((B)-(A))
UNIVERSITY			
Two Years Training High Schools	129,462	107,473	-21,989
Faculties	166,963	170,473	+3,510
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>296,425</i>	<i>277,559</i>	<i>-18,479</i>
OPEN UNIVERSITY			
Two Years Training High Schools	64,167	46,680	-17,487
Faculties	171,179	92,032	-79,147
<i>Sub Total</i>	<i>235,346</i>	<i>138,712</i>	<i>-96,634</i>
TOTAL	531,771	416,271	-115,500

The expectations for digital technologies are putting an increasingly greater burden on both students and instructors. This pressure comes about as students use and expect more from new technologies. Digital technologies influence previous methods of communication. E-mail was not a requirement in their courses. Yet it clearly was a part of their lives, and they used it to get answers to their questions. This brings us to one of the most pressing issues, that of communication systems for such a large enterprise. In particular it brings us face to face with the impact of globalization on Open Distance Education System.

### *Graduates of Open Education Faculty*

Anadolu University Open Education Faculty conducted a research to evaluate to what extent the graduates found jobs in the economic and management sector, whether they have been successful in their performances at their jobs. They have been appreciated more in public service than private sector (Demiray, 1999).

### **Internet Based Distance Education By Other Universities In Turkey**

Since 1997, our universities started internet-based programs leading to a certificate as well as within the campus. Electronic Engineering Department of Middle-east Technical University (Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi ,ODTÜ) in 1998 started an internet based program leading to certificate in asynchronous communication informative technologies (IDEA) (<http://idea.metu.edu.tr/> ) In addition to other in campus Web based activities, METU Institute of Informatics (METU-Online) in 1999 implemented an 8 month course program leading a certificate informatics for 170 academic personnel from 35 different universities. (<http://www.ii.metu.edu.tr/metuonline> ) Within the project of “*Educating the Educators*”, Department of Computer and Education Technologies of METU organized an Asynchronous Education Certificate Program based on Internet, for 50 academics from 42 faculties of education from different Universities. (Information for other METU programs is available <http://eders.ii.metu.edu.tr>, <http://kys.ii.metu.edu.tr> )

At Sakarya University Internet based instruction activities started in 1998. (<http://www.ido.sakarya.edu.tr> ). In 2003, in cooperation with MEB, this University started a certificate program on Information Manager and Computing Programming.

Technical University of Istanbul (İTÜ) has been offering asynchronous distance education program based on Internet for students since 2001. Boğaziçi University, in 2002 established Distance Education Center (BÜ-UZEM). Süleyman Demirel University, Computer Science Research and Implementation Center (<http://baum.sdu.edu.tr> ). Hacettepe University continues its activities concerning distance education through departments of Computer and Educational Technologies and Computer Engineering. About other internet-aid programs by different universities are available at the following sites:

<http://ion.ii.metu.edu.tr>,

<http://www.yesevi.net>

<http://www.bilgiemba.net>,

<http://www.bilgi.aof.edu.tr>,

<http://www.adamyo.sakarya.edu.tr>,

<http://myo.mersin.edu.tr>.

*Internet Based Education Programs (IDEA) and Computer Based Certificate Programs (BTSP) of Middle East Technical University (METU)*

METU has started two different programs that are very important in developing distance education program in the field of informatics. Table 4 indicates the different backgrounds of the participants, in between 1996 and 2002. Among these participants, architects and engineers constitute 35 percent of them. Secondly, those come of informatics background. Students are the third important groups, but there is no information about what they study. Probably they are students of mostly electronics. Those with social sciences background consist of only one fourth of total.

**Centers of Ankara University For Distance Education (ANKUZEM) and Continuing Education (ANKÜSEM)**

Ankara University, one of the biggest universities, several years ago established two centers for distance education and continuing education. Center for Distance Education (ANKUZEM) by using communication technologies supplies educational programs to those people living in different regions based on internet either synchronous or a synchronous communication systems. By organizing smart classes, the center tries to make learning process more efficient, with the help of an educator. The participants have been supplied with CD-ROM and other teaching materials. Same instruments have been used by the Center for Continuing Education (ANKÜSEM) where courses organized for certain groups who further their educational levels as well as to get oriented new informative and technological knowledge's.

*Distance Education Offers New Opportunities To Meet The Needs Of The People: New Roles For The Universities*

Developments in technologies present new opportunities by distance education for those who did not have formal education in schools of different levels. Distance education extends towards all social groups in different regions of the country. In many universities in Turkey started to try virtual university programs supported by internet.

At this age of informatics, not only for professional opportunities, but also individual developments, life long learning has been spread causing enthusiasm

for continuous education. Those who are unable to reach in-school education, distance education provide an opportunity. Developments in educational technologies provide new opportunities to establish interaction between the learner and the teacher. In other words, in these days it is possible to convert one-way communication into full duplex communication.

Table 4

Distribution of Participants among Professions in IDEA and BTSP Programs (1998-2002)

Professional Background	1998-1999	2000	2001	2002	Total
Informatics	9	4 2	22	9	82
Student	12	20	22	8	62
Medical Doctor	4	6	1	2	13
Architects and Engineers	37	19	3 9	40	135
Science	17	2	1	4	24
Officer	-	3	3	4	10
Teacher	1	-	-	6	7
Administrative and Social Sciences	17	5	5	3	30
Other	3	3	7	8	21
TOTAL	100	100	100	84	384

### **Universities Must Be Pioneer To Develop Such Distance Education Programs.**

Programs should be prepared to educate “computer literate citizens” needed as a consequence of the informatics age. Therefore, educational system in Turkey must be oriented towards the following targets:

- Creating an innovative, creative and flexible thinking in all sectors of the population,
- Giving life-long education to individuals and developing their communal and social sense of responsibility,
- Connecting all schools to each other and with other productive sectors of the society, Increasing productivity and efficiency in our schools.
- Eliminating “digital gap” in the system in order to transformation of the society into informative society.

### **Distance Education Programs By Ministry of National Education**

The first formal distance education by MEB started in 1961, by using correspondence method. The Ministry sent Course materials other documents such as examinations to the students by post office. Students sent their answers by mail. Since 1992, there have been two open education programs carried by the Ministry. Both schools provide printed and electronic materials to their students such as course books and notes, brochures newsletters. Among electronic materials, there are radio and television programs and broadcast of some course materials on the internet. In each province within the MEB directorate there are student support services to render registration, distribution of materials, diploma, completion paper etc. Radio and television programs are broadcast on the TRT (Radio and Television Institution of Turkey) channels.

#### *Open education Secondary School*

Ministry of National Education, in 1992, started open secondary school program leading to a diploma. During the period 1992-2002, more than 637,000 registered and 143,000 (% 22) completed the program successfully. In 2004, number of the student from Turkey and abroad has reached 650,000. There were 198,550 pupils actively attending the courses. Those who did not renew their registrations exceed 250,000. More than 25,000 pupils abandoned the school. I understand that motivation level of the pupils is too weak. It is a fact that percentage of those who quitted and did not renew their registration is very high (% 55). This has been the weakness of the program. Administrators of this program must make a survey exploring the reasons why pupils are not actively participating.

Two different programs organized within this project: *Vocational Lyceum* (Lyceum) and *General Lyceum*. Vocational Lyceum courses have been given through face to face methods, a kind of blended learning at the site at after school hours and/or at week ends.

*Other Open Education Programs of MEB, At Primary and Secondary Schools Levels*

In 1992 Open Secondary School (*Lycée* in French) program, in 1998 Open Primary School launched by MEB. In cooperation with Turkish Academy of Sciences (cited as TUBA) MEB supports several research projects aiming at using of modern technologies of communication in distance education, cable broadcasting in interactive distance education and learning centers (Uluğ, 1994).

*Vocational and Technical Open Schools*

MEB administer also vocational and technical program leading to authorization certificate to those completed the courses. Electricity fitter program is one of these programs. Around 70,000 student shave been given such a certificate. Theoretical knowledge given by printed material produced according to distance learning. Applied technical information has been acquired by working at work sites. Other certificate courses are internet-based programs. Programs on Information Management and Computer Programming have been carried out by the support of Sakarya University.

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**Administrative Subjects Related To Distance Learning**

*Efficient Education Administration Must be Developed*

Administration of Informatics Based Education must be integrated with programs by using e-Education facilities. Any program administrator is expected to reach to all schools under his span of control. Any teacher must be able to access all information concerning his courses, to save, to send through by using only single address. Within same context, “programs for educating educators” must be

developed and expanded as to cover all universities. To stop the brain drain towards other, and mostly to the developed countries, young academics must be encouraged and supported through any way.

*Officials Administering Distance Education Programs Need More Knowledge of Informatics*

Those who are working at the administration of distance education programs of have not been well educated, enough to have literacy of distance education. The courses with duration not more than a week do not meet the educational needs of these personnel.

### **Distance Education in Armed Forces**

*Case of Air Forces*

Turkish Air Forces, in accordance with Military Internal Service Regulation (Article 36) has the “obligation of duty to learn and teach the art of war”. The approach of the Armed Forces towards education comes out of this rule, and the main target is to fill the peace-time with the best training activities shaped with the slogan “More sweat and training in peace is less blood and total victory in war”.

For instance, Turkish Air Force Command has planned to train its personnel through “Warrant Officer Orientation Course” applied with the distance education approach, due to some restrictions.

*Case for Land Forces*

Commandership of Education and Doctrine of Turkish Land Forces, in November 1999 organized the First Symposium on Distance Education in Ankara. Among the subjects of papers represented were as follows: Theoretical basis of Distance Education, the roles of learners in primary and secondary education, technologies of informatics, in service training of personnel and educators, preparation of programs, materials needed in open education, open schools of distance education, virtual universities, principles concerned with utilizing the distance education and etc. This indicates that Turkish Armed Forces have been interested to use interactive and informatics in their training activities. At the Conference on Education in the Light of Informatics Technologies, a presentation made on the subject of how to develop the leaders’ ability for decision making,



by means of creating a new medium by interactive communications models (Gürsoy, 1999; Türkiye Bilişim Derneği ve ODTÜ Öğrenci Kolu 1999).

#### *Academic Tutoring in Distance Education*

Academic Tutoring, one of three basic elements of distance education, seeks to meet face-to-face education needs of the distance students. Anadolu University Open Education Faculty, from its inception in 1982, has been providing Academic Tutoring services and trying to expand it across the country. There are more than 62 tutoring centers in 59 provinces (Serter and Çekerol, 2002).

Table 5

Lectures Covered by Tutoring System, Anadolu University (2001-2002)

First Year	Second Year	Third Year
Introduction to Economics	Economic Theory	Cost Accounting
Mathematics in General	Implementation of Accounting	Turkish System Of Taxation
Accounting in General	Statistics	Foreign Language (English)

In 1999-2000 Academic Anadolu University started tutoring services for all lectures supported with video conference given by Eskişehir Campus to distance pupils living in Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

In 2001-2002 academic years, from different universities, 505 academicians served as tutor in tutoring services (see Table 5). Tutoring service is not only good for better comprehending the lectures by students, but also for making them getting acquainted with other students as well as establishing cooperation with others. This also helps them to taste the atmosphere of the university. As a group, they may participate in social and cultural activities in the city.

In addition to class work carried out with the tutor, this service may cover other **face-to-face** activities as such; group discussions, study circles, seminars, and summer schools.

Due to lack of tutors available, this service has been unable to cover most of the registered students every part of the country (Serter, 1986, 1997). Tutorship system serves more than 25,000 students in nearly sixty provincial centers, most of which are studying economic and accounting courses. Therefore, engaging more academics as to cover the programs other than economics and accounting must reinforce this service.

### **Some Problems Concerning Distance Education In Turkey**

Due to lack of internet infrastructure, of legislation, of governmental support, of research activities, of public relations, of knowledge of decision makers, the problems faced in distance education in our country can be summarized as follows (Final Report submitted to 2004 Information and Communication Congress):

- There is no clear-cut vision concerning distance education on the part of educational administrators, and at the people concerned.
- Quality and standards have not been at a sufficient level.
- Not well organized within educational system, at any level and not institutionalized yet.
- D.E. covers only a small part of the society.

Internet based distance education can be successful if the participants have a knowledge of using computers, ownership of computer at home and access to internet. Technology of informatics has great help to exercise any vocation, which necessitates certain knowledge, what and how to do. It is also possible to provide theoretical knowledge to implement any profession. That is why Small and Medium size Industries Administration (shortly KOSGEB) tries to contribute the development of production and marketing, provides certain educational programs. We might say that implementing these programs has not been used computer and internet based technologies. The Center for Promoting Personal Entrepreneurship established by KOSGEB started to prepare computer based programs.

#### *Universities in Turkey Do Not Utilize the Possibilities of Open Education*

Anadolu University, which started its distance teaching programs in 1982, is the first and only distance teaching university in Turkey. According to Prof. Dr. Dursun Gökdağ, the system has been used as a solution for many educational needs, and it is used for greater equality of opportunity of access to higher education; for those adults who had missed the opportunity to attend a university; and again for adults to have

access to educational opportunities throughout their lives, in order to renew or update their knowledge. Anadolu University has extended its distance programs to Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus and to West European Countries (Gökdağ, 2002).

One of the areas for which distance education can be used is to solve the problem of faculty shortage. Unfortunately many universities have been suffering from the shortage of faculty for years. It may seem strange enough that not one of those universities has tried to encourage their students to take some courses from existing distance teaching programs in Turkey. Those universities lack of academics must collaborate with Anadolu University to utilize its distance education programs.

### **Effects of Globalization**

Globalization is the dominant international system that is transforming the way the world shares information. The current international system is based on a capitalist, free-market model. Globalization is “the integration of markets, nation-states and technology that enables individuals, corporations and nations to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before. But there has been great discrepancy among income levels of the population of different regions, urban and rural areas. It is an act that computer business has been under the monopoly of national and international trusts and holdings. This makes very difficult to utilize of having a computer and to reach internet (Aksoy, 2003).

At one time, the number of personal computers per household per country defined a country’s economic power. Now it is based on internet bandwidth per person per country.

Ten years ago the Internet was in its infancy. Now we find that with falling telecommunication costs, growth of microchips, satellites, fiber optics and the internet, technologies are weaving a web around the world, bringing countries even closer together than before. Not only governments and large corporations can benefit from this new wave of technologies, but individuals are affected in new ways. People can now reach farther, faster and cheaper than ever before. The two most significant concepts that emerge from this globalization are integration and connectedness. Both of these affect the strength and future of major universities.

### **Setting Up A Nation-Wide Distance Education System**

National Committee of Informatics established by YÖK, in 1999 to study the possibility of using technologies of communication and informatics in distance education.

TÜBİTAK (Scientific and Technical Research Council of Turkey) in cooperation with academicians established a joint research team composed of experts from different universities to study the subject of setting up a Nation-wide Distance Education System (TÜBİTAK 1996, 1997). According to the final report of the study team, ULAK-NET (National Academic Network) would be the backbone of national distance education systems. By means of ULAK-NET has been an initiative of TÜBİTAK, used by universities having access to prominent libraries around Turkey and information and documentation centers of Turkey. ULAK-BİM (the National Academic Network and Information Center, under the auspices of TÜBİTAK, being in the implementation phase, will be national information center, having serial library previously managed by YÖK. ULAK-BİM aims at assisting academicians and researchers to take care of their bibliographic surveys and at being national database. Another important duty of UBİM is creating national content in the form of indices, databases, thesaurus, and citation indices.

The researcher's team implemented a questionnaire in order to explore distance educational requirements and the existing infrastructure of higher education institutions of Turkey. Out of 60 institutions concerned only 34 institutions replied the questionnaire. Only one of them stated that they did not plan to participate in the system. Almost 33 of 34 respondents stated to participate in this system of distance education, out of which 25 institutions wanted to both receiver and provider. 32 of them want to participate in undergraduate and graduate and 18 in continuing programs. **There is a high level of willingness towards participating in distance education.**

It is interesting that third to fourth of these respondents, courses Turkish and English should be utilized in distance education. Those who participate within the system as receiver think that to support course content of a degree program is very important (% 91), Transmission of all course content and of all courses are as important (% 50 - 59). Nearly third to fifth of respondents (% 59) request to participate because lack of trainers. 47 % of the institutions want to train trainers. Half of the respondents referred both lack of resources and trainers. Only two of respondents stated that computer literacy of the students is very high while only one of them stated that students in their universities are computer illiterate. 14 universities stated that the level of computer literacy of the students fair, 10 universities stated good in this respect. Only 4 institutions reported that they have already practiced distance education.

To construct a model of distance education at national level, the aim and resources available, population to be served and its distribution within the country, cost of the courses in terms of human resources, effectiveness and technology must be considered.

Any model of distance education depends upon following factors such as:

- Whether delivery and reception of the course is **synchronous or not**.
- The space the learners are located either **at home, unit at university site or any electronic classroom**.
- Infrastructure of communication to be used, **cable, microwave, satellite and post**.

There is not only one single model of distance education. Various models may be developed, but only one of them can be chosen which is the most feasible in terms of our targets and the available sources.

The research team developed too many models. They were considering only formal education level, excluding education at primary and secondary school levels, and adult education too. I must say that any national distance education system should cover all areas of learning at any level of formal and non-formal adult education.

#### **Evaluation from Adult Education Point of View**

One of the criticisms can be made that all these programs depending upon formal education leading a diploma or certificate. They are not programs of adult education in the classical context. An important percentage of adults are illiterates. There are great discrepancies among developed and underdeveloped regions of the country in terms of income, social and economic levels, as well as between urban and rural areas. According to Human Development Index of the United States, average duration for any Turkish citizen has spent at school system, been around 3 and a half years. Educational, cultural, political problems which Turkey faces, the citizens must be educated in democratic way of life, as well as human rights, peace, and environmental problems. The role of local and national televisions in creating environmental consciousness has been very important (İnceelli, 1999).

I may say that Adult Education Centers of Ministry of National Education do not provide courses and other activities to cover these subject (problem) areas. Therefore, a national distance education network system must be developed and organized as to cover this lack of adult education carried out by the Ministry. Universities must not only prepare and execute programs for the students registered in distance and open education, but also adult education programs to help them to solve their problems and to meet their needs concerned with social, economic and cultural problems as well as vocational and technical issues.

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**CASE A****THE PLACE OF FONO CORRESPONDENCE INSTITUTE  
IN DISTANCE EDUCATION IN TURKEY****Prof. Cevat Geray**

Correspondence education has been one of the efficient methods of adult education in a country like Turkey, where the educational level of the people is lower than the desired and planned targets in comparison with developed countries. Due to the fact that educational facilities have not been distributed on a balanced basis among different social strata and geographical regions, urban and rural areas of the country, great deal of people is not able to reach, utilize the educational opportunities offered by the State, mostly due to economic reasons, such as insufficient income level stemmed from disparities among income groups.

From, the very beginnings of Turkish Republic, the government has paid necessary attention upon adult education. Atatürk, the founder of the Republic, started Nation's Schools (Ulus Okulları) movement to teach people the newly adopted Latin alphabet which made people able to read and write easily. He was proclaimed as the Principal of all Nation Schools. This also contributed a lot to overcome the acute problem of illiteracy, in a period when only 11 percent of the people was literate.

Turkey has a vast experience in raising the educational level of the people and training teachers needed in educational mobilization launched by Atatürk administration. Among several positive actions, People's House (Halkevleri) and Village Institutes should be mentioned because of their contributions not only to the educational development of our country, in general, but also specifically, to adult education and rural community development.

It took time to start distance education until 1961. A unit was set up for teaching by correspondence by the Ministry of National Education after the establishment of General Directorate of Adult Education in 1960.

FONO has been first correspondence institute of Turkey, even prior to the governmental set up. We may also say that FONO has been the only nongovernmental organization of distance education presenting correspondence opportunities of learning to the benefit of the people since 1953 without any interruption. Although there were other private attempts in this field they have been small in scale, and they have failed to continue.

Although the main function is to teach by correspondences, FONO also provides necessary educational aids, like dictionaries, collateral reading books, tapes, cassettes etc. Which are also available to the access of general public. These FONO productions have been very popular and leading newspapers (namely Milliyet and Güneş) have distributed some of them to their readers as a cultural service.

FONO has been mostly specialized in three main foreign languages (English, German and French) as well as in accountancy. Nevertheless among the subjects offered by the institute we may mention shorthand writing, type writing.

A great majority of FONO participants takes English courses (%60) whereas %13 preferred French, and %20 German. That taking course on accountancy constitutes %5 FONO students. (See: Table 1)

As a part of new project for launching vocational and technical subjects, FONO started a new course on electricity. Enrolment in this recently started course is rather high, and is a sign of need on the part of people to learn on technical matters and the new technological developments, including television, videos, computers and electronics.

As regards to the educational levels of the unrolled participants of FONO, we observe that even the people having only primary school diploma are interested in learning by correspondence, it is a fact that only 9 percent of FONO participants are university graduates, whereas approximately one fifth (%19) of the student body is of primary school graduates. Great majority of FONO participants (%79) is having diplomas at secondary education level.

If we compare with the data concerning the level of education of the participants of the correspondence courses provided by the Ministry, we may conclude that more than half (%51) of the student body was of primary education, while those with higher education diplomas constituted only 5 percent of the student body. (See Table 3)

One can easily say that this difference stems from the nature of the courses offered. The subjects of the correspondence courses carried, out by the Ministry were concerned with skills and knowledge needed for exercising certain vocational activities such as electricity, radio and television installation, repairs and maintenance, and were designed and convenient for adults at lower education levels. (See Table 4)

Having participants from all provinces, FONO extends her training services to the people living in remote settlements or underdeveloped regions of the country, but approximately half (%48) of the enrolled participants has been inhabitants of three biggest provinces (namely Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir)

And most urbanized, developed areas. In comparison with figures concerning the course participants of the Ministry, there has been no essential difference as regards no the place of inhabitation of the students. (See Table 5)

A great majority (%88) FONO participants has been under the age 30. The reverse is true for the student body of the Ministry courses, since the great majority (%85) were older than 30. In other words, FONO participants have been consisted of younger people at school ages or a little bit older, but still in a period consecutive to the school years in contrast to the older people registered at the courses offered by the Ministry.

The fact that the main emphasis by FONO programme has been paid mostly upon foreign language teaching and this satisfies the needs, hopes and desires of the young people, at the ages of secondary and higher education, and they feel themselves ready and capable to learn and improve a foreign language, than the people in middle ages who has some hesitations about their learning capacity. Another fact supporting this observation and explanation we made above is the fact that more than, one third (%36) of FONO student body has been consisted of pupils attending schools at different levels. Teachers (%10),

white collar officials (%31) constitutes another substantial category of FONO participants, having enthusiasm for making progress in their carriers.

Performance level of FONO participants has been rather higher (%80) than one expect for correspondence education elsewhere, this may be due not solely to the highly motivation level on the part, of FONO students in general, but also to the determination to participate into an educational activity which is not free of charge. Nevertheless, this proves the high level of the participant's motivation and enthusiasm feeded by a regular and well planned correspondence course, accompanied with necessary educational material and aids, realized by FONO.

During a period of service of 35 years, from the very beginnings of FONO (since 1953) more than 300.000 students completed the programmes and became eligible for a certificate or Ministry approved diploma after having examinations under the auspices and control of the Ministry.

**Table 1**

Distribution of FONO Participants  
According to the Courses Taken

Subjects	Partic ipants
English	65
French	13
German	17
Accountancy	5
Total	100

Geray, *Halk Eğitimi (Adult Education) Ankara 1978 p.117*

**Table 2**

Distribution of Participants According to the  
Levels of Education (1971-1972)

Educational Level	Participants	
	FO N O	Mini stry
Primary	19	51
Secondary	72	44
Higher	9	5
Total	100	100

Geray, *op.cit*, p.317)

**Table 3**

Distribution of FONO and Ministry Participants

According to Age Groups (1970-72)

Age Groups	Participants	Participants
	FONO	Ministry
- 20	27,6	----
21-25	59,9	0,3
26-30	10,8	14,6
31-40	9	49,6
41-49	2,3	31,9
50 and over	0,4	3,6
Total	100	100

Geray, *op.cit*, p.317)**Table 4**Subjects of Correspondence Courses Rendered by  
The Ministry of National Education (1972)

Subjects	Participants
Radio Repairing	18,3
Hotel Services	1,8
Food Preparation, Nutrition	3,5
Type Writing	2,6
Electricity	62,4
Teachers School Graduation	1,9
Construction	3,3
Others	6,2
Total	100

Geray, *op.cit*, p.316

**Table 5**  
Distribution of Participants According to  
Their Inhabitancies (1971-72)

Place of Inhabitancy	Participants	
	F O N O	Min istr y
Three Biggest Provinces (Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir)	4 8	44
Other Provinces	5 2	56
Total	1 0 0	100

Geray, *op. cit.*, p.318

**Table 6**  
Distribution of FONO Participants According to  
Their Occupations

Occupations	Part icip ants
Students	36
Teachers	10
White Collar Workers, Officials	35
Housewives	2
Others (including industrial workers, officers, professionals)	21
Total	100

Geray, *op. cit.* p.317

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